University of Crete
School of Social Sciences
Department of Economics

PhD Dissertation

Exchange networks and parallel currencies: Theoretical approaches and the case of Greece

PhD Candidate: Irene-Chrysovalantou Sotiropoulou

PhD Supervisor: Professor Vasileios Kardasis

Members of the Advisory Committee
Professor Dina Vaiou (National Technical University of Athens, School of Architecture)
Professor Maria Karamessini (Panteion University, Department of Social Policy)

Rethymnon, November 2012

This dissertation is dedicated to
all those people, women and men, who experiment far beyond the mainstream economy, within or outside schemes, trying to find better ways to cover all people's needs while living better in a better world,
for without those people this dissertation would not exist at all
for they generously accepted to educate me in economics that no-one else could teach me about
for they participated in this research and helped me as much as they could
for they reminded me that a civilisation I thought of as lost still exists
for they have given me hope.

University of Crete
School of Social Sciences
Department of Economics

PhD Dissertation

Exchange networks and parallel currencies: Theoretical approaches and the case of Greece

ABSTRACT

The research project comprises both theoretical study and field research and it focuses on economic activity in Greece which is performed without the use of any official currency. This has been the first time that parallel currencies and exchange networks, but also free bazaars, are being researched in Greece, not only because of lack of interest by academia, but also because such initiatives emerged the very last years in the country and still emerge and develop, particularly since 2009 onwards.

The project investigated parallel currencies, exchange networks, both specialised and of general scope, free-exchange bazaars and free (online) networks, and several sui generis schemes which could not be placed into the other categories. The research used a combination of methodological tools, ranging from participatory observation and free discussions with scheme members, to questionnaire survey, interviews with key informants and mapping of scheme membership in the entire country.

The questions explored through this research have been related to main notions of economic discipline, like market and economy, and to core issues like the perception of economic value and how this is expressed in transactions without official currency. The main features of the transactions have also been explored, like the lack of exact measuring and the non-linear perception of time in exchanges. The motives for performing this type of transactions have been a major question of this research. The role of current economic and financial crisis in Greece in the expansion of the schemes all over the country has been investigated and discussed, same as the variety of scheme structures, which does not have similar precedents in academic literature; then, this variety appears, till the moment, as the main peculiarity of the Greek case of non-mainstream transaction modes.

Keywords: exchange networks, parallel currencies, free-exchange bazaars, Greece.

FUNDING

This PhD research project has been approved for and received financial support by the project "IRAKLITOS II - University of Crete" of the Operational Programme for Education and Lifelong Learning 2007 - 2013 (E.P.E.D.V.M.) of the NSRF (2007 - 2013), which is co-funded by the European Union (European Social Fund) and National Resources of Greece.

However, the funding was reduced although the time schedule has been completely satisfied and the funding for the first 15 months of the project (June 2009 to August 2010) has not been paid as approved and performed yet (november 2012). The case has been brought before the Greek High Administrative Court and it is still pending.

European Union
European Social Fund

OPERATIONAL PROGRAMME
EDUCATION AND LIFELONG LEARNING
investing in knowledge society
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION & RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS, CULTURE & SPORTS
MANAGING AUTHORITY

NSRF 2007-2013
programme for development
EUROPEAN SOCIAL FUND

Co- financed by Greece and the European Union

I would also like to thank very much my PhD colleagues Nantia Baliou and Georgios Ioannides, in the same Department of Economics at Rethymnon, who advised, insisted very much and assisted me in applying for this funding, and I am indebted to Greek and other European people who paid so that this funding can be available for this research project.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Apart from all research participants, there are many other people whose contribution has been essential for this dissertation.

I hope that this dissertation proves that both my previous and my actual Supervisors' (Prof. George Stathakis and Prof. Vasileios Kardasis) and my Advisory Committee's (Prof. Dina Vaiou and Prof. Maria Karamessini) support and assistance was not given in vain and that at least, I have not wasted their time and effort. Moreover, I would like to thank very much Prof. Charitini Dipla (Univ. of Athens, Dept. of Politics), Prof. Emanouela Doussis (Univ. of Athens, Dept. of Politics) and Dr Nick Weaver (Univ. of Manchester, Dept. of Economics) for their assistance.

Many people helped me very much with their knowledge sharing, their comments, advice and support, so that I could tackle with all types of problems this research project have faced: Ms Lydia Koniordou (Desmoi- Cultural Nonprofit Organisation), Prof. Costas Georgoussopoulos (Univ. of Athens), Ms Glykeria Papageorgiou and Ms Efi Vassileiou (Desmoi- Cultural Nonprofit Organisation), Prof. Richard Seaford (Univ. of Exeter), Dr Stevphen Shukaitis (Univ. of Essex), Prof. Dimitris Kapoyannis (Technical Educational Institute of Messolonghi), Prof. Takis Nikolopoulos (Technical Educational Institute of Messolonghi), Mr Dimitris Sakellaridis and Mr Kostas Pigounakis (Univ. of Crete), Dr Foteini Tounta, Dr Fay Patsiou, Ms Giota Tzortzi (Greek Statistics Authority), Dr Theodoros Katerinakis (Univ. of Drexel), Dr Maria Hnaraki (Univ. of Drexel), Dr Faidra Papavassiliou (Georgia State University), Mr Manolis Tzouvelekas (District of Crete), Mr Costas Valeontis (ELETO), Prof. Evangelos Nikolaides (Univ. of Crete), Prof. Andreas Giannopoulos (Univ. of Crete), Ms Ioanna Giotopoulou (Univ. of Crete), Mr Rolf Schroder, Mr Miguel Yasuyuki Hirota (Univ. of Valencia), Mr Stathis Stasinos (www.techiechan.com), Prof. Apostolos Dedoussopoulos (Panteion University, Athens), Prof. Ben Fine (SOAS, London), Dr. Deborah Johnston (SOAS, London), Ms Christina Sakali (Univ. of Macedonia), Prof. Nikos Theocharakis (Univ. of Athens), Dr. John Horton (Univ. of Northampton) for his sending me the unpublished research notes (vignettes), Mr Erik Brenes (Univ. of Calabria), Mr Geof Chessire, Ms Evi Michelaki and Mr Christos Christodoulopoulos (Lathos Collective), Mr Rolf Schroeder (CC Literature Database Project), Dr Tonia Zervaki (Univ. of

Peloponnese), Mr Matthew Slater (Community Forge), Mr John Zube, Dr Efthymia Kanner (Univ. of Athens), Prof. Bernard Lietaer (Center for Sustainable Resources, Univ. of California at Berkeley), Dr Jérôme Blanc (Université Lumière - Lyon II), Mr Panayotis Samartzis, Prof. Minas Vlassis (Univ. of Crete), Prof. V.Spike Peterson (Univ. of Arizona) and all anonymous referees of my papers and the participants in the conferences I have attended so far for their comments and precious advice.

I am also grateful to the people of Val d' Uixo, Spain, to the Greek National Youth Foundation people, to the people of the Sol-Violette collective in Toulouse, France, to the people of the Community of Yaracuy and the Ministry of Communes & Social Protection in Venezuela, to the Technological Educational Institute of Messolonghi (Faculty of Management & Economics) and to the teachers and colleagues from the Gender & Macro International Working Group (GEM-IWG) team, who all contributed their best for me to receive feedback, comments and acquire knowledge related to my research that otherwise I could not have access to.

I would also like to thank my sisters Dimitra and Ferda for their help and support, a Cretan family who have treated me as their own daughter and have been my "back-up" support people, my teacher Sultana (who taught me that people construct their ideas through their experiences), my teacher Rhea (who taught me not to kill something in order to study it) and all my good friends who apart from providing me with all sorts of assistance in order to proceed with this research project, were always very eager to spend time to listen to my unlimited chatter.

However, all deficiencies of this dissertation are my responsibility only.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1. The general context of the research project

During the last two years, there has been extensive public attention to the so called "barter economy" (ανταλλακτική οικονομία) and to several initiatives which emerged all over Greece. Currencies created and used locally by groups of people, free-exchange bazaars, exchange networks, free online networks, collective gardens and kitchen collectives seem to attract many people and the focus of mass media. It seems that this has been a time of great and unprecedented expansion for this type of activity.

At the same time, particularly since spring 2010, the economy of Greece is under severe financial constraints, given the adoption of neoliberal policies imposed through transnational and international agreements concerning bailing out the country's public debt. Economic hardship, recession and unemployment are typical indicators of what those policies might mean for the country's majority of population.

The most common discourse concerning the economic activity without official currency places all those people and the structures they create within the context of economic and financial crisis, as if there is a direct causality between the two. However, coincidence of time and place is not enough to prove any inner connection between two economic phenomena, much less to explain the choices of all those people who share that economic behaviour.

The research project which I am writing this dissertation about, is a bit older than the mass media attention to economic activity without the use of official currency. The project started officially in February 2009, while the preparation of the research project started in October 2008. Although at that time it was impossible for me to anticipate the expansion of the subject-matter of the research, the entire project coincided in time with that same expansion, and although by chance, it grasped the activity at its development stage.

In the next chapters, I will provide with further detailed description of all those schemes and their structure. Their common underlying feature is that the members of the schemes perform transactions among each other without the use of any official

currency; and this happens without them being necessarily close friends or relatives to decide to proceed to such an economic behaviour. There are also many people who perform transactions without official currency without being registered members of a scheme. That means, the attention the schemes capture does not reveal the real picture of the activity anyway, but only a part of it.

Actually, grassroots schemes where transactions without official currency were taking place existed well before October 2008, but they were very few compared to the actual scheme numbers (in November 2012). Therefore, this project managed to acquire original data concerning this activity at the time exactly it expanded.

Moreover, this information gathered through the research project has been important for one more reason: this activity has not been studied in Greece for about the last one hundred years in an economic discipline setting, but also in the broader framework of social sciences[1]. Therefore, the lack of previous field research created a void which, of course, cannot be filled over with just one research project, much less by a PhD dissertation. On the other hand, the ambition of the project was to contribute as much as possible to this subject-matter, at least with the intention to gain some first picture of this economic activity for which academic literature is so scarce.

1.2. The research questions[2]

In other words, the question which connects the subject-matter to the economic and financial crisis in Greece developed along with the expansion of the entire activity, but it has not been the main research question from the onset of the project. Quite the opposite, this question, although a major one was one among several which the research project aimed to answer:

1.2.1. Does this activity belong to the economic discipline, despite the fact that there are serious difficulties in measuring the features of transactions (like volume, frequency, etc)? How can we study this activity within an economic context while the

[1] There is only one MSc thesis by Christidou, E. (2008) in environmental sciences and referring only to one type of scheme.
[2] Several out of those questions have already been published in Sotiropoulou, I. (2010a). Some other have been already formed in the initial research proposal.

activity comprises transactions without exact measuring and without linear-time perception?

1.2.2. How the notions of market and economy are perceived and formulated through the scheme members' activity and what implications might this have for pricing practices, for paying-back obligations and for the entire perception of reciprocity?

1.2.3. What are the implications for the value of things and of human effort when they are placed within the framework of a transaction without official currency? What happens with the value of the offers given away for free/gratis/at-zero-price?

1.2.4. Why people would participate in transactions where they would receive no economic profit or even any economic reward? Why would they participate in transactions where exact measuring is inexistent or impossible and why would they accept as means of payment virtual units or things which suffer quick impairment?

1.2.5. Why would people accept to participate in transactions where the values of goods and of human effort are completely different to that of mainstream economy, therefore choosing to lose the gain they would have in the mainstream economy if they kept their offers within that mainstream setting?

1.2.5. In general terms, why people choose to perform transactions without official currency? What are their motives and how do they explain their own behaviour?

1.2.6 What has been the role of the recent economic and financial crisis in enhancing the scheme participation and expansion and how can we really investigate such a connection?

1.2.7. Do the Greek schemes fit the scheme typologies as those are formed by the numerous networks in other countries? What are the peculiarities of the schemes in Greek space, where those peculiarities can be attributed to and what implications do they have for the entire activity? How is the activity under study integrated within a regional or international framework, both theoretical and practical? Particularly, how is this activity linked to the related schemes in other Mediterranean or European countries?

1.3. Theoretical framework of the research

Half of the research project has been to investigate which theoretical approaches would be most appropriate to perceive, understand and explore the

subject-matter. The lack of literature for Greek schemes does not mean that there was no literature on international level; however, the nature and variety of Greek schemes made me to make some choices in terms of theory which would rather seem to be eclectic and formed out of texts originating in various disciplines.

At first, there have been four theoretical approaches to explain this activity instead of one only. Second, it seems that till the end of the research project, no theoretical approach out of the four had been possible to be rejected, rather they seemed to complement each other. Third, despite the complementarity, each one had its own structure and notions. The theoretical arguments are presented in detail in chapter three of the dissertation, nevertheless, their rough presentation is as following:

1.3.1. The first argument studies the economic activity without official currency as a crack or a set of cracks in the mainstream capitalist economy; the cracks do not necessarily show yet the direction (anti- or post-capitalist) of future structures.

1.3.2. The second argument studies this same subject-matter as a creative effort of people to escape the double bind situation which is imposed on them by a schizoid capitalist economy.

1.3.3. The third argument explores the possibility that the entire activity is a struggle to redefine collectively economic values, establish and support them in priority; all those scheme-structures are the tools and/or mechanisms used by the scheme members to achieve this.

1.3.4. The fourth argument goes un-named in this dissertation. It attempts to explore several stereotypes concerning multiple currency use and non-monetary economy as obsolete, temporary and emergency solutions only. At the end, it sets a framework to explore whether the economic activity studied has always been coeval to the mainstream capitalist economy and now, under certain economic and social conditions, it sets a completely different agenda than the one defined within the axis capitalist-anticapitalist.

1.4. Hypotheses and first answers

The argument that people turn to non-monetary transactions and to parallel currencies due to economic and financial constraints, has not been proved as such. The answers of the survey show clearly that economic hardship is just one motive

among many, let alone that several people who participate in the schemes are more or less wealthy or very wealthy. However, many people in economic distress participate too, which means that one needs to explore several possible reasons for this economic actıvıty instead of just lack of income in official currency.

In that sense, the role of the economic and financial crisis is being set within a completely different framework than the one usually mentioned in everyday mass media discourse. Particularly in chapter four, the data on the expansion of the schemes, on unemployment increase and on how the scheme members perceive the role of the crisis shows that several long term conditions affected individual and collective choices concerning the preferred transaction modes.

On the other hand, social struggle is present, however, not in the strict class struggle setting one would expect. Scheme members might belong to different social groups and might have various social features, but they share common aims, as for example, a more harmonious relation with nature during satisfying material needs and fairer relation to other people during exchanging with them. Struggles, at the end, exist all over the space of non-mainstream transaction modes, exactly because there are various aims which are needed to be achieved, sometimes within the same network: solidarity and human gatherings to re-affirm collectivity, access to food, covering basic needs, access to education and to educative materials, access to art and to beautiful everyday stuff, as well as access to know-how concerning the production of everything: cultivation of traditional varieties, cooking, decoration, etc.

Small production in all main sectors of human effort is what I have encountered with during this research. The schemes seem to favour small production and small consumption in all their aspects by re-sharing any existing surplus and by re-distributing know-how, tools, simple/small machines, recycled things/materials and unused stock in closets or small stores which are closing down. Moreover, small production in human effort, i.e. services, is also favoured or, at least, it seems it can be deeply favoured as schemes encourage their members to provide a variety of services and use their various skills instead of just one professional service only.

1.5. Methods used

To approach such a peculiar subject-matter while there is little literature based on field research, I opted for using a combination of methods instead of just one. Observation and participatory observation, free discussions with participants, text analysis, and keeping notes by the means of thick description technique have been used during the preliminary stage of research, but also during the entire project itself.

Interviews with key informants based on short open-answer questionnaires have been the qualitative method I used for the first stage of research. A questionnaire survey has been used to gather data concerning the profile of scheme members and of quantitative features of the transactions studied. The interlude stage of the research consisted of mapping the membership of schemes throughout the country, whenever this was possible and related data available.

More details and the issues which emerged concerning methods but also ethics of this project will be examined in chapter five (5) of the dissertation.

1.6. The structure of the dissertation

The dissertation consists of two main parts. The first part comprises two chapters which are dedicated to theoretical issues of the project. In chapter two (2), one can find the literature review concerning theoretical issues of the subject-matter, but also the review of literature concerning field research on the same topic. In that same chapter, there is a presentation of the existing scheme typologies in literature and of the typology used at last in this project. Chapter three (3) analyses the theoretical framework I used in my research: at first, it presents the problem of finding or constructing a theoretical basis for my project. Then, it presents the four theoretical arguments I finally used to explain and explore my research topic.

The second part of the dissertation consists of five (5) chapters, all referring to the field research I conducted during my PhD programme. Chapter four (4) is a detailed presentation of the schemes I investigated, and this presentation is made by type and category. The last section of chapter four discusses the main question of the expansion of the schemes during the last three years and the possible connections with the economic and financial crisis in Greece, which coincided at exactly the same time.

Chapter five (5) is the one referring to the methods I used during my field research. The first section is a methodology review from previous literature originating in field research, the second section is the main part of the chapter presenting the methodological issues I faced in using a variety of methodological tools; and the third section of the chapter examines the ethical issues I dealt with during my research project.

Chapter six (6) of the dissertation presents the results of the questionnaire survey conducted during the third year of research. This chapter has a different section enumeration to fit with the enumeration of the questionnaire sections (available at Annex C) and make it easier for the reader to see the answers within the entire questionnaire structure perspective. Chapter seven (7) presents the research findings from the interviews conducted with key informants of the research, i.e. scheme coordinators or scheme members which have a global view of the scheme activity. This chapter (7) is divided into two sections, one for the questions which have been common to all participants and one for the questions which have been addressed to each scheme participant, according to the scheme type.

Chapter eight (8) is the collection of my main findings originating in participatory observation and the other qualitative methods, other than the interviews with key informants. The sections of this chapter are dedicated respectively to how theory is created through the action of the participants, how environmental awareness and good life perceptions are implemented through scheme activity, how scheme economic structures affect the participants' economic behaviour, how women are involved in the schemes, and how this activity might also be part of a larger cultural context, which as any culture, needs its own economic basis.

The conclusions of the dissertation are presented in chapter nine (9), where the limitations of the project and the main topics for further research are also presented.

There are four annexes in this dissertation: the first is the full list of initiatives which perform transactions without the use of official currency. Annex B is the questionnaire for the interviews with the key informants. Annex C is the survey questionnaire in word format. And, Annex D is a coloured map of Greek regions to facilitate the visualisation of tables in the last section of chapter four, concerning the expansion of schemes and the increase in unemployment after 2008 all over the Greek regions.

PART I

THEORETICAL APPROACHES

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW AND TYPOLOGIES

It has been very difficult to acquire literature which is relevant to the subject matter of my research. At the beginning I thought it was scarce, but at the end it seemed huge and complicated. There are several issues concerning literature and some of them are already mentioned in the previous chapter: first, academic literature concerning the Greek schemes is more or less inexistent. What of literature is related to my topic, concerns mostly parallel currencies.

Difficulties in literature are not a negative thing of course. There is a variety of academic texts originating in disciplines other than economics which are very informative in both theoretical and field research terms. At the end, even my theoretical arguments have been formed by using this interdisciplinary literature.

The other problem I faced during my literature study has been that terminology concerning my research subject-matter has not been established yet. Actually, there is some terminology concerning parallel currencies, but given that the topic is relatively new for academics, each author chooses the terms that better fit the ideas she/he means and the case studies she/he works on. The major problem one could see from international academic literature is that there are currencies but there are no other schemes, like exchange networks, or free bazaars or free networks or even the sui generis schemes we have in Greece. It is important to say that till now not even the activist texts have information about such initiatives or even if they have, they just mention the exact name of the initiative without giving a generic name to it. Therefore, writing about what I have found in Greece, I could not but write on schemes that have never appeared in any academic literature concerning modern economies[1].

At the end, I created for analytical purposes, a typology for this project, hoping that in the future this might change and improve[2]. Concerning literature, I mention in the next chapter (three) the texts I used for my theoretical arguments. In this chapter, I refer to the literature which is connected to my topic and helped me to understand where I should look to in order to form my theoretical framework. However, given the load of literature I had to handle, the only way I could organise my literature findings was only a descriptive distinction, between a) theoretical

[1] For details on terminology and how I investigated this problem, see Sotiropoulou, I. (2011d).
[2] See section 3 of this chapter.

arguments concerning the same subject matter and b) previous research on the subject matter of my project.

2.1. Literature review concerning theoretical issues

Silvio Gesell[1], whose theory has affected the history of parallel currencies, attributed to the form of official money the unemployment of his era and the creation of the deprived and homeless mass of workers, whom he called proletariat[2] . He believed that the proletariat would have been maintained in deprivation even in the case that workers had their own means of production, because they would have been forced to pay interest to the buyers of their produce, as the buyers would be the money holders and therefore, in a better negotiation position. The money holders, according to Gesell, raise their interest demands because they otherwise will not provide the money-deprived people (workers) with the medium of exchange necessary to trade in order to satisfy their needs (food, clothes, houses, ships, etc). Therefore, "…Money creates a proletariat, not because the burden of interest deprives the masses of their property, but because it forcibly prevents the masses from constructing property for themselves". That way, new capital is formed from the surpluses originating in the interest upon capitalists' assets and the gap between capitalists and non-capitalists gets greater and greater. At the same time, interest limits, according to Gesell, the possibility or even the capability of saving among low-income classes. Gesell also considered that long-term projects (like the reafforestation of a waste!!) would be possible without interest-bearing money for large polities like the state.

Instead of conventional money, Gesell proposed a type of money (free-money) serving as a medium of exchange only, without features that make it a better commodity that the rest[3]. This money would "rust" like all other commodities, because a depreciation rate would be imposed on it instead of positive interest. In other words, money is a commodity with value attributed by law and the demand for money is the same thing as the stock of an economy's produce (supply of products-

[1] Gesell, S. (1906).
[2] Gesell defined proletariat as: "workmen deprived of their own means of production".
[3] He points out: "…we must make money worse as a commodity if we wish to make it better as a medium of exchange".

wares). However, due to the non-rusting, non-costly-to-store nature of conventional money, the demand which is materialised in money can be postponed, in contrast to supply of goods and services, which can not be postponed. The negotiation disparity between money holders and producers affects the price of money (therefore, money bears interest, which is a tribute to the money holder) and as a consequence, its abundance and its velocity. To fight this privilege of the money holders, Gesell proposed that money be a medium of exchange only and not a medium of saving. Moreover, free-money would also be designed in such a way that its holder, instead of having a right to interest, should be compelled and be in a hurry either to lend it "unconditionally", or to purchase other people's products or to re-purchase her own products in order to complete the transaction of money creation, whose essence, according to Gesell, is production.

However, Gesell did not consider that the monetary model he proposed would be a panacea for all economic and social problems[1]. Far from that, he stated that "free-money" would just enable poor people to trade and work, but that poverty would be eliminated by that work and not by the monetary reform. He pointed out that free-money would open the path for interest-free loans, but the financed projects would be those that would change the economic situation of the money users[2].

Although Irving Fisher[3] was critical of Gesell's theory on interest, he accepted Gesell's ideas about supporting (during the times of the Great Depression) money supply with the creation of a parallel medium of exchange that could be invested, spent or banked but that could not be hoarded. What Fisher did not clarify was whether this kind of money could be capitalised (because free-money as designed by Gesell would be difficult to be capitalised) and whether this anti-hoarding character

---

[1] Gesell refers to a more sophisticated version of Gresham's law in chapter 3.5: Gresham's law: "When in any country the stock of money exceeds the needs of the exchange of products, the result is a rise of prices. This rise of prices impedes export and facilitates import. The balance of foreign trade consequently shows a deficit of export in relation to import which is most easily met by the export of gold". I understand this statement as following: Good money is hoarded, as it has higher value and bad money circulates. Foreigners ask for good money in order to be paid for their exports to the country. Therefore, saved good money is necessarily used to buy imported goods, and therefore, it goes out of the country and "out" of the country's money supply. At the end, bad money is the only circulating and the only available for any payment. (Not just "bad money drives out good money", which is a simplification). This description is very important for the relevant discussion about the role of parallel currencies within a local economy which is "open" in relation to the wider formal economy – therefore, official money might continue to be driven out of the local economy even if a local currency exists or because a local currency exists. It has been impossible to verify where Gesell found this sophisticated statement.

[2] Gesell (1906), chapters 1.14, 2.2, 3.1-3.5, 3.9-3.13, 3.15, 4.1-4.4, 5.2-5.5, 5.7.

[3] Fisher, I. (1933).

would be the result of the emergency and temporary nature of Stamp Scrip, as Fisher designed it, or because of other features of it (for example, a demurrage mechanism).

However, Fisher was deeply concerned with the velocity of money and accepted the idea of demurrage for Stamp Scrip under the name of "ambulatory tax", which would force the scrip users to pass their scrip money to others as soon as they can. He, of course, did not clarify whether this tax would be permanent (at least during the stamp scrip circulation time) or whether it should be imposed when only the money velocity appears to be very low. This "tax on hoarding" would speed the scrip money circulation and would create new economic activity[1]. Moreover, local projects would be self-financed out of this tax on hoarding, which is a tax on mostly new business (and this financial sustainability today would have implications for the ability of the parallel currency users to choose the project, its scope and its technology).

Nevertheless, Fisher thought of Stamp Scrip as not being "money", but as having a substitution relation with conventional official money and he did not consider any possibility of their parallel existence[2]. He also accepted the possibility that scrip money would never become a large proportion of the total money circulation, although he expected that a fraction of the conventional currency would withdraw from circulation in favour of the Scrip. What is important, it is that Fisher did not considered scrip money as a panacea [sic] to depression. He recognised that the issuance of scrip money by small towns might have a great importance for the economic activity to be revived and he pointed out the role of the unemployed people, who, after farmers, adopted the stamp scrip before the rest of the United States population.[3]

Gesell's purpose was to help workers face a monetary system that was itself allocating wealth away from its poor producers, but as Dillard states, his theory does

---

[1] Fischer mentions but does not discuss a proposal that the scrip be given to people in need or to everybody. This should be discussed concerning parallel currencies, as it might have social security as well as general economic implications.

[2] It might be a coincidence, but Fisher also answers the critique based on Gresham's law. He states that: "When the money supposedly in circulation doesn't circulate, any money which drives it out and really circulates in its place is not *bad money* but *good money*". He does not discuss the case (with the exception of high inflation) where more than one currencies are circulating at the same time.

[3] Fisher (1933), chapters I-IV, VII.

not explain its practical proposition[1]. Keynes had almost the same view about Gesell's theory[2].

Decades after Gesell and I.Fischer, Margrit Kennedy considers parallel currencies as an initiative which is a first step toward a more sustainable and equitable economic system. She adopts Gesell's theory[3] about demurrage money and the implications that this would have on economy activity, and she proposes land reform (which is half part of Gesell's theory, but is not discussed at all in the local currency discourse[4]) and the transformation of the taxing system. She thinks that interest is a mechanism of redistribution of wealth from the poor to the rich on individual, local, regional, national and international level, because poor pay interest in order to have access to money and investment funds, but they also pay interest integrated into the prices of the goods they buy, while their labour, which does not bear "interest", is paid with very low rates. Interest rules are also forcing society and economy into a non-sustainable, exponential (and inflationary) growth pattern, which is environmentally destructive, too. As a conclusion, she proposes that interest is abolished and that a monetary system based on Gesell's ideas is established in order to face unemployment and social inequality, but she also considers that two monetary systems exist side by side[5]. Kennedy implies that this would also have important positive effects on social security and welfare policies[6].

A strong environment-friendly character is found in the views by Goerner, Lietaer et al. who attempt to apply the resilience principle found in nature onto the monetary system and support for this the existence of several currency systems running parallel to each other[7].

Lietaer, in particular, defines "…money, or currency, as an agreement within a community to use something as a medium of exchange. It's therefore not a thing, it's

---

[1] Dillard, D. (1942), p. 349.
[2] Keynes, J.M. (1936), pp. 353-357. However, Keynes believed that "the future will learn more from the spirit of Gesell than that of Marx" (same citation).
[3] However the LETS schemes of that time do not impose any demurrage fee on their currency.
[4] Helmut Creutz (1982) discusses the necessity of land reform as necessary feature of the use of non-interest-bearing money
[5] Again Gresham's law is discussed, but this time Kennedy sees "bad money", e.g. money with a demurrage fee as something very positive, even if it will replace in part or entirely the "good money", which creates so many problems to people, economy and environment.
[6] Kennedy (1995), chapters 1-3,5,
[7] Goerner, S. et al (2010). Also Goerner, S. et al. (2009). The theory by Goerner S. et al (2010, 2009) is being used in this dissertation in chapter 3, then no details are mentioned in this section.

only an agreement…"[1]. He also thinks that two of the functions of money are essential: being standard of measure and being a medium of exchange, while he states that the other three functions (being a store of value, a tool for speculative profit and a tool of empire) are not essential but rather harmful, because they are in conflict with the essential functions of money. For example, money cannot be at the same time a store of value and a medium of exchange, because the money users will tend to hoard money instead of pass it to others by buying goods and services. Moreover, Lietaer criticises interest as the cause of environmental degradation, because environment preservation has a negligible net present value while environmental abuse is more valuable today. The same happens with any long-term investment project.

As a response, Lietaer proposes that a group or a community make new agreements among themselves concerning the currency they should use in trading. In other words, parallel currency schemes are, according to Lietaer, agreements within the communities or among the people that use them and the small changes those new agreements bring to economies, might unleash important improvements for modern societies. Particularly, Lietaer mentions the ideas of Gesell and Fischer in order to describe the demurrage on stamp scrip money of the Great Depression era. He also supports the idea of community currencies[2], although he points out that hoarding, which also appears within community currency schemes, is a structural problem for those schemes that should be faced[3]. As positive examples, Lietaer mentions Time Dollars, the Japanese local currencies for the elderly care and the Balinese traditional "banjar" currency, in order to show how problems, like the lack of official currency among the youngsters or among the elderly, unemployment and lack of financial resources for larger projects, can be satisfactorily solved by the use of parallel currencies[4].

In the recent book written by Hallsmith and Lietaer, there is presented a new approach to the economy, after the critique to the current mainstream economy and its academic discipline of economics: the market should not be in the centre of human existence but in its proper place and it cannot be perceived as an invisible hand but as a mechanism of preventing the majority from attaining decent life standards.

[1] Nexus Magazine (2003).
[2] Lietaer names parallel or local currencies as "complementary" instead of "alternative", because, according to his own view they do not intend to abolish the official currency (something that was the aim of Gesell's free-money), but they facilitate exchange in addition to the official monetary system
[3] Lietaer (1998).
[4] Nexus Magazine (2003).

According to this view, money can be a tool to change the mainstream attitudes towards the economy and the market and bring more balance to our economic activity in relation to nature and to human communities. The economic activity is thought of as taking place among several types of capital (social, community, natural, human, institutional, historical, technological, etc) which all should be used in a sustainable way and this can be done by the use of parallel currencies[1].

Another argument for community currencies that directly affects disadvantaged areas, but also developing countries, is that elaborated by Jayaraman and Oak. Jayaraman and Oak have constructed a model within which the local currency is a mechanism that minimises demand uncertainty in favour of local entreprises and enhances efficiency of the local markets. This permits the transfer of truthful information from the consumers to the local firms, while consumers are not harmed. Moreover, the firms can invest in technology because they know the demand levels, as well as that this demand will be more or less stable under the same conditions. Jayaraman and Oak also discuss the limitations to this development option, which consist mainly of the problems caused by the implementation of a new parallel currency and by the possibility that real demand for local goods and services is very low[2].

On the other hand, Douthwaite integrates parallel currencies into a theory of sustainability. Parallel currencies are discussed as local and they are the last numbered but first discussed in a system including other four sustainability targets: production cycles possible to be repeated, stable economy, simple life and renewable energy resources. Therefore, local currency and local banking institutions become the economic and financial tools that would enable people to achieve the other sustainability aims[3]. Douthwaite, apart from criticising the existing monetary and financial structures, proposes that the sustainable financial structures will consist of different (parallel) currencies to perform different functions of money, that money should be created by its users only and that if an international unit-of-account currency is necessary to be adopted, it should be backed by a truly scarce resource (like carbon dioxide emission rights)[4].

---

[1] Hallsmith, G. & Lietaer, B. (2011), pp. 24-54.
[2] Jayaraman & Oak (2001), pp. 5-7, 9-16, 20-24.
[3] Douthwaite (2004), chapters 3 & 4.
[4] Douthwaite (1999), particularly Introduction & chapter 4.

Like Kennedy, on his part, Thomas Greco states that the interest paid on each transaction is a mechanism that transfers wealth from the poor people to the rich[1]. He analyses thoroughly the problems created by the current monetary and banking system pointing out that we are now, in terms of economic and social organisation at a stage of caterpillar transforming into a butterfly. The credit clearing opportunities (including complementary currencies), which new technologies offer and environmental and social needs ask for are those which are able to solve the serious problems the actual caterpillar-like system has created[2].

Comparing LETS and Time dollars, Cahn attributes to LETS a more economic orientation, one that intends "…to create an alternative economy…", while Time Dollars "…are designed to rebuild…the economy of home, family, neighbourhood and community". In that way, Cahn discusses the specialisation of parallel currencies in their scope and objectives. He also stresses the complementary nature of Time Dollars, their non-commercial nature as well as their "social capital" potential. Therefore, Cahn raises the issue of having several parallel currencies, each with different structure, aims and "clienteles" [sic]. In addition, he points out that the commercial structure of LETS enhances the position of people who have already skills and services to sell, and therefore social justice issues are left behind the individuals' ability to negotiate within the scheme. Cahn emphasises the support potential of Time Dollars schemes to people who cannot do well in any kind (mainstream or "alternative") of market and need a mechanism to provide them with access to services and possibly goods, most of which are not provided by any market[3].

Especially about the United States, economic benefits, especially tackling exclusion and supporting small businesses with credit is a constant pattern for parallel currencies described by David Boyle in his journey report from several States where pioneer parallel currency schemes exist. Time banks are particularly praised to provide their members with services they could not otherwise afford or they could not find within the formal economy. Moreover, time banks have been used in a programme of social inclusion of adolescent offenders. The Ithaca Hours (the local currency of Ithaca, New York) are presented as a mechanism for supporting and regenerating the local economy, by creating new jobs, providing interest-free credit

[1] Greco (2001), pp.22-26, 32-36, 46-63, 76-90.
[2] Greco (2009), particularly chapters 2, 4-7, 11-13, 16, 20.
[3] Cahn (2001).

and weaving a protection net against the exogenous economic shocks. Boyle also mentions the case of Deli-dollars, which functioned as a small-entreprise credit mechanism when formal financial institutions denied any loan to a local restaurant in Berkshire[1].

Concerning the potential of parallel currencies in supporting businesses, the study by North showed that among the four parallel currency models examined (LETS, Ithaca Hours, Sectoral currencies – for example, Time Dollars – and the Swiss "Wirshaftsring" – WIR) LETS seem not to provide businesses with the needed utility and competitive advantages. At the same time, WIR seems to be more appropriate, not only because of its set of strict trading rules, but also because of its nation-wide scope, while "Hours" and sectoral currencies like Time Dollars lie in the middle between LETS and WIR currencies. What seems to affect business behaviour in all cases is that local currencies might induce entreprises to adopt ethical behaviour and support quality of life in the localities they trade in, because local currency would materialise the social ties they have with the people who are the businesses' neighbours and customers[2].

Ton Brunsveld, on his part, examines Local Exchange Trading Systems as non-banking mechanisms for welfare, along with barter trade systems. In that case, LETS can make welfare services affordable for poor people in developed and in developing countries[3].

Moreover, Tibbet understands parallel currencies as challenging monetary globalisation and he lists three ways they can do that: by providing an intellectual or moral alternative; by undermining or replacing the existing monetary order; by preventing the existing monetary system from being absolute in extend and power[4]. That third listed way is perhaps one of the main arguments for local currencies, i.e. to create a shield against exogenous shocks originating in unstable globalised markets. The same way parallel currencies are perceived by Derudder and Holbecq, who

---

[1] Boyle (1999), pp. 1-70, 104-134, 161-191.
[2] North (1998), pp. 116-130.
[3] Brunsveld (2000-2001), pp. 9-15. Brunsveld mentions the case of Curitiba, Brazil[3], in order to support the view of the positive aspects of LETS for deprived people, but he does not mention that the bus tickets given to poor people as a payment providing the local authorities with collected garbage cannot be used (or they are not reported to be used) in other transactions than payment of garbage collection and payment of public transport companies.
[4] Thorne (1996), pp. 132-134.

within the framework of France being a member of Eurozone, propose that countries should have a national complementary currency, along with the transnational one[1].

As for studies focusing especially on the social issues related to local currencies, Aldridge et al.[2] consider LETS as a Third Sector initiative with a high potential for employment creation[3]. Powell, on the other hand, discusses parallel currencies in an associationalist framework and he emphasises the literature which attributes to associationalism a hidden ideology for welfare state retreat. He also, like Cahn, points out the social capital building capacity of community currencies, and he mentions the possibility that individuals or groups with a certain economic advantage not accept parallel currency. Nevertheless, Powell examines the risk especially for some types of parallel currencies (and he mentions Time Dollars as an example) to be absorbed by the mainstream economic and political structures and become a tool and a justification for welfare state provision cuts[4].

The gender bias in relation to parallel currencies is an issue thoroughly discussed by Powell, by examining the links of the "ideology" of local currencies with feminist thought. To speak on a specific example, he uses the case of Bia Kud Chum, a local currency project that did not actually worked because of an official prohibition by the Thailand authorities. According to his views, both community currencies and feminist economics reject the assumption of "homo economicus" and of seeking by nature self-interest in a competitive context; both try to re-value the reproductive economy tasks and skills, which are undervalued in conventional markets; and both seek ways so that projects access and support women in contrast to mainstream projects which support sectors where men prevail. However, Powell mentions the danger of having a parallel currency gendered in a negative way for women. He also states that the effort to create new exchange or market structures, especially via the enhancement of local subsistence economic activity, might impose on women more burdens and economic distress[5].

Bowring attributes to LETS an optimism which is expressed via the belief that "…everybody has socially useful resources…which can be exchanged for mutual benefit in their community". The parallel currency used within a scheme is a socially

[1] Derudder, P. & Holbecq, A.J. (2010).
[2] Aldridge et al. (2001b).
[3] This assumption is not explained in the article. Time Banks would fit more in the Third Sector narrative, but they are not mentioned at all in the article.
[4] Powell (2002).
[5] Powell (2002).

constructed representation of the exchange-value of goods and services. The openness of the exchange information to all members functions as a quality control mechanism, because it permits the potential customer to ask the opinion of the previous customers. Moreover, interest-free credit might permit local business to survive and invest locally, when the conventional currency becomes scarce or burdened with high interest rates. On the other hand, the schemes seem to affect the use and preservations of non-renewable energy and materials, because the scheme provides the framework for second-hand sales, repair or maintenance work and promotion of non-commercial consumption patterns[1].

However, Bowring is quite critical concerning the potential of LETS to tackle social inequality, because he finds nothing in the scheme structure that might prevent exploitation. He also points out that having the surplus value created within LETS to circulate within a locality or community is quite different from redistributing this value in favour of the most disadvantaged people (who probably will be those who have created it). His critique to LETS applies on all parallel or local currencies, because this critique refers to the main scope of them:

> "…we cannot at the same breath promote LETS as a local economic development tool with politically neutral macro-economic merits. If LETS harbour the potential to weaken people's dependence on the existing social system and to foster the self-productive use of their time, then the same schemes cannot simultaneously be championed as the saviours of work-based society, as the means by which the unemployed can be reconnected – and re-subjected - to the dominant system of wage relations, private companies protected against the vagaries of the business cycle, and the market economy placed on a more stable and efficient footing"[2].

In addition, local currency has a strong possibility to be considered as non-equivalent to the official currency because it does not offer the same range of products and services like the latter. In that case, the wealthier users will demand higher rewards in local currency in order to compensate for the lack of consumption opportunities, while the most disadvantaged users will be unable to ask for a wage raise, given that unemployment and poverty will always be the factor forcing down their claims[3].

---

[1] Bowring (1998), pp. 95, 99-100, 102-103.
[2] Bowring (1998), p.103.
[3] Bowring (1998), p. 106-107.

Bowring's argument can be extended[1] to the question whether local currencies can be a mechanism to keep employable the people which are excluded, in order to provide the market with a pool of ready-to-work-as-soon-as-possible skilled people, while transferring the cost of this "readiness" to the unemployed people themselves. On the other hand, the businesses and employers in general that will use local currency (and will be able to accumulate this easier than simple individuals) will be able to buy labour without paying in conventional money, that is without paying taxes or social security contributions for the people employed, while employed people will be divided into those who are paid in official money, because they can negotiate so, and those who are paid in local currency, because otherwise they will remain unemployed. The divide is not difficult to imagine what will be: high-skilled professionals will be in the first cluster, while "unskilled"[2] workers, cleaners, helpers, sale assistants, etc. will be paid in local currency; class, gender, ethnicity, age, etc. bias will get further monetised; the people paid in local currency will be de facto forced to stay where their savings and their investment are, while people paid in official currency will enjoy mobility and localities' competition to attract them with higher salaries in official currency. The argument might also have a positive hypothesis, that people paid in official currency will also face competition by other same-skilled people in other localities, while people paid in local currency will be protected against competition because it will be difficult for other people of the same sector to change locality and currency in order to move to a more prosperous area. Nevertheless, even in that case, deprivation will be also a possible trap for people who cannot leave the place where they work and live.

Contrary to Bowring, Lee considers the LETS schemes as a phenomenon which is beyond the response-to-exclusion discourse that is often used when referring to the local currencies. Instead, this phenomenon is directly linked to the notion of value, of money and of trust to society's economic expressions. In addition, Lee thinks that exchange within LETS removes the fetishism of commodities but at the same time the schemes do not have of themselves "…the means of producing a social surplus nor the mechanism for its social distribution or allocation". Moreover, even if LETS manage to develop to such extend and in a such manner that they can satisfy

[1] North (1998), p.125.
[2] The use of this terms at this point is not an acceptance of the divide between skilled and unskilled labour as all labour requires skill and experience to be done in an effective way.

the basic needs of their members, they might become class or occupation biased structures, where capital controllers will keep reaping profits and workers will be in a more disadvantaged position. Lee supports the position that emphasis on time resources in combination with the non-technical (i.e. labour intensive, low-profit-making[1]) nature of products will make local currency schemes a trap for the most disadvantaged of community ("low-skilled" labour and especially women)[2].

Examining local currency ideology as a starting point, Pierret states that the emphasis put by the schemes on exchange might be more ideological than practical, because it is used as a promotion or appeal engine in order to attract attention and participation by diverse "audiences" or people. The political engagement, although obvious, is left aside, while pragmatism is the main argument in favour of the schemes. The other and most important implication of this choice of argumentation by the schemes and their supporters, is that local currency schemes, as engines of self-help, are structured on exchange (that is, reciprocity) and not on redistribution[3]. This might also be a pathway to explore and explain the reasons why inequalities of the formal economy are transferred or even intensified within local currency schemes.

There are of course, more technical arguments against[4] parallel and local currencies: they are inefficient, inflationary, easily counterfeited, they facilitate tax evasion and the abuse of social security systems as well as the further informalisation of the economy. They also compete with the official money driving it out of circulation and they are counter-investment mechanisms[5].

Among the people that construct interesting arguments that criticise parallel currencies is Jorim Schraven, who concludes from his research, that the LETS schemes do not provide "… a good basis for economic theorising because the actions and motivations of a large number of their members are based in ideology rather than self-interest". Therefore, "…It would be inconsistent to base such standard economic

---

[1] This is a statement according to Lee's writings. Profits made out of labour intensive industries, like for example, cleaning, are huge. For an example, see Ehrenreich B. (2001).
[2] Lee (1996), pp. 1380, 1384-1386
[3] Pierret (1999).
[4] It is quite weird that the arguments against parallel currencies have no bibliography, or at least such a bibliography is not mentioned anywhere. The critique mentioned here consists of arguments supposed to be developed by people against parallel currencies, but these people either have not written or published anything yet so that I could find it, and their writings are not mentioned in the texts of people supportive to parallel currencies. For example, the paper used here as a reference has footnotes with literature on the counter-arguments to the critique, but no literature is mentioned concerning the critique itself.
[5] DeMeulenaere, Greco & Lopezllera-Mendez (1999), pp. 38-45.

analysis on research on the actions of such people [sic]". Nevertheless, Schraven "agrees" with other researchers' views that the trade volume is very low and the nature of goods traded is quite alternative (some of them non-existent in formal economy and in any case, luxurious in economic terms). However, one should also question whether childcare, help in household or house reparations belong to the "luxuries" sector, as Schraven does not discern them from egg-liqueur, or whether the opportunity to have "products" [sic] traded that are not traded in formal economy is not an utility increase just like mainstream economists define it. Moreover, Schraven does not inform us whether the LETS-type schemes in Austria he studied had any members facing economic distress and what their views were about the scheme[1].

According to Schraven, the LETS schemes perform three functions: "…provision of transaction management, credit, and 'market-matching' of supply and demand" and therefore the LETS currency is a type of money. However, he states that the store-of-value function of LETS money is equivalent to that of ordinary money, although he points out that LETS currency works without any interest charged (therefore, the store of value function is not equivalent to that of ordinary money, because LETS money does not increase in volume by just being lent). In addition, he formulates some hypotheses why people, according to economic theory, would choose to join a LETS scheme: low transaction costs, because the scheme offers information and supply-demand matching mechanisms; taxation and other regulation can be easily avoided within the scheme; the scheme provides cheap and flexible credit; it is less inflationary, especially when it is not pegged to the national currency; transaction costs originating in opportunism and speculation are reduced; trade-diversion rather than trade-creation is the buffer tool toward exogenous shocks; LETS may increase trade in non-tradables[2] (however, Schraven does not discuss the non-tradable services provided within the schemes he studies – for example, household work, childcare, chauffered car, house reparations, etc – instead, he rather neglects their importance).

The change of conditions might affect the emergence of alternative transaction modes. New zero-pricing phenomena in conventional economy that dismantle our mainstream economic ideas are thoroughly explored by Anderson[3].

---

[1] Schraven (2000).
[2] Schraven (2000).
[3] Anderson C. (2009).

Kaskarelis[1] believes that there is taking place a change of meaning and uses for the leisure time in Western societies, in contrast to consumerist attitude, given that people have to deal with unemployment after the crisis of 2008. Biggart & Delbridge are more specific by distinguishing four different systems of exchange: price system, associative, moral (where parallel currencies belong, according to the authors) and communal systems (where barter and cooperatives belong)[2].

Fine and Lapavitsas[3] focus on social relations or customs that are well connected to markets, to the point that the former (customs) might have a role in turning a commodity in commodity money. In that sense, Iwai states that several exchange mechanisms, including money, might emerge in an economy, depending on information structure and/or shared expectations about the acceptability of a token[4].

The discussion on value cannot but be present in the discourse of alternative transaction modes. Starting his analysis using historical facts, Diquattro[5] defines moral economy as an attempt by people to prevent market economy from dominating local markets, thus value and socially necessary labour (which defines value), both stem from the competition inherent in market capitalism – while Vlachou seems to agree with this interpretation of value[6]. Moseley[7] asserts that Marxist theory still cannot satisfactorily resolve the value problem of pure non-commodity money – therefore, leaving unexplained all parallel currencies structured as fiat currencies. Concerning the subjective school of value, Priddat[8] concludes that at least the German school of subjective value interprets the latter in a more collective way, as a process of communal formation of opinion and judgement about value.

Macy's view is an effort or re-interpretation of Marxist theory of value and exploitation, by exploring the political-economic implications of his asymmetric interdependent model. According to this view, workers are exploited through the constitution of the market itself and he sees the alternative in interpreting work as an

---

[1] Kaskarelis, I. (2009).
[2] Biggart, N.W. & Delbridge, R. (2004), pp. 36-42.
[3] Fine, B. & Lapavitsas, C. (2000), also Lapavitsas, C. (2005a, 2005b).
[4] Iwai, K. (2001).
[5] Diquattro, A. (2007), pp. 464, 467-468.
[6] Vlachou, A. (2002), pp. 196-197. She also quotes her personal communication with Anwar Shaikh concerning exactly this issue, e.g. specification of value formation in capitalist markets.
[7] Moseley, F. (2005), pp. 14-15.
[8] Priddat, B.P. (1998), p. 1517.

activity with meaning rather than purpose, which at the end will give the alienated workers "a capacity to speak"[1].

Theories about money have been informative, too even if most of them refer to mainstream, official money. Several very interesting views and theories about money are discussed in Smithin's collective volume, although none of them made any direct reference at least to parallel currencies[2]. To them, one could add Oh's view that, under certain conditions, barter exists even in an economy with a generally accepted medium of exchange, as well as, that two generally accepted media of exchange are possible in the same economy[3]. Niehans, in his writings, explores the possibilities of several monetary or non-monetary markets and on the conditions for a market to become fully monetised, as well as on the non-neutrality of money[4]. Of course, economic literature which considers non-monetary activity not only as possible, but also modern, is literature concerning countertrade taking place among companies trading on international level[5].

On the other hand, North considers parallel currencies but also other non-monetary activity as Freecycle networks, to be alternative economic spaces or at least possible to be so in the future[6]. Seyfang seems to share this view, exploring both the alternative theories on money in relation to parallel currencies[7] as well as Time Banks being spaces for collective redefinition of social values[8].

Bradshaw, Chatzidakis and Maclaran point out that Skoros free bazaar in Exarheia area of downtown Athens is a place where goods are exchanged, but also a space where exchange and cultivation of ideas is possible, particularly to the direction of anticonsumerism, gifting and sharing[9]. According to Wainwright, however, the parallel currency movement is much more ambitious, as it attempts to reconfigure the entire political economy on a basis of class equality[10].

Nevertheless, this alternative nature is not the only view about parallel currencies. Parallel currencies, according to Williams, might have merely practical

---

[1] Macy, M.W. (1988), particularly pp. 146-150.
[2] Smithin, J. (2000).
[3] Oh, S. (1989), pp. 113, 116.
[4] Niehans, J. (1971, 1987).
[5] Birch, D. & Liesch, P.W. (1998), Neale, B. & Shipley, D. (1987).
[6] North, P. (2007).
[7] Seyfang, G. (2000).
[8] Seyfang, G. (2003).
[9] Bradshaw et al (2012), pp. 502, 506-507.
[10] Wainwright, S. (2012), p. 11.

aims, irrespective of how those are possible to be attained[1] or they might end to be a structure preferred by the "disenfranchised middle class"[2]. Powell, while studying the Red Global de Trueque (Global Exchange Network) in Argentina, discusses the dual, complementary and alternative, nature of parallel currencies in relation to mainstream economy[3]. At the same time, Peacock[4] and Ozanne[5] seem to consider parallel currencies as well connected to the social and human capital theory. Finally, Kapogiannis and Nikolopoulos state that parallel currencies are forming a hybrid situation between profit and solidarity, and their future will be judged by the extent to which they absorb productive resources and market shares from the [conventional] market economy[6].

If, of course, one takes into account Allemand et Boutillier's statement that social and solidarity economy is based on the same foundations as capitalism: private property and free competition[7], parallel currencies are not in conflict with conventional market. Henderson, however, does not agree with this, because she considers parallel currencies and actually "nonmoney, pure information economy" to be the "oldest, most reliable safety net"[8], because "production systems based on elaborate barter, reciprocity and redistributive schemes" are "highly refined technology of software variety"[9]. She gives long descriptions of parallel currencies in history but also in our modern times[10] and she finally states that "These nonmoney and scrip-based economies are leading indicators of transition to a much more diverse socially and ecologically compatible future"[11].

Apart from studying the present, historical studies are also very useful: Schoenberger starting from the idea that markets are mechanisms for "facilitating mobilization of resources across space and time", examines the role of the states and state warfare throughout history in establishing markets and specific monetary structures[12]. In support of this view there stand Seaford's[1] and Kraay's[2] writings,

---

[1] Williams, C.C. (1996a).
[2] Williams, C.C. (1996b).
[3] Powell, J. (2010).
[4] Peacock, M.S. (2000).
[5] Ozanne, L.K. (2010).
[6] Kapogiannis, D. & Nikolopoulos, T. (2010).
[7] Allemand, S. & Boutillier, S. (2010), p. 14 (General Presentation).
[8] Henderson, H. (1996), p. 209-210.
[9] Henderson, H. (1996), p. 83.
[10] Henderson, H. (1996), pp. 157-158, 206-218.
[11] Henderson, H. (1996), p. 286.
[12] Schoenberger, E. (2008).

where one can see how political structures had an immense role in (but also suffered great impact from) the invention and dispersion of coinage. Fantacci, on the other hand, studying dual currency systems in Medieval Italy, concludes that the dual currency systems permit commutative and distributive justice to be established in the economy[3].

Catton, despite his insightful discussion on value, thinks that "only a well-fed person" will work on a "theory of valuing", otherwise "a hungry person might be obsessed with food"[4]. Dalla Costa would probably disagree with this, given that she considers food to be a common and she examines how this translates into safeguarding various other fundamental common goods, like: biodiversity, freshness, healthiness and quality of food as well as the knowability of the food production cycle[5].

Nature is considered to be the ultimate source of meaning by Consesa-Sevilla[6], who states that value cannot be partial but referring to the whole only - which of course exposes the false sense of empowerment consumers and labourers experience because of their (monetary) income. Close to this environmentally aware view, Hornborg uses ideas from thermodynamic physics to explore the contradictions of modern economy and society and how modern ideas about value, labour and nature are constructed so that industrial production seems more valuable than nature and life itself, and that same production structure has substituted human needs as the aim of the economy[7]. Of course, Greek schemes do not fit the "green dominated image" the Norwegian schemes give to Gran[8], which might deter many people, not self-named as ecologists, to avoid any participation in the initiatives.

Ingham's theory on the nature of money gives important directions not only on the social character of monetary structures, but also on the value of money, on the political character of new monetary spaces and on the collective character of the monetary arrangements[9]. Zelizer, by studying "thick" archival and historical

---

[1] Seaford, R. (2004).
[2] Kraay, C.M. (1964).
[3] Fantacci, L. (2004).
[4] Catton, W.R. (1959). The entire article is very interesting –however this "low-value" statement of the food issue can be found on page 315.
[5] Dalla Costa, M. (2007).
[6] Consesa-Sevilla, J. (2006), particuarly pp. 28, 37-39.
[7] Hornborg, Alf (1992), particularly pp. 10-12, 16.
[8] Gran, E. (1998).
[9] Ingham, G. (2004), particularly pp. 81-82, 177-189, and Ingham, G. (2007), p. 269-270.

information, succeeds in grasping the struggle among several agents and/or groups within the same society, class or even household; and this struggle takes place about or is expressed by giving special meanings on money amounts or tokens, which are supposed to be identical to each other[1]. To those theories, one could add the status value theory applied by Thye in exchange relations[2], given that this theory links exchange position and value with the status the exchange actors have or even try to attain through the exchange itself. These approaches remind that people are capable of giving new meanings and of redefining economic tools, no matter what economic theory might have written in academic books.

The aforementioned literature does not follow the mainstream view that barter and multiple currencies are relics from the past and preliminary stages toward a fully single-currency market, because as Dalton says, this view is linked to history "invented to praise the necessity of money", with all the consequent perceptions about money and barter[3]. Dalton's examination of Western conceptions about primitive money turns the former to appear rather naïve and market-oriented and the latter will be differentiated to serve several purposes within the economies and societies it is used[4]. This might be relevant to the research findings by Williams and Windebank, who claim that non-exchange activities or unpaid exchange are not really dependent on people's income only and that apart from the precapitalist-relic assumption, one should also consider structural economic transformations, f.ex. new regimes of accumulation, and culture, particularly cultures of resistance[5].

Marcel Mauss[6], in his own study on the gift practices, had pointed out that for this type of activity, there are three obligations: to give, to receive and to reciprocate. Therefore, economic prejudices of the [contemporary western] people arise from their determination to follow the thing they have produced. Groups are important, perhaps also important as individuals in economic activity and at the end "it is something other than utility that circulates in societies of all kinds"[7]. Mary Douglas, in her

[1] Zelizer, V. (1994, 2001).
[2] Thye, S.R. (2000).
[3] Dalton, G. (1982).
[4] Dalton, G. (1965).
[5] Williams, C. & Windebank, J. (2003), particularly pp. 260-261.
[6] Mauss, M. (2002) particularly pp. pp. 50-54, 84
[7] Mauss, M. (2002), p. 92.

foreword to Mauss' book, points out that "a gift that does nothing to enhance solidarity is a contradiction"[1].

A very recent approach in parallel currency literature is that of examining currencies created by their users as innovations in both technological and social terms. Blanc and Fare point out that those innovations question the mainstream development model, and in social terms, they mobilise diverse agents and resources in order to achieve a "federating project" through cooperation and coordination[2].

Particularly about the role of parallel currencies in supporting environmental sustainability, Longhurst and Seyfang distinguish among currencies which have explicit environmental aims and currencies which deliver environmental benefits which might not be intended as such, although parallel currencies are considered as having important sustainability functionalities[3]. The important thing in this approach, is the nature of those grassroots technological or socio-technical innovations: a) they might emerge from non-traditional sites and b) social movements and other civil society actors might also be important for the development of such innovations[4]. Till now, this approach concerns parallel currencies only, but one could use similar notions to examine other phenomena, like exchange networks and free bazaars.

2.2. Literature review concerning field research

Research on transactions without official currency usually refers to parallel currencies. Other forms of transactions, like non-monetary exchange schemes, barter networks, free bazaars or free networks, attract very little or no attention by the academic community. This has created an obligatory bias in my literature review – on the other hand, it has created very interesting questions concerning the activity itself[5].

Research on community currencies is not very extensive either and due to the rapid changes in local currency scheme development and extinction, many of the research projects mentioned below might concern information which is out of date. Moreover, in most cases the research concerns Local Exchange and Trading

[1] Mauss, M. (2002), p. X.
[2] Blanc, J. & Fare, M. (2010), pp. 17, 19-20.
[3] Longhurst, N. & Seyfang, G. (2011), pp. 4-5, 6-13.
[4] Longhurst, N. & Seyfang, G. (2011) p. 18.
[5] See chapter 3, section 3.5 on * hypothesis.

Systems/Schemes (LETS), while research on other types of parallel currencies is very rare. On the other hand, very few research projects have included large areas, on regional or national level.

The results are ambiguous concerning the role of parallel currencies in assisting poor people or unemployed to get by and to improve their economic and social situation. In some cases, the question has not been really answered. In some others, the assistance is so limited that the conclusion could fairly be negative. There are also results, which state that parallel currencies enhance inequalities already existing in formal economy. There are also some cases, where the results are positive, even if one should be very careful to assert such a statement.

The research done on parallel currencies is presented project by project. I chose this approach, because I am not able to reach any conclusions, given that the vast majority of the projects concern LETS schemes or LETS-like (mutual credit) schemes, most of them in the UK. Therefore, a generalisation based on the results is not possible and it might not be fair for other parallel currency types. On the other hand, a serious problem appears in evaluating the results of the following projects: most research on LETS schemes has been based on surveys, where quantitative research prevails. However, a survey can measure the value of trade in sterling within a scheme, but it cannot measure the use-value or any kind of value a trade has for a low-income person[1]. The different results between surveys and interviews are persuading that one should at least look at the projects one by one.

At the end of this section, the research concerning counter-trade among Australian businesses is presented, because one could include multi-lateral counter-trade as a mutual credit system.

Among those projects done on national level, there is an evaluative project funded by the UK Economic and Social Research Council, by which there has been explored the role of the Local Exchange Trading Systems in facing social exclusion. The quantitative research results showed that inequities, especially gender and class structures, of the formal economy may be enforced, diminished or transformed within a Local Exchange Trading system. Particularly, given that the exchange-value within the UK LETS schemes was “insignificant”, the question remained about the “use-

[1] Even if we speak in quantitative terms: if the poverty line is one or two US dollars per day per capita, then seventy or a hundred sterling pounds or dollars per year might be a lot of money. The same holds, for a household with annual income less than, f.ex. 5000 sterling pounds.

value" of the exchanges. The LETS members were predominantly middle-aged, women, low-income, unemployed or self-employed people. Scheme participation did not seem to help participants to find a job or to directly improve their employability, but members' interviews showed that it indirectly improved their employability or their opportunities to set up a self-employment business. Moreover, the interviewees felt that they were helped in economic terms (although a very small portion of their income originated in LETS transactions) and in social terms, by establishing ties and networks with other scheme members[1].

The analysis of the results did not come to any conclusion about the conditions who affect the role of a LETS scheme in recasting work relations, much less about the reasons that enforce or fight work/economic inequalities within a scheme. However, the authors point out that the inequalities tend to be reinforced in low-income sectors. The information provided by the research results concerning the price setting within a LETS scheme is not enough to reach any conclusions how and for what reasons LETS are affecting work and pricing process[2].

On the other hand, the participants' views in the same research showed that they conceived benefits from participating in the scheme in a broader sense rather than strictly economic. This trend was especially evident for the LETS members that were unemployed in the formal economy[3].

The research done in May 1995 by Williams concerning LETS schemes in the United Kingdom gave several interesting findings: spatial diffusion of members inhibits trade, because most trading involves customer services; the small number of members is also problematic because there is a need of a wide range of goods and services to facilitate trade; the economic impact of the schemes is not as great as expected, but the use-value of trading is high for the members; despite the "green" origin and initial composition of the schemes, unemployed people tended at the time of research to participate more; there was a widely accepted view among the members that community building and local trade enhancement is more feasible within the schemes than helping poor to get by; business participation was very low and

[1] Aldridge et al. (2001a), Aldridge et al.(2001b).
[2] Aldridge et al (2001a), pp. 567-569, 573-576.
[3] Aldridge et al (2001a), pp. 569-573.

consisted in consumer services, wholefood cooperatives, cafes and restaurants and to a lesser extend in producer and professional services[1].

Another research project which consisted in an overall study of the UK LETS schemes was implemented in late 1990s[2] along with two case studies in the Stroud and Brixton schemes and it revealed that the motivation for joining and remaining in the scheme was, in first place, community building with ideological and economic reasons to follow. The socially excluded were the majority of the schemes membership, but the schemes did not appear to improve directly employability, much less to create new jobs. However, the scheme activity did not seem to substitute the employment positions of the formal sector and it consisted of new economic activity that would not have taken place had the scheme not existed. On the other hand, despite the critical discourse of the schemes on value and money, the prices of LETS trading were analogous to those in the formal economy, which means that inequalities of the formal economy were transferred more or less into the schemes. In addition, despite the interest-free credit the schemes provide, it did not seem that they tackled financial exclusion, although it was not clear whether this originated in established attitudes towards debt, in fear of scheme abuse or in existing incidents. The schemes, however, were good at providing networking opportunities to their members. Nevertheless, Williams concluded that the LETS schemes were an effective vehicle for tackling social exclusion, but they faced serious problems to achieve that: geographical dispersion, population awareness, exclusive advertising and member recruitment practices, lack of (conventional) finance, lack of self-confidence and ideas for contributions of the part of potential members and participants and lack of state regulations clarity concerning benefits entitlement[3].

As for projects concerning smaller areas or a certain number of schemes, there are also interesting results. For example, the interviews series that Lee conducted with several UK LETS scheme coordinators in early 1995 showed that the schemes attracted rather "a well-educated underclass" and that "…exclusion takes place on the grounds of taste and life-style". These statements are amazing, because exclusion is different from marginalisation and because one who is unemployed might have specific tastes and life-styles preferences, but this pre-supposes that there is no

[1] Williams (1996a) pp. 261-264. Williams (1995b), pp. 330-331. Williams (1996d), p. 1401-1403.
[2] It is not clear whether this project is the same mentioned in the two articles by Aldridge et al.(2001a, 2001b), where Williams is also participating.
[3] Williams (2000), pp. 324-325.

poverty along with unemployment. However, these statements are supported by the examination by Lee of the economic situation in the Kent county and the proliferation of LETS schemes within its area: the most affluent and inclusion-prone regions in the county had more schemes, while the more disadvantaged an area, the less possibility existed that a scheme appear in it[1].

The reasons for this tendency of local currencies to "avoid" disadvantaged areas were explored in the research project by North. The research showed that several assumptions and assertions concerning the problems faced by the schemes did not hold, at least not to the extent expected and/or not for the five schemes North examined. The fear that LETS participation or active trading will make scheme members to lose their social security benefits was not so influential on the members' decision about trading. The insecurity argument did not seem to work against the schemes. The informal economy was not considered as a great barrier to the scheme development nor as a competitive structure, but other mainstream projects, finance companies and moneylenders seemed not to be distinguished easily in comparison to the scheme by the scheme potential members. In addition, the research proved that the "green" or "alternative" character of the schemes was not a problem in itself, but that in some cases, schemes failed to be promoted, therefore understood, as something belonging to the everyday life and as a means able to support participants in facing problems like unemployment and lack of cash. In other words, the successful schemes were explaining in plain words and beyond any theoretical debates their scope, their way of function and their links to the already existing experience of mutual help within the city neighbourhoods. Moreover, failure of coordination and communication with development workers and officials involved in other projects as well as lack of clarity concerning the potential achievements by the schemes were reasons for incapacitation of the scheme projects. However, the major problems were: the lack of confidence and the dependency culture[2] already existing in the disadvantaged areas; the difficulty of getting trade going; the lack of trust and criminality or perceptions of criminality; the uncertain economic circumstances of participants and potential participants[3].

---

[1] Lee (1996), pp. 1387-1391.
[2] The dependency culture is defined as North describes it: "reflection of the powerlessness of people unused to the thought that they can do things for themselves" (North, 1996, p. 275).
[3] North (1996), pp. 269-276.

From another comparative research done in six different LETS schemes in the United Kingdom, Thorne concludes that participation has merely social motivations rather than economic. Exchange is just an expression of this activity that emerges from the need to re-define work, community feeling and relation to money. Thorne explains this argument with the features of the LETS currency (valuation, abundance principle, grassroots creation and control) and with the relation the schemes had with informal economy: they are considered to be "in negotiation" with regulating bodies and authorities and they are, potentially but not for sure, prone to support the emancipating character of informal economy. Moreover, Thorne concluded that LETS schemes were internally viable, although they were not coherent in their development, local regeneration and social inclusion aims[1].

Concerning major research projects in other countries, results are also interesting: The view established by Peacock's empirical evidence was rather the same like that of researchers working on British schemes: the "mixed picture" was not very favourable for the unemployed people that participated in LETS(-like) schemes in Austria and Germany[2].

Williams, has also conducted research on national level in Australia and New Zealand. The survey on Australian LETS schemes held in 1995 by Williams showed that the overall economic impact of scheme participation was very small, but the effects on participants' quality of life might have been important. Williams had noted the tendency of unemployed people to participate more and more in schemes, but no further information was given about the possible benefits those people had within the schemes. The members faced problems, like reluctance to trade or unawareness of the way the scheme functioned[3].

At the same time, the study conducted by Williams on New Zealand Green Dollar schemes in April 1995 showed that unemployed people joined the schemes for economic reasons to an extend of thirty nine percent (39%) on average of scheme membership. Moreover, the community building and social networking opportunities seemed to benefit the most disadvantaged participants. On the other hand, the New Zealand schemes seemed to face the same problems like the schemes in other

[1] Thorne (1996), pp. 1364-1374.
[2] Peacock (2000), p. 71. I have not found any other paper presenting the empirical evidence on which this paper has been based.
[3] Williams (1997).

countries: lack of membership; lack of funding; lack of trading activity; lack of clarity of administrative procedures[1].

In the United States, the research done by L.Bates and J.Lepofsky concerning the circulation and distribution of PLENTY, a regional currency in central North Carolina reveals that the scheme members participate in the scheme and accumulate local currency unevenly. As a result some members (actually, businesses) "dominate" in the scheme and people who would need to use more the scheme are left "outside" of the actual trading activity. The authors emphasise the reluctance of people to participate because they consider the scheme to be too alternative for them[2].

Similarly, in the research by Ed Collom for the United States community currency schemes, although economic difficulties in a neighbourhood, a city or an area, are linked with the emergence of a scheme (given that local currency supporters claim that the currencies can sustain economic empowerment), it is not answered whether the scheme members belong to those disadvantaged people that form the poverty and unemployment statistics of their place[3].

The survey and research done by DeMeulenaere and Lopezllera-Mendez in 1998-1999 on the Tianguis Tlaloc local currency system in the Mexico City, cannot lead us to any conclusion. The question whether the objective of the project to create opportunities for the poor was met, has not been answered. Therefore, although being very interesting because it has been the only published research concerning this scheme, this research project can not lead us to any conclusions about the role of the scheme in relation to its disadvantaged members. The trade seemed to be in equilibrium as far as it is concerning producers and consumers, but the opinions expressed by the interviewees showed that the scheme had several drawbacks concerning the core of its function: the exchange was limited and exchange in local currency was much more limited, the market fairs were not helpful and the organisation of the initiative was not efficient[4]. Lopezllera-Mendez asserts that marginalised people participated most in the scheme in comparison to middle-class

[1] Williams (1996c), pp. 322-326.
[2] Bates & Lepofsky (2005), pp. 6-7, 10-12.
[3] Collom (2004), pp. 20-23.
[4] DeMeulenaere, Greco & Lopezllera-Mendez (1999), pp. 72-89. DeMeulenaere & Lopezllera-Mendez (2000).

and business people[1], but no data, or any other detailed information exists about the Tlaloc system.

Moreover, research conducted by Pearson within the Argentinian Global Barter Network (Red Global de Trueque) showed that, even if the participants agreed in many cases with the ideology or mentality of the network, as established by its founders, their motivation for joining was mainly economic, especially when in late 1990s and especially during the 2001 crisis rising unemployment created more and more poor in the Argentinian cities. The interviewees seemed to think of the network as a means to get by during hardship, but this did not change the impoverished situation they were experiencing. A case of small business start is also reported[2].

The cases studies are also limited and most of them refer to LETS schemes. For example, a research project implemented in October 1994 concerning the Calderdale LETS scheme in West Yorkshire (UK) showed that economic motivations for joining existed, even if they were combined with ideological or social motivations (like having their house equipment maintained by trustworthy people). Women, low-income and unemployed people were over-represented in the scheme. Moreover, the most disadvantaged people offered a narrower range of goods and services within the scheme, but they were more successful at selling them, even if this meant that the rates and prices they negotiated was lower than the rates and prices the employed participants could receive. Therefore, the Calderdale LETS scheme reinforced social inequalities that already existed in the formal economy. This coincided with the very low total trading volume, which made Williams conclude that the use-value and the self-esteem building opportunities were perhaps their major benefits from scheme participation to unemployed people[3].

In addition, the survey done by Williams on Manchester LETS members in June 1995 showed that forty three percent (43%) of them were unemployed in the formal economy and most of those unemployed members were also living in very low-income households. It might be then, not a coincidence that the most popular motivation for joining was the economic one (which was in most cases, straightforward, with some exceptions of ideological argumentation), with the social-networking and community-building arguments following. Although the percentage

[1] DeMeulenaere & Lopezllera-Mendez (2000).
[2] Pearson (2003), pp. 219-227.
[3] Williams (1995a). Williams (1996e), pp. 346-352.

the LETS earnings represented within the total household income was particularly low, it seemed that scheme participation helped members, especially those without formal employment, to improve their material standard of living. However, the local currency earnings for low-income and unemployed members were lower than the earnings received by the employed and affluent scheme members, because the prices and rates received within the scheme were analogous to rates and payments in formal economy. Social networking and community building seemed to be among the benefits for the scheme members, while interest-free credit seemed to help particularly the most disadvantaged among the participants, because they enabled them to purchase basic necessities, like food, clothes, maintenance work, training and skill development. This cheap credit provision seemed to be the reason for the trade creation potential of the scheme. However, Williams observed that the vast majority of the unemployed people in Manchester did not take advantage of the scheme. The survey did not explain whether the scheme structure is such that requires members with educational and cultural capital in order to be able to trade within, or whether people without a specific education or culture are discouraged by the image the scheme displays towards the non-members[1].

However, the survey done on Totnes LETS scheme by Williams (in 1995) gave slightly different results: although for the average scheme member the LETS earnings are not more than two percent (2%) of their total household income, for members living in households with less than 5000 sterling pounds this percentage was between three and seven (3-7%) of the household income. Moreover, almost half of those low-income members thought that scheme membership improved their material standard of living. This is also supported by the survey results, which showed that people unemployed in the formal economy managed to sell goods and services within the scheme. However, the scheme did not appear to create significant volume of new economic activity, because around one third of the activity would have been conducted even if the scheme did not existed (and this raises the issue of substitution of formal employment by parallel currency schemes) and the amount of new economic opportunities was equivalent to 0.9 jobs (that is, the job creation potential seemed to be inexistent). In addition, although Williams attributes a redistribution character to the fact that unemployed people were hired within the schemes for a

[1] Williams (1996d), pp. 1403-1411.

longer period of time and, therefore, acquired higher sums in local currency, one could criticise this redistribution as favouring the most affluent, because they could buy goods and services produced at lower rates than in the formal economy. Nevertheless, the credit-provision function of the scheme seemed to be beneficial for low-income members, because they were able to cover some basic needs through trading in local currency[1].

The same vague picture is given by the research conducted in mid-1990s by Pacione on two LETS schemes in Glasgow, UK. The first case study was about a successful (and surviving at the time of fieldwork) LETS scheme in West Glascow. No findings about its role in assisting disadvantaged people were extracted, although the first motivation for joining was economic and the patterns of trading involved a diversity of goods and services. The second case study was a LETS scheme in Drumchapel, which was one of the most disadvantaged areas in greater Glasgow. The scheme did not manage to function at all and the most reluctant "participants" were the people that might need it most. The combination of both cases shows that the ability of a local currency scheme to enhance economic activity and assist poor people to support themselves in economic and social terms is limited by the general context within which the scheme develops. Pacione accepts that such a scheme might have a positive potential, but this seems not to be enough to achieve positive results for its members[2].

Ambiguous results, given that the scheme participants were mostly people in formal employment, have also been those of research conducted by Seyfang in Diss LETS (UK), in mid-1990s. Moreover, in this research the transactions have been considered to be insignificant compared to conventional cash trading. Nevertheless, the interviewed participants affirmed that the scheme provided them with opportunities to work and earn "credit", even by using skills not valued or used in the cash economy. This view, however, was not originating in financial considerations concerning scheme membership but rather in a critical ideological stance towards economic and political structures[3].

However, results have been ambiguous for the Argentine parallel currency schemes which existed during the economic problems of 2000-2002. Gomez found

---

[1] Williams (1996b), pp. 90-95.
[2] Pacione (1997), pp. 1189-1198.
[3] Seyfang (1997).

that the local and independent schemes have been more sustainable and more able to face the economic upheaval that existed in their communities, than large schemes which covered the entire capital city of Buenos Aires or entire regions. The large schemes proved not to be able to support their own proper function during exactly the time period when they were mostly needed by their members[1].

On the other hand, the research conducted by Caldwell on the North Herts LETS (UK) scheme showed that people considered the economic motivation as the most important for joining the scheme, although the unemployment rate within the scheme was lower than the local or the UK national ones. However, their trading patterns and volume did not fit with the participants' statements on their motivations, but they might be explained by their ideological and political views, which were strongly environmental-friendly and "post-materialistic". Caldwell concluded that people continued to participate in the scheme, although they thought their economic aims were not satisfied[2]. Given that the participants were facing little unemployment and economic difficulty, the issue of whether the scheme was helpful for (any) disadvantaged members was not discussed in this research.

Slightly different results have been those of the research done by Seyfang on King's Lyn and West Norfolk LETS (UK) scheme. The research showed that the economic significance of the transactions within the schemes was relatively high, even if the trade had not reached any great volume. The interviewees attributed great value to the few transactions they performed, even if those transactions did not involve any high sum of LETS currency. This might be linked to the fact that half of the scheme members were unemployed at the time of the research and a large part of the scheme members belonged to low-income households. Therefore, it seemed that the scheme provided a framework to make affordable goods and services that otherwise would be inaccessible to those people. On the other hand, Seyfang observed that scheme members tended to under-report their trading and this might also be an explanation why scheme participants attributed such a high value to LETS trading while numbers showed otherwise[3].

However, some trade-creating effects have been observed but at the same time the LETS scheme seemed to be an alternative both to informal but also (and maybe to

[1] Gomez, G. (2012).
[2] Caldwell (2000).
[3] Seyfang (2001a), pp. 982-992, Seyfang (2001b), pp. 583-590

a greater extent) to formal employment. This might explain why unemployed people were attracted by the scheme for economic reasons, but without considering it as a pathway to formal employment. Therefore, skill development and "employability" enhancement, as well as social networks development, were considered as important benefits from scheme participation. At the same time, people able to earn a higher income as professionals in the formal economy disliked the lower prices paid for their services within the schemes and their inability to spend the earned LETS income due to the lack of variety in goods and services offered. On the contrary, unemployed people were more comprehensive and tolerant to inconveniences or problems of trading within the scheme, while people employed in the mainstream economy tended to point out in a critical way the issues of malfunction or inefficacy of the scheme. Seyfang, however, pointed out that the localisation effect of the scheme was rather insignificant, because the offers were mainly services and not consumer goods (which continued to be bought from national companies in official currency). In addition, the alternative, "green" or non-commercial, non-profit-seeking and sustainable development image of LETS trading deterred local businesses from participating in the scheme[1].

Hodges and Stott, on their part, held interviews with members and studied the newsletters, membership lists and the transaction records of the North East Dartmoor LETS and of Oxford LETS schemes. Moreover, the researchers were active members of the same schemes. The results of their and the other members' experience are similar to other research results: the impact of the schemes in relation to the localisation of economic activity and to anti-poverty aims is quite limited; community regeneration seems to be a more feasible target for the schemes; the reasons for this disenchantment are the "inadequate" social composition and size of the schemes, as well as the quality of products and services provided within them. Hodges and Stott state that LETS have been over-promoted and they are more a lifestyle proposal and a reaction to economic circumstances than an elaborated process to tackle with current social problems[2].

The mail survey and the consequent interviews done by O' Doherty, Dürrschmidt, Jowels and Purdue in Stroud LETS revealed structural issues that other research projects mention, too: alternative health care, house work and domestic care,

[1] Seyfang (2001a), pp. 987-994, Seyfang (2001b), pp. 583-590.
[2] Hodges & Stott (1996).

professional and business services and crafts are mostly offered and traded within the scheme; there was unmet demand for food and for better quality of the goods and services already provided within the system; ideology and the need to join community were motivations of becoming and continuing membership despite the reduced opportunities of trade and the other complaints members had of the scheme. That last finding seems to be the most important, as trading within LETS is examined by the research team as a symbolic construction process of the community and as a mechanism interacting with the trust that already exists within a community. The research team points out that if trust does not exist already, a LETS scheme might not function at all or might not work as expected (for example, it might fail to include an ethnic minority within the community) [1].

Research projects concerning other types of local currencies are really few. One has been implemented by Seyfang in order to study the Gorbals time-bank in Glascow, UK. The research gave similar results to the other research on King's Lynn and West Norfolk LETS scheme (which is a very disadvantaged area of the city) and it also showed that time-bank users, who were among the most disadvantaged of the area, benefited and argued that they benefited from their participation. Some services acquired through the scheme would be unaffordable in sterling pounds for them, but emphasis was mostly given to the social inclusion and community building effects of the scheme. Particularly, the time-bank permitted the implementation of local projects and the development of skills through either training or practice. However, problems existed: limited range of services and goods offered, communication among members was needed, people were reluctant to participate because they would not see how they could so, local education and health agencies were also reluctant to take part in the project, and (more) external funding (in sterling pounds) was needed[2].

Collom has done extensive research on Time Banks too. His research published in 2007 showed that people participating in the Time Banks were highly educated, mostly of low income and also pursuing certain social values within community engagement and volunteering framework[3]. Moreover, Gregory asserts from his research findings that Time Banks have an important potential for developing co-production among their members, depending on the ways the time

[1] Doherty (O') et al. (1999), pp. 1642-1651.
[2] Seyfang (2004), pp. 64-69.
[3] Collom, E. (2007).

currency is used within the scheme. That means, radical change in people's economic activity might not happen immediately as they join the scheme but after some time and as time-banking develops in the scheme[1].

Recent research done by Soder proves that parallel currencies are enhancing environmental sustainability through localisation of economic activity[2]. This feature is well supported by the extensive field research done by Seyfang in several UK parallel currency schemes[3].

Finally, positive economic and social effects exist for local currency users in Ithaca, New York (USA), as the survey by Brinkerhoff, Jacob et al. reveals. Apart from giving access to goods and services otherwise unaffordable for the users, the Ithaca HOURS provide them with opportunities to finance, practice skill development and improve their quality of life. However, the HOURS impact remains questionable[4]. The research done by Papavasiliou in Ithaca revealed several important issues, like the lack of credibility local currency might have for people with low income but on the other hand this same currency was perceived as contributing to the quality of life of its users. Moreover, her findings show that the means of exchange has a role in constructing and representing the value in economic activity, in both economic and social terms[5].

Concerning the business sector alone, the research studies by D.Birch and P.W.Liesch and by P.W.Liesch and A.P.Palia on Australian entreprises have shown that some benefits, although not very extended, exist for the business members of (multi-lateral) barter networks (which, as already mentioned, can be considered are mutual credit systems). The businesses find new customers, increase their sales and their networking opportunities, tackle with the uncertainty of markets and enhance their competitiveness on a national or international level. However, the business people themselves do not see in general, any direct benefit for their lives (nor more purchasing power or better quality of life) and they sometimes encounter problems when they try to counter-trade. Moreover, the business done within the barter network for each entreprise is quite limited in comparison to their monetised transactions[6].

---

[1] Gregory, L. (2009).
[2] Soder, N.T. (2008), particularly pp. 43, 45-46.
[3] Seyfang, G. (1996, 2001 a,b).
[4] Brinkerhoff, Jacob et al. (2004), pp. 50-54.
[5] Papavasiliou, F. (2008), pp. 254, 258, 284.
[6] Birch & Liesch (1998), pp. 334-339. Liesch & Palia (1999), pp. 496-500, 502-503.

The study by Christidou concerning the Peliti network showed that participants are environmentally aware and this affects their decision about cultivating traditional varieties – at the same time the network participation satisfies their need for social interaction and communication through the fairs and gatherings[1].

2.3. Existing typologies and the typology used in the project

There are no established typologies yet concerning this subject-matter. Each author distinguishes the activity she/he studies according to several criteria, usually related to the discussion she/he wants to open concerning non-mainstream transaction modes. Given that most literature is related to parallel currencies, the criteria might vary concerning the issuer of the currency, the basis of the currency or the material/non-material substance of the currency.

There has been a typology used by the academics of Wales Institute for Community Currencies, in United Kingdom, which worked on the types of currencies in order to provide with guidelines concerning parallel currency design. This typology table published in 2004 comprises all those criteria of distinguishing parallel currencies (and probably, currencies in general) and providing the choices communities or scheme members might have to create a currency. Therefore, the choices are the types of currencies, which means that choices in each criterion section (for example, issuer, backing, redeemability, etc) might create different combinations of currency types[2].

The most recent attempt to classify parallel currencies has been made by Jerome Blanc where he distinguishes parallel currencies according to their purpose and to the space within which they are used. At the same time, he proposes a typology of currencies concerning generations, attributing to each generation a different structure[3]. However, even if there could be generations of parallel currencies, the ones mentioned in this typology sometimes belong to same time periods (but different countries or areas) while Blanc enlists them in different generations. At the end, he

[1] Christidou, E. (2008), particularly pp. 95-97.
[2] Wales Institute for Community Currencies (2004).
[3] Blanc, J. (2011).

perceives the fourth generation as the market-oriented parallel currencies, although they are coeval to other types of parallel currencies.

From the above examples, it is clear that even if I wanted to use any of those two typologies, I would need to study parallel currencies only in Greece and actually there would be a need for the schemes to exist in Greece for some time so that one could see their design characteristics in depth and in detail. The only distinction I could make at this stage concerning parallel currencies is the one among Time Banks (where the unit of account is the time hour) and the other parallel currencies, where the currency is of fiat/mutual-credit type and prices are freely established by the scheme members.

On the other hand, the variety of schemes in Greece supersedes the parallel currency literature and discourse. As a consequence, even from the beginning of my research, I needed to understand main differences of the various schemes and at the end, to learn about them without losing focus of their most important structural features. Then, I created a preliminary typology just for analytical purposes using as a criterion the main modes of transaction in each scheme. Of course, given the expansion and evolution of schemes through time, this typology is indicative only, because many schemes developed several transaction modes to cover a variety of needs as time goes by. Then, one could locate them into different categories or it might be possible that after some time, this typology will be of no use at all.

I have distinguished all the initiatives I have studied in a) parallel currencies, b) exchange/barter networks and c) free bazaars and free networks. To those categories there is added the fourth one, where the sui generis schemes belong.

By the term “parallel currencies”, I mean the currencies created by the users themselves, in virtual or even in material form, which are used as units of account by the scheme members to perform their transactions within the schemes.

By the term “exchange network” I mean the schemes where transactions are taking place without the use of any accounting unit. Given that the research showed that barter may have several forms and there might be several arrangements which can be similar to barter or not, I avoid to name the schemes as barter networks or name their activity as barter only.

The term free-exchange bazaar (χαριστικό-ανταλλακτικό παζάρι) is the term used by bazaars where people can bring things (clothes, petty machines, shoes, toys, books, CDs, etc) to exchange them or just give them away and they can take anything

they believe it is useful to them. To bring something is not obligatory, but we learn that there is an "unwritten" rule in one-day bazaars that to participate, you should bring at least something. This rule does not hold in permanent bazaars, because a person can bring something one day and take something else after several months. However, in no case is it necessary to equalise the value of what you offer and what you get, which means that, in principle, you are free to take as many or as valuable things as you can carry with you.

Given that free-exchange bazaars have no members and they do not keep records of the volume of stuff which is disposed through their activity, I could not find any other way of studying them, but by creating a draft typology, i.e. a set of categories, just for analytical purposes only and for being able to trace "quantity" somehow without needing membership data. Therefore, I distinguish free-exchange bazaars into a) permanent, i.e. those which have a stable place where stuff for free provision and exchange is stored and displayed for any visitor or bazaar user, b) regular, i.e. those which are repeated by the same organisers, not necessarily at the same place (but usually within the same area); repetition does not require any tight event schedule, but only the act of repetition itself, and c) occasional bazaars, i.e. bazaars that are organised once by their organisers and they have not been repeated by the same organisers within the last two years. Obviously, bazaars might turn from occasional to regular or permanent and vice versa.

I am not sure I should have created a special category for swishing parties (πάρτυ ανταλλαγής ρούχων) which emerged in Athens[1] since 2009 and Thessaloniki[2] in 2010 and can be categorised as regular free-exchange bazaars. Swishing is a term created out of swapping and shopping to describe parties where people bring their clothes, shoes and accessories and can take other clothes, etc for free. Then, they are regular free bazaars, focusing on clothing.

The free networks have a different pattern: they are online networks, the members of which can notify when they want to give something away for free or when they need anything that might be available but not yet announced online, or they get instantly notified when something is available by any network member.

The sui generis schemes are those which cannot be categorised into any of the previous categories and one cannot discern any categories or any pattern of

[1] www.swishing.gr
[2] http://swishing-thess.blogspot.com/.

transaction which would create a new category yet out of the variety of schemes within this same category.

In the next chapter three, there will be a detailed presentation of the schemes which participated in the research and of their expansion throughout Greece the last three years.

CHAPTER 3: THREE THEORETICAL ARGUMENTS PLUS ONE[1]

"…why do people hear the message at a particular moment,
so that they can then say they have just learned what has always been known."
Maria Todorova[2]

3.1. The problem of theoretical basis

The main theoretical issue I faced is that the schemes I study (parallel currencies, exchange networks/groups and free bazaars/networks) are choices and activities that cannot be explained by the mainstream theoretical frameworks I could find so far in economics. This does not mean that there are no theoretical texts in economics that might give partial explanations or that might give hints or ideas about explaining such activities; but, there is not any thoroughly elaborated theoretical framework in economics to explain such economic activity.

On the other hand, disciplines like sociology, anthropology, geography and ecology provide some further ideas that might be useful in this quest. Therefore, I used texts originating in other disciplines, but not in an effort to explain economic activity in non-economic terms. Quite the contrary: I used economic theory as stated or narrated in other disciplines because I want to explain the schemes studied in economic terms. I also use economic theory as stated or narrated by the scheme participants and the schemes as collectives themselves**,** because I accept the possibility that both practical and theoretical knowledge might spring from social and/or collective activity, no matter whether this has been mentioned in academic texts so far or not.

Therefore, the main argument is one constructed in an eclectic way, as following:

The subjective value theory cannot be of use in this project, but only as a theory to be put aside. First, because scheme participants do not by any means decide as individuals about the value of each item/activity. One could add that in no case of

[1] In this chapter, I have used the work done for the papers Sotiropoulou, I. (2012a, 2011f, 2010a).
[2] From her introductory chapter at Todorova (2004), p. 4.

free choice one person only is able to decide about a thing's value (which is an inherent contradiction of liberal economic theory), but at this point the focus is on the specific economic activity of the research project. Moreover, that very same theory of value is based on the notions of "scarcity" and "utility", which are either rejected or re-defined by the schemes.

Neither is useful to apply the labour theory of value in this case, neither liberal nor Marxist[1]. First, because not all valuable things and activities can be measured by labour: teacher's ability for teaching is not measurable and actually not compensated, the medical doctor's or nurse's support to the patient in pain is not measurable and not compensated, good behaviour toward the children by their "nanny" is not measurable and not compensated, the beauty of an art work is not measurable and not compensated. Simmel refers to artwork[2] but he does not discuss the compensation of a "nanny". Of course, liberal theory measures the nanny's work as the "opportunity cost" of the children's parents who can generate more income by "outsourcing" the children's care to other people and undertake an occupation that is better paid than the nanny's work.

At this point, I use Barbara Ehrenreich's critique[3] that the economic system we live in is unable, for several reasons, to commodify, i.e. to measure even through labour-time or labour units, several essential human needs (for example, household cleaning and hearth care, child care, elderly care, etc). This inability is turned into wild poverty and exploitation at the expense of humans, who are able to satisfy those needs, and the reason for this is exactly because we force them, through poverty, to satisfy those needs (of course not their own – the question remains: Who cares for the nannies' kids?[4])

Therefore, labour, no matter how one conceives it (concrete wage labour or just any human activity) is not enough to assess and evaluate a human activity. Much less is it enough to evaluate a non-activity, for example, the value of solar light, or

---

[1] However, we cannot but point out that, as Harry W. Pearson (1957) states (p. 333), Marx at least understood the social conditions of labour process. To be fair, reading Marx, K (1976) made clear to me that as a researcher I should be very careful with two points: first, try to understand the activity I study within its historical contexts and second, never lose from sight the fact that with my writing I take, whether I like or not, a position within the field of struggle(s) that take place in society. This approach of struggles and collective action helped me in choosing theoretical texts which, in majority, originate in this literature tradition (Marxist), although I would not define myself as a Marxist.
[2] Simmel (2004), pp. 405-406, 411-417.
[3] Ehrenreich, B. (2002) & Erhenreich, B. & Russel Hochchild, A., editors (2003).
[4] Charusheela, S. (2003), p. 295.

that the soil of a field has no chemical residues or that the water is clear. At this exact point, both liberal thought and environmentalist theory meet with compassion and understanding: the value of nature is conceived positively (for example, anything we can use in production process has value) and negatively (anything we cannot create – yet - has value, i.e. the day we will be able to clean completely the water our of chemical residues at a cost lower than changing production technology, there is no reason to change the latter).

Nevertheless, parallel currencies and initiatives for non-monetary exchange seem that they think or perceive or try to perceive value far from and beyond the limit of labour as a value foundation! And they do this not in reaction or in opposition to the labour theory of value!

It was so easy to be left without a mainstream theory of value, while I have all this activity and all those statements and narrations on the part of the schemes studied to talk or imply value in their transactions. Therefore, the economist's questions are: what are those people doing? Why? Are they doing anything that is "economic" or has any "economic" implications?

It is impossible to conduct research without theory, so I needed some theoretical approaches and to do this, in both the preliminary and the first stage of the project, there have been used qualitative/ ethnographic methods: mostly observation, observation by participation and text analysis, free discussions (not recorded) with scheme coordinators and members. The ethnographic methods have been extremely important, along with the entire preliminary stage of the project, in forming the theoretical arguments which could be explored in the first stage of the field research.

Therefore, since the beginning of the first stage of research (spring 2010), there have been constructed three theoretical arguments which aim to explain the activity studied, as well as to provide with an analytical framework that will (hopefully) permit to answer some of the questions raised by the study. In spring 2011, it seemed that there was need for one more theoretical argument, to put the previous three but also the entire research project within a historical context.

3.2 The crack – Η ρωγμή

"The crack is the first sign from which one… can predict an evolution of things. We do not usually pay attention to the crack. What does the crack shows? It shows a conflict of opposite things: whether… they are social propensities, or… big social inequalities, or it is huge arrogance that cannot think of its own destruction, e.g. it is the indication of great contradictions that have not yet been overtly expressed", Lydia Koniordou[1].

The first theoretical construction is the notion of "crack" or "ρωγμή". This notion emerged from Professor Stathakis' own discussion and notes over the schemes we study in this project and by "crack"/"ρωγμή" we mean that those initiatives consist of breakings throughout the capitalist economy, as it has been formed the last decades in Greece. However, this "crack" notion cannot be applied on the "appearance" of the phenomenon, because the schemes are not "modern", the main economic system is not and is not perceived as "coherent" and the schemes are not in principle "insconsistent" with the main economy, nor do they perceive themselves as such. On the other hand, the very same notion of "crack" can be applied on fundamental dissident views of the schemes and their participants in comparison to the mainstream economy as well as to the mainstream economic theory: their views about scarcity and non-scarcity, about whether people have freedom not to starve in any case and to be able to access quality and nutritious food, whether value cannot be measured, etc. might well be a "crack", given that they do not only stand by, after expressing their views, but they act accordingly. Of course, this might be a hypothesis to be tested, i.e. how the scheme activities are really inconsistent and conflictual in the long run with the mainstream economy and economic theory.

Moreover, the fact that in several cases, the economic activity does not only appear well separated from the social one, but it becomes "a" social activity among other, changes the entire idea about the economy as it is perceived in the modern (western) world: in western societies, the economy is the space where people compete with each other over scarce resources and where most people do not have any

[1] I have not found any literature in social sciences that uses the notion of crack. We turned then to Ms Lydia Koniordou who is a classical theatre actress and theatre director and used the notion of "crack" as the main axis for directing the play of Aeschylus' Persai in 2006. The definition above has been given by Ms Koniordou within the framework of an interview she gave in May 26th 2010 especially for this research project.

command on the terms and conditions of their activity, i.e. their work, which they have to perform in order to cover some of their needs. It might be a crack that people in several schemes are searching for ways to turn their activity (no matter how hard work it might consist of) into something that is non-competitive and actually not forced upon them.

Another issue is whether these multiple market structures created by the schemes might prevent the main market from working as it should or as the liberal theory wants it: as a self-regulating and free [from societal control] market. Neale[1] asserts that in a markets-system, whenever some of the markets start to work in a non-self-regulating manner, the entire system ceases to be self-regulating[2]. So, the question might be whether the schemes are the participants' attempt to intervene with conventional markets (which claim or try to be self-regulating) and establish some control over the existing supply-demand-prices mechanism[3]. This of course raises the question whether the schemes are one more necessary impurity of the evolving capitalist economy, rather than a dissident activity against to or in rupture with the mainstream economy[4].

Finally, to the notion of the crack one could add John Holloway's view[5], according to which the crack might be any activity that does not (or attempts not to) conform to capitalist economic structures and ideas concerning labour. However, although one could easily trace anti-capitalist characteristics in the schemes studied, this is not because of the anti-capitalist discourse of the schemes. Quite the opposite: this would be an interpretation of the schemes done by the researcher[6] if she assumed that the crack is unidimensional and necessarily a socially "positive" or "alternative" phenomenon. Moreover, a crack can open space for economic structures which can be non-capitalistic, but equally exploitative – then the cracks in the economy give chances for both directions, not only one: to create better, non-exploitative economies

---

[1] Neale, W.C. (1957).
[2] Neale, Walter C. (1957), p. 369.
[3] One could mention at this point the Great Transformation as depicted by Karl Polanyi (See Polanyi, K. 2001). Polanyi, at the end of his book (pp. 257-267) claims that society will attempt to integrate again market economy, despite the independent nature of the latter during the last centuries under capitalist socio-economic structures.
[4] See, for the "impurity principle" of capitalism, Hodgson, G.M. (2001), pp. 70-74.
[5] Holloway, J. (2010), esp. chapters 1-13.
[6] There are schemes who adopt anti-capitalist arguments but it seems that those arguments do not prevail or at least do not prevail for the majority of the schemes. As a result, the researcher is very reluctant to label the schemes as anti-capitalist whenever the schemes do not rush to adopt such a name for themselves.

or similar or worse economies than the capitalist one[1]. Nevertheless, the important contribution by Holloway in this case is that he points out that a "crack" exists where a social activity sets the agenda not in response to another social phenomenon but in an original way, focusing not on reaction to a previous situation, but on exploring the needs of the people who perform the activity[2].

3.3. The escape from a schizoid economy

Georg Simmel[3] was insightful enough to understand several features of money, but also of capitalist economy. He also pointed out that not only groups, but also individuals, depending on their position and the conditions of an exchange, use money in a specific way and their attitude towards money depends on the conditions and not on the medium (money) of the exchange. Simmel understood the empowerment (freedom) that money offers to persons, but also the pervasiveness of money into every societal structure[4].

However, despite his clear views on the specific features of money, he never decided, for good, his own stance towards it and its role within economy and society. In that sense, the critique by Leyshon and Thrift[5] that Simmel undertakes a schizophrenic[6] position towards money would probably keep Simmel's Philosophy of

[1] See for this Sotiropoulou, I. (2012 b, c, d). However, it is crucial to add here the point by Prof. Costas Georgousopoulos (Univ. of Athens), that the Persian empire did not collapse after the defeat in Greece but survived several centuries afterwards. Same with capitalism: we need to be careful and avoid be too optimistic even if we get to be sure about capitalism having serious cracks already.

[2] This idea of "re-setting the agenda" is perhaps the crucial point for the crack not only in Holloway's book (see for this chapters 5-10, e.g. pp. 21-79) but also in the research findings, as they will be presented in the next unit of this paper. This is well "found" in the research results, e.g. the schemes, instead of adopting an anti-capitalist discourse or any discourse starting with an "anti-", tend to create or establishing new themes for discussion or public debate and they act within those new themes. Holloway calls this behaviour "the revolt of doing against labour", see Holloway, J. (2010), pp. 83-99.

[3] Simmel, G. (2004).

[4] See a very interesting analysis in Kalmonick, P. (2001).

[5] Leyshon A. & Thrift N. (2005), pp. 35-37.

[6] When I first read this critique, I thought that this notion (schizophrenic, schizophrenia) is being used by the authors to make critique more impressive. Just after a while, political correctness hit me to the point I considered the use of the notion quite unfortunate, insulting people under severe condition. When I finally arrived to study Bateson's writings, I realised that it might be a completely political notion, irrespective of the reasons for which Leyshon and Thrift use it in their book. Bateson proves by ethnographically studying schizophrenia that there is a social structure which creates it and it is not an illness stricto sensu.

Money out of the main part of this paper, if there was not Gregory Bateson's "Steps to an Ecology of Mind"[1], which finally gives Simmel's work a new meaning.

Bateson's theory concerning schizophrenia consists in the idea that the condition is created for a person after the latter is constantly exposed to situations of double bind, usually within family and actually by its parents. A double bind is created when the same person receives by the same sender two contradictory messages about doing or not doing something. One of the messages is often explicitly given in words, the other in non-verbal form, so this makes comparison or commenting on both more difficult for the receiver. The double bind situation leads the message receiver to be "wrong" and "missing" whatever he/she opts to do. If the message receiver cannot for any reason abandon the field of communication (for example, the receiver is dependent on the relation with the sender for practical, economic or psychological reasons) and he/she also cannot laugh at or discuss the messages (metacommunication) with the sender, or even with a third person, the receiver is in danger of having his/her mental integrity broken down by the impossible demands of the double bind situation.

Even if I do not use the critique on mainstream economic discourse where there is analysed the symbolic role of the capitalist market as the ideal mother to a completely isolated male agent[2], I use Simmel's Philosophy of Money to detect the double binds of western market economy and particularly of its monetary system. Therefore, Simmel's genius is revealed not by his not-having-clear-position, but by his understanding of the political-ideological-verbal impasse of modern capitalist economy - which impasse becomes material, given that it is addressed to real people. Simmel writes down details about that impasse, following (knowingly or by intuition) the method of "thick description" anthropologists used even in his own era, without needing a theory/position at hand about what one sees, but writing everything he sees, so that the writer or anybody else can later construct a theory, if needed.

If this assumption is correct, then the schemes studied are an effort of people to avoid the double bind they face within modern economy[3] – and one could add that this double bind is mere violence, provided that it endangers people's survival and

[1] Bateson, G. (1972), particularly chapters 4.4.-4.7.

[2] This type of analysis is important, because the economy is being /portrayed perceived as a family, and schizophrenia has its own micro-structure, which is family, as its own macro-structure, which is the community where the double-bind victim lives in. See for this, Kuiper, E. (2003) and Feiner S. (2003).

[3] For example, "you need official money to pay for your food and clothes – I cannot hire you and/or offer you a salary that covers your basic needs because I have not official money to pay you", etc.

quality of life. People, by participating in the schemes exit from the mainstream economy's field of communication and acquire an ability (or chance) of meta-communication; they can again comment and renegotiate the conditions of their economic activity; finally, they (try to) avoid the market-imposed double binds by using their creativity, which Bateson considers as an alternative to schizophrenia[1]. In that sense, the schemes are the result of a political-economic effort to create new discourse about economic activity.

3.4. Collective viewings of value, keeping-while-giving and grassroots transaction mechanisms

The third argument is constructed by using the writings of several authors, who are anthropologists and their writings form a whole new perception about economy.

One main point of the argument is Annette Weiner's hypothesis[2] that people in a specific social and economic setting do participate in several types of transactions, like exchange, gift-giving, giving-away things, potlatch, etc. not with primary intention to participate in the transactions but aiming to keep out of the transactions what they consider most valuable to them. Weiner links this prioritisation of what can be exchanged, with the construction, re-construction, questioning and re-negotiation, even struggle, around social hierarchies that are defined via possessions (no matter whether those are of material nature, like for example, a clothe or a crown, or of non-material nature, like a story, a myth, a poem, social status and titles, etc) and the ability of humans to decide about disposition or preservation of those possessions.

Therefore, the argument is that scheme participants, as individuals but also as groups and collectives, attempt, by their scheme activities, to keep out of transaction, or at least, out of obligatory transaction, or at worst case, out of disposition ruled externally (by third parties), things or activities which are very important to scheme participants, either individually or collectively: dignity, views about the world/economy/society, environment and nature, survival, good living conditions,

[1] Bateson, G. (1972), p. 203.
[2] Weiner, A. (1992).

household survival, healthy food, tasteful tomatoes, etc. – anything that they do consider of value, no matter whether this is valued the same in conventional economy.

Apart from Weiner's position, I use David Graeber's anthropological theory of value[1] as well as his views about capitalist modes of production[2]. Graeber links value to human action in a wider context, well beyond the notion of labour. So, production and reproduction of ideas and perceptions are also considered action creating and contributing to the value of some things in comparison to other. If this holds, then value is rather running on a continuum between belief and action/non-action (belief about something being the most valuable, protect & not-dispose the most valuable) formed and continuously renegotiated by people themselves, individually or in groups.

Instead of social hierarchies mentioned by Weiner as people's motive, Graeber uses the term of freedom defined as "…the freedom to choose what sort of obligations one wishes to enter into, and with whom"[3]. To this, one would add Caroline Humphrey's results from her field research in Nepal[4]. She concludes that barter not only is not the stage prior to monetary transactions, but rather the stage after a monetary system has started to disintegrate. "Barter is a response to increasing poverty on the part of the people who wish nevertheless to maintain their autonomy"[5], given that money is designed to circulate while poor people cannot afford participating in this circulation by keeping wealth in money[6].

Taking the argument a bit further, one could point out that the scheme participants might have their own theory to explain the economic phenomena they create themselves. Given that knowledge can also be created by non-scholar people and/or by collective groupings, not only by written word and narration, but by action as such[7], one can also describe the theoretical approach of the schemes themselves and under the light of the previously mentioned literature, as a collective viewing[8] of value.

---

[1] Graeber, David (2001).
[2] Graeber, David (2006).
[3] Graeber, David (2001), p. 221.
[4] Humphrey, C. (1985).
[5] Humphrey, C. (1985), p. 67.
[6] Humphrey, C. (1985), p. 66.
[7] See for this Biddle, Graeber & Shukaitis (2007).
[8] We avoid the term "theory", first because it is not a theory, second because "viewing" implies better the positionality of the viewer(s).

This collective viewing of value, far from the subjective value theory and from the objective/labour value theory, is something that literature was not prepared for! So, I can only describe its features, because I think that collective viewings of value are those which permit scheme participants to prioritise their "valuables", decide which of them can enter which transaction and under which rules, and it actually explains why and how all those people bother to defy mainstream evaluations and invent ways to apply their own:

1) it is not uni-dimensional and of course it is far from the mainstream.

2) it is not thinking of itself as unidimensional, much less unique and does not function as such – it tends to work with an approach "case by case".

3) it does not fit the axis "conflictual/complementary". It can be one of those, or both, or both in different combinations, or some participants in the same scheme to consider their activity as conflictual and others as complementary to mainstream economy. Or, at the end, within a certain context, the same activity might have conflictual character, while within another context, it might have a nature which is complementary to the mainstream.

4) It is by no means easy to be tagged as static. It is not only ongoing and evolving day by day, but it also tends to create multiple value systems. That means, this value viewing can fit an evolving theoretical structure of a participant or an already chosen theory. That very same feature explains the horizontal dispersion of the schemes irrespective of social, economic, political or any other background of the participants.

5) The collective viewing of value is performed not only by "discourse" but also by action. Therefore, discourse and action as intertwined, but action seems to prevail – preference is given to those who act according the scheme and not to those who speak about it.

6) It takes into consideration the power relations in establishing values and permits minorities, "uneducated", "marginalised", "peasants", etc. to attempt to re-define again words and meanings.

7) It does not, therefore, presuppose money to establish the value of an item or of an activity, neither does it require one type of value but it can function with several types of value existing together.

What would this collective viewing of value might tell us about money in particular? Christopher Gregory's (1997) quality theory of money is of great importance in this case. Gregory states that the value of money is not founded on the

currency quantity, but on the issuing/monetary authority's power over transacting agents. That means, the scheme participants who adopt a parallel currency or even participate in a Time Bank, are accepting the credit of some members and the debit of some other scheme members, because they have decided so. This is not classical fiat money – because here there is not an issuing body well separated from the currency users. We have money and money currency created by the users themselves; they set the rules and decide about the money features and the money value.

3.5. The * hypothesis

3.5.1. Three theoretical arguments require a fourth one

It was not possible, nor was it necessary, to choose among the three arguments, although it is obvious that the author prefers the third one as more complete in explaining the phenomena studied. One would comment that all three might hold together and they are not exclusive to each other. A scheme might be at the same time, an alternative view and action on values and transaction ways, a creative way to avoid mainstream market's crazy demands and a crack to a cemented monetary system that deprives many people from the unique generally accepted medium of exchange.

On the other hand, the question a researcher has is how to check out the reality of those arguments by using field data. It seems that the third argument, well situated in micro-economics or in the space between micro- and macro-economics, is easier to be checked. However, given that we have no a comprehensive theoretical framework to explain all activity, it seemed normal to keep all three arguments and discard none of them.

However, while finishing the second year of my research, I realised that the design of the entire research project was missing the historical perspective it needed to put the phenomena studied into a time and space context. The research project had not been designed to integrate historical research and it is, instead, focusing on the actual economic activity, i.e. the activity taking place since the beginning of the project in February 2009. Moreover, at the beginning of the project it had been chosen that the research findings would not be really placed within a historical perspective.

The reason for this decision was that such an attempt would require original historical research which would be beyond the scope and the time-schedule of the project, let alone that information on this type of economic activity has been inexistent for the previous decades. So, it seemed that it would be better to do the historical research within the framework of another future project.

It seemed that this decision of keeping my attention to the present was more or less well-working during the first two years of the research. This does not mean that the research findings did not include hints or evidence about older exchange and barter practices. Research participants themselves often pointed out in several cases that their activity is not something new but something that existed, at least some decades ago. In some cases, even specific non-monetary contract names have been mentioned to me, to educate me that this activity was quite formal at some point in the past, even if the contracts were not acquiring a written-material form. However, I carefully kept all information aside as it seemed "irrelevant" to the scope of the research project.

Therefore, the first hypotheses constructed to be examined within the project were more or less unhistorical. This means, that the first three hypotheses used in the project could "nicely" be "placed" within any other economic context and still be negotiable even if we did not discuss anymore Greece since 2009 onwards. This might not be inherently bad and I have not discarded those hypotheses, given that they seemed not to be disproved but to shed light on several important aspects of the activity studied. In fact, the hypotheses were attempts to explain the activity studied in terms that could cover the entire activity to some satisfactory extent.

In particular, the impasse of the project itself emerged after the maps of scheme membership have been constructed in late December 2010. The findings of this mapping were amazing, not only because they showed that this activity is well-dispersed throughout the country (although there are disparities among regions) but mostly because the quantity (many thousands of people) and the dispersion (all over the country) of the schemes was questioning the idea that this activity is completely "new", i.e. a phenomenon emerging since 2009[1].

Several questions were raised, which could be summarised as following: is it possible that all this activity is completely new, or that people have shifted suddenly

[1] Sotiropoulou, I. (2011a).

their choices into joining all those schemes in hundreds or thousands? Is it possible that all this activity, for which no literature exists, be so quickly acquired as knowledge by so many people who can "miraculously" coordinate themselves without really many instructions[1]? Is it possible that all this activity is a random choice or just an activity invented because of the new communication technologies available to most people? Can this be just a fashion or just a temporary shelter against economic crisis[2] and fade out once mainstream economy will recover?

Even if I wanted to use the first three research hypotheses I had previously adopted in my research project, those could not explain the extent and the dispersion of the phenomena studied. Then, another explanation was needed, at least to complement the other hypotheses of the research.

One more question was imminent. The existing literature from all over the world is being oriented towards the study of parallel currencies, while exchange networks and free bazaars are almost inexistent for both academic and non-academic authors[3]. This peculiarity of literature had already made difficult for me to comprehend and analyse the vast part of the research subject-matter (exchange networks, free bazaars and networks, sui generis schemes). A very first hypothesis could have been that exchange networks, free bazaars and other non-monetary schemes are just a Greek originality – but this hypothesis did not have any sound reasoning because we have no research publications from other countries to verify whether any similar activity exists there or not. Plus, it seemed too easy to be verifiable or too difficult to be discarded, because the researcher could not extend the research field to other countries.

The only information we have till now about non-monetary transactions that take place nowadays is the information published through the video of the research project "Homenatje a Catalunya II"[4], which started in 2010 in Catalunya, Spain, by Joana Conill, Manuel Castells and Alex Ruiz.. Moreover, there is some information

---

[1] Rules adopted by the schemes are really few, and the education workshops held for the Athens Time Bank new members focus rather on conflict resolution rather than on practicing or simulating exchange/time-banking.

[2] There has been a first attempt to evaluate the "crisis argument" by checking scheme participation in comparison to unemployment increase rates the last two years (2008-2010). The first indications acquired out of this attempt have been inconclusive. See, Sotiropoulou, I. (2011a), pp. 32-33.

[3] In the literature review chapter (4), barter and non-monetary economic activity seems to be at the margin of literature, even in theoretical terms. Fieldwork on non-monetary institutions is done by experts in other disciplines than economics.

[4] The research team has published a video with information gathered during research, at http://www.homenatgeacatalunyaii.org/en.

about barter fairs and the anonymous markets (mercados anónimos – very similar to free bazaars) of Venezuela[1] and some really vague information about direct barter and countertrade contracts among businesses in Argentina[2]. Nevertheless, the question of uniqueness remains and there is no point to discuss whether all this activity is a peculiarity of Venezuelan countryside, Catalunya, Argentina and Greece (although, I admit, this would be a fabulous assumption). There are also some studies on business countertrade in the Anglo-saxon countries where the phenomenon is studied as coeval and not as "an emergency or haphazard way of conducting business"[3], but this literature is still rather limited.

So, the burning question in January 2011 had been formed like this: We have possible explanations for personal or collective motives for joining a scheme, for establishing a parallel currency or an exchange network, but we have no explanation how this can be done all over Greece so quickly, with so numerous membership and so extended geographical dispersion, with little scheme-education for new members, with no real support by public authorities[4] and with this variety of schemes (it is weird that in Greece we have so many types of schemes and in other countries we have just parallel currencies). *If this is not a peculiarity of Greek society, then what is really happening?*

3.5.2. When history re-visits the research project

At this point, in January 2011, there (re-)appeared the historical question: what if this activity needs to be placed within a historical perspective? What if all those findings, particularly the findings of the mapping process, show that my choice of "keeping focused on here and now" was a vain attempt not to discuss "here" and

---

[1] Information on this has been gathered from personal communications with people who work on barter economy in Venezuela. There is also a print leaflet "Manual de Trueke" (Barter Manual) published by the Municipality of Caracas.
[2] Sitrin, M. (2011), p. 34.
[3] Marvasti, A. & Smyth, D. (1998), p. 1087, Birch, D. & Liesch, W.P. (1998), Neale, B. & Shipley, D. (1987).
[4] Of course, financial support by public authorities for those schemes is out of the question in Greece. In some cases, especially in cases of free bazaars or of the annual Peliti fair, the local city councils might provide some spaces to host the event or the event visitors or support informally a scheme, like the TEM initiative in Volos city. The Time Bank in Agia Varvara and the Time Bank in Pylaia and in Pallini are the only cases where the municipalities have been more involved with establishing a scheme.

"now" and everything that this "here and now" meant for the research subject-matter and for the research participants themselves[1]. Moreover, the choice of leaving the historical framework outside of the research project has been proved not only vain, but also impossible: it seemed that research findings, for reasons we cannot explain yet, "demand" their place in time, actually in time and space altogether, even if the researcher had herself made other options for her project.

The preparation of an essay concerning the views of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels on the Eastern Question (Sotiropoulou 2011b) was the crucial point for the researcher to realise that everything might have been wrong so far with the project. Of course, it was not a disaster but on the other hand, there was no chance within the specific project to do the historical research required to gather all data necessary to evaluate all the findings and have some definite or at least, satisfactorily verified conclusions. However, it is possible to raise questions and construct one more hypothesis, which will have the features needed to direct the examination of the above mentioned questions into some interesting routes.

Further study showed several points which were of major importance concerning this research design as being mistaken. One can discern some major characteristics on scheme members' activity which, at the same time, challenge our perceptions about several major issues in economics. Although those characteristics and the views challenged are interlinked, I distinguish them for analytical purposes only into a series of "themes challenged and revisited", so that they are easily compared to related literature:

3.5.3. The "deficient" nature of transactions without official currency

Transactions without official currency are considered to be full of disadvantages (Fayazmanesh 2006: 46-51, 84-88). This holds for both the economies where multiple currencies circulate and for economies where barter or non-monetary mechanisms exist. Multiple currency economies are considered an irregularity and a

[1] It is important to note that research participants definitely do not seem perplexed at all with the activity of their fellow scheme-members nor of the other schemes nor do they seem to feel that their activity is of less importance if it is not mentioned in academic literature. They behave but also comment on their activity as something "normal", "natural" or "common sense".

situation just prior to the final prevalence of one of the currencies[1]. The idea that barter cannot be but an emergency solution which will fade out once the capitalist economy recovers is also refuted by academics who have empirical findings from the ex-Soviet countries where non-monetary or alternative monetary transaction modes show that this activity might be something more than a reaction to market dissolution[2].

In addition, barter and non-monetary activity is of much lower status, as they are considered to be "non-economic" and "obviously" inefficient. However, inefficiency of multiple currencies and/or of barter and non-monetary transactions has not been proved. Quite the contrary, there is evidence that they might be much more efficient and efficiency-creating within an economy than the one-currency systems of the mainstream economy. This discussion about inefficiency is a long one and even if one does not want to accept its notion as set by Taussig[3] or by Gregory[4], one cannot ignore the theory by Lietaer, Ulanowicz et al. where efficiency of a single currency economy might not be under question as such; however, efficiency of a system without resilience is disastrous for the system itself as well as for its components. Therefore, even if one perceives multiple currencies and non-monetary schemes as non-efficient, one should consider whether this variety of transaction modes works towards the resilience of the economy and the stability of the livelihoods of people who participate in it[5].

Moreover, transaction tools (currencies or any other mechanisms) are much easier managed on local and/or community level rather than on vast areas of a country. This happens because problems, like lack of currency velocity and liquidity, are quickly drawing attention on local level and possible solutions might be applied in

---

[1] Even Irving Fisher (1933), who promoted the idea of stamp scrip during the Great Depression era, made clear that this solution is only temporary.

[2] Carlin, W. et al. (2000), Aukutsionek, S. (2001).

[3] Taussig (2010, pp. 83-92) perceives efficiency from the point of view of the majority (poor people), therefore in a political economic way.

[4] Gregory (1997, pp. 125-126) questions efficiency as to which person or group it refers to.

[5] Goerner, S. et al (2009a, 2010). Actually the theory proposed by Lietaer et al. concerns only multiple currencies. Detailed presentation of the theory can be found in Lietaer, B. 2010. However, in this paper I use the theory as presented by Goerner, Lietaer & Ulanowicz (see their papers of 2009) to discuss the diversity of the schemes I encounter in my research. This theory of economic sustainability seems easy to be extended to include non-monetary exchange and all various schemes which exist nowadays in Greece. Of course, the question raised is whether this variety is sustainable itself and to what extent. See for this Lietaer, B 2010. In addition, Kocherlakota (2002:345) accepts that two monies are sufficient to provide complete memory if moneyholdings are not observable to the economic agents, but he still raises the unanswered question why societies use other means of payment besides money.

time, before the aggravation of the problem[1]. One would add that currency users proximity in material and/or virtual space also makes it difficult for the financially strong community members (who have collected the most of income) to keep on their own and deny to participate in the common solutions of their community's transaction mode problems.

Apart from efficiency, there is the general discourse about modernity and how this multiple-currency or non-monetary systems idea is out-of-date, a relic of the past, which even if we do not want to abandon in the modern economy, it will be abandoned as time goes by[2]. The most important element of this view is that it usually avoids to consider this multiple economy as co-existent or coeval to the mainstream economy[3]. First, barter or multiple transaction tools are considered to be already history or that they existed very far back in the past. Second, when economics faces a modern phenomenon of this type, if it is not possible to attribute it to "primitiveness" or "badly-integrated peasant economies", then the temporary-emergency argument arises: when there is a crisis, such modes of transaction emerge to cover the money market failure and when the latter recovers, they fade out. Last, but not least, economics has pushed multiple transaction modes into limbo, and when it is faced with them, it prefers to leave them for scrutiny by another discipline, usually sociology or anthropology.

3.5.4. The transactions without exact measuring and without linear perception of time

Of course, it is not only a theoretical choice that economics deny to study anything but the official currency transactions. It is also a practical one: economics as we know it, is unable to study anything without exact measuring, as Fayazmanesh points out[4] and the fight over qualitative methods and their possible usefulness or

[1] Based on a comment by Stathis Stasinos.
[2] Even Marx had undertaken such a stance. See Hodgson 2001:70.
[3] A very thorough discussion of the notion of coevality and its importance in economic activity but also in economic theory can be found at Gregory, C. (1997), pp.7-9, 37-38, 304-312.
[4] Fayazmanesh, S. (2006 pp. 102, 125-126) criticises this measuring attitude as long as it turns economics toward mathematisation without any connection to what is happening in real markets. However, his main argument to which his entire book is dedicated, consists of the view that economics deny to see that exchange cannot be expressed with an equation, e.g. that an exchange might involve unequal values.

uselessness for economic research. So, even in cases of multiple currencies, where it is supposed to be easier to "measure" the subject-matter of research, economics have no real tools to evaluate such an economy like the non-monetary one. There are exceptions to this stance of course[1], but most economists do not work on such models, so methodology for a multiple currency economy is not very elaborated or refined yet.

Things are much more difficult when it comes to the non-monetary transactions, where economists try to measure values (usually in terms of official currency, while the entire transaction might be structured in a quite different way), while people transacting do not care about measuring[2]. Nevertheless, people care about not being cheated or mostly, about not cheating the other party of the exchange, as research participants have pointed out in their discussions and/or interviews[3].

In other words, economics have no tools, not even concepts, to understand how people in real economy can perform economic transactions without exact measuring of values, sometimes not even of volumes of the products or work exchanged.

The other major problem economics has is that its perception of time is linear, while people in schemes have no problem to think of time in a cyclical way or to "count" time with the work or task performed and not vice versa. The time might be social time, well far away from clock time[4], and after this "estrangement", economics is unable to understand the world from the viewpoint of the schemes.

We are used to read about not-measuring values in exchange and about non-linear time perception when studying literature on "native" people in countries of Africa, Latin America or Asia. We are not used to accept that people who might transact this way live in the same economy with us. It is not clear whether this denial is unconscious, i.e. it stems from our education in an economic-social system which

---

[1] Martin, A. (2006). An important effort for quantifying economic sustainability through monetary diversity has been done by Goerner, S. at al (2009b).

[2] There are historical precedents in other countries during the Middle Ages, where the exact measures approved by the authorities were well neglected by the people who preferred to use "generous measures", i.e. to give more than what they were supposed to (See for this Gemmill, E. & Mayhew, N. 1995, pp. 81-109) or to… mint forged petty coins with more (!) silver than the one the officially minted coins contained (Gullbekk, S. 2005). Both cases are well connected to economies where multiple currencies are used, including commodities for (measuring) payments and where there is vast circulation of black (low value metal) money (Gemmill, E. & Mayhew, N. 1995: 110-142, Gullbekk, S. 2005). However, my lack of expertise in this fascinating field of economic history prevents me from making any effective comparison of those medieval economies to the actual phenomena I study.

[3] Therefore, what research participants say verifies that they know very well the unequal nature of exchange, as described by Fayazmanesh (2006).

[4] Taussig explains how the perception of time (or labour-time) is constructed. See Taussig (2010), pp. 3-12.

praises both exact measuring of everything and linear time perception, or whether it is conscious, in the sense that we deny to accept that our perceptions are already questioned in this economy we live in[1].

3.5.5. The disdain against rural communities and their economic structures, and the modern state

One more feature that most literature reveals is that barter is considered to be an element of a peasant-rural economy and not appropriate for urban economies (apart from emergency moments in history). This appropriateness of a single official currency for the urban centres has not been constructed with the view, at least, that people in the countryside might have the option to have another or a parallel economic system. Quite the opposite: what is appropriate for the big city is appropriate for all communities, especially for rural communities, which anyway are "backward", "ignorant", "primitive", "late in participating in the capitalist economy"[2].

There is also the view that even in western countries, the construction of the modern state and its economy has been a process of internal colonisation, performed by the centre metropolis at the expense of the regional cultures[3]. Greece could not have been exempted from this process and actually it is one more example of the polarisation between "primitive" regions and "progressive" centralised state[4].

Therefore, to construct a central economy with a centrally-managed currency needed an entire perception of rural communities and their economies as non-important, as keeping economy "behind" and as structures which not only need to be eliminated but also reveal the lower educational, social and economic level of the countryside people. Barter has been associated with poverty, naivety and lack of economic mind.

---

[1] It might be possible that abstraction of labour works directly towards making time homogeneous [so that linearity is the only possible form of it]. See, Holloway, J. (2010) pp. 135-140.

[2] Transfer of "appropriateness" perceptions from cities to rural areas is criticised by Schumacher, E.F. (1974), pp. 160-171.

[3] Hechter, M. (1974) dedicates the entire book to this hypothesis. However, his study concerns British Isles and not Greece, but the mechanism described is so detailed that one can use his internal colonisation model to examine the policies Greek central metropolis has imposed on the rest of the country.

[4] A detailed study on the Greek case of internal colonisation and what this meant for peasant and regional cultures has been published by Peckham, R.S. (2004).

Of course, those mentalities have been directly connected to the effort to establish a capitalist economy within the framework of a nation-state. To create a national economy, the state could not possibly afford to have several transaction modes, much less to have people who transact without the use of the official currency or without the use of currency at all. To ban multiple currencies might be possible, although it is not easy to chase all those people who would continue to use other currencies parallel to the official one. To ban barter and non-monetary transactions is impossible because of the nature of the latter and actually, it might need such a tremendous mechanism of surveillance that such suppression becomes completely unaffordable. So, disdain and labelling seem to have been preferred to suppress barter or to suppress the explicit manifestation of it.

Obviously, we do not know whether such policies have been practically successful. What we know is that their success was definitely one of appearances: people in Greece the last years before 2008 and for sure, before 2000, would not dare to publicise bartering or non-monetary activity, as this would label them as "peasants, poor, uneducated, etc". The appearance of course, has several important practical implications: people do not know about the transactions taking place, so the majority believes that non-monetary transactions are already history. In case they want to learn more, sources are difficult to find. This holds for researchers as well as for myself as a PhD student.

Economists however, apart from facing difficulties in acquiring information about the non-monetary economy, they are the first victims and bearers of the mentality which neglects activity without official currency. It is amazing how even the Marxist side of economic analysis has also been neglecting or disdaining the economic structures of the peasants, or in general, of the traditional economies. Particularly, the peasant economy is the cause of all deficiencies of the peasants and of the peasants' inability to participate in the marxist revolutionary project[1]. In that sense, Marxist texts have not been different in promoting more or less the same attitude, as the mainstream texts, toward the variety of transaction modes and the people who preferred them[2].

---

[1] Hammen, O.J. (1972), p. 700, Szporluk, R. (1988), pp. 45, 65, 190, Todorova, M. (1994), p. 470.

[2] It might seem absurd, but concerning societies like the Greek one, or at least, like the communities of people who lived in the southern Balkan peninsula (which today is the area of the Greek state), both Engels and Marx have expressed a really "bourgeois" and "orientalist" attitude. No matter how they tried to face the bourgeois ideologies and social structures within the societies they themselves lived in;

This disdain and a certain perception about barter and multiple currencies go hand in hand with a certain perception about the urban centres and their economy. It seems that urban centres in Greece are not behind at all in multiple-currency and non-monetary modes of transaction while we know from the economic theory, that there is no need for this to happen, because official currency tends to concentrate in urban centres. Apart from the discussion whether modern official currencies or the currencies of the western-european-anglosaxon world are all international currencies (therefore, they are often drained from cities as well, or at least from smaller cities or from the poorest areas of the cities), there is also the question: what has made economic theory to assume that multiple currencies and non-monetary activity are not expected to exist in urban centres? There is no reason for such a peculiarity, even if one could discuss whether city dwellers join the schemes for same or different reasons than countryside habitants do.

Moreover, this idea of modern cities transacting in official currency is something that stems from the form cities have taken in certain western countries the last 200 years, where capitalism first has been well established. However, we still do not know many things about those cities and the development of their local economies. Therefore, we cannot even use them as models for the cities in other countries and in other historical contexts. What cities should I compare the Greek ones with to assert whether economic activity without euros in Greek cities is "peculiar" or "normal" or "based on urban economic structures"?

The perceptions about urban and rural areas and their economies are also linked to the phenomenon of tradition and traditional cultures. While central economic authorities were not really in favour of rural economies and directed urban economies to where it seemed "appropriate", they, at the same time, created a museum version, i.e. an institutionalised perception of traditional cultures, both of rural and of urban centres. This version became the "official" "national" one, at the expense of the variety and plurality which traditional cultures themselves bring with them. It has not only been "dehydrated" and "mummified" but it has also been

---

when it came to the people living in the Balkans, they uncritically thought of the latter in the same way as their contemporary bourgeois thinkers did. The idea that the urban-bourgeois western civilisation is anyway superior to the cultures and civilisations of the people who lived in the Balkans was explicitly expressed in their writings. See Engels, F. & Marx, K. (1985), pp. 95-96, 353, 383-384, 387, 439, 448-452, 457, 465, 473. I am grateful to Dr Efthymia Kanner (Dept. of Turkish & Contemporary Asian Studies, Univ. of Athens) as she vastly contributed to this comment by discussing on 21-3-2011 about Marx and Engels' views concerning the Eastern Question.

separated from the entire socio-economic context within which this variety has been created[1]. Therefore, people wear folk costumes in folkloric fairs, but they do not know how they are made, or how the traditional way of clothe making was a miracle of economic structures who needed to find rare materials, economize them, create beauty out of them but also solve practical issues the clothe user would have: for example, to take care of the garment, not to create waste or unnecessary waste during clothe production, etc.

In other words, traditional economy has been under elimination process, while the culture it had been creating was promoted as "traditional civilisation". Is there any traditional civilisation without its economy? Is it possible that any culture created within a certain (socio-)economic setting is reproduced "as it was" in another economic setting than the one which created that same culture?

The distance from institutionalising tradition towards commodifying it, is not long (no doubt, the modern "traditional costumes" are made out of massively produced materials and usually they are also massively produced themselves). The economy which has produced the culture is inexistent (at least for central authorities) and the centrally "planned" tradition is produced just like any other stuff in a modern economy: in a capitalist way, to be consumed in a capitalist manner, far from educating people to or from becoming the way/the proposal of life it was when it had been reproduced within its original socio-economic context.

At this crucial point there come the schemes studied within the research framework to represent a completely different view (or different views) of peasantry, of countryside civilisation and of urban culture, but also of the economy that those views presuppose as the material expression of this same culture. As a consequence, economics is challenged by scheme members' activity, because at least mainstream economic ideologies and theories are all based on this internal colonisation idea to be necessary for "progress".

[1] Peckham describes in detail how the idea of folklore and folkloric studies have been constructed and used by the Greek state to eradicate the local culture and replace it by what centrally was decided to be the "authentic" Greek peasant. See Peckham,R.S. (2004), pp. 49-58.

3.5.6. The idea that "small is beautiful" but inefficient

Small production is typical in rural and urban communities and it has been typical in Greece till nowadays. Sole producers and practitioners are or have been the rule for Greek economy, even the last decades, even in big urban centres, which are considered to be the most capitalism-integrated in the entire history of the country. This does not mean that small producers do not face severe competition by big producers, mostly companies; quite the opposite.

However, it seems that once a person has a chance to try the small production mode, that person will try to survive under this choice instead of succumbing immediately to the "big players" of the economy. It is obvious that multiple currencies and non-monetary transactions favour small producers and their produce, as producers can find a "market" where the throat-cut prices of the big companies have no meaning at all. Therefore, by changing the transaction mode, small producers acquire an economic advantage that within a big, "national", economy with a hard-to-find single currency, cannot have[1]. Small production is not favoured by the banking system and it is not either favoured in terms of taxation, lobbying power, etc.

However, small production seems to be much more sustainable than "big" production, not only in economic terms but also in terms of its environmental impact and of better quality of life for poor people. This is not only stated by E.F. Schumacher[2] but also by Taussig who conducted field research in Latin America for many years and could compare the results for people and for the environment of both capitalist production (large) and traditional production (small) in both agricultural and mineral-extraction sectors[3].

One would point out that "then, small producers are creating serious problems to the economy, if they avoid competition by the use of transaction mechanisms beyond the official currency". It seems, though, that this argument is not founded on evidence. If the hypothesis that small production is more efficient and/or resilient than the mass production mode[4], then one could better wonder whether "big players" play efficient and receive profits at the expense of small producers of their sector. In other

---

[1] Lietaer, B. (2010), p. 19.
[2] Actually, his entire work has been dedicated to supporting small production modes as more human and sustainable. See Schumacher, E.F. (1974).
[3] Taussig, M. (2010), pp. 41-92, 112-139, 155-159. 214-232.
[4] There is evidence to support this hypothesis. See for this Taussig (2010), pp. 83-92.

words, it is possible that big producers can have profits as long as there are small producers drained from their efficient results throughout a mainstream market unfavourable to the small producers. As long as small producers are economically or financially destroyed and led out of the mainstream market, then big companies might also have serious problems, because in that case, they are "on their own"[1].

Therefore, the entire perception about the deficient or counter-competitive nature of small production is an ideology that assists large companies to demand for assistance in any case, even in times when a crisis proves them to be not efficient at all. In that sense, small production finds shelter in multiple transaction modes, because it is obvious that small producers do not care to fight against big companies but they do care to survive.

3.5.7. The dark "otherness" of peasant economies and the "freedom that money gives"

One more idea which is very common in economic literature is mainly a political one: our monetary system is a system of freedom for all, given that money gives freedom of choice to anyone who holds it and wants to spend it. The contrast is made with peasant economies, which are stigmatised as feudal or semi-feudal or, even if a community has no feudal structure, with all problems an economy might have: inequality, exploitation, women's suppression, superstition, enmity towards new ideas, prevention of a person to get rich out of his/her own inventions, etc[2].

Therefore, economic structures which are, at least theoretically, associated with peasant economies, like barter or the multiplicity of transaction mechanisms, are considered to be tools of all this unfairness and injustice. Of course, no-one has ever said - and I am far from believing - that a peasant economy might be an ideal one or that barter might be itself the path to fairness and justice. However, I am also far from accepting the assumption that one mode of transaction is completely "bad" and

[1] In support to this view, Goerner et al. (2009b), pp. 78-80, show how big entreprises erode economic structures by draining resources from the entire network they take part in, while small entreprises along with workers and consumers create the diversity which is necessary for the economic system to be resilient and thus, sustainable in the long run.

[2] This idea is deeply connected with the disdain toward the traditional-old ways of transactions and the people who performed them. It is not a coincidence that a vast part of Simmel's Phisolophy of Money is dedicated to this view. See Simmel, G. (1978-2009), pp. 283-428.

another mode of transaction is inherently “good”. Quite the opposite: money following certain rules and within certain social setting might be a tool for redistribution in favour of the lower income groups or it might be redistributing income from the poor to the rich. The same holds for non-monetary structures: they might embed in economy several hierarchical and exploitative practices or they might deliver to their users, especially those with lower incomes, chances for improving their living conditions in both economic and social terms.

Therefore, our inability to see multiple currency systems and non-monetary transactions as possible positive political-economic tools, stems from our idea that a monetary economy with one currency only is the best social option, especially compared to other economies where a variety of exchange mechanisms exists. However, even if a monetary economy with one currency only has been under certain circumstances the best social option, this might change through time and space and according to the change of circumstances – which means that if nowadays this social option is not the best anymore, we need to reconsider or replace it with a more appropriate one.

3.5.8. The possibility that we see what we are ready to see

One would say, after the above, that it might be possible that all this activity in Greece without official currency has emerged because it became visible due to the new information and communication technologies. Schemes use new technologies to announce their gatherings and their activity (due to easiness and zero-cost of publicity) but also to enable members communicate among themselves, discuss issues, make decisions, disseminate news, manage accounting, etc, without much effort and in a very open, public manner. Therefore, technology might be a reason for “making known-making material” these transaction modes.

However, through my research it has been shown that there are groups in Greece which do not use internet or social media software that much. Or, even if they use new communication technologies, this use is rather limited; which raises again the question, whether technology just facilitates and does not create the economic activity we see through it (the technology). Therefore, material conditions which permit diffusion of information and facilitation of transactions might be important as a

feature but not the decisive one for the ability of the schemes to be visible but also for the ability of the observer or the researcher to "see" them.

Another possible explanation would be that material conditions (both economic and social) might be to blame for this and not information-communication technology only. It might be that people in the society of Greece (or perhaps in other societies as well), are adapting rapidly to an all-changing economy. This rapid change is not a new thing. Mark Mazower mentions this for the peasant communities of the Balkan peninsula who were facing monetisation and capitalisation of the economy in late 19th - early 20th century. However, he also mentions how rapid change in peasant economies coincided with rapid change in capitalist economy and how the former change was perceived as inexistent while the latter change was perceived as the real change at the same time, concerning economy and society[1].

Therefore, it is possible that nowadays, economic-social changes are making people, either scheme participants or non-participants, either academics or the (student) researcher herself "see" transaction modes which some years ago were believed to be inexistent. In other words, we "see" this economy of variety because we asked "does it exist?" instead of saying "it does not exist", or because we thought "let's re-examine our perceptions in economics" instead of "we have clarified our perceptions in economics"[2].

This research does not cover but transaction modes; nevertheless, transaction modes cannot be separated from production modes. It is impossible to know details at this stage and within this research project about the production modes which are supporting/using/intertwining-with the transaction modes I study. There is, however, one main characteristic which can not be neglected: it seems that those transaction modes favour small production, as it has already been mentioned.

It is usual in economics to talk about small property production mode, meaning production methods chosen by people who own a small lot of land. Actually, small production seems very connected to the owning of small lots and to the agricultural production of small scale. However, research shows that small production does not exist only in this setting: transaction modes reveal that small scale agricultural production is just one aspect of production supported and undertaken

---

[1] Mazower, M. (2002), pp. 65-98, 214-218, 221-227.

[2] Lietaer (2010) shows how discussion between the neo-liberal and marxist schools left beyond scrutiny the idea of monopoly of national currency.

through the schemes. There are people who live in cities and might own just the apartment they live in or they might have neither land nor real estate property rights at all. However, they still produce within the networks and might be also quite active in economic terms (although their skills and produce might not receive such warm reception within the mainstream economy).

Moreover[1], the chance the scheme members have to share or give-away things among each other reduces the need for mass production of goods that can be easily shared within a network. It is possible that for most non-consumable goods, people do not need to keep them all the time in their closets, cupboards and warehouses[2]. Tools and small machines are circulating within the schemes just like books and clothes. In that sense, small production is enough for the scheme members, and on the other hand, small consumption is also enough for them, because they can cover their household needs through interchanges without needing hard-to-find extra income in official currency. In addition, one would assume that this support to small production would help heavily the environmental cause[3].

Therefore, one more possibility exists: the phenomena studied might be not only one more adaptation of small property production modes (which of course is possible to be happening) but also an overall adaptation of small production modes in general, to new economic conditions. The urban setting, or the no-land-property setting proves to be a factor that does not prevent small production as such. It probably directs small production not only to small city agriculture or gardening, but also to a variety of sectors which economics had not paid attention to so far.

3.5.9. Description of the * hypothesis

There is no name or title for this hypothesis (yet). It might seem absurd to write this, after the previous pages of stating one hypothesis after another, but it is

[1] This idea and observation point is based on a comment by Stathis Stasinos.
[2] It is not a coincidence that in free bazaars and networks, children's clothes are taken for some time and when they are not anymore fit on the child (which has grown in the meantime) are given back to the bazaar or to the other members of the network. Same holds with tools, or re-use of materials for creating things. One should note that apart from giving-away announcements, there are also demands for things people need, so the other scheme members can search in their accumulated stuff and they usually can provide the other member with the thing she asked for.
[3] This cause, along with solidarity with each other, is whatsoever mentioned by most of the schemes, especially the free networks and the groups who organize free bazaars.

impossible to gather them and represent them in just one phrase. I believe that it is too early to name it, given that it seems that our way of perceiving all the phenomena mentioned above but also the notions which concern them and we have been taught so far, do not permit us to construct a wording that would not limit us to the traps we try to escape from. Even this distinction between rural and urban centres or the categorisation of all countryside communities as rural and of all city communities as urban is a false one[1], well stemming from the same mentalities and ideologies this paper tries to question. Let alone, that to give a name to this hypothesis right now would lead the researcher to make the same mistake as the one probably done by those who do not "see" transactions if the latter do not look like the ones described in books.

It seems that the schemes studied are the surface of an economy or economies which never ceased to exist, as both material spaces and experiences in people's histories. They were, however, dismissed, disdained and even disreputed and the first texts that easily accepted this "I-do-not-see-for-I-do-not-want-to-see" attitude have been the academic ones, even if we would expect exactly the opposite from them. Particularly about economics, which claims to be the most "scientific" among social science disciplines, the inability to "see" was much more intense than in other disciplines (like anthropology or sociology) which, however, could not substitute economics, but only criticise its stance.

Finally, the entire discussion is not about naming the schemes studied as modern or old, pre-capitalistic or post-capitalistic, parallel or resisting to capitalist economy. It seems that if one gets into such type of discussion, then one is obliged to use the same analytical tools that prevented us from "discovering" this type of economy till the last years. Labelling is handy under certain conditions, but it is not useful if one searches to answer questions like the ones stated in this paper.

Therefore, we might need to view all this activity as coeval to the so-called capitalist[2] or monetary or conventional economy and as raising a different agenda for economics than what capitalist and anti-capitalist discourse can offer. This does not mean that I dismiss any conflictual feature or conflict element that this activity might

[1] This questioning of "rural" and "urban" is based on a comment by Prof. Dina Vaiou (National Technical University of Athens).

[2] There is of course a very interesting view stating that the "capitalist system depends upon the internal variety and could not survive without it". See Hodgson (2001), p.78. If this "impurity principle" holds, then all this activity of the scheme members might not only be contradictory but also necessary for the survival of the capitalist system. See Hodgson (2001), pp. 71-78.

have, not only toward the mainstream economy, but also among the people who participate in this activity. Using another transaction mode does not change the economic and social power of the scheme participants. It just gives them one more option to use that power within another setting.

It is not possible at this stage to know what this power might be and how this economic option turns people's stance toward economy and their fellow members of the economy, both those who participate and those who do not participate in the schemes. It becomes evident, however, that the schemes enable their members, while transacting without official currency, to challenge economics here and now, or… once more. This can be easily shown in the next chapter four, where the schemes' structure and expansion is presented in detail.

PART II

FIELD RESEARCH & RESULTS

CHAPTER 4: THE SCHEMES, THEIR EXPANSION AND THE DELIMITATION OF THE RESEARCH FIELD

This chapter consists of three main sections: the first presents the delimitations of the research field and how I decided to include or to exclude a scheme from my project. The second section presents in some detail the schemes which I have worked together with during my field research distinguished in the typology categories already presented in chapter two. The second section also comprises some mapping results from my attempt to map scheme participation in autumn 2010, therefore it is easy to compare the actual expansion of schemes to the situation of late 2010[1]. The third section of this chapter presents some information about the expansion of the schemes since autumn 2008 (when the research proposal had been prepared) till today and some tables I constructed in 2010 with the intention to compare the scheme participation with the increase of unemployment during the years 2008-2010 in each region of Greece.

4.1. The delimitation of the research field

To include a scheme or initiative into the research project's scope we used the following criteria:

First, the transactions should not involve euros or any other official currency at all. Then, the project was not interested in transactions that might involve another currency (than the official one in Greece). Obviously, the research could not include transactions which might belong to any type of the solidarity economy but they use euros to perform those transactions (f.ex. cooperatives).

Second, the transactions should not be performed for charity or within a context of charity. What is important for the research is to examine economic activity that avoids the unequal structure of "wealthy people giving – poor people receiving".

Finally, the transactions should not be just performed based on relations of friendship and family. Of course, in many cases relatives and friends participate in the same scheme, just like many friendships emerged within the schemes, but what is

[1] For the mapping results, I used the information from Sotiropoulou, I. (2011a).

important for the research is to study the transactions who take place beyond and for other reasons than kinship and friendship.

For the purposes of this research project, I excluded the kitchen collectives and the collective gardens and cultivation projects, not really because they do not belong in the project scope, but because, although they could be studied within the sui generis category, they deserve a separate research project to be studied in a satisfactory manner. In reality, both collective cultivations and kitchen collectives could be a category of their own. However, for practical purposes only, i.e. for the research project to be manageable, both types of collective production and consumption (collective economic provision) have been excluded from the project.

One should bear in mind that particularly the parallel currency schemes are not supported by any authority with the exception of the Time Bank managed by the Municipality of Aghia Varvara in Greater Athens area and two other Time Banks in Greater Thessalonike and Greater Athens areas where, however, the schemes are still in phase of organisation. On the other hand, some free bazaars or exchange networks have some support by local authorities, who provide municipal spaces or buildings to host fairs and meetings.

The schemes presented in this chapter in some detail are schemes which I have cooperated with for this project. For some of them (the Time Bank of the European Network of Women, the Exchange Network of Chania, the Exchange Network of Rethymnon-Rodia, the Dose-Pare Network and the Charise-to Network) I have been a full member of. However, given the expansion of the activity particularly since January 2012 and the establishment of many new schemes, it has been impossible to contact and visit and perform observation by participation or even any interviews with coordinators. Some of the schemes established in 2011 were not possible to conduct interviews with, but they participated in the questionnaire phase of the research, even if their membership was quite limited at the time.

In Annex A, there is a full list of all schemes and initiatives. Presenting all schemes in a full list has been a choice because several schemes which have been announced online and might have also received some publicity during the last year (2012), have not really started working yet. I mean, in several cases I contacted them directly, they replied that they have not started transactions yet, but they are that the phase of organisation. Other schemes make transactions but they are still at a very early stage, or they perform transactions in other modes than the ones publicly

announced (i.e. a parallel currency scheme might have members who perform direct barter, but they have not used the currency yet). I hope that they do well and that in a future research project we will be able to work together.

4.2 The parallel currencies

At the moment, we know that there exist thirty nine (39) parallel currency schemes in Greece, nine (9) out of which are Time Banks and the rest (30) schemes are parallel currencies where prices are set freely among the scheme members. However, even this number (39) should be taken into account with some precautions, because several schemes are still at the phase of organisation, therefore, they have not worked yet in real terms.

4.2.1. The Time Bank of the European Network of Women in Athens

The oldest parallel currency in Greece is a Time Bank run by the Greek branch of the European Network of Women[1], which is a Non-Governmental Organisation focusing on assisting women who are violence victims. However, the Time Bank is an activity totally separated from the rest NGO activities, which means that anyone can participate and it is a rule that no-one will discuss whether any member has been connected to the other activities of the NGO (for the sake of confidentiality but also of the inclusiveness of the scheme).

The Time Bank was established in Athens, Greece, and started working in October 2006. The scheme follows the general structure of time banks, which is a "network" of individuals who are offering services to other members of the group. In reward, the member gains "time" so that he/she is able to ask for the other members' services. The value of the services is accounted in time hours. The transactions and the time hours credited and debited for each participant are recorded in a computer with software created by a volunteer.

[1] www.enow.gr

An important feature the scheme administrators have opted for is that of the time currency expiry date, i.e. the time hours gained expire six months after they have been gained by a member. The organisers expect that by setting an expiry date, the time currency will circulate efficiently within the scheme, instead of being accumulated by some members while other members will stay without any task to do for time hours.

At the same time, if one does not want or does not have any need to spend his/her time hours gained, one can give the time currency to somebody else, even if that other person is not a member of the scheme. In that case, the time-hours receiver will be able to spend but not to gain any time hours. The time currency might also be donated to a charity, an NGO or a non-profit organisation and the organisation will use the time hours as any other non-member. The major emphasis has been given so far to education services, related to languages and PC skills.

On the other hand, the project managers mention at every occasion that all work done within the framework of the Time Bank is voluntary, therefore, it is not to be considered as income. Tax authorities do not seem to care about Time Bank activities and they consider time banking as voluntary work, therefore non declarable and non-taxable[1].

The Time Bank organises educational workshops, where people from Athens and other Greek cities participate, in order to learn more about Time Banking and has trained many people who have participated in the establishment of other Time Banks or other parallel currency schemes. Since autumn 2011 the Time Bank of the European Network of Women tries to create local nodes in Greater Athens area, to be able to manage the new members who applied for participation.

However, in December 2011, the really active members were around 45 with many membership applications pending. I have been a registered member with the Time Bank of the European Network of Women since its very beginning in autumn 2005.

[1] This is what Tax officers told me in 2005, when I had an informal discussion with them concerning the Time Bank and my participation in this.

4.2.2. The Time Bank of Agia Varvara

Similar in structure, the Time Bank of Agia Varvara has been established in 2011 by the Municipality of Agia Varvara in the Greater Athens area. The Time Bank has not many members (30 to 40) and transactions are not many either. Of course, this is normal for a scheme which has been established quite recently in comparison to other schemes.

The peculiarity of this Time Bank is that its management is done by the municipality itself and that this initiative has been more or less successful, in terms of getting the entire scheme running. The attempt by the Municipality of Lamia, in central Greece, to establish a Time Bank[1] has not been successful so far, while the attempt of the Municipality of Pylaia in the Greater Thessalonike area to create a Time Bank online platform[2] for the city habitants to be able to use it, is still at its organisation stage.

4.2.3. The Ovolos currency based in the cities of Patras and Thessalonike

The Ovolos project started its organising in January 2009 and it is based in Patras city (West-South coast of the country) but also run in Thessaloniki (second major city in the North of Greece), as well[3]. Its members were around 4800 in July 2010, but not all of them are really active, although active members are at least double number than the one initially announced on Complementary Currencies data base[4].

Each member has an equal say on the management of the scheme. To achieve this equality in practical terms and particularly in decision-making procedures, the main coordinators have delayed launching the currency in order to safeguard the checks-and-balances feature of the scheme by using Greek legislation. Therefore, there has been created a non-profit organisation (Σωματείο) based in Patras city and

---

[1] http://www.lamia-city.gr/netexchange.php
[2] http://www.time4time.gr/
[3] See the website www.ovolos.gr. There is also a group with the same name at Facebook, where the members discuss issues (in Greek only) about their currency.
[4] They hadn announced 500 members. This is what had been registered at CC World Map about Ovolos in January 2009: http://www.complementarycurrency.org/ccDatabase/maps/worldmap.php?action=list&s_le_countryId=64.

named “Ovolos Research and Documentation Center for Social Currency” which has the supervision of the scheme and provides the members with documentation and perform research activities. The members of the organisation have by law equal rights and obligations and the organisation is the “umbrella organisation” for the entire scheme.

In 2011 the scheme asked their members to register with the non-profit organisation so there remained about 2100 members in the scheme. Ovolos currency covers the entire country and it is used by several people who do not live or work in Patras and Thessaloniki, but they prefer to transact with parallel currency in their local communities. This has created a peculiar situation, where locality of transactions is not linked necessarily to the “base cities”. The Ovolos organisers see this as an advantage, which will make Ovolos an online technology platform available to all people living in the country, enabling them to experiment using parallel currency while transacting locally no matter where they live.

Therefore, the scheme members can use the Ovolos currency (which is virtual, e.g. on the main computer system and on each member’s digital smart card) instead of euro currency for their transactions with members. To avoid abuses of the system by companies, they have not permitted double pricing, i.e. the items or services sold are priced and paid in Ovolos only. The basic idea behind Ovolos is that the classical (state) currencies, especially after the interruption of equivalence with gold in 1971, create sur-values that are out of control by the economy and non-responding to real economy, e.g. real production. Contrary to that, the social currency will circulate and be consumed as it is produced.

A significant feature of the currency is the designation of it: the members of Ovolos call it “Social Currency”. They wanted, first to show the social orientation of the entire project and second to avoid giving any false impressions of localist or secessionist ideas (if they called it “local currency”) or of competing with euro currency (e.g if they named it “Community Currency” it might be confused with the European Community currency). The title “social” is more than a word, because the plan includes features of Local Exchange Trading Systems but also of Time Banks. The local and not regional character is important not only because of the model of the parallel currency they use, but also because the Ovolos founders and users believe that the currency will be easier managed and controlled by its members if it remains on a local basis.

The other “social” feature of Ovolos is that the scheme members use extensively the social networking internet applications to communicate, exchange ideas, discuss and notify each other about current news or about gatherings, etc. The use of Facebook as well as the use of blogs, email lists, etc is also found in many other initiatives – but it is amazing how the establishment of a parallel currency has been based on internet communication applications for publicising the project but also for permitting the members (and to some extent any person interested) to have direct information and participation in discussions and decisions about the project.

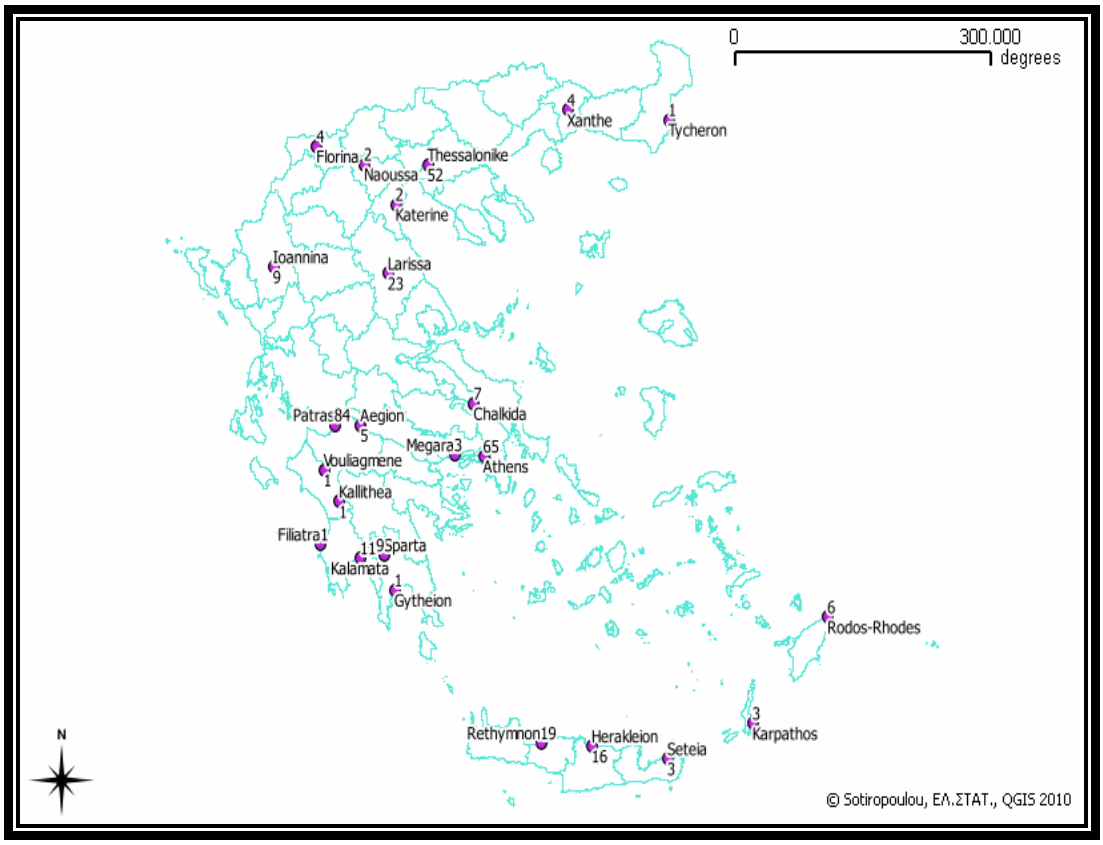
What is also very interesting about Ovolos is that it was started by a group of entrepreneurs, contrary to most parallel currency schemes in other countries, which have a hard time to attract even small neighbourhood businesses. The economic and financial crisis of October 2008 and its consequences, which have been severe for Patras city, have induced the entrepreneurs to search for money liquidity. At the same time, as household spending has decreased, individuals were very positive to the idea, if this was going to offer them the opportunity to buy basic goods without needing euro currency for this.

In autumn 2010, Ovolos Association has provided me with data concerning the location of the official Association members in autumn 2010, who were only 332 at that time located in Greece only. I did not count the members located in countries other than Greece. Below one can see the members of the Ovolos Association as of autumn 2010. I have no detailed data about the dispersion of members within greater Athens and Thessaloniki area. Moreover, I have not had data concerning the dispersion of all Ovolos members at that time throughout Greece.

The curious thing in this mapping result is that there are no members in the islands apart from Crete and Dodecanese. In Crete, there are no members in Chania city, which is the second major city of the island. There are no members in the central part of mainland Greece neither in the northern prefectures. However, given that I have no data on all members of the currency at that time (because it was allowed to be a member of Ovolos currency without being a member of the Ovolos Association) I cannot reach any safe conclusions. Particularly about areas where Ovolos Association has one or very few members only, one could ask the question whether there are any other members for the official member to transact with or this membership has ended up to be practically non-active. The percentage of members in each prefecture is

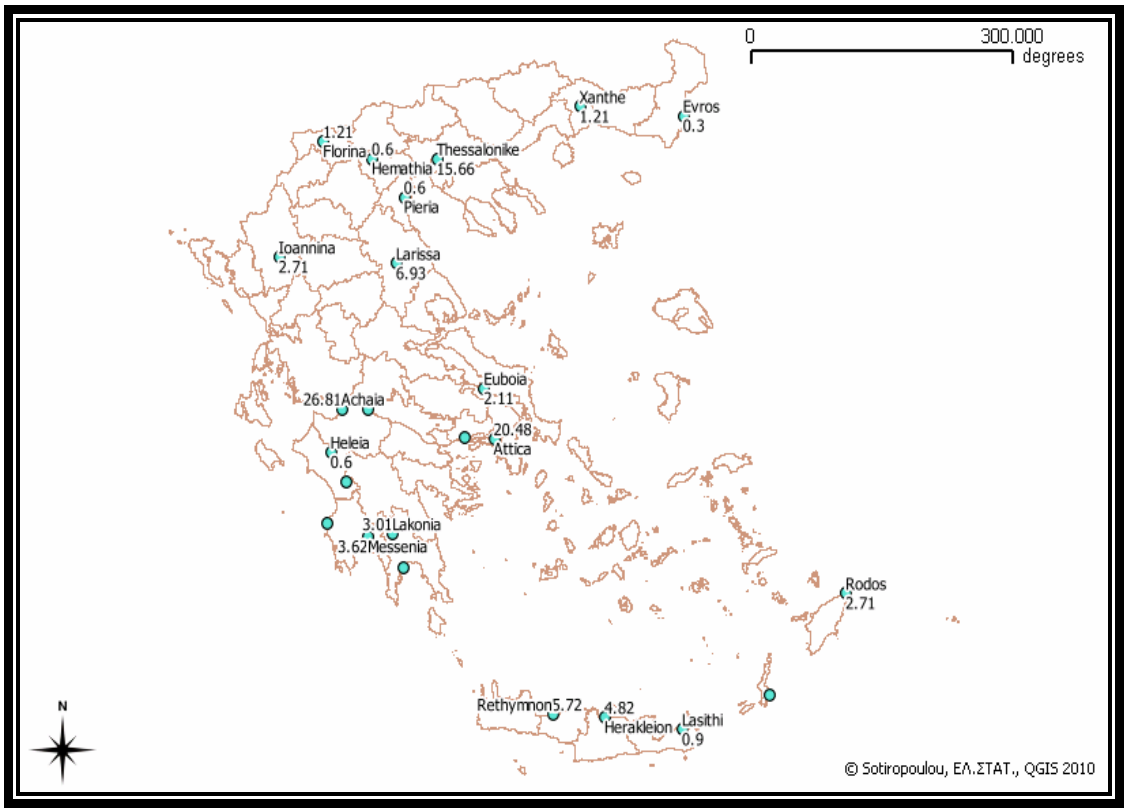
shown below. The geographical points which have no percentage are those that belong to the same prefecture.

Map 4.1: Members of the Ovolos Association as of November 2010



It is obvious that urban areas attract the majority of members. The interesting feature is that the general population pattern is not followed at all: Thessalonike and Patras attract more members than their share "could" be according to the general dispersion of population (2001 Census data). This is connected to the fact that Ovolos currency is based in Patras and has as a second basis the city of Thessalonike. The major surprises have been Larissa and Rethymnon cities. Especially about Rethymnon, one could say that participation in Ovolos currency might explain the weird situation where we have no data about Rethymnians' heavy participation in any other scheme for autumn 2010.

Map 4.2: Percentage of Ovolos Association members in each prefecture



4.2.4. The Local Alternative Unit of Magnesia (TEM)

The Local Alternative Unit (Τοπική Εναλλακτική Μονάδα – TEM) was formally planned to be launched on June 15th 2010 in the city of Volos, on the East Central coast of Greece. The Unit is digital only and will be used within the framework of the Exchange and Solidarity Network[1] which covers the entire prefecture of Magnesía. Since June 2012, the LAU scheme in organises regular open markets in Volos twice per week. This has boosted exchanges within the scheme which in autumn 2012 has about 1200 members.

The project is a very interesting one, not only because it is designed to remain local, but also because the managing team has opted so far to avoid the network taking any official legal form. However, they name their project as a "mainstream" one and an observer could say that this is true, given that the network tries to be as inclusive as it can be. They are also in close coordination with local municipal

[1] www.tem-magnisia.gr

services, so that the network can have several trading points hosted in the city's Social Centres, where people with no access to internet or uncomfortable with using PCs can ask for support in order to register and trade within the network. Local businesses are also welcome to participate and actually it is a local business that offers the server of the network.

On the other hand, the funding of the project is upon its members only. The scheme, to make transactions easier when the use of PC is not so comfortable or possible, has also created for their member, the option of print "orders of payment" which can be issued by each member as a means of proving that a transaction has taken place. Each member can have a voucher-book with "orders of payment" to use when performing transactions.

Local businesses participate in the scheme and I personally, have received several invitatios/announcements from third parties (not the LAU managers) about workshops or events taking place in Magnesia prefecture, where all or part of the admission fee could be paid in local currency. It is interesting that this payment is even accepted for events organised in the area by people who do not live in this region. Moreover, any work done for the scheme or for the projects undertaken by the network itself is remunerated and not voluntary, with six (6) LAU per hour of work.

4.2.5. The Fasouli currency in Athens[1]

This is a parallel currency formed in January 2011 in Athens. Its members use the virtual unit of Fasouli (it means "bean" in Greek) to perform exchanges among them. The Fasouli currency is run by the Fasouli Exchange and Solidarity Network, which is based in Athens. What is very interesting is that till now, this is the only parallel currency which has certain limits in prices concerning the remuneration of people's work: ten Fasoulis are the lower limit, 20 Fasoulis are the upper limit per work hour for someone to be remunerated for his/her services[2].

[1] http://fasouli.wordpress.com/
[2] This is according to the Fasouli Network of Exchanges and Solidarity Terms of Use as updated on June 2nd 2011.

4.2.6. The parallel currencies in the island of Crete

The Kaereti is the parallel currency run by the local exchange network "Alternative Economy of Ierapetra" (Εναλλακτική Οικονομία Ιεράπετρας)[1] and the first established in Crete island. This is the first exchange network which uses a parallel currency as its accounting unit, to have been established in Crete island, in summer 2011. The Kaereti scheme has organised the first Alternative Economy Festival in December 2011 in Ierapetra and in autumn 2012, they are trying to create a legal entity (Association) so that they facilitate their networks' activity.

In autumn 2011, another scheme has been established in Chania, the Exchange Network of Chania (Δίκτυο Ανταλλαγών Χανίων)[2], which also uses a virtual unit to enable its members perform its transactions. They also run open markets every other Sunday. I am a member of this Network since its very beginning and given my relocation to Chania since December 2011, I have close experience from the function of the network.

Since spring 2012, new schemes for parallel currencies have been established in the cities of Herakleion, Agios Nikolaos and Siteia. All of them have virtual units: the Herakleion Network of Exchange and Barter[3] (Δίκτυο Ανταλλαγής και Αντιπραγματισμού Ηρακλείου) name their currency as Unit, while the other two schemes, "Alternative Economy of Siteia" and "Alternative Economy of Agios Nikolaos" name their currencies as Kaereti, just like the currency in Ierapetra. Actually, all three networks in the prefecture of Lasithi, which comprise Ierapetra, Agios Nikolaos and Siteia cities, are interconnected in terms of organisation. This might be the reason they do not have separate websites, only separate pages in the Facebook social media.

4.2.7. Helios - The Local Alternative Unit of Pieria[4]

The Helios currency has been established in 2012 in the city of Katerini, in Pieria prefecture and it has similar structure to the other parallel currencies. The local

---

[1] www.kaereti.gr
[2] www.diktyoantallagonxanion.gr
[3] http://diktyoantallagisirakleiou.espiv.net/drupal2/
[4] http://union.motherearth.gr/

currency is virtual only and the scheme organises regular open markets and other events, for example, workshops, lectures, cultural meetings etc. The members who register with the network have a 200 units debit limit, so that they can start their transactions immediately, without being forced to earn some units before trading.

4.3. The exchange networks

Despite the fact that the oldest scheme in Greece is an exchange network, the exchange networks are not as numerous as parallel currencies are: I have counted fifteen (15) schemes, although I am not sure that all of them are really working.

4.3.1. The Peliti double network

The greatest and oldest exchange network is Peliti[1] which covers the entire country, both urban and rural areas. It was founded in 2000 as a an effort to preserve local plant varieties, but started it expansion in 2002 and its structure consists of two separate but intertwined networks: the first, is a network for exchanging goods and services, named "From hand to hand"; while the second, is a specialised network which enables its members but also anyone interested, to exchange or just find for free traditional varieties of plants[2] (either fruit or decorative trees, vegetables, flowers, etc) and to acquire (at the cost of breeding only) several traditional species of domestic animals, named "Localities of farms".

The main idea is that, for preserving the traditional plant and domestic animal varieties, one should be able to find the species for free and offer them for free to whoever asks for them. The domestic animals, given that their cost of breeding might be high in some cases, can be purchased with official money, but only to cover the breeding costs and not the value of the rarity of the species (which means that if a member of the network overcharges, this member will be reported). Moreover, the transactions held in the general network do not permit the use of money by the

[1] www.peliti.gr There is also a version of the website in English at http://www.peliti.gr/pages_eng/peliti_eng.htm.
[2] Another term already used for them is "landraces".

participants – they advertise (some on the web, some other on the annual Peliti Magazine) their offers and what they ask in exchange.

In 2011, the Peliti network has created local groups in several locations, so that the people who live in those areas can create nodes of exchange and cooperate with each other in a better way. The local groups exist in Komotini (Rodopi), Bassilika (Thessalonike), Lemnos island, Kozane, Ioannina, Almyros (Magnesia), Euboia island, Peratia (Aetoloakarnania), Aegina island, Ancient Olympia, Herakleion (Crete island).

Peliti organises several events, workshops and participates in a variety of meetings and events all over the country and abroad. However, the most famous and populous event is the Annual Fair of Exchanging Local Varieties where cultivators, volunteers, activists, and other visitors gather to exchange traditional seeds, learn about traditional cultivation methods and attend gatherings, lectures, feasts and the lunch of the day which is open to all. I am not a member of any of the Peliti networks but I have volunteered three times for their Annual Fair and this has permitted me to experience from inside the way they work.

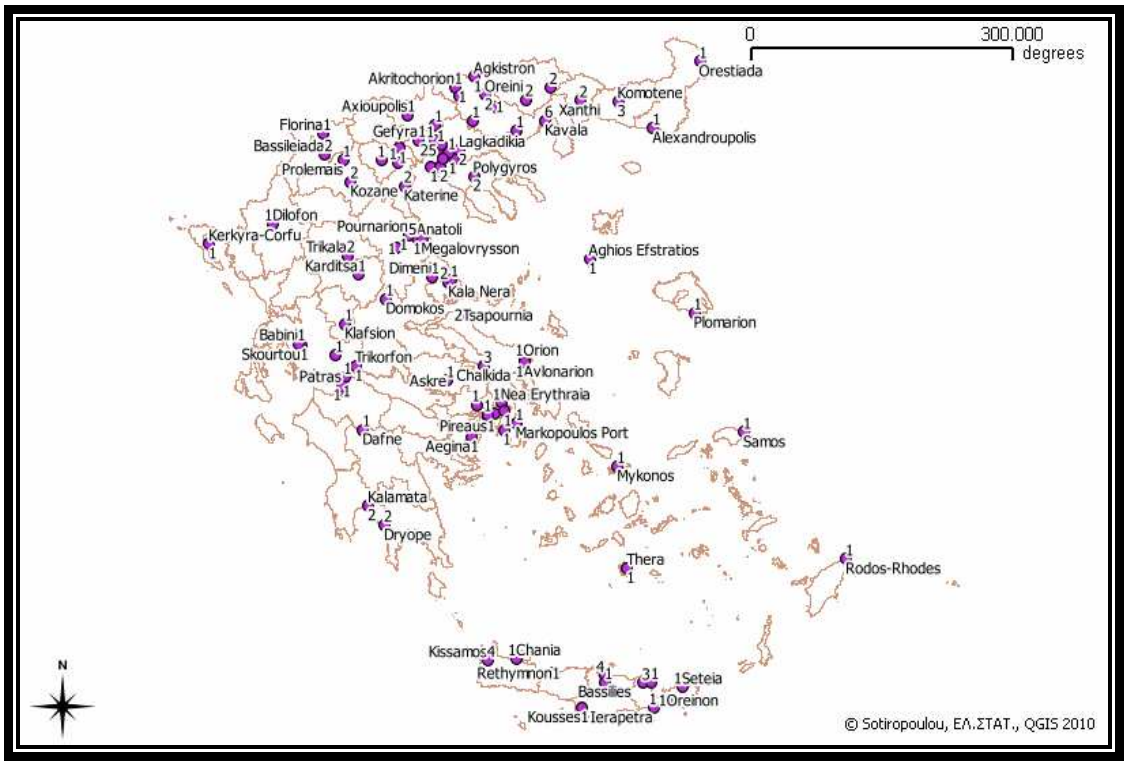
For the mapping, the data I gathered from Peliti were in raw format, i.e. I had access to the public lists concerning the members of both networks. Particularly, I used the list of the general exchange network named "From hand to hand" (Από Χέρι σε Χέρι) as it has been published online in November 2010 on the Peliti website, and I used the information for the specialised network named "Localities of Farms" (Κατά τόπους αγροκτήματα[1]) from the annual journal of Peliti network as it has been published for years 2010-2011. The data I processed concerning "Localities of Farms" include all farmers as enlisted in the network, without distinction between agriculture farming and domestic animal breeding, although Peliti journal gives information as if it is about two networks, one for plants and one for animals. In many cases, same farms undertake both activities, so I avoided double entries.

Below one can see the locality and number of members of both networks in Greece as of autumn 2010. The general network "From hand to hand" has 177 members in total and from the map it is obvious that in each locality members are very few. The specialised network "Localities of Farms" has 213 members in total. At this point, I should note that in both networks I kept data concerning farms and

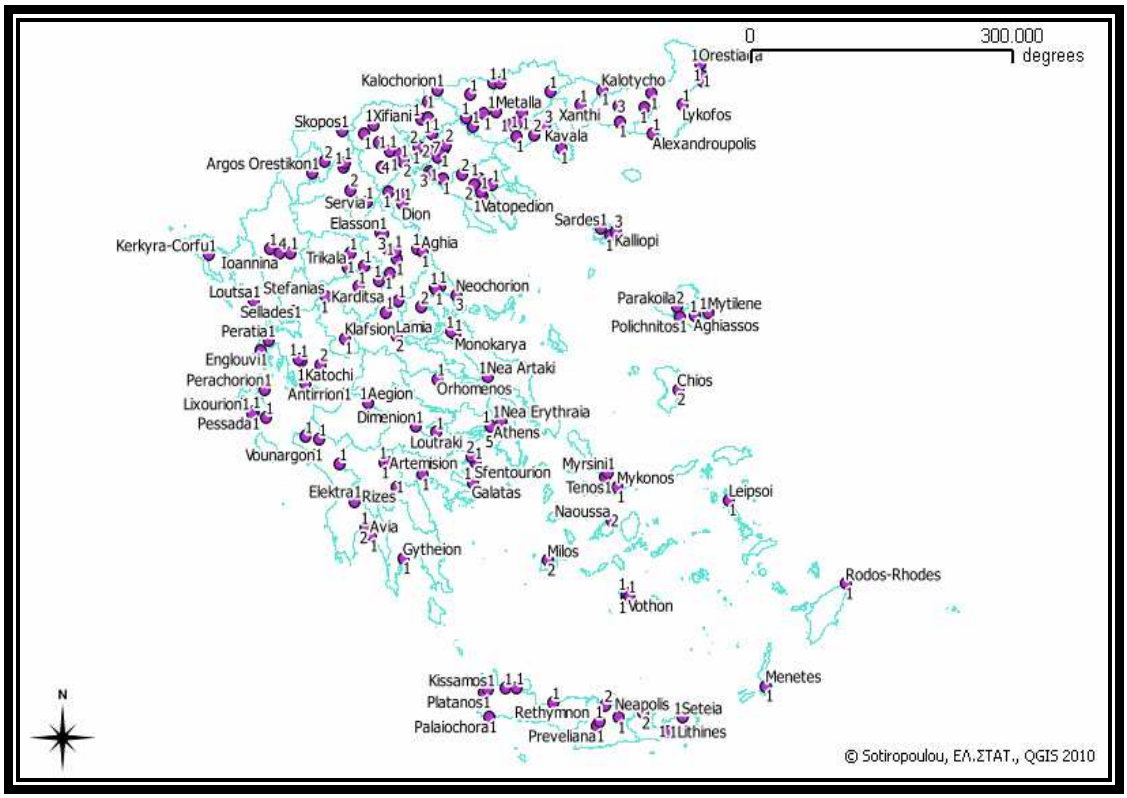
[1] Translation of network names is done according to publications of Peliti in its English website version.

members as given by Peliti. In many cases, a member does participate with its entire household; in other cases, both husband and wife of the household are members of the network. I count names of members as appearing in Peliti lists, so I did not researched the household participation through one member only.

Map 4.3: Membership of "From hand to hand" network (general exchange network):



Map 4.4: Membership of "Localities of Farms" network (specialised network)



It is obvious that comparing absolute numbers in both networks shows only that the general exchange network tends to attract more members in greater urban areas or around them, while the specialised network for preservation of traditional varieties of plants and traditional species of domestic animals has a more dispersed membership. Of course, one could also say that the data I have is limited as a sample, so there might not exist same patterns if members were more numerous.

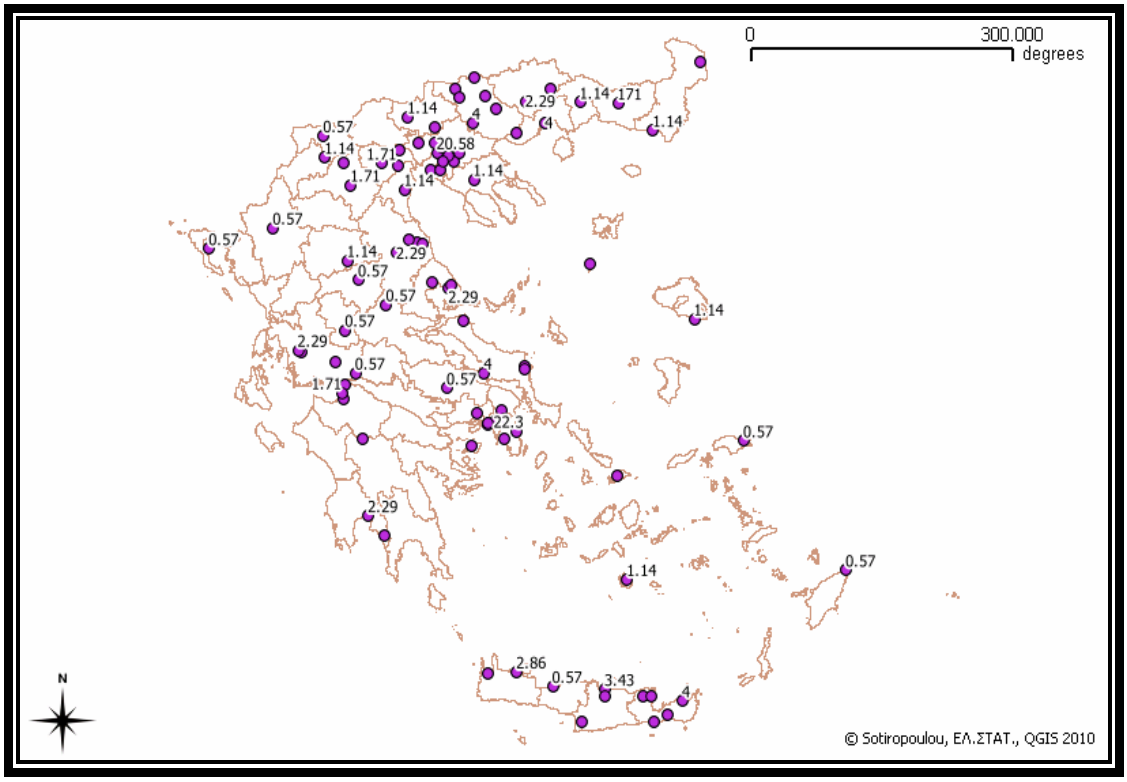
Moreover, from observation and free discussions with members and non-members of Peliti, I know that many people use both networks without being official Peliti members. This works more or less like this: an official Peliti member lets his or her relatives and friends know about Peliti and then they exchange through the official member's contacts and "name". In addition, I have also met people who have exchanged through Peliti network facilities for their own activities, without ever registering as official members of the network. So, membership might be fairly indicative of the real activity or of the real numbers of people involved. Moreover, during the last 2 years (2011-2012) it seems - and information from free discussions I have had with Peliti members and cultivators which are not registered members verifies it- that official members become something like node-members. In other words, official members are nodes/coordinators of the exchange in their area or in

their specialty and they might provide with traditional varieties dozens or hundreds of people.

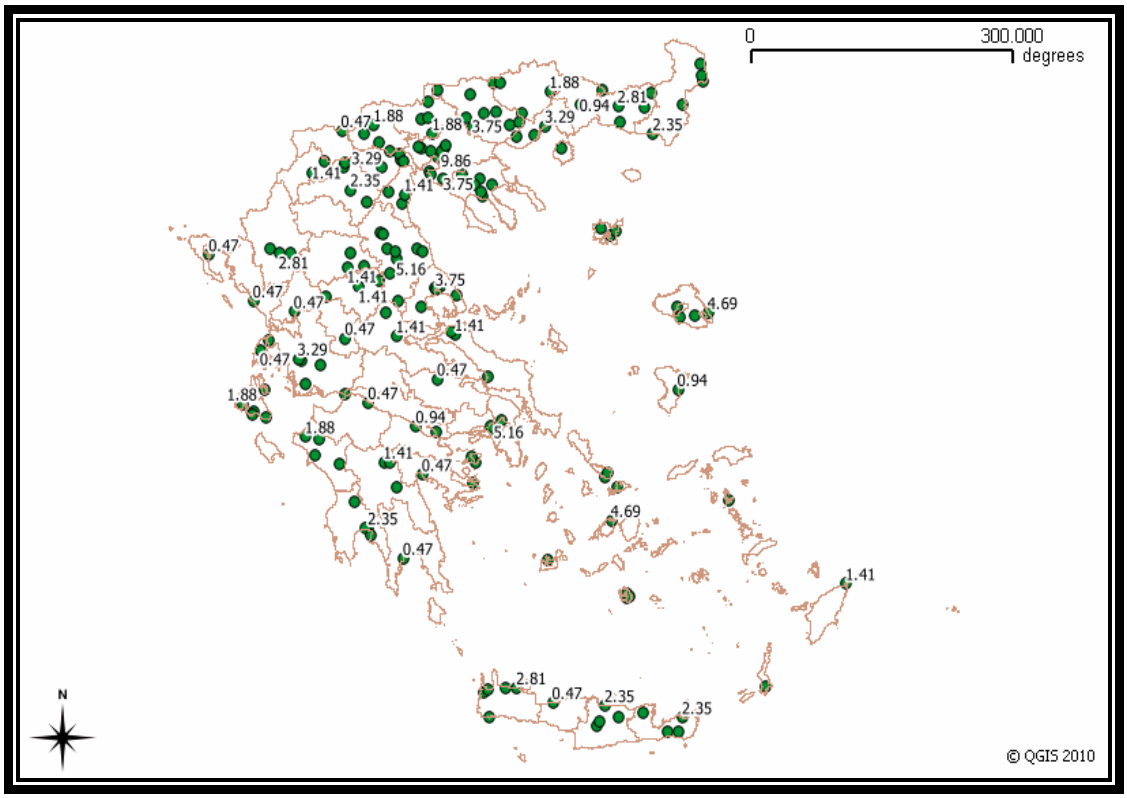
In some cases, same people participate in both networks. However this is not as common as I expected. Membership disparities are more evident when one compares the maps of membership percentage as dispersed in each prefecture. The following two maps show that the specialised network does not follow at all the general population pattern. The general exchange network, does attract more members in Athens and Thessaloniki area, but membership in Athens is still low (22,3%) instead of 34,31% of Athens population, while Thessaloniki prefecture attracts far more members (20,58%) than the general population concentration number (9,65%). Therefore even in the case of the general exchange network, population dispersion patterns do not match the general population pattern of the country.

It seems that particularly the specialised network attracts members in the islands, and in the Northern part of the country. The prefecture of Thessaloniki attracts a percentage (9,86%) near the general population percentage, while Athens, despite its population, attracts only 5,16% of the specialised network's membership.

Map 4.5: Percentage of "From hand to hand" network members in each prefecture



Map 4.6: Percentage of "Localities of Farms" network in each prefecture



4.3.2. The other groups for preservation of traditional varieties

Counting the groups all over the country which, following the example of Peliti, had announced that they are working for the preservation of traditional varietes, I had found them to be at least six active in summer 2011. However, the new structure of Peliti local groups creates a question whether those groups can be counted again as independent, or whether it is enough to mention them as Peliti nodes in the country. The question is crucial, given that those local Peliti groups have emerged from groups who have been independent and might have a variety of activities apart from the preservations of varieties and the organisation of local fairs in their areas. Moreover, it is not clear to me whether this question is a matter of same people participating in several activities (which at the end are very intertwined in terms of discourse, aims and practices) or a matter of having local groups being linked officially to Peliti without the local character, aims and worries being eliminated from the agenda of their members.

By making this question a bit clearer, I can say that we need to see the groups with activity well beyond preservation of needs also as independent informal entities. For example, the group in Lemnos named Spori (Seed)[1], also is working in establishing exchange links among its members which might refer to all goods and services. They also organise free bazaars and other events that they think are relevant to the aims of the group.

Then, I would like to talk a bit about them as such, as independent groups. Most of them cooperate with Peliti, as I have already written, but some have opted for acting locally only. Some of them are not even networks, but they just use local proximity of their members to create an unofficial group of people who are able to find traditional seeds whenever they need any. All of them provide the seeds for free and there is only a (loose) obligation of the receiver to cultivate the seeds, and renew the variety for next year and provide with seeds any other person for free.

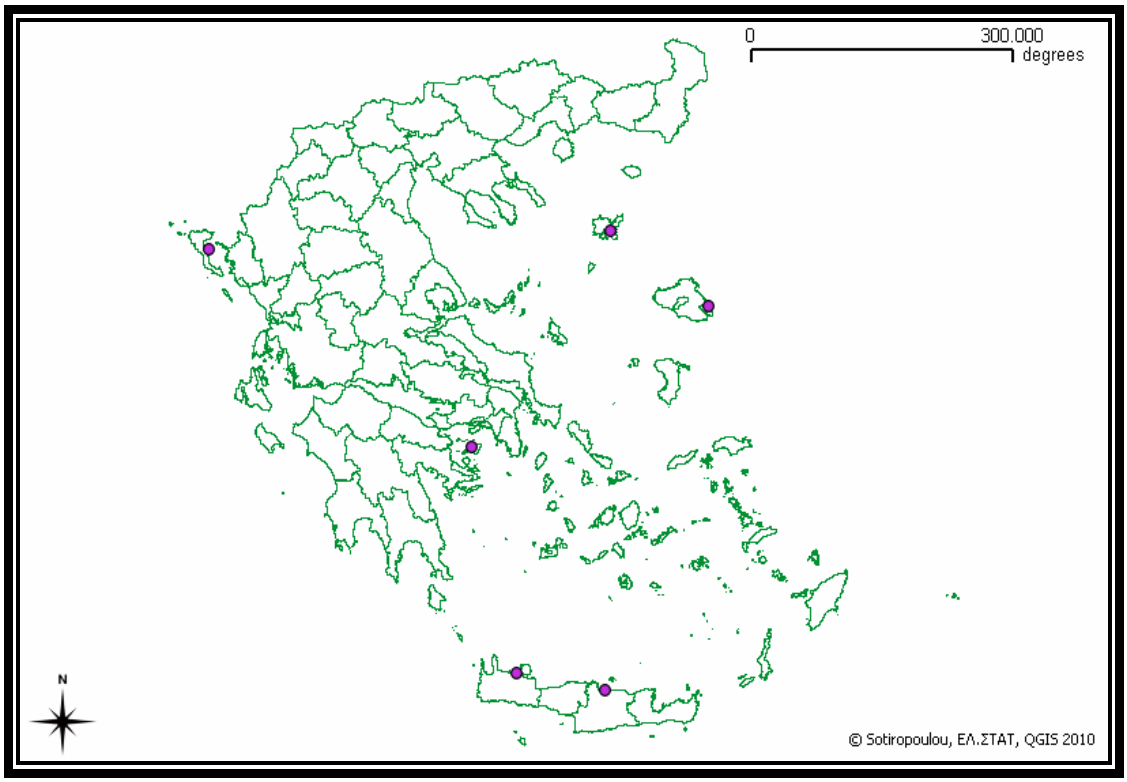
Apart from the group in Lemnos island, named Spori (Σπόρι), there are other four (4) schemes specialising in traditional varieties – which brings the total number of this type of schemes to six (6), including Peliti network.

There are also several groups who have existed in several places in Greece, but their activity has been suspended or absorbed by groups who at the end work till today. There are also other groups who have integrated into their activity the exchange and preservation of traditional varieties, so we cannot just examine them in this unit, but in the other units of this chapter.

The map constructed in 2010 comprised a group of cultivators in Herakleion prefecture which does not exist anymore.

[1] http://sporilimnou.blogspot.gr/

Map 4.7: Local groups and networks for preservation of traditional varieties



What is important in the case of independent groups and schemes which exchange traditional varieties is that most of them are located in islands; not really very small islands, neither islands that rely mostly on tourism (although one would ask the question, why small islands are not that active, so that they are able to cover better the needs of both their habitants and visitors). The answer that Peliti covers most of the needs in information and varieties-exchange for the mainland might not be enough as an explanation, given that the islands also participate with high membership in the specialised network of Peliti. The creation in 2011-2012 of the local Peliti groups has just created another picture of the activity that needs to be further researched.

4.3.3. The Logo-Timis exchange network

The Logo-Timis[1] network (Λόγω Τιμής – by word of honour, in Greek) which started its function on June 4th 2010, based in Greater Athens area . From the

[1] www.logo-timis.gr

announcements of the network that are open to all internet users, we see a prevalence of services: dental care, business consulting, music lessons, architectural design, printing services, homeopathy and alternative therapy/diet consulting, hotel and restaurant services, etc. However, given that there is an option for a private profile on the network, it is not clear whether the announcements freely accessible on the web are the only ones.

4.3.4. The Rodia Exchange Network[1] in Rethymnon city

This exchange network has been established in spring 2012 and they also hold open markets (bazaars) in order to facilitate transactions. I am a member of this network too. Although it is difficult for me to attend regularly their bazaars and assemblies, given that I live in Chania, I can say that the experience of the exchange network itself is very interesting, exactly because this is the only exchange network I am part of.

4.4. The free-exchange bazaars (χαριστικά-ανταλλακτικά παζάρια) and free networks (χαριστικά δίκτυα)

4.4.1. The free-exchange bazaars

Given that bazaars have no members, but just visitors or users and the only regular participants associated with them are the organising groups, I decided to study bazaars in a different way than networks. I used the typology of free bazaars described in Section 2.3. and I tried to focus on their geographical dispersion and regularity.

In this unit, I will present the activity without “counting” the free bazaars organised within the framework of other schemes (apart from the regular and permanent ones), with the exemption of permanent free bazaars which are run by schemes. This is important, because free bazaars comprise often an activity that

[1] http://www.rodia-reth.gr/

schemes like parallel currencies or exchange networks organise for their membership. In several cases, the free bazaars have been the first attempts of a group of people to try their abilities in organising something related to non-monetary economy. In other words, some schemes have emerged out of free bazaar organisation groups, or other schemes consider free bazaars part of their activity, no matter what their "officially announced" structure might be. Therefore, free bazaars are well intertwined with all structure of schemes, not only with the free networks which will be presented in the next unit.

The first free-exchange bazaar in Greece had been organised by Sporos Cooperative in downtown Athens since 2003 but now, while still being part of the same cooperative, it has moved to its own place and is named Skoros[1] (moth, in Greek). The Skoros assembly permitted me to attend their meetings and also volunteer for their bazaar "service" one afternoon per week for a month, so that I can observe directly how the bazaar works.

There are other permanent free bazaars in major cities of the country: two in Thessalonike (one of them within the framework of Charise-to free network), and other permanent bazaars in Rodos city, Chania, Ioannina, Kerkyra, Ierapetra (within the framework of Kaereti network).

Regular free bazaars are organised in most areas like: Athens city (at least three series of bazaars, one within the framework of Skoros, one with one regular bazaar organised in Syntagma square[2], the place where Greek May2011 movement gathered, and one within the framework of swishing parties[3]), Aegina island, Anavyssos (Greater Athens area), Ikaria island, Herakleion city, Euboia island, Ioannina, Kaissariani (Greater Athens area), Kilkis, Neo Herakleio (Greater Athens area), Thessalonike (at least two series of bazaars, one organised within the framework of Charise-to network and one as a swishing parties series[4]), Eleusina (Greater Athens area), Syros island, Alexandroupolis, Tripoli, Katerini and Korinthos.

Occasional free bazaars are obviously even more numerous. It is important to see several groups to organise bazaars in many many places in Greece, sometimes in the same city or area. Attiki, i.e. the Greater Athens area attracts most of the

[1] http://skoros.espiv.net/
[2] http://www.adantallaktiko-pazari.gr/
[3] http://swishing.gr/
[4] http://swishing-thess.blogspot.com/.

initiatives: there have been free bazaars in Agia Paraskevi, Agia Varvara (and the municipality has been involved in this), Agioi Anargyroi/Kamatero, Agios Dimitrios, Galatsi, Laurio, Maroussi, Moshato, Nikaia, Palaio Faliro, Peiraias, Perama, Peristeri, Xalandri, Vyronas, and of course downtown Athens, where I can count 8 occasional bazaars (i.e. without counting the permanent and regular bazaars) the last 3 years.

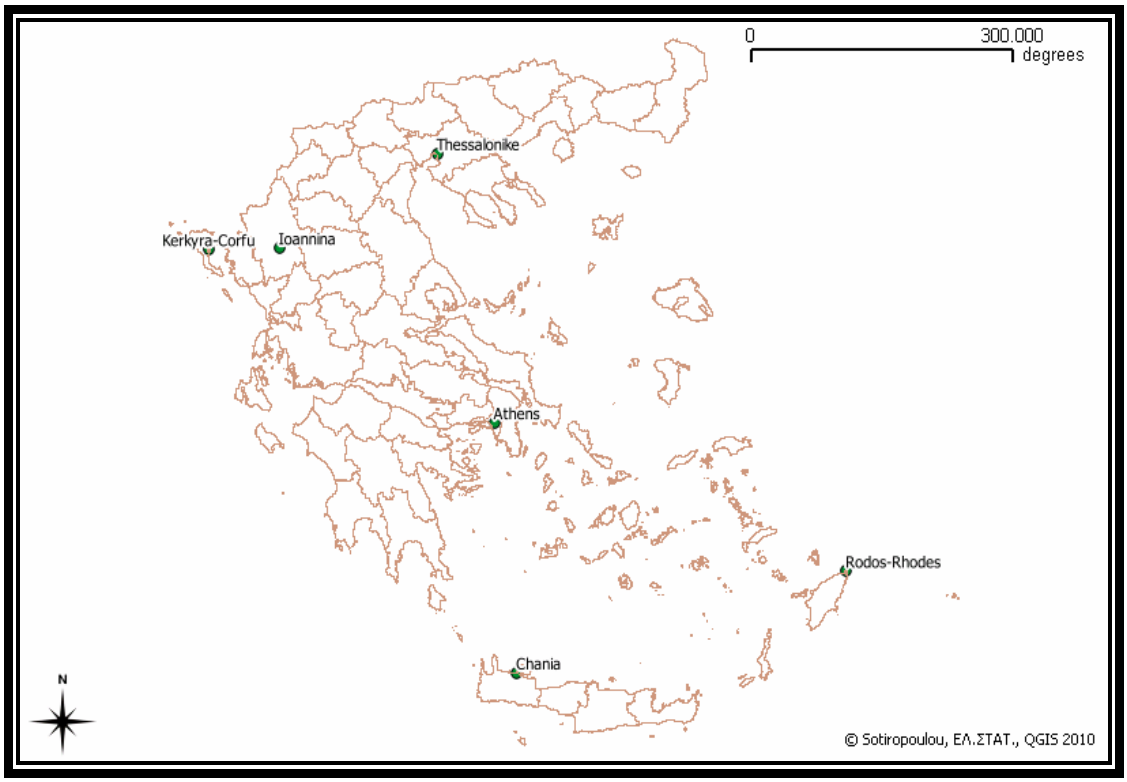
An interesting case is the bazaar in Palaio Faliro, where it has been announced that vouchers would be available for those who would offer to the bazaar but were unable to find anything they needed to take, so they could use the voucher for next time. I have no information yet concerning how this system worked and whether a second bazaar like this took place (to see how the saved vouchers were used).

Occasional free bazaars in other cities than Greater Athens area have been organised the last three years in Agrinio, Amfissa, Beroia, Chania, Drama, Herakleio, Kalymnos island, Kerkyra/Corfu island, Lamia, Larissa, Patra, Pyrgos, Rethymno, Thessalonike and Thiva.

I have not attended all those bazaars. Some of them I did and I can say that the volume of stuff gathered and exchanged and the number of people who might have attended is not to be dismissed. However, there are no precise quantitative data about the bazaars, given that organising a free bazaars requires a lot of work; therefore, it is not even easy to keep record of things offered and taken or of people visiting or just wanting to see what is happening. Some of the bazaars take place in squares, parks or other open spaces, exactly with the intention that people who did not know about, to see the activity while they are walking around. There has been a case where I have (tried to) attend the bazaar in Greater Athens area, but the bazaar did never take place, because people were not interested in bringing stuff to give for free and take something else from the bazaar.

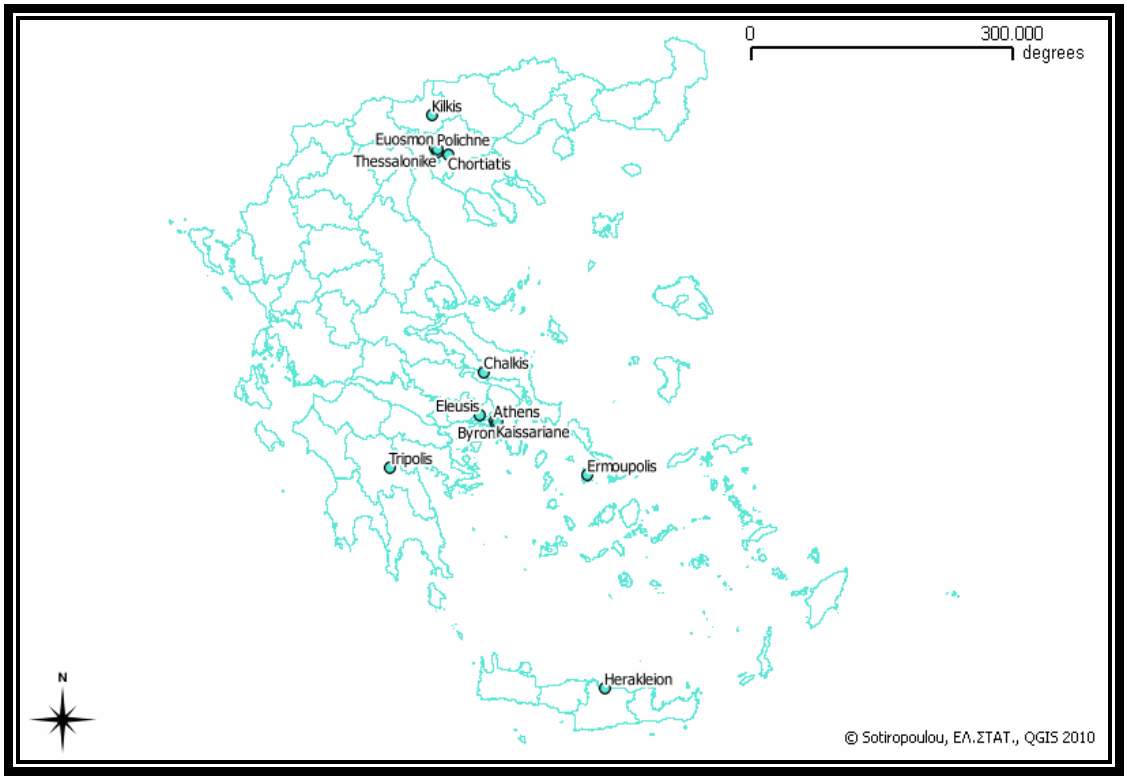
Taking into account the mapping of 2010, one can see that in autumn 2010 there existed six permanent free-exchange bazaars, Skoros, which has been the oldest, and other five permanent free bazaars in major cities of the country (Thessaloniki, Corfu, Chania, Ioannina and Rhodes). Below, the map shows the points (all urban areas) where the bazaars are located:

Map 4.8: Permanent free-exchange bazaars in autumn 2010



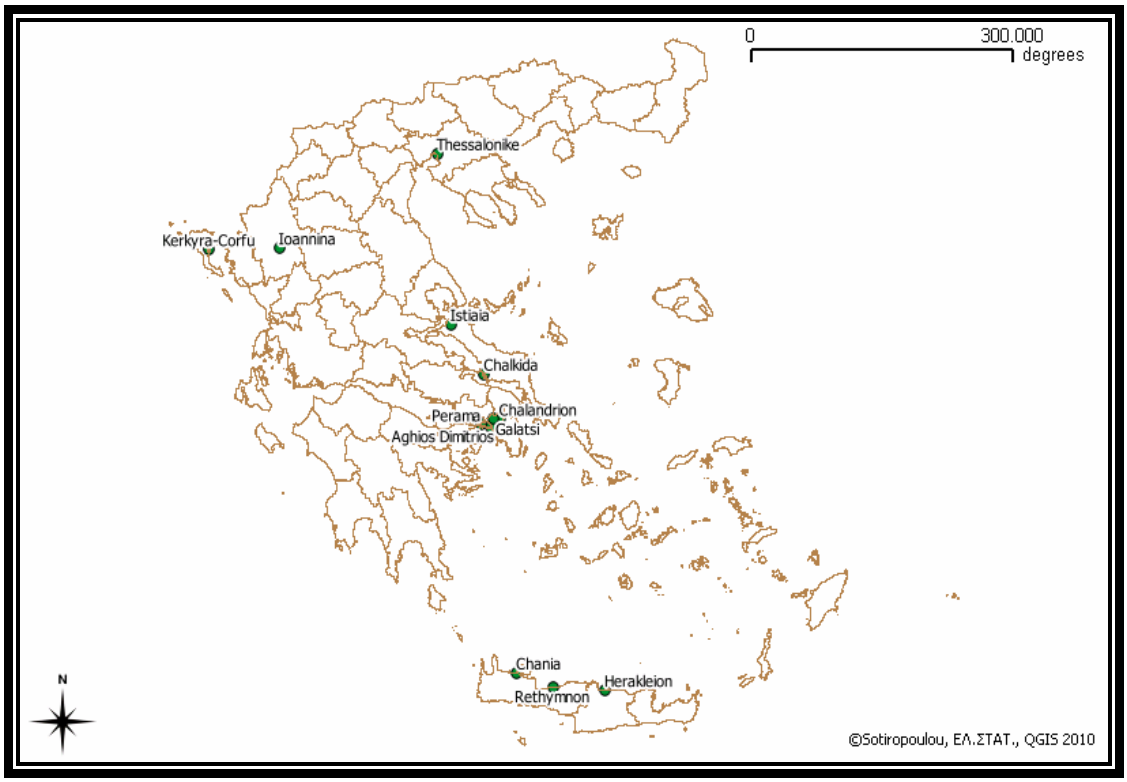
Among the regular bazaars in 2009-2010, there was one in Kilkis city, well supported by the local municipality, which seems not to be still in function.

Map 4.9: Regular free-exchange bazaars in autumn 2010

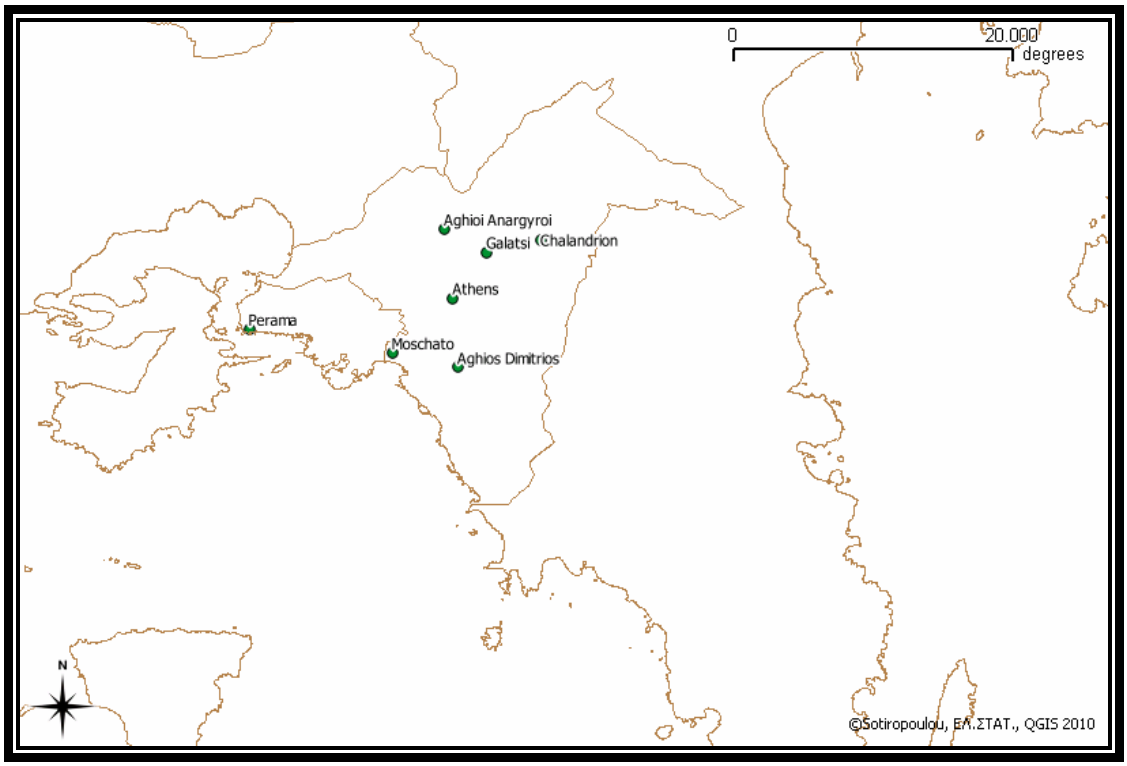


Occasional bazaars have also increased in numbers since autumn 2010, in both big urban centres but also other, smaller cities. Each point on the following map shows one occasional bazaar; the exception is the main urban area of Athens, where I count eight occasional bazaars the two years (2009-2010).

Map 4.10: Occasional free-exchange bazaars in autumn 2010



Map 4.11: Occasional free-exchange bazaars in Attica prefecture in autumn 2010



One can easily see that free bazaars seem to be a feature of urban areas – actually, the greater the urban centre, the greater the free-bazaar activity which emerges there. Moreover, regular and occasional bazaars tend to concentrate in big urban centres (Athens prevails in that sense), following the general population pattern, despite the fact we have no information about the visitors and participants on all bazaars.

However, one could note the following:

a) Bazaars usually have a lot of visitors, originating in all age groups, purchasing-power groups, gender and ethnicity (this information is based on observation done by the author in several bazaars).

b) Given that the bazaar organisers do not keep any records about the bazaar visitors, a bazaar may attract visitors from a larger area than the neighbourhood or the city the bazaar is located in. Therefore, to label free bazaars as a strictly urban phenomenon would obscure the fact that bazaars in smaller cities might attract visitors from semi-urban or rural areas as well.

c) The location of the bazaar does really show something, probably the urban or urbanised perception of free giving and taking. This is important especially for the Greater Athens area, where most free bazaars are located in the main Athens city area

(and actually not in the richest neighbourhoods) and in suburbs which usually both face economic hardship (in terms of per capita income).

d) The distinction made by Masoudi Nejad[1] between commercial and social bazaars might be very useful in this case, especially if one takes into account research results from observation and participation of the author in several bazaar activities. According to Masoudi Nejad's distinction, free bazaars are social bazaars. However, at this stage of exploring this subject-matter, it would not be wise to stick with such a distinction only, as we do not have full and clear picture of the free bazaar activity in Greece.

4.4.2. The free networks

There are three only free networks in Greece, but both cover the entire country: one is Freecycle[2] in Greece, which actually is member of the international Freecycle network which has be established in USA several years ago and is the oldest free bazaar in Greece; the other is Χάρισέ-το[3] (pronounced Charise-To, Give-it-away) network, which is based in Thessaloniki and also organises free bazaars in cooperation with the city municipality. Both promote re-use of stuff their members do not want anymore, but they also try to cover needs. Freecycle is based in several cities in Greece, with administrators in each node and the central one in Athens – while Charise-to is based in Thessalonike. Charise-to runs a permanent free bazaar in Thessalonike (Χαρισομάγαζο) and organises regularly free bazaars in Greater Thessalonike area.

The third free network is Dosse-Pare [Give-and-Take (Δώσε-Πάρε)][4], which is the most recently created (June 2010) and it is based in Athens and Thessaloniki, but they also have members in other Greek cities. The distinctive features of this network are a) there is a separate forum for exchange of services among the network members and b) a "library", where members can lend and borrow books among them. Moreover, they organise free craft workshops for their members – or publish photo-workshops in a special section of their website. Dosse-Pare organises too "creators'

[1] Masoudi Nejad R. (XXXX).
[2] http://freecycle.wikispaces.com/freecycle_gr
[3] www.xariseto.gr
[4] http://dwsepare.ning.com/

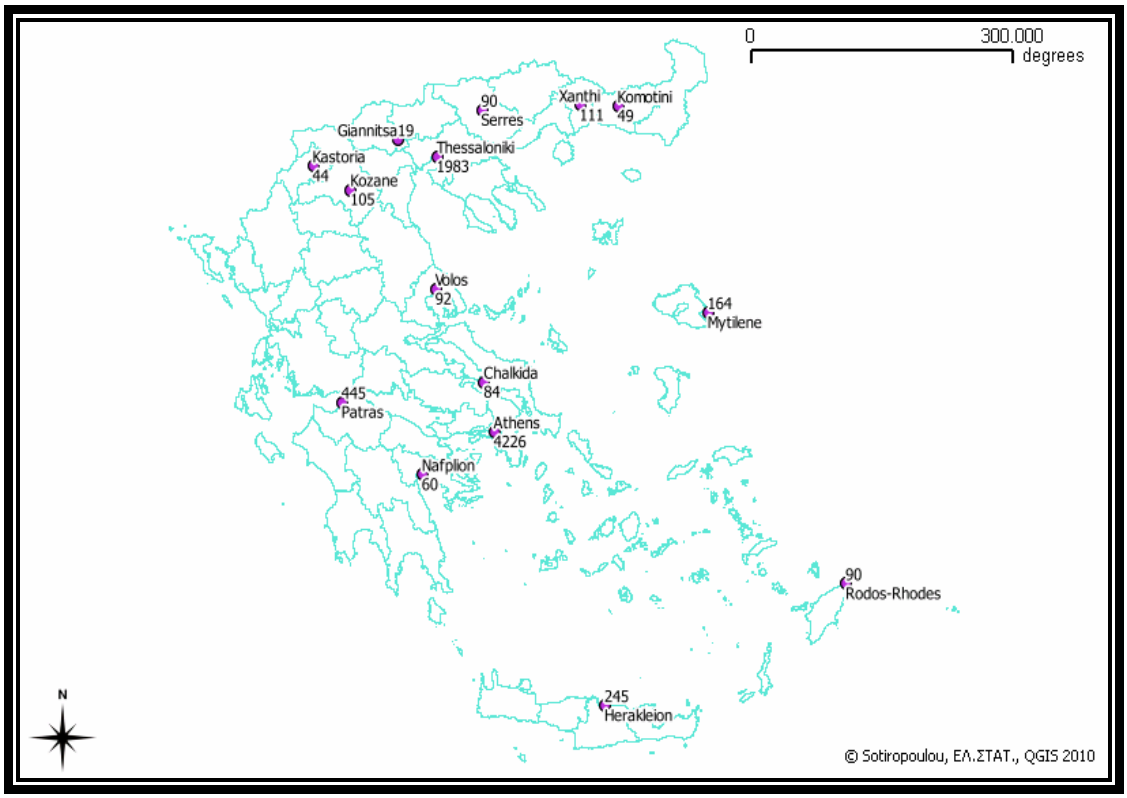
bazaars" where the stuff offered and taken consists of things that the members have created originally using materials and re- or upcycling things they have acquired from the network.

I am a member of Dosse-Pare since September 2010 and a member of Charise-to since December 2011. Given that I was living in Athens till November 2011, it has been much easier for me to attend the gatherings and bazaars of Dosse-Pare.

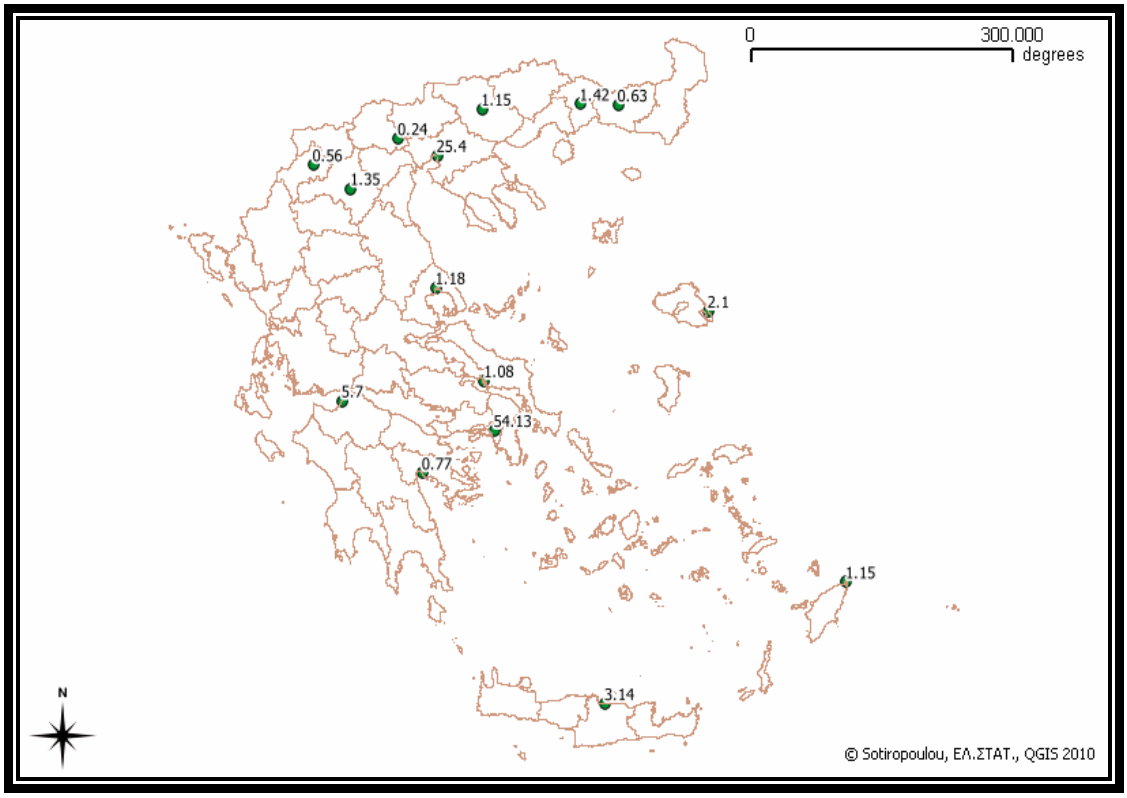
The Freecycle network is structured in a way that is more or less decentralised. Apart from the main node in Athens, there are several online nodes and coordinators in other major cities of the country. The network had 7807 members on December 12th 2010. The data used for this research have been acquired from the online available information on total numbers of membership in each node, which means that I have no data on members' dispersion within prefectures or big urban centres, nor any information about members from areas where there is no local node (Do they register with central node of Athens? Do they register with the closest node to them?). The map below shows the membership dispersion according to the data on Freecycle Greece website in autumn 2010.

It is obvious that Athens gets the greater share of Freecycle membership. To compare the membership dispersion pattern with general population dispersion patterns, one can also see the map of the percentage of membership in each prefecture. Although I do not know where the members from areas without local nodes register with the network, one can have a first picture about this free network's geographical dispersion.

Map 4.12: Freecycle Greece network members in autumn 2010



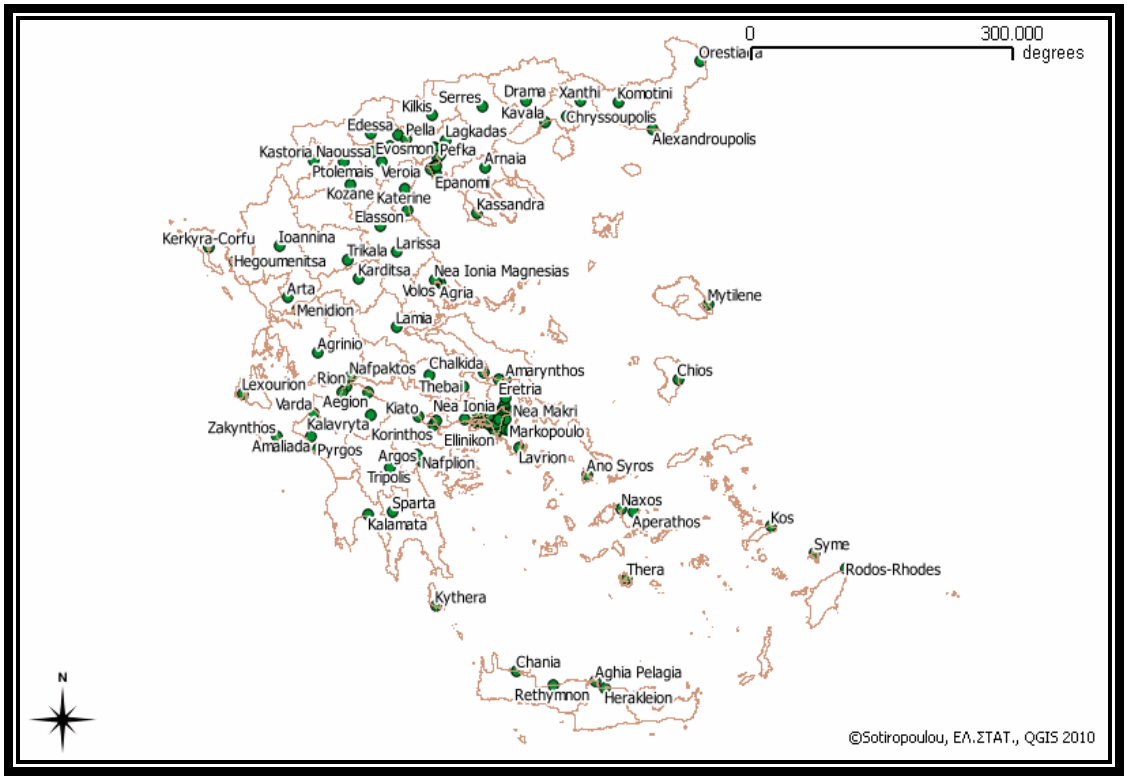
Map 4.13: Percentage of Freecycle members in each prefecture in autumn 2010



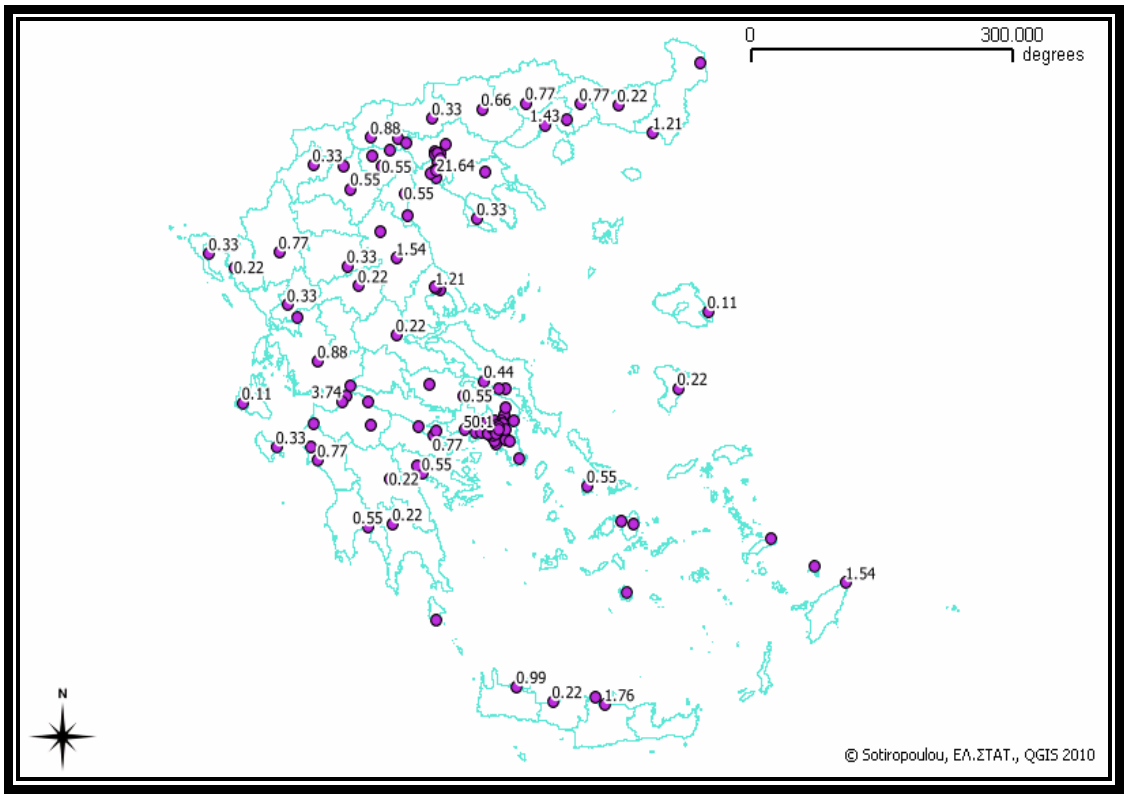
Dosse-Pare network has accepted that I register since September 2010 as a network member, so I had access to information about membership numbers. However, given that the data collected was in raw form, the difficult part was to process the data while not all of it was available (actually some members do not announce publicly their location and they have not replied to the researcher's message asking for this information). However, according to the data, the network had on December 5th 2010 918 members, of which 910 could be located on prefecture level. The members were located in the areas as depicted on the map.

Some points should be made about this network. First, I do not have any detailed data yet on exchange of services and work done by members. Second, membership seems to be concentrated in big urban centres. However, the network permits free provision of stuff disposed by members to other members throughout the country. Therefore, I might see most members in urban centres, but a part of the stuff disposed within the scheme is transferred to small urban centres. I have no data on those transfers.

Map 4.14: Dosse-Pare network membership location in autumn 2010



Map 4.15: Percentage of Dosse-Pare network members in each prefecture in autumn 2010



It is obvious from the last maps in this section 4.4, that both networks (Freecycle and Dosse-Pare) not only follow, more or less, the general pattern of population dispersion in Greece, but this pattern is quite enhanced in favour of the greater urban centres, which receive a share quite bigger than the population they have. The other urban centres attract several members, but they usually do not keep up with percentages near their general population percentage.

4.5. The sui generis schemes

Having excluded collective cultivation projects and kitchen collectives, the sui generis schemes I have included in my research have been finally three (3) at the end.

4.5.1. The Money Back System[1]

The Money Back System is a network established in summer 2009 which combines exchange trade but also monetary elements. The network has been created by a private company, which also own the intellectual property rights of the system. Bus companies of Crete and Dodecanese cooperate as sponsors of the system while other local companies (super markets, pastries, clothe stores, cafés, furniture stores, cinemas, etc) are by contract commercial partners of the managing company.

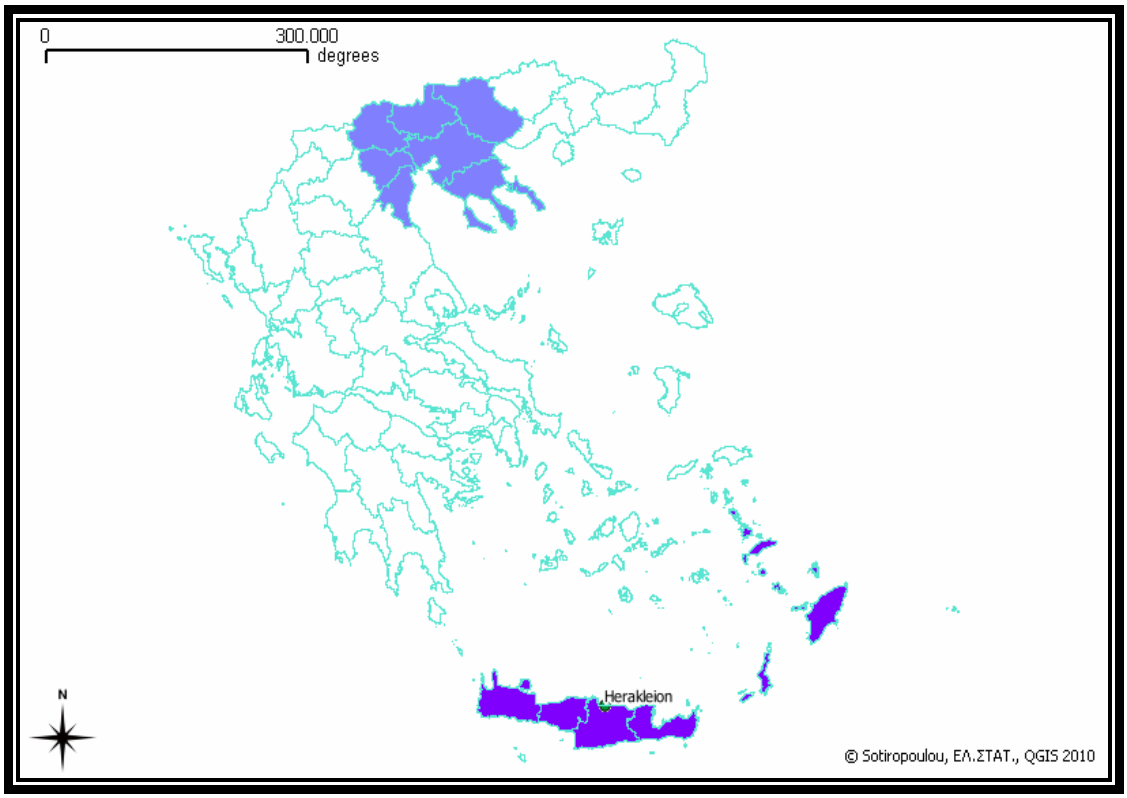
Local ship and air companies also participate and the scheme has been extended to the entire country: according to the project, the used tickets of mass transport means, no matter in which part of the country have been used, can be re-used at the their nominal value to buy goods and services from the participating companies, but of course, they cannot be used again for public transport. Each entreprise announces in public which part of the price a customer pays can be paid in tickets. The only prerequisite is that the value of the ticket is written on the ticket and it does not matter when the tickets have been issued or used for transportation.

The network has expanded in other areas of Greece, like Macedonia (mostly in Greater Thessalonike area), Peloponnese, Chios island (where Dodecanese belong) and Attica, i.e. Greater Athens area, where most of the stores are and the variety of goods and services is mostly developed. The scheme is distinguished first for its simplicity based on the used tickets circulating as money, second for its B2B2C structure and third for its environmental and economic implications.

In December 2010, however, the expansion of Money Back System was the following:

[1] http://www.moneybacksystem.gr/home.html.

Map 4.16: MoneyBackSystem in autumn 2010



4.5.2. The LATHOS. Collective

This scheme is based in Archanes, which is a small town in Herakleion mountainous area. The scheme is actually an artistic collective, named LATHOS (error, in Greek) who work on several projects, within the framework of social intervention conceived as artwork. The scheme managed to construct an entire house using exchange networks instead of money (apart from all transactions that by law should be done with official currency) and they aspire to continue this same exchange activity in order to work on more artistic projects in the future.

The collective works on open technology projects and has invited me to contribute to the projects[1].

[1] Information on the projects and on the designs created and offered for free online can be found at http://dialoguetechnologies.wordpress.com/.

4.5.3. The ARTBANK

The third scheme, named ARTBANK[1], is located in Athens. This is an art project by a collective of artists who want to create a platform for discussion and debate on the terms of money, currency, exchange and economy. Therefore, the artworks created and exhibited by the collective are used as money tokens or as pretexts for inviting people to exchange views on essential economic notions.

The main idea is that artworks can be used as money and currency – to facilitate this flow, the ARTBANK collective experiments with the idea that limited and numbered copies of the artworks can be used a currency, so that users can invest in art. To be more precise, the investment will be in a parallel currency backed by artworks of the collective. Each user who has acquired enough ARTcash to buy any artwork, can do this – or she/he can just exchange the ARTcash for other goods and services, because the idea is that artwork increase in value through time, then many people might be willing in holding and exchange ARTcash.

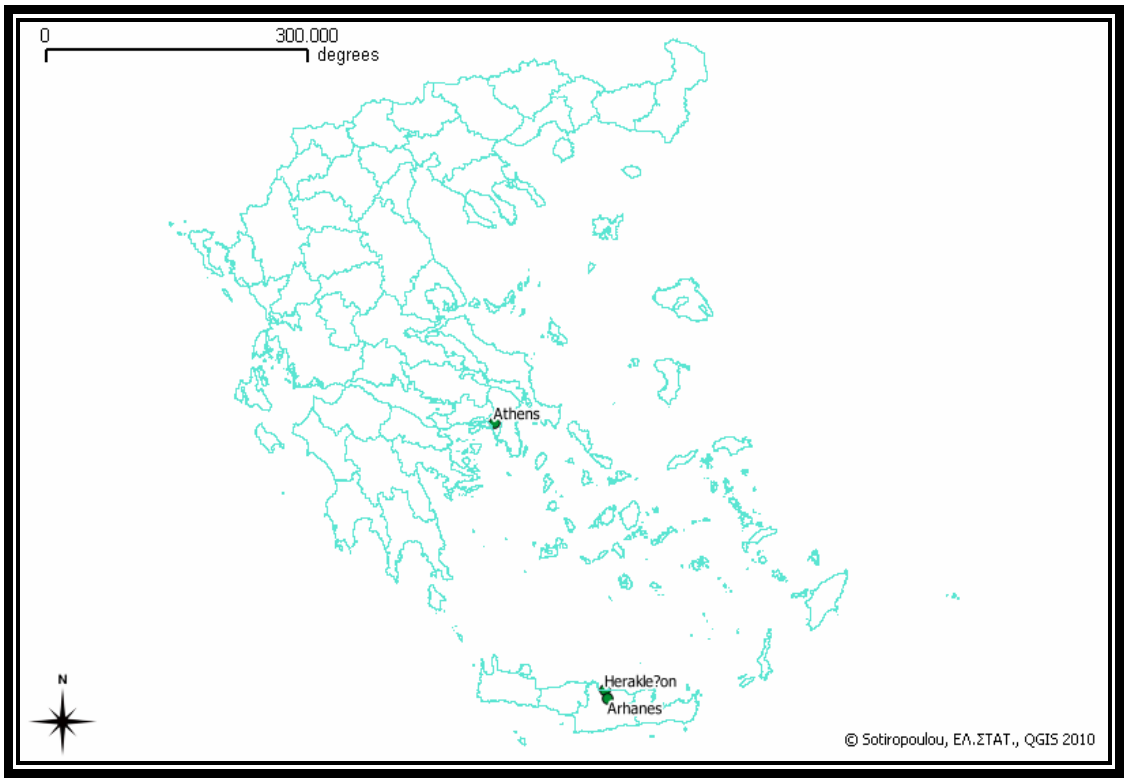
The last year (2012), ARTBANK experiments with creating exchange rates between ARTcash and goods and services and invites people to register either as artists or as users of ARTcash. I have registered too recently (autumn 2012) offering various goods and services.

Considering the sui generis schemes, the map I constructed in autumn 2010 includes a scheme in Greater Herakleion area, which does not exist anymore.

---

[1] More information can one find at the group's blogs http://orizontasgegonotwn.blogspot.com/search/label/ArtBank and http://trapezatehnis.blogspot.gr/

Map 4.17: The other two sui generis schemes in autumn 2010



4.6. Other projects?[1]

It is not easy to be sure about the exact number of schemes, given that several are still in the phase of organisation – and several other are in phase of restructuring. In some cases, there are schemes which have started running but they were not developing very quickly, so I am not sure whether this means a steady development or just is the first stage of dissolution. Moreover, there are some schemes who stopped working or were merged with other schemes in their area, so I did not mention them. There are also schemes which never managed to start really working, so I do not mention them either. I hope that the schemes which are not working yet and are mentioned in Annex A, overpass the stage of organisation – however, we will know for sure after many months or years what has really happened with them.

I have not either mentioned schemes or organised attempts to create schemes in years before 2009. The research project was not about the pre-2009 era, although

[1] I cross-checked my findings with the lists of solidarity economy schemes in Greece as presented by Roumeliotis, A. (2012) pp. 34-36 and by Staiou, E.R. (2012) in her online mapping http://.organosi20.gr.

many schemes include members who have former experience in establishing a scheme which failed at the end.

Moreover, in some cases, it is not sure what scheme exactly exists and whether it exists at all. An example is the Larissa exchange network[1] where there is only a facebook account without being clear whether this is call for organisation or the scheme's tool for transactions. The network of Lykovrysi-Pefki (Greater Athens are[2]) has a website completely closed to any visitor, i.e. one cannot communicate with them. Then, there is a facebook page which seems to be an exchange network too[3] and two other webpages which seem to be networks and/or also information nodes at the same time: Exchange-it/Antallaxeto[4] and Exchange Economy (Ανταλλακτική Οικονομία)[5].

Finally, there have been two major gatherings of schemes. One has been held in Ierapetra in December 2011, where the schemes of Crete and Fassouli currency participated. The other has been held very recently in Greater Athens area and it has comprised schemes from all over the country. That was the 1st Festival on Solidarity & Cooperative Economy[6] held in October 2012 and was not covering parallel currencies and exchange networks, but also other forms of solidarity economy and degrowth initiatives. An interesting feature of the Festival has been the special currency created for people to be able to get food from the collective kitchen. People could offer stuff to the bazaar of the festival or could volunteer for the festival and they were receiving in return the Festival Currency which entitled them to a plate of food from the kitchen. As for me, I attended two out of the three days of the festival and I have been invited to present issues out of my research at the second festival day.

4.7. Expansion during the years of the crisis[7]

When I officially started my PhD it was February 2009. Before that date, the research proposal had been prepared in autumn 2008, actually, just after the breakout

[1] https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100003610298315&ref=ts&fref=ts
[2] http://pelykoia.wordpress.com/
[3] https://www.facebook.com/Antallagi.Boitheia
[4] http://www.antallakseto.gr/
[5] http://antallaktiki.gr/
[6] http://www.festival4sce.org/
[7] Many of the information used in this section, originates in Sotiropoulou, I. (2011e).

of the international financial crisis. At that time, it would have been impossible to anticipate the development and expansion of this activity the following three years. The research proposal submitted to the University of Crete in mid-December 2008 included only two (!) case studies: the (double) exchange network of Peliti and the Athens Time Bank which was the only existing parallel currency in Greece at that time. In January 2009 there has been announced the initiative of Ovolos, now perhaps the major parallel currency running in Greece.

As it has been obvious comparing the mapping data and the data in this chapter, as well as the data in Annex A, the schemes have increased in absolute numbers since October 2008. As I have already mentioned, the research proposal included only two schemes and at that same time (October 2008) there also existed the two free networks: Freecycle Greece and Charise-to network and the permanent free-exchange bazaar of Skoros in dowtown Athens. Those have been added into the research project in spring 2009, when it has been decided that it was impossible to study exchanges and non-monetary schemes without investigating free bazaars and free networks. Then, one could say that in October 2008 there existed five schemes only and those were of various structures and nature.

In August 2011, when I prepared my research questionnaire[1], the latter had integrated a list of already functioning schemes which were either exchange networks, or free networks or parallel currency networks. The list contained eighteen (18) schemes without being included in the list the sui generis initiatives and the free bazaars. So, if we add to this number the three (3) sui generis schemes and the five (5) then permanent free bazaars [let alone the regular ones] and without adding the schemes that were under organisation phase or were just starting up in autumn 2011 (when the questionnaire was distributed all over the schemes and many more people who might be close to them), one can say that we had twenty six (26) really functioning schemes in early autumn 2011.

In autumn 2012, as one can see from Annex A, this numbers seems to have increased even more. However, many of the new schemes are in organisation phase and are not effectively working yet.

On the other hand, there is an increase in participation and in absolute numbers of membership in most of the schemes. Well, given that most schemes have

[1] See Annex C.

been established within the last three years, their members are… new members anyway. I mean, we can only know about Peliti and the Athens Time Bank, whether they have increased their members since 2009 onwards. Even if we count only the Peliti members who accept that their data is published online, we can see that new members have been added since 2009. The same happened with the Athens Time Bank. Particularly about this scheme, given that I am a member of since its first call for participation in autumn 2005, I can tell that they not only increased their members the last years (2010-2011) but they also managed to do this despite the fact that several old members had changed their mind or their availability to participate. As already mentioned, since autumn 2011, the membership applications have been so many, that the Time Bank is trying to establish timebank nodes in several points of the Greater Athens area to be able to better facilitate transactions and time-banking management.

Membership in most schemes arrived to be hundreds or even thousands[1] – and for the moment, given the short period I study them, there is no way to know whether those membership numbers will reflect real activity in a year from now. However, it shows that thousands of people have been informed about the schemes and interested in registering, receiving updates and making transactions. One should note that several cases exist where people register but do not perform exchanges of any type; in many cases, each official member is a node-member for other non-official members to perform transactions within the network: household members use one member's account to trade through the network, and even friends and other relatives or neighbours are served through a member's account. Then, it is not sure whether those membership numbers are accurate, but on the other hand, even the fact of the registration shows that there is strong will to participate or stand by or at least learn more about this activity.

Another issue which is very important is that during the last three years, the schemes have not increased in membership only. Most of them had to adapt to the membership increase by modifying their rules or by extending their activities to cover more needs, given that new members brought new demands within the schemes.

For example, that Charise-to network organises regular free-exchange bazaars which take place in the Greater Thessalonike area and in 2011, they have established

[1] See, for more details on the membership as of January 2011, Sotiropoulou, I. (2011a).

a Χαρισο-μάγαζο (Chariso-magazo, Give-away store), i.e. a permanent free bazaar in downtown Thessalonike. We have also seen that the Athens Time Bank organises free workshops so that members (or even non-members) acquire new skills. Same activity is undertaken by Dosse-Pare (Give-take) which organises free workshops and creators' free-exchange bazaars, where people who create stuff with materials acquired through the network can exhibit and give-away their creations. The TEM network in Magnesia organises regular bazaars and so does the Exchange network of Chania. The new parallel currency in Ierapetra, Kaereti currency has established a permanent free-bazaar and organised an entire festival and pan-hellenic meeting in mid-December, while Peliti undertook an international traditional varieties meeting for spring 2012 which lasted three days instead of just one, as it has been the previous years. The TEM-Boutsouni currency in Kerkyra has established a collective cultivation project open to any member who might want to work in agricultural production.

A major factor in this activity to be promoted has been the attention by mass media[1]. Particularly since 2011 the mass media, which in previous times rarely paid any attention to it, were running all over the country to acquire interviews with the scheme coordinators, to win some shots from the fairs, bazaars and festivals and to present the activity even in their main newspaper pages or in their main TV news broadcasts. This media involvement has made the entire activity recognisable, to the point that one could wonder whether media attention persuaded people to participate or whether people would ever participate or establish the schemes if there was not such public attention. On the other hand, one would point that it might be the expansion of the activity that forced reporters and media managers to ask for such news reports. I can say, given that I study this activity since 2003, well before this PhD project had started, that with some very few exceptions, it was impossible before 2009 for both activists and academics to reach any type of media if the topic they wanted to talk about was economic activity without the euro currency.

[1] A search using the search machines available on the internet will give dozens of articles and videos concerning the non-monetary economic activity in Greece. Some of them have been very good quality and well beyond surface reporting, f.ex. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wKN_lDHqh_E&feature=related , a little part of the three (!) broadcast series by the show Alithina Senaria (True Scenarios) by Nikos Aslanidis and his team, in spring 2010. Or, another "early" publicity has been the long (5 pages in total) tribute by Andreas Roumeliotis in Eleftherotypia newspaper on March 28-29th, 2011. Since then the attention by mass media has increased.

Everybody knows what the situation of the Greek economy has been since October 2008 onwards. Actually, the Greek economy makes the news, particularly since October 2009 onwards, when the new administration of the Greek socialist party (PASOK) came to power and the International Monetary Fund found a new space to try its updated neoliberal policies.

Particularly since spring 2010 (when this research project had already completed its first year) the Greek economy is a laboratory for acute neoliberal policies: wage cuts in both government and private sectors, public expenditure cuts, delay of payments if those are due by the state, increase of horizontal tax rates and indirect taxes, etc. Unemployment has doubled or tripled in some regions since October 2008 while in November 2011, it reached 20,9% of the total working population, while the GDP declined in 2011 by 5,5%[1]. Other negative indicators like the number of small entreprises closing down, the number of homeless people, just like the number of people under the poverty line, the horrible reports from schools where children faint down because they are not fed adequately, etc. are increasing[2].

Therefore, everyone is blaming or looking towards the... direction of the economic and financial crisis in Greece and abroad. I mean, the neoliberal policies are attributed to the crisis and then, the negative indicators are attributed to the crisis and then the transactions without the use of the euro currency are attributed to the crisis, too. As a consequence, the question emerging particularly since 2011 onwards is:
Is this economic activity where people transact with each other without using the euro currency connected somehow to the financial and economic crisis which heavily affected Greek people particularly since 2009 onwards?

4.7.1. What we learn from the people who participate in the research project

Given that there is no literature at all about the parallel currencies and the non-monetary transactions in Greece, it was impossible for me to find any information that could enlighten me on this issue in terms of comparing the current activity to any similar activity during the previous decades. One remedy I could find was to turn to the schemes themselves and ask the participants, if of course those have not already

[1] See the newspaper articles at REAL.GR (2012), Νίκας, Σ. (2012).
[2] See the newspaper articles at Iefimerida.gr (2012), news247.gr (2011) and Sidiropoulos, A. (2011).

opened the discussion about the “crisis” and what this might induce concerning the activity we are talking about.

One can see that groups who existed before the crisis of 2008 had already pointed out problems that we are now paying attention to. Peliti network has been trying for more than a decade to raise awareness about local varieties and about how the conventional economy drives them into extinction and us, people, into starvation. The two free networks which were existing already in 2008 were trying to educate people in re-using stuff that needs not to be thrown yet into the recycling bins, let alone that it does not need to be thrown away to pollute the environment. The Athens Time Bank has been really trying to assist people against social exclusion and to face poverty in an egalitarian way, far beyond charity and unequal relations. That most of us had not put those issues onto first places in the economic agenda before 2008, is not a mistake of the issues themselves but of the observers.

The schemes which have been established the last three years, i.e. since 2009 onwards, always refer to economic issues of general interest, like the way the economic system works, how real/material economy is affected by its financialisation and they use the “crisis” not as an explanation for the existence and the development of the schemes, but as an argument and an example to discuss in specific terms the motives and the arguments of the schemes and their people. Then, “crisis” becomes just a particular argument, not “the” argument, nor the main reason for the activity. In many cases, the coordinators or organisers of schemes or bazaars point out that the crisis alone cannot explain the change of the behaviour of people, although they also think that crisis might have some role in this change.

Therefore, the “crisis” is not enough an argument to explain in a satisfactory way the change in people’s views about the economy and their own economic activity, but it seems to affect, along with many other events and conditions, the people so that they are able to start a discussion, search and disperse new ideas, experiment with the economy, and undertake collective action to find or try possible solutions.

An interesting hypothesis might be the one stated by Caroline Humphrey, already mentioned in chapter three of this dissertation. She concludes that barter is the result of a monetary system which is disintegrating while poor people make an effort

to maintain their autonomy[1]. Then it might be that crisis (whatever this might mean) cannot be analysed in economic terms only to understand the final (economic) choices of the people.

4.7.2. The unemployment trends

The same inconclusive conclusion about the role of the crisis I have reached through my mapping of the schemes in late 2010-early 2011. In January, when I finished my mapping study[2], I tried to put the information I had gathered about scheme participation in autumn 2010, in a country-wide perspective. Then, I created a table where one could see the membership dispersion for the schemes which covered with the activity the entire country. At the same time, in January 2011, the Hellenic Statistical Authority announced the recent labour force survey as of October 2010 with data concerning unemployment in all regions of Greece, in comparison with unemployment rates since October 2005[3]. For a map of Greek regions with colours as used in the tables, see Annex D.

[1] Humphrey, C. (1985).
[2] Sotiropoulou, I. (2011a).
[3] You may find this data in English at http://www.statistics.gr/portal/page/portal/ESYE/BUCKET/A0101/PressReleases/A0101_SJO02_DT_MM_10_2010_01_F_EN.pdf In Greek the file is available at http://www.statistics.gr/portal/page/portal/ESYE/BUCKET/A0101/PressReleases/A0101_SJO02_DT_MM_10_2010_01_F_GR.pdf

Table 4.1: Unemployment rates in % of the labour force since October 2005 to October 2010 in each region of Greece (Source: Hellenic Statistical Authority)

REGION	Oct. 2005	Oct. 2006	Oct. 2007	Oct. 2008	Oct.2009	Oct.2010
Thrace & East. Macedonia	11,8	9,6	7,2	10,7	9,8	15,4
Central Macedonia	11,2	8,2	9	7,6	10,1	14,8
Western Macedonia	12	9,7	10,1	10,7	9,3	17,2
Hepeiros	8,1	8,3	12,8	10,4	12,7	13,9
Thessalia	8,5	6,1	7,2	8,7	9,7	10,6
Mainland Greece	13,2	9,6	11,5	9	9,9	14,3
Western Greece	9,8	10,7	9,5	10,7	10	12,5
Peloponnese	7,3	6,8	8,1	7	9	9,5
Attica	9,1	7,5	7,3	6,1	10,4	14,4
Ionian Islands	5	7,9	4,9	8,7	5,4	11,3
N.Aegean	8,5	7,2	4,7	1,9	2,2	7,7
S.Aegean	9,1	5,6	5	4,2	9,1	14,5
Crete	6,3	3,9	4	5,4	8,7	9,8
Greece	9,5	7,7	7,9	7,4	9,8	13,5

I did not consider unemployment as a satisfactory explanation for the turn of so many people to the use of non-monetary or parallel currency schemes. However, the increase of unemployment rates has been so abrupt the last years, to the extent that I could neglect it either. I also calculated the total increase of unemployment since October 2008, when the global financial and economic crisis started and when at the same time, this research project was being designed. One should also note that several schemes (like Ovolos currency, TEM currency, Logo-Timis network, the Money Back System, Dosse-Pare network) appeared since 2009 onwards. Moreover, there is no data for older schemes to see whether there has been an increase in membership since October 2008. The comparison of unemployment increase and scheme participation is inconclusive.

Table 4.2: Percentages of scheme membership and unemployment rate increase[1] on regional map 2011

REGION	% Total population	% Peliti-general	% Peliti-specialised	% Ovolos Association	% Dosse-Pare	% Freecycle	% unemploy-ment increase from 10/2008 to 10/2010
Thrace & East. Macedonia	5,57	10,29	11,27	1,51	4,36	2,05	43,93
Central Macedonia	17,09	29,71	25,82	16,87	24,83	26,79	94,74
Western Macedonia	2,75	3,43	4,23	1,2	0,87	1,91	60,75
Hepeiros	3,23	0,57	3,76	2,71	1,42	0	33,65
Thessalia	6,88	6,29	11,74	6,93	3,59	1,18	21,84
Mainland Greece	5,52	6,29	3,76	2,11	1,2	1,08	58,89
Western Greece	6,75	4,00	5,63	27,41	5,34	5,7	16,82
Peloponnese	5,83	2,29	5,63	6,63	2,4	0,77	35,71
Attica	34,31	22,29	5,16	20,48	49,67	54,13	136,06
Ionian Islands	1,94	0,57	3,29	0	0,76	0	29,89
N.Aegean	1,89	1,71	5,63	0	0,33	2,1	305,26
S.Aegean	2,76	1,71	6,1	2,71	2,07	1,15	245,24
Crete	5,48	10,85	7,98	11,44	3,16	3,14	81,48
Total in Greece	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**82,43**

I would like to note that in this table, there are not included the members of Ovolos currency which are not members of Ovolos Association, neither the schemes which do not cover the entire country. Moreover, as we miss several sets of data from some schemes, one cannot reach any safe conclusions; apart from one: unemployment increase might be a reason for joining a scheme, but it cannot be the only one, as for at least autumn-winter 2010, we see regions with high unemployment rates or sudden unemployment increase and limited scheme membership or limited local scheme creation. Then, it seemed that in some regions, scheme participation was "moving" to the same direction as the unemployment increase, while in other regions, the scheme participation did not seemed to be affected at all[2]. I do not know what the results would be if I did the same comparison today (2012), with updated data – I hope I will have this chance in a future research project.

[1] To calculate the percentage of increase of unemployment rates, we used the data as provided by the Hellenic Statistical Authority.
[2] See, Sotiropoulou, I. (2011a) pp. 32-33 and Sotiropoulou, I. (2011b), pp. 112-113.

4.7.3. Some first points about connecting the activity studied to the economic crisis

Greece is not facing its first economic and financial "crisis" in its history. Actually, Greece has been in crisis, more or less, during its entire modern history and this creates several questions about us connecting the economy activity without euro currency to the actual crisis.

First, we have no information at all, much less any academic literature concerning the economic activity without the use of the official currency of Greece, for at least the last one hundred years. I mean, even if we know from older people or even from older cinema movies or other artwork that in Greece many times there circulated several different currencies, that barter was also taking place and that long-term non-monetary contracts were agreed concerning labour and production, there is no historical or economic study on this activity. Then we cannot know what had really happened with the use and the non-use of the official currency during other times of crisis. Even concerning the time of World War II and the Nazi occupation, about which all agree that barter existed and alternative currencies (like eggs, olive oil, gold, etc) were circulating, we have no studies to rely upon in order to make any comparison with nowadays.

Then, one cannot know whether the activity we now see all around is something new, something that is not new, or something which has evolved throughout a long history of unofficial mechanisms of transactions in Greece. Thus, one needs not to raise questions only about "crisis" as if this is the one and ultimate condition for what is happening in the economy today. Because, by raising questions about the "crisis" only we

"…risk seeing the pathological where for better or for worse, normal and quite unexceptional processes are at work. Or, preoccupied with the sickness, [we] may neglect the patient. Similarly, [we] may be led to overlook or misrepresent long-range development in favour of the short-term "crisis" and so miss the significance of both".[1]

[1] Starn, R. (1971), p. 21. Starn talks about the stance of historians towards crises, particularly economic crises. However, it seems that he understands economists' attitude towards (economic) crises better than anyone.

Even if I chose to insist in the discourse of "crisis" and the direct connection of parallel currencies and non-monetary transactions to it, I would better re-state the question, and ask: *why in this crisis do people choose those specific solutions and not other ones?* To answer this question, it would be impossible within the framework of my actual research project and it would be unwise to base any argument on assumptions about issues we have not even a clue about, given that lack of historical research on this topic.

I would also add to the argument that there is need for a long-term historical perspective to understand current grassroots choices of people. A very interesting point is the view expressed by V. Spike Peterson. Peterson asserts that the actual crisis is not merely a financial one, not even one which started in 2008. The crisis is one of structural inequalities which existed already before capitalism within the even long-living system of patriarchy and its masculinist ideology, but became even more acute within the capitalist and neoliberal context. At the end, it became a crisis of social reproduction on global level, questioning the reproduction of human societies as such. Therefore, the masculinist ideology upon which capitalism is based, is in crisis itself, as it cannot sustain the structural inequalities the same way it could in previous eras. At the end, the household cannot be neglected any more as a crucial site of power struggle, as it is the space which sustains and in the same time resists capitalism[1].

Though this prism, the entire activity of the people who perform transactions without official currency takes a new meaning: transaction modes express this will to resolve the crisis of masculinism and capitalism by exploring other ways of structuring reproduction. Then, the heavy involvement of women, as we can see in next chapters[2], can be explained within this context, as well as the non-mainstream attitudes towards nature and human life within the schemes. This economic activity taking place within household limits or for household use/consumption, might have much more connections to the actual crisis than one could anticipate. Therefore, more research is needed in this direction, investigating the nature of crisis and how its aspects are perceived and tackled with by non-mainstream transaction-mode users.

Chapters six (6), seven (7) and eight (8), dedicated to main research findings, show that Peterson's approach could not be neglected and perhaps I would need a future project to integrate her analysis to the theoretical framework of this research.

[1] See Peterson, S.V. (2010, 1997).
[2] Chapters 6, 7, 8.

However, before getting to explore in detail the research findings, the next chapter five (5) is dedicated to methodological and ethical issues tackled with during field research.

CHAPTER 5: METHODOLOGICAL AND ETHICAL ISSUES

I do not know anything, I discover. I everyday observe and discover. They say "I do not know this", the answer is "Observe better!".

Statement on knowledge acquirement by a research participant during her interview for this project.

5.1. Methodology review

As already mentioned, there is almost no literature on transactions performed within schemes which have not the structure of a parallel currency. Therefore, most information concerning field research methods refers to parallel currency schemes.

It has been usual that a combination of qualitative and quantitative techniques is used in order to do the fieldwork on parallel currencies. There are of course several quantitative surveys, but it seems that parallel currency researchers tend to prefer either the qualitative approach or the combination of methods, given that simple data might be misleading.

What has not been discussed in most studies is the issue of the researchers' but also of the scheme participants' perceptions about crucial terms, like, for example, poverty, exclusion, utility and use-value[1]. The other issue that needs to be addressed, first in theoretical and then in practical (methodological) terms, is that all studies on parallel currencies (and probably the fieldwork in this project) explore a "new land" in science, which has the characteristic to change form and conditions with an amazing speed[2].

As a consequence, one should at least search the methods other researchers used to study parallel currencies. That does not mean that one should follow necessarily the same fieldwork paths, but at least one should examine what experience exists so far in exploring this "new land". The methods are presented project by

[1] The term is mentioned, because most studies are using it to describe (I suppose, because it is not very clear) the satisfaction the scheme members have from the traded goods and services in contrast to their market or local currency price (which is usually limited).

[2] Most schemes out of those mentioned in the studies are not operating today, or they have been transformed to such an extent and in such a way that we are not sure whether the same research project would reach similar or comparable results today like the previous study. Moreover, new schemes are established, previous experience makes scheme founders to explore new project designs – therefore the "new land" is not "stable" at all.

project, in order to make it easier to link the findings presented in the first part of literature review to the method used to acquire them.

To explore the role of the LETS schemes in tackling social exclusion originating in unemployment, the project funded by the UK Economic and Social Research Council consisted of quantitative and qualitative research methods. The techniques included posting questionnaires to the coordinators of the schemes, posting questionnaires to members for the member survey, as well as ethnographic action research in two of the studied schemes. The field research consisted of "participant observation", interviews (with scheme members and non-members) and focus group discussions[1].

To study the impact of the exchanges held within Green Dollar schemes in New Zealand, Williams extrapolated data from fifteen (15) schemes in April 1995[2]. However, this was not a method Williams used in most of his research on parallel currencies: he used a questionnaire survey in order to study the Australian LETS schemes in 1995[3]. A postal survey was also conducted by Williams to make a case study of the Totnes LETS schemes[4]. The same method (postal survey) was used in order to study the effects on unemployed and poor users of the Manchester LETS scheme[5]. He used also the same method to do an overall survey on UK LETS schemes in May 1995[6]. So did he in order to study in October 1994 the Calderdale LETS scheme (UK) with the aim to explore whether the scheme was assisting in any way the disadvantaged people of this location. In that case study, Williams points out that neither the scheme coordinators keep detailed and updated records about the profile of the scheme participants, nor the scheme members, when asked, have the same attitudes and perceptions of being employed or unemployed. Thus, the unemployment rates within the schemes might be just indicative[7].

A more elaborated method was used in late 1990s by Williams in order to evaluate the UK LETS schemes' potential or actual role in fighting economic, financial and social exclusion. It has been conducted a national survey of all (existing at that time) LETS coordinators, a postal survey of scheme members and 200 non-

---

[1] Aldridge et al (2001a), pp. 566-567. Aldridge et al. (2001b).
[2] Williams (19996c), pp. 322-323.
[3] Williams (1997).
[4] Williams (1996b), pp. 90-91.
[5] Williams (1996d), p. 1396.
[6] Williams (1995b), p. 329, Williams (1996a), p. 260, Williams (1996d), p. 1396.
[7] Williams (1995a), p 329, Williams (1996e), pp.342, 347.

members and an in-depth action-oriented research was done for a six-month period in Stroud and in Brixton (the localities were chosen because they were quite different in terms of economic geography)[1].

Postal questionnaires have been used by Laacher, too, in order to study the political perceptions and ideologies expressed by the means of LETS-like schemes in France (the so-called Systèmes d' Echange Locale – SEL). However, the questionnaires, although structured for qualitative research and sent to 278 schemes, were sent to the administration of each scheme and not to simple participants[2].

Gran, who questions the assumptions of Williams about the profile of LETS members, also used the same method (postal questionnaires) in order to study four of the Norwegian LETS schemes existing in 1995 as for the ideological profile of their members[3]. Caldwell used postal questionnaires to study the motivations of joining of the North Herts LETS scheme. In addition, those questionnaires included questions about trading patterns and the views on environment and society. Caldwell also held nine unstructured in-depth interviews with scheme participants[4]. The same methodology combination (mail survey and interviews) was used by O' Doherty, Dürrschmidt, Jowels and Purdue in order to study the Stroud LETS scheme in relation to its community economic development potential[5].

Fitzpatrick, on the other hand, opted for a more qualitative research approach in order to examine the attitudes and views of LETS participants toward the social benefits legislation, authorities and institutions. The research was conducted between December 1999 and February 2000 and the fieldwork was conducted by Sarah Lawlor. The first step was to identify four categories of interviewees: "key actors" who participated on the front line of the LETS and social security debate, scheme members who were benefit claimants, scheme members who had been benefit ex-claimants and scheme ex-members, who were benefit receivers. All interviews were semi-structured with open-ended questions and opportunities for the expression of the interviewees' views. However, the interviews of the "key actors" included discussions

[1] Williams (2000), p. 323. It is not clear whether this project is the same implemented by Aldridge et al.
[2] Laacher (1999).
[3] Gran (1998).
[4] Caldwell (2000).
[5] Doherty (O') et al. (1999), pp.1642-1646.

on perceptions and assumption about social policy, while the interviews of the other three groups were more exploratory[1].

Schraven seems to have used interviews only when he studied a LETS scheme in Innsbruck, Austria. However, he does not give any other details about the methodology followed[2]. Lee, on the other hand, used interviews only to explore the role of LETS schemes in the social construction of economic geographies in Southeast England. He conducted interviews in the period of January-March 1995 with local coordinators of eight LETS and the London Borough of Bromley, with local coordinators of schemes in other localities in the United Kingdom and with the national coordinators of LETSLink UK. Moreover, Lee examined the geographical dispersion of LETS schemes in comparison with the exclusion and unemployment phenomena in the regions of the Kent country, in order to explore in which areas the schemes tended to appear the most[3].

To study the ideology and the decision-making structures of Australian LETS systems, Ingleby chose eight case-study LETS schemes in Victoria, Australia, and preferred to use qualitative research techniques that belong to the Action Research Methodology: informal interviews with scheme committee members; study of documents, like directories, publicity texts, newsletters, etc; attendance of meetings and trading days; random telephone survey of members of two schemes[4].

In order to study the barriers to developing a LETS scheme within a deprived area, North designed an interview questionnaire after a working seminar where experts in LETS development were brought together with the intention to identify questions for further research and possible fieldwork places. A pilot interview was conducted in order to test the questionnaire and then the main field work was conducted. This included semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions with rank and file members of LETS schemes and community development workers that had some experience with LETS schemes[5].

The research methodology used by North in order to study in 1997 a Local Exchange Trading Scheme in Manchester, UK, proved to be inappropriate, as he himself states in the relevant article. He used the Sociological Intervention method,

---

[1] Fitzpatrick (2000).
[2] Schraven (2000).
[3] Lee (1996), p. 1380.
[4] Ingleby (1998).
[5] North (1996), p. 269.

which had been developed for the study of social movements by Tourraine and Melycci, but the LETS scheme appeared to be more complicated to be studied through that prism only[1].

The comparison study by Pacione of two LETS schemes in Glascow included participant observation and interview methods. A survey also took place concerning the members of the active LETS scheme and Pacione was a member and participated actively in one of the two schemes[2].

The methodology of social auditing has been used by Seyfang in order to study the Diss LETS scheme. Seyfang used a mix of qualitative and quantitative indicators in order to assess the scheme in reference with its stated objectives and principles, as well as to compare it with other schemes, social norms or other standards. The process was in short: she defined the objectives and values of the scheme, she identified indicators of performance, she collected the data via studying the scheme newsletter and directory and through interviews based on an interview sheet, she evaluated the data by the means of internal and external comparisons and she finally published the results of social audit.[3]

To study King's Lynn and West Norfolk LETS scheme, Seyfang used a variety of interlocking methods in order to cover the case study in depth. Apart from collecting data from the postal questionnaires sent to the scheme members, Seyfang analysed the trading records, the publicity, the directory, the handbook, the newsletters and the minutes of the scheme. She also used additional questionnaires before advancing to unstructured interviews with the participants. However, she mentions that she faced the problem of scheme members under-reporting their trading and that there is a lack of clarity on the accounting system within the scheme[4]. When she studied the Gorbals time-bank, she also used a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods: site visit, interviews, survey, informal discussions with participants and a focus group[5]. One should wonder whether the slight difference of the findings in those research projects in comparison to other research results, can be

[1] North (1998), especially
[2] Pacione (1998), p.1180.
[3] Seyfang (1997).
[4] Seyfang (2001a) pp. 982-983, 987, Seyfang (2001b), pp. 582-583. Williams mentions the same problem of under-reporting trade in his article on Calrderdale LETS scheme (see the part on research results of the literature review).
[5] Seyfang (2004), p. 64.

attributed to the individuality of the schemes or to the methodology adopted by the researcher.

Thorne[1], on the other hand, made a comparative study of six LETS schemes located in different places in England and Scotland in order to study whether the schemes worked toward re-embedding economy into society, particularly local society. The study consisted of interviews with the coordinators of the schemes chosen and explored the schemes in relation to three criteria: age of the scheme, location, especially whether they were established in urban or rural areas, and valuation of the local currency used by the scheme[2].

Hodges and Stott studied the documents (newsletters, membership lists, transaction records) of the North Dartmoor and of Oxford LETS schemes, they held interviews with members and participated themselves in the schemes in order to explore whether the aims of the schemes (localisation of economic activity, social inclusion of unemployed and disadvantaged people, community regeneration) were met[3].

Schroeder, on his part, a member of Hannover Talente Tauschring (Germany) advises researches not to rely too much on ("usual") surveys but to use more elaborate methods, like in-depth interviews and Q-methodology[4].

As for developing countries, the research conducted by Lopezllera-Mendez and DeMeulenaere concerning the Tianguis Tlaloc currency in Mexico City accessed primary information through the formulation of a focus group, with which, after a two-stage "poll" had taken place, brief discussions were held, based on a structured/semi-structured interview sheet[5].

On the other hand, Pearson used in-depth interviews in order to explore the Argentinian Global Barter Network (Red Global de Trueque), which was a rather nation-wide multi-scheme network. The interviews were held with the organisers of the network, scheme members or users, local scheme coordinators, the president of an activist association (Unión Cívica Block) and high officers of the City of Buenos Aires Government[6].

---

[1] Thorne proposed focus group work for further research.
[2] Thorne (1996), pp.
[3] Hodges & Stott (1996).
[4] Schroeder (2002).
[5] DeMeulenaere, Greco & Lopezllera-Mendez (1999), pp. 72-89. DeMeulenaere & Lopezllera-Mendez (2000).
[6] Pearson (2003), pp. 219-227.

Gomez performed her research in three major cities of Argentina, where she at first conducted interviews with scheme leaders and visited the schemes themselves. She then chose some of the schemes, according to several criteria (number of participants, geographical area, income of the area population, etc) and conducted a survey with semi-structured questionnaire. Samples of participants have been decided as a percentage of the entire scheme membership[1].

Slightly different methods have been those of the research done by Seyfang on King's Lyn and West Norfolk LETS (UK) scheme. Seyfang used the scheme as her case study. It is not clear whether she performed the research tasks in the order she mentions them, or whether she performed all of them in the same time: She sent a postal questionnaire to all scheme members and she analysed the trading records of the scheme; she conducted unstructured interviews with coordinators (who also received additional questionnaires) and she also used the public texts of the scheme to work on the values and development trajectory of the scheme[2].

Collom for his research on Time Banks, used a scheme as a case study and collected data through an online and/or postal membership survey[3] while Gregory used ethnographic methods (observation) and interviews with key members of his case study Time Bank[4]. Concerning the United States, the survey on community currency schemes, which explored the context within the schemes emerge, used as a starting point a theoretical framework based on social movement theories. Then, Collom, who did this research, used the internet websites of the schemes or other websites related to community currencies in order to identify the schemes and find their contact details. However, the study was performed mainly with public census data on the cities where the schemes appeared or have ever existed. On these data there have been used statistical tests (t-test) to examine which, if any, population determinants affect the emergence and the survival of the schemes[5].

In her research, Natalie Soder opted for a multi-method research approach which involved key informant interviews, focus groups, field notes and surveys. She

[1] Gomez, G. (2012) p.81
[2] Seyfang (2001b), pp. 582-583
[3] Collom, E. (2007).
[4] Gregory, L. (2009), p. 22-23.
[5] Collom (2004), pp. 8-17 (as numbered by the author).

also used secondary sources, like literature and census data on poverty and population[1].

The study by Christidou concerning Peliti network has been conducted with a questionnaire disseminated among the cultivators of the Annual Peliti Fair. The questionnaire comprised membership profile questions, but no questions on the forms and the extend of transactions. The data have been analysed with statistical software packages[2].

On the other hand, the research concerning the circulation and distribution of a regional currency (PLENTY) in North Carolina consisted of data collected in surveys and of other information collected from participant observation (one author was member of the Board of Trustees of the administrating organisation) and from interviews[3].

The survey on the Ithaca HOURS done by a research team in Ithaca, New York, consisted of phone interviews with local currency users. The interviews covered 172 issues, but they left a relative freedom to the interviewees to narrate their experiences with the HOURS currency. However, no distinction has been made for businesses and for individual users[4].

The study on Australian business bartering by Birch and Liesch used interviews and posted questionnaires where the receivers gave answers of degree of agreement or disagreement. The same method was chosen by Liesch and Palia in order to study the international counter-trade attitudes and patters of the Australian businesses. In both cases, the results have been processed and evaluated with statistical tests (t-test)[5].

Finally, Kichiji and Nishibe used a random network model to run simulations for an economy with legal tender currency and with parallel currencies, then they used only modelling methods to approach the existence of multiple currencies in an economy[6].

---

[1] Soder, N.T. (2008), p. 40.
[2] Christidou, E. (2008) pp. 47-53. The research was done with an environmentalist focus, so it was impossible for the limited schedule of the project to have an extended questionnaire.
[3] Bates & Lepofsky (2005), pp. 3-5.
[4] Brinkerhoff, Jacob et al (2004), pp. 44-47.
[5] Birch & Liesch (1998), pp. 331-334. Liesch & Palia (1999), pp. 494-496.
[6] Kichiji, N. & Nishibe, M. (2012).

5.2. Methods used in the present project

5.2.1. Methods used for addressing the lack of theory

As already mentioned, the main theoretical issue I have faced in this project, is that the schemes studied are choices and activities that cannot be easily explained because there is not any thoroughly elaborated theoretical framework in economics to explain such economic activity. On the other hand, I used texts originating in other disciplines, and the theory that emerges from the grassroots discourse and action itself[1].

The economic literature concerning parallel currencies is limited, due to the fact that economists do not consider parallel currencies as belonging to their "object" of study. There are of course, some very interesting studies done by geographers, sociologists, or environmentalists, who, in a sense, give great insights of the schemes, as well as new readings on economic literature. However, the problem I faced even for the beginning of this research was not only the limited economic literature on parallel currencies, but also the inexistent literature on other transaction mechanisms.

The choices I had from literature were rather limited: either I should dismiss all this activity as "irrational" or outside economic scope, or I had to turn the study into another discipline, perhaps, sociology or anthropology, given that it would be easier to find some literature in those disciplines to support my project.

Instead of facing the literature dilemma within the library, I decided that first I had to find out what those people are really doing and possibly we would learn about the reasons of their activity. To do this, I opted for *observation*, especially when any scheme was holding a fair or a gathering open to the public. Of course, typically this belongs to the qualitative methods group, so as time went by, I also used three other methods:

observation with participation, when the scheme organisers invited me to take part in their activities, either as a volunteer or even as a scheme member;

text analysis, given that the schemes are usually very open in publishing texts and posters online, on their websites, but they also use social networking online

[1] However, this possibility of knowledge springing from grassroots activity has been mentioned in academic literature. See for the this Biddle,E. et al (2007) and Longhurst, N. & Seyfang, G. (2011), pp. 17-18

software, like Facebook[1], where they announce gatherings or discuss several issues and ideas concerning their activities;

finally, I also used *discussion,* either by phone or in live meetings. There have been made several discussions on this preliminary stage with organisers or even people who have some global view of an initiative. The discussions were informal and not recorded, although some hand-written notes have been made, especially when participants were advising about sources or ideas they believe to be important for their activity.

The preliminary stage of research has lasted formally for one year, till the formal-interview stage started in April 2010. Unofficially this stage cannot stop before the entire project, because it is amazing the pace by which new issues come up almost everyday that are not yet elaborated enough to be included in the formal interviews. I expect to examine them thoroughly for another project, after this first one is formally over.

Despite the wandering-like nature of the first stage, it proved to be extremely useful and perhaps it has been what was really needed to be done. Observation and observation with participation gave long notes on what the people are actually doing and what their main concerns are, as well as how they solve the issues that come up in each initiative. In addition, the free-discussion stage gave me not only a first picture of the activities studied as well as many hints on where the research should look to for literature, because, instead of being observed, the participants were speaking freely (and non-recording helped very much to this), correcting me on terminology, group structure perceptions, aims of the initiatives or even the ideas that I might have had created by my own observation and reading and were not fitting the reality of a scheme.

One would criticise this as giving too much power to the participants. However, it is impossible to learn anything by just going out imposing your own assumptions and questions in a discussion. Even in observation and participation, what was thought as most important, was to collect as much information as possible, and write it down, even if at the moment of gathering it seemed that some information was less important than other. The method of *"thick description"* used by

[1] This was the reason for opening a Facebook account for the research project. Actually, the Ovolos currency scheme invited us to do this, as this was a very practical way to have daily updates about their discussions, news, even critical comments they were receiving! After a while, we saw that several other schemes use Facebook as well.

anthropologists has also been heavily used in this project. By "thick description[1]" I mean the method where a researcher gathers information about all incidents, details, images, people, relations and material world that is possible to be observed. To do this, there is no need to have a previously constructed theory. Of course, it is impossible for a person to get rid of his/her ideologies, questions and assumptions, even if a specific theory does not exist for a research project. But thick description is the closest method we have toward unbiased data gathering, given that the data gathered can be used by other researchers and theorists after long time periods, not only to be checked, but also to harvest information that at the day or age of data gathering seemed to be not important nor meaningful.

It is not sure whether the research findings will permit the construction of a pattern model for this economic activity, because the, rather never-ending, itinerary "research-findings-research", no matter how necessary it might be, makes the research results unpredictable. For this reason, it has been crucial to keep methodology flexible and ready to be adapted to issues which are raised by findings at each stage of the research. As a result, the subject-matter of the research itself "defines" the methods which are more appropriate for understanding and explaining the initiatives studied[2].

The findings of observation and participatory observation, as well as of the other ethnographic methods used, are presented in chapter eight (8) of the dissertation.

5.2.2. The interviews of the first stage of the project

Three theoretical arguments have been constructed to explain the activity studied and to provide me with an analytical framework that will (hopefully) permit answering some of the questions raised by the study. I have kept three and not one argument, not only because the project is about a subject matter about which we know

[1] Thick description is not uncontroversial as a notion and as a method. Discussion on this can be found at Redding, G. (2005) and at Ponderotto, J.G. (2006).

[2] For the nature of inquiry in economics, see particularly, Bush, P.D. (1991), pp. 330-331, 333-337. For the pattern model and the holist choice of letting the phenomena studied to dictate the methods of research, see Francis, S. & Wilber, C.K. (1986), pp. 183-184, 187-191 and Harrison, R.S. & Wilber, C.K. (1978), pp. 71-73, 76-83.

very little, but also because there is no rule that makes such a choice obligatory at this stage[1].

Just after having constructed the three arguments presented above in March 2010, it was time to check them out in real world. The project was not yet at a stage that would permit a quantitative approach. However, it would have been possible to investigate the demographic and social features of the scheme participants and be able to collect data about their age, gender, occupation/employment status, etc. Nevertheless, this would mean that I should conduct a series of closed-type questionnaire interviews with scheme participants at this stage and conduct one more at the second stage of research, without being able to ensure that the same people would participate in both. Moreover, this choice would create several time-schedule and budget issues to the project and it might tire the participants, who might not be willing to waste time twice for the same research.

Therefore, the decision was made to leave demographic and social characteristics of scheme participants for the second stage of the project and I decided to use the data as gathered by observation and participation at the preliminary and first stages of the project. This was not useless, given that some schemes are distinguished by the heavy participation of women while other schemes seem to be male-dominated. In the second stage, I was able to verify those observations but also compare organising groups and gatherings participation with the really active scheme members.

The other issue I had to handle, was the method I should use to check out the arguments I had already at hand. Of course, the idea was not to impose my theories and terminology onto participants, so I should avoid creating a questionnaire of closed type or even with questions that are directly copied from the theoretical arguments' unit of the dissertation.

The solution was rather an ambivalent one: I created a list of questions, consisting of eight questions to be addressed to scheme coordinators or members with global view of each scheme's activity, one question of which (the first one, concerning definition of terms and notions) was meant to be asked only if any term presented or used by the scheme was not clear for me; the third group of questions

[1] How multiple theories interact with each other and with observation findings and how necessary this is in field research, is well defended by Bensman, J. and Vidich, A. (1960).

were special questions, each one dedicated to a type of scheme. The list of questions can be accessed at Annex B of the dissertation.

Therefore, the questions were nine (or eight) in total for each participant. The questions were not only open-ended, but were as simple and as terminology-neutral[1] as possible. They asked about the motives of participation and the aims of the schemes, the structure of the scheme, whether the participants were happy with the scheme, etc. Of course, the questions were constructed in a way that they would be checking-questions to each other, in the sense that we wanted to explore different aspects of the same issue or make sure that we have not missed terminology used commonly by the participants. The "checking" was not to detect any "contradiction" by the participants, but to avoid the researcher considering one wording as the only one concerning the topic studied.

Actually, the question-list was constructed in a way to create a fruitful discussion and not to make participants just agree or disagree with something. Even in cases where the discussion required the researcher's stance, I asked the participants' understanding so that I reply after the interview to avoid influencing them with my views. The interview was designed not to last more than fifteen (15) minutes, unless the participants wanted to present their detailed views or discuss any issue they thought it was important.

The participants of the first stage were asked but not pushed to fill-in a sheet with some personal details of them, but this filling-in was not obligatory (and this was written on the sheet in capital letters), so there is some demographic information about key informants. However, special care has been given so that those details have not been possible to be connected to the interviews by anyone outside the research project, to respect the confidentiality agreed with the participants and they have been destroyed by the end of the project.

5.2.3. The qualitative data and how to analyse them

Of course, the most difficult part came just after the interviews started to accumulate. How should I elaborate all this data collected through interviews?

[1] There is no neutrality in words, however, some words are less "coloured" than others and we tried to use them instead of the "others".

An answer would be that it would not be the interviews only but also the other material (notes and texts) that should be combined with the interviews to get to some conclusions. However, interviews should be examined on their own right, because they have been created with the direct intervention of the researcher[1].

Therefore, the question was how to combine all those answers and views expressed in interviews. One would say that the open-end questions are very useful in grasping participants' real views but really messy in comparing those views to the theoretical arguments we have to check out.

The first thing is to search for common ground, i.e. some terms or views that sound similar to each other, even if this is not really supporting the arguments constructed so far. The second issue is to try to see whether any of the views are or can be connected to any of the arguments created. The third issue is to see whether common grounds among scheme participants and theoretical approaches are linked in any way. The fourth issue is to see whether common grounds which are not included in the theoretical arguments are possibly theoretical views by the participants that had not been detected in the previous (preliminary) stage of the project and whether those views can be one more theoretical argument, as emerging in a grassroots space.

An issue that emerged was that all three arguments did not seem to be able to be excluded yet from the project. The third argument, as more detailed, seemed easier to be connected to the participants' discourse, although one should note that the third argument is my favourite. So, one should be careful with anything that shows that specific argument to prevail. Another issue was whether the other two arguments have a more… macro-economic nature, which means that one could check them easier with mapping or quantitative data that will be used in a later stage of research.

The main question one would raise is about using specialised software for elaborating this data, like NVivo, which enables the user to trace main terms in vast volumes of texts (which is the case at this stage). NVivo of course needs the entire interviews transcribed - which was not possible to be done till now, but it will be done in the future. On the other hand, the use of NVivo might bias the project by giving results on the researcher's questions only and not on the issues the participants

[1] That means: the researcher is (should be) under scrutiny on the discourse she used and the discourse the participants used to which she contributed more or less. See for this, Briggs, K. (1996).

themselves raise through their interviews[1]. At the end, I decided that it is better to avoid the use of such software and perhaps try it after this project is over.

The findings of the interviews with key informants are presented in chapter seven (7) of the dissertation.

5.2.4. The geography issue[2]

One thing I have done to create another picture of the phenomena I study is a map of Greece, where the schemes are pointed out in their base cities in colours depending on their type. That was really difficult for me, particularly because not only I had not used such methods before, but also I had to learn the software for GIS mapping – and I am still learning. However, I thought that it was impossible to ignore the importance of space. Moreover, literature on parallel currencies often uses space and geography as an analytical tool[3].

A technical question I had to deal with is how to show the extent of the schemes who are not limited in a city only. For example, Peliti has its base or headquarters in Paranesti of Drama, but it covers the entire country. Same with Ovolos currency, which is based in Patras and Thessaloniki, but it provides its online software to anyone in the country who wants to trade locally. Moreover, the Athens Time Bank is on the process of creating a country-wide network with other time banks which are going to start running in September 2010. The MoneyBackSystem covers the island of Crete and the island complex of Dodecanese, but its headquarters is in Herakleion, while the used tickets may originate in any mass transport company of Greece (f.ex. the ticket might be from Patras or from Athens). How was I going to visualise this complicated situation?

The other issue is the essential one: This first mapping has created several questions about the urban character of the schemes or their involvement of re-

---

[1] It is the real thing of this research that we do not want to miss by using software.

[2] See also Sotiropoulou, I. (2011a).

[3] See for example, Barnes, T. J. (1989), Bates, L. K. and J. Lepofsky (2005), Danson, M. W. and M. Pacione (1999), Gelleri, C. (2009), Haughton, G. (1990, 1998), Kennedy, M. and B. A. Lietaer (2008), Lee, R. (1996) , Leyshon, A. and N. Thrift (1997), North, P. (1996), Pacione, M. (1997a, 1997b, 1999), Soder, N. T. (2008), Williams, C. C. (1996, 1997), Williams, C. C. and J. Windebank (2003). Actually, the most difficult part of using this literature was to think what questions should one raise concerning geography of Greek schemes. At the end, the choice made was to create the maps and see what questions emerge from them afterwards.

structuring of rural production, about the inactivity in certain regions of the country and about the ways I can trace those issues in more practical (i.e. researchable) ways. For example, should I link the schemes with the average income information we have in each region? Would that be enough, given that, for example, a region might have low income, but also other local social and economic structures that might render a parallel currency not really useful[1]? Should I link the schemes with the population of each city or county to measure the impact of each scheme on the economy of the space it is established?

Not all issues which emerged from mapping were possible to be addressed in this project. The important thing is that mapping revealed that the three theoretical arguments I had constructed in spring 2010 were not enough any more as explanatory tools for the extent of the phenomena studied. Then mapping gave crucial information for creating the *hypothesis, which is presented in chapter three, section 3.5 of the dissertation.

The mapping of scheme membership has been done in autumn 2010 in an attempt to create pictures about the dispersion in space of schemes and initiatives which existed at that time in Greece. Although this research task had not been anticipated at the beginning of the project, the emergence of several schemes after 2010 showed that between the first (qualitative) and the second (quantitative) part of the project, there stands the geography question. Given that the project covers the entire geographic area of Greece and many of the schemes also have a prefecture-wide dispersion, it seemed interesting to put the information I had gathered so far on the map.

The problem in this case was that it is not only parallel currencies I have been studying. This has several implications in terms of literature and methodology (how one should study a free bazaar or an exchange network?) but also in terms of possible comparison among schemes of different structure. The indicator I used was membership. Of course, membership does not reveal much about real function of a scheme[2] – however, as a participant pointed out a scheme might also have among its aims to create “little by little a social web who might believe in exchange” and to ensure “someone, feeling that there exists something like this, that I can at any

[1] An example is Thraki, where several interesting issues, beyond the average income, about its economic and social structure might explain the rare existence of schemes.
[2] Hodges, J. and M. Stott (1996), pp. 266.

moment to send an email and exchange services with someone else, might have more inner balance". Therefore, I chose the membership as an important indicator, even if I had no data yet about the real, material activity within the schemes and about the economic safety the schemes might provide their members with.

To prepare the maps, I used the Quantum GIS Software and the maps of locating villages, towns and cities as well as the boundaries of the first grade prefectures as are available online by the Hellenic Statistical Authority. I also used the population data as of the census of 2001, again available by the Hellenic Statistical Authority. The data about the schemes have been either available on the web or provided by the schemes themselves. In some cases, the data were pretty raw, so I had to work on accumulating information in quantitative way from membership lists. More details about the data of each scheme will be presented below.

In the previous chapter four (4), there have been included maps showing the geographical dispersion of schemes and their members in Greece as well as information comparing scheme members' geographical dispersion to the unemployment rates for each region during the years 2008-2010.

5.2.5. The second stage of research and the question of quantity

At the beginning of the project I was not even sure whether I would use a questionnaire to explore quantitative issues of the research subject-matter and how this questionnaire would be. The evolution of the project made the questionnaire necessary. In other words, once the first phase started, and the interviews were conducted with the coordinators of the schemes or the members who have had a global view of the initiative they were part of, it was more and more clear that there questions of quantitative nature that could not be answered through the interviews or the ethnographic methods.

Moreover, the schemes do not usually keep any records of their transactions, and even if they do, this holds for new schemes, so the data they might have is raw and is available for the most recent months only. On the other hand, the schemes do not keep records about their members' profile. This is normal as any data collection more than those required for the transactions to be done would be considered very

intrusive. Therefore, the only possible solution would be that I was going to collect the data myself by the use of a questionnaire.

This did not only mean that I needed a questionnaire, but also that I needed vast time for observation, given that some schemes may have many users but do not have members, for example free bazaars. During discussion with scheme organisers, this issue seems to be an interesting one, because in some cases the scheme organisers do advise that we can turn some activity into quantifiable data by measuring hours of work or activity within the scheme. This was not made possible within the framework of the present research project.

The option for a questionnaire became more and more imminent once the mapping of the scheme membership was done. Then, what one would need was to have a first picture in a systematic way of both the people and their economy activity without the euro and gather information on the transactions which would include the non-mainstream perceptions of the economy.

To this point, one should note that the qualitative phase and the interlude (mapping) phase of the research had already revealed the peculiarity, the variety and the multi-aspect character of the activity. Now, what I needed to know were the common features or what could not be revealed easily through ethnographic methods. Moreover, there was the need to check out what the ethnographic research was giving as findings, especially to see whether my assumptions or theoretical arguments might have any explanatory power if they were compared with quantitative findings.

Nevertheless, I was really in a difficult position as I really did not know how to construct such a questionnaire. No research has been done, to the best of my knowledge, comprising all possible forms of transactions without official currency, let alone no research has been done including people who are not registered members of any scheme or collective which performs such transactions within the framework of a capitalist economy. I did not like to miss of course, the vast field of exchange networks, free bazaars and networks, and just stick with the parallel currencies, although this might make the entire “quantitative phase” much easier. That means, the questionnaire has been constructed from scratch – and this did not only required a lot of time to be prepared but it also required lots of trials and errors. The decision to

create the questionnaire in both Word and online format[1] was also a crucial point as it required structural modification of the questionnaire, so that it can be handy without the participants needing to contact the researcher.

The electronic questionnaire was absolutely necessary because it was the one to ensure 100% anonymity of the participants. Of course it comprised all necessary information about the project and about the researcher's contact details but it was expected that in cases where the participants would have any difficulty with the questions, would not contact the researcher because this would destroy their anonymity (in some cases, participants would write their questions or their question mark on the answer place, but they would not contact the researcher, leaving me of course with unanswered questions or questions answered in a way that shows that the questions was not well understood).

Finally, it took about six months to prepare the questionnaire at its final version. It has been a difficult task and I am sure it needs several improvements. However, for the purposes of this research the questionnaire which has been used had 45 questions and it can be accessed at Annex C of this dissertation.

5.2.6. The problems I faced with the questionnaire

Therefore, the questionnaire reflects the dilemma of the entire research project: conduct the quantitative research through the terms and customs of the activity studied or examine this activity through the prism of the official currency? It has been my conscious choice to opt for the first solution, although this might not have permitted me to gather any data that could be compared with prices in euro currency. However, the qualitative research had already shown that even the goods and services offered through the schemes might not have exact comparable features with the goods and services offered in the conventional economy. Then, it might be more useful to explore this economic activity on its own terms and leave the comparison with the conventional economy for another, future research project.

[1] The online questionnaire has been constructed as a google-document form and was made available to the public since August 29th 2011 till February 20th 2012. Mr Manolis Tzouvelekas' assistance with the construction of the online questionnaire was essential, as I was turning to his advice for all technicalities in designing and constructing the online version of the questionnaire.

This choice created its own problems, well interconnected with the problems any questionnaire would have in order to gather data about this specific economic activity. In sum, the problems I faced using this questionnaire can be distinguished into ten major themes, as following:

5.2.6.1. How we perceive quantity and quantitative measurings? Well, this is a methodological problem which is common to all social sciences and it would be beyond this project's scope to find a definitive solution. What is important, is that given the schemes do not use the official currency and in most cases, they do not use any accounting unit at all, all ideas or assumption about quantity used in economics were not easy to be transferred to the questionnaire. Then, what was I supposed to count?

5.2.6.2. How can one cover by the use of a questionnaire an activity that we really do not know, or which we barely know anything about? How can a (by nature) static research instrument capture or at least respect the economy activity while the schemes and their people are evolving social structures that change every day under severe and ongoing social and economic conditions?

The qualitative phase of the research was very informative, but it really did not provide us with any data that would be able to be used to have a sample for the quantitative phase. This happens because the schemes do not have data of themselves and of course, they gather very few data about their members. The mapping phase showed that even if the data exist, it is in raw form, which meant that I had to gather them by myself and quantify them to be able to use them on the maps. Therefore, this questionnaire was not addressed to any sample. The idea was that given our ignorance about the profile of the population participating in the research, I would send the questionnaire to all possible destinations and then I would receive the answers by anyone who would be willing to fill in the questionnaire. Obviously, to have a research with a sample, one would need to wait for this project to be finished, so that one can have a basic picture of the people taking part in the activity studied.

The other issue I had to face was to select among my numerous questions, the topics that were raised during the qualitative research and the topics I am interested in, the most important to be included in the questionnaire. At the end, forty five (45) questions were included in the questionnaire and that meant that those questions were

not few at all. However, I tried that most of those questions can have multiple choice answers, although I gave in most cases the option to add an answer which was not anticipated by the questionnaire. The questionnaire has been divided into three parts: questions about the profile of the participants, questions about the scheme they participate in (which was skipped if they answered that they did not participate in any scheme) and questions about the transactions themselves. The idea has been that the questionnaire did not need more than 20 minutes to be answered.

5.2.6.3. How do we construct a questionnaire for such an economic activity, so that the data we would have at the end, can be "useful" for basic statistical tools? Well, this question remained without any real answer in this project. First, because the data gathered were completely different than what statistical tools are expected to receive for analysis. Then, without a sample, there is no possibility for statistical testing. Finally, one would think of multidimensional scaling or fuzzy statistics[1] to be used with those data gathered, but this would be beyond this project's scope, especially because I am not trained at all in those two methods. I hope that in near future, I will be able to use those statistical methods to see what we can learn from the data gathered so far.

5.2.6.4. How do we examine the profile of the agents-participants? This was a real puzzle, particularly because I knew that in the demographic data about the participants it is easy to integrate the researcher's prejudices without taking notice about such integration. On the other hand, I knew that probably the questions about income, house and land property might create negative reactions. The income issue is something like a taboo among the schemes, and this happens in favour of the people who might not be so wealthy, then the schemes avoid to stigmatise poverty. However, it was really important to ask those questions, so I relied on the anonymity of the questionnaires and on their option not to answer any question they thought of as annoying.

5.2.6.5. How can one integrate the variety of structure and activity into just one questionnaire? The main idea was to construct a questionnaire which would be

[1] To get some idea what those methods are about, I read Nguyen, H. & Wu, B. (2006) and Borg, I. & Groenen, P. (2005).

common for all participants, so that I would be able to have comparable data from all schemes but also from people who do not participate in any scheme. Of course, it is really not wise to put all activity into one same mold, so, I hoped that the option not to answer any question they do not want to answer, would cover the cases where a question might not fit at all a specific activity. I sent the questionnaires to all schemes, even the sui generis ones, letting the latter know that in case they thought their scheme did not fit at all, they were not supposed to answer.

Moreover, I knew already from the qualitative phase of research that several people are members of more than one scheme. My fear was that they might fill in the questionnaire more than one times, then creating a number of answers which would create a fake picture about participation in schemes and participation in the research. In the questionnaire (Annex C) one can see the questions referring to the multiple participation or to possible multiple filling-in of the questionnaire.

5.2.6.6. What to do with the transactions which are not written down, which are measured in unusual ways, which are located into a different perception of transaction time? That was an essential point, because my qualitative research had shown that this type of transaction features are very common in the activity studied and in case I ignored them, my research was to be severely biased at its core: the data concerning the nature of the transactions. The problem I faced is that I needed to gather data about those features that can be meaningful for an economist without forcing the participants to “count” or “measure” in ways they do not really do while they actually trade.

5.2.6.7. How do you check out answers or data you already have gathered through qualitative research? I mean, it is easy for the researcher to gather false impressions due to her meeting and talking with many people during the three years of the research. No matter how important and clear-cut the answers and comments of the participants might have been during the qualitative phase, one would ask whether those answers can really be verified in the sense of the researcher checking out her own perceptions and data gathering. For example: if I have the impression through discussions and interviews that people participating in the activity studied originate in all income groups, then is this a correct impression or just it is the clue I have because I just talked with “the right people” to give me this impression?

5.2.6.8. How can one check out the economistic[1] hypotheses and arguments which we often find in literature and they are also popular among academics and mass media, but they cannot be accepted as self-proving? I mean, the idea that being short of income in official currency is enough a reason for people to turn to parallel currencies is something very common in literature, although no-one has ever explained why even this reason might lead to this type of economic activity and not to another. I am not really fond of those economistic assumptions and arguments, but I thought, that particularly because I am so critical of those arguments, I needed to check some of them in some way.

5.2.6.9. How do we deal with ethical issues in the questionnaire? I constructed the online questionnaire to offer a 100% percent option for anonymity, although anonymity is secure even for the questionnaires sent to me via emails. I also tried to avoid political discourse in the questions, and of course, this was easy given the topic of the research, which was not including the political implications of the activity studied. Moreover, I tried to give the option of adding one more answer or of answering multiple answers, so that people can cover the variety and multi-structure activity they take part in. Yes, I knew that once we use words, it is impossible not to be biased at all, but I avoided technical terminology, nor even terminology which would remind of a particular stance of mine towards the activity. Moreover, I knew that this freedom to participants might give me data which could not be categorised or quantified at all, but I decided that I will create my quantitative data sets where this is possible and I will study thoroughly the non-quantifiable data afterwards, as those might give new insights for this activity which could not be covered within this project anyway. The major ethical problem was of course, how to gather the data without bending ethics, especially, without bending the participants' will to participate or not. Well, it is obvious that you cannot bend a participant's will to fill in or not to fill in a questionnaire, and I hope that in those cases where the scheme coordinators did not allow me to reach the participants directly, those participants

[1] I mean with the "economistic" the belief or hypothesis that is constructed on the perception that people act just by tight economic motives, like official currency income or profit-seeking aims. I also consider as economistic the idea that the economic structures are enough an explanation to social phenomena, even if those phenomena are also of economic nature.

were just informed about the research without any further pressure about what to do with the questionnaire.

5.2.6.10. Another issue was which people were really able to get to know about the questionnaire and which people were able to fill it in. Even if it was written on the questionnaire that in any case someone wanted to fill in the questionnaire, but had not access or was not feeling comfortable with internet or PC use, then he/she could call me, I knew that not having access to internet was important a barrier for people to participate. Unfortunately, the project could not include special travelling for me to disseminate the questionnaire during assemblies, gatherings, meetings or fairs – let alone that personally, I think that it is quite oppressive and perhaps, disturbing to the meeting or fair taking place if I am trying to disseminate the questionnaire at that same time. And with the researcher present, it might be possible that anonymity is lost.

Things of course have been more complicated than this:

The use of the questionnaire was revealing itself. There are schemes whose members did not reply it at all, or the members who filled-in the questionnaire were so few in numbers that one could not have any picture about the scheme activity at all. This has several implications about the number of the members who participate in a scheme, which means that either the questionnaire has not been really welcome by some schemes or the members were not notified at all by their scheme coordinators or the schemes do not have as many members or as many active members as they announce officially.

However, the case with the Peliti network is indicative that other conditions, irrelevant to the research project, were also taking place and affected the research. Peliti network has been very generous during the three years of our cooperation of the research project and they permitted me not only to attend their annual fairs, but also to participate as a volunteer in the fairs, which meant that I was able to call by phone the cultivators and talk with them about their participation in the fair, plus was I able to be among the people of the fair and work together with the other volunteers and coordinators.

However, once I sent the questionnaire of the research, things changed. First, it took me one month to realise that, given that I had no reply at all from any Peliti member, I had to contact them again and again and finally I was informed that there

were a technical problem and they could not let their members know, but they would inform them as they could and actually they would upload the questionnaire link on the Peliti website (Peliti has announced my research project on their website from the beginning and this has helped for the publicity of the research among the Peliti members as research participants in the ethnographic research). Some days after, the Peliti coordinators called me to tell me that the Peliti assembly decided that they did not want to support the questionnaire. After a long discussion, they revealed the reason: it was the general political situation in Greece and that they were afraid that the data of my questionnaire (which was totally anonymous and confidential and actually, did not include any question concerning political beliefs or related to the political situation in the country) were to be used for other reasons than my research project.

I was really shocked. At the end, they told me to send the questionnaire to the emails of their members available online on their website member lists, which I did although I thought that this was totally unfair, particularly because this would seem as a spam towards people who had already decided they were not willing to answer. However, I followed the instructions given by the coordinators but I knew that once they were not trusting me anymore (even if the reasons were stemming from the general conditions in the country), they were not going to answer. And this happened at last and only very few members answered the questionnaire.

The most curious thing was that in December 2011 Peliti called me informing me that they had put the questionnaire link on their website at last. Timing is important in research projects and if, for any reason, a community decides that they do not trust a research project, things cannot be changed with just an announcement, particularly if that announcement comes months after such a negative assembly decision. The questionnaire was available till February 20th but things were already in the row and the answers by Peliti and several other schemes were showing that people were facing the questionnaire with mistrust. Moreover, research has its own timeline. I hope that this research project will prove that it is not dangerous to participate in an open and publicised research and that once you know the researcher and the conditions under which the research is done, you may be able to have control over the information you give as a research participant. Then, I hope that it will be easier in my next research project.

Anyway, this did not happen with all schemes. Moreover, there have been several answers by people who do not belong to any scheme or network or group at all, which means that the work done to publicise the questionnaire through networks and schemes was not in vain and could reach people outside structured transaction mechanisms. To achieve this, I received assistance by many schemes and coordinators who tried to help me and created a multiple snowball effect by sending the questionnaire to their members and sometimes to other schemes, or even uploading it on their websites or blogs. The research facebook account might have helped as I had used this to publicise the questionnaire among the schemes– however it is impossible to know to what extent this has worked positively for the research.

5.2.7. The last but not least issue: the reversal of methods' order

It is common in economics, but also in other social sciences as well, to use the quantitative methods for the first stage of a research project, and continue with qualitative methods at the second stage, to explore in depth, several issues which need further examination and have been proved important through the first stage of the research.

However, in this project the order of methods used has been quite the opposite: the quantitative methods have been left for the second stage, while the qualitative methods have been chosen for the first stage. The reason has already been explained: the lack of theory for the project asked that we find one theoretical approach in direct connection with the phenomena we study[1].

The critique on this is the one seeing this process as the construction of a self-fulfilling prophecy: the researcher observes the phenomena she is interested in, she constructs a theory emerging from observation and then she tries to prove whether the theory holds for good or not – it will probably do, given that both the theorist and the one making the checks are the same person. On the other hand, the options the researcher had were either to keep up with theories in economic literature as they are and ask the questions those theories raise, even if those questions are irrelevant to the phenomena studied but mostly to the people creating those phenomena; or, to accept

[1] Of course, the option to just apply, no matter what, an existing theoretical construction, would not probably be really fruitful. See for this Diamond A.M. (2009).

the theorist's position and create theories that are not checked or not possible to be checked, waiting for another researcher to go to the field and check the theoretical arguments.

No doubt, this was not the aim of the research, much less of the researcher. It is possible, though, that the project might seem like a self-fulfilling prophecy, but on the other hand, the quantitative stage of the research will show which of the theoretical arguments are really possible to be checked by any other researcher or not, through fieldwork which is more or less repeatable. Even if one points out that "it is not possible to step through the same river twice", it is possible to find a theoretical argument that is easier to be checked for its truth than other arguments, and this will also be a useful research finding. At the end, it is impossible to ignore real people and what they are doing and it is better to fail as a theorist who creates a non-testable theory in an effort to grasp some aspects of newly-emerging reality than as a researcher who tries to impose an existing theory on reality, no matter how much the latter challenges the former.

5.3. Ethical issues of the research project [1]

5.3.1. The idea of reflexivity

The research project comprised important ethical dimensions of conducting field research, with all peculiarities and difficulties which are common in social sciences. To address those issues and actually, to enable myself to think in a coherent way on ethics, it seemed that the idea of reflexivity (and the notions of reflexive research and reflexive researcher) fitted best to the situation of this field research. It also seemed to offer an analytical tool for understanding the ethical issues that have arisen so far or that one might, given the actual circumstances, anticipate for the future. By the term "reflexivity" I understand that the research is an ongoing process of mutual learning and "teaching/informing/exploring" between the researcher and the research participants, as well as the other humans involved more or less directly with the research project: academia and public.

[1] This section has been written by using main parts of the work already presented in Sotiropoulou, I. (2012e).

The reflexive researcher "returns" at all times and occasions of the research to his/her self to question terminology, hypotheses, methods, results, writings, analyses, etc of the research project as well as to bring the information gained through research process as knowledge to be studied, examined and questioned. This is particularly important, because, not only concerning the topic of the research, but also concerning its ethics, the researcher has to treat him/herself and participants as what they are: persons who, even if the researcher would try to avoid it, contribute all together to a social process[1], whether this is a parallel currency scheme or the research project itself.

The reflexive approach has no rules of thumb for all problems. Nevertheless, it obliges social scientists to "critically and reflexively query the relationship between research ethics and research practice"[2] and at least permits discussing ethical concerns with the research participants themselves. This might be an ethical solution in its own right, because even if there are no rules of conduct for economist-researchers, any economist researcher has to find ethical solutions. Therefore, reflexivity best satisfies the need that even if the researcher cannot find the absolute truth in his/her field and in ethics, he/she is bound to be truthful in any case about the research process and the research outcome. The case where there are not any theoretical criteria for moral action, does not mean there are not any criteria at all, nor does this mean there is no possibility for the research to be morally and responsibly conducted[3].

Some might criticise reflexivity as an approach which creates unjustifiable

- inability of decision-making by the researcher about its own project[4]
- extended powers to the participants to influence the research project more than they should

[1] Aull Davies (1999), pp. 5-10, 17-23. Silverman (chapter 6 in Caplan 2003), p.127. Rorty's view about reflexive humans as quoted by Cherryholmes (1988, p. 449) is also very interesting, because it emphasises that reflexivity is the human approach to express solidarity, through their story of contributing to the community. Gill (2003) also seeks a methodology "capable of critical introspection" when she comments on Brennan's "Economics and Ethics" (Brennan 2003). See also Hisrchheim & Klein (1994), p. 6, linking self-reflection with self-transformation. See also Nash & Wintrob (1972) pp. 527-529, Shore (1999) p. 45 and Gardner (1999), pp. 50-51. Abma, Molewijk and Widdershoven (2009), describe in detail a very reflexive research process with several practical implications. However, they use the term "reflexive" once only: to remind that the design of the research project not only emerges from the research process itself, but also, that this is done to make it link it to society "reflexive of the social condition". Reflexivity is also one of the responsibilities of the researcher according to Cannella & Lincoln (2009), p. 279. Shaw (2008), p. 410, asserts that the (qualitative) researcher seeks reflexivity while designing and performing the research.

[2] Horton (2008) p. 369.

[3] Brinkman & Kvale (2005), pp. 174-176.

[4] Shore (1999) pp. 25-30. Horton (2008), p. 363-364.

- mess, because it does not necessarily exclude any critical approaches to field research and epistemology, much less does it give any hints about ethical issues in research, but it rather permits a mixture of them, along with the researcher's personal experience, stance and psychology[1]
- boredom, because instead of "hard facts" or, in the case of ethics, clear solutions, it permits an endless intellectual wandering and endangers the research project into becoming a researcher-centered narrative[2].

5.3.2. Interdependence

No doubt, the main complexity is the intertwined structure of relationships created between the researcher and the research participants. Interdependence of all people involved in the project (in my case not only the researcher, who is a student, but also the supervisor, the supervisory committee, the university institutions, etc) is inevitable, but research participants' involvement is the most important in relation to the ethical issues, exactly because they are those who, without any obvious benefit, contribute the raw material of the research to be conducted; and they are those without which the research could not have been able to be done at all.

Dependency of the researcher on research participants is only one side of the coin[3]. The other side is that participants depend on the researcher about getting information on what project they take part in and how their contribution might be used even in a textual construction. The researcher has in hand relevant literature, ideas about what the project is aiming to and what it is probably leading to, and experience of issues that were raised in one case and now appear in another, while

---

[1] See Silverman (chapter 6 in Caplan 2003), p. 128. Horton (2008) p. 364, 366.

[2] Nash & Wintrob (1972) p. 532. Shore (1999) p. 29.

[3] I liked very much the quotation Silverman offers us from a student of hers in her chapter (no 6 in Caplan 2003) at p. 118. However, one psychoanalyst would say that my fear and the other student's fear and any researcher's fear in general toward research participants might be also a "projection" of the researcher's guilt for its inner indifference to the research participant's experience as a real person in real life. Another explanation of that fear is that the researcher, knows by intuition and perhaps feels guilty of the fact that the research process in the modern social context might also express the commodification of rapport skills, feelings, trust, etc which happens during research in order that the researcher gains the raw material (contacts, data, etc) of the project (Brinkman & Kvale 2005, p. 165). This commodification is also hinted in Cannella & Lincoln (2009), p. 278.

participants might have in mind their own case only and in hand their only right to refuse contribution (which would anyway jeopardise the project).

In addition, the participants might not be well prepared to understand or feel the power characteristics of the research, while the researcher knows (or is supposed to know) very well how those power relations are formed and put into function during the project. The project might be manipulative to an extent that the participants might not be aware of[1]. To avoid this, they usually depend on the researcher's integrity, i.e. on the powerful person's will.

I included some ethics rules in the proposal on my own initiative: particularly, the proposal included the clause that the research will be negotiated as being done with the research participants, that their demands about "writing down" any information they give will be respected, concerning confidentiality or any other issues they want to keep beyond publicity.

One could immediately observe that the project became dependent on the research participants. This is true. The question is: why not? This is what THEY are doing, THEY are working for, THEY are taking the risk about, why not be THEM to have control over the information they give for the project? There is also the view that they own their contributions, even have intellectual rights to what they say or write to respond to the researcher's questions[2]. From a legalistic point of view, this is true. From an ethical point of view this is more than ownership (which is anyway a notion that does not fit reflexivity at all).

5.3.3. What rules already exist about ethics in economic field research[3]

There is no code of ethics or code of conduct already agreed or just proposed for economic research in Greece. Nor has the Greek Sociologists's Association published anything relevant on their website[4]. The curious thing is that no code of

---

[1] Brinkman & Kvale (2005) pp. 164-167, 169. Shaw (208) pp. 404-405.

[2] Oliver (2003), p. 31.

[3] Even if there was a code for research ethics concerning economists and even if in the University of Crete there was an Ethics Approval Committee, this would not make my research easier. Not only ethics theory is always far behind real research practice, but also the researcher cannot rely on the general rules or a committee's approval to get rid of the actual ethical dilemmas she will have to deal with in the field. See Connolly & Reid (2007), Gillam & Marilys (2004) and Halse & Honey (2005).

[4] www.sociology.gr

ethics or anything similar to that was found on the American Economic Association's website[1], nor even on the International Initiative's for the Promotion of Political Economy website[2]. So, I turned to the Development Studies Association of Britain, who again have only a Development Ethics Study Group but no code of conduct[3], and of course to the American Sociological Association[4] and the American Anthropological Association[5] to get some examples of codes of ethics and ideas. The British Sociological Association[6] had ethical rules or recommendations in a Statement of Ethical Practice while the Royal Economic Society[7] of Britain had no special reference to ethics on their website. The ethics policy of the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS)[8] is also very interesting, because, instead of rules concerning situations, creates rules concerning the stance and attitude of its researchers. The Association of Social Anthropologists of the UK and Commonwealth[9] has also a set of Ethical Guidelines.

Something which is relevant to social research in Greece, is the RESPECT project[10], and the code adopted within that project's framework. The RESPECT project is an initiative adopted by the European Community so that the social researchers throughout the continent have some (not legally binding) instructions about ethical issues related to their research. It is really a very peculiar code of conduct in comparison to the rest I managed to find, because the priorities of this code are quite reversed (first comes the compliance with scientific standards, second law compliance with an emphasis on intellectual property and third the avoidance of social and personal harm) contrary to the theoretical (actually all) approaches to research ethics who prioritise the protection of people and communities to everything else. The other peculiarity consists in that the RESPECT code is, as always in the European Community, the minimum standard in Europe and professional associations are free to adopt stricter rules for their members. The third point of the code is that it

---

[1] www.vanderbilt.edu/AEA
[2] www.soas.ac.uk/iippe
[3] www.devstud.org.uk . The study group has not reached any conclusions yet, as they informed me via personal communication.
[4] www.asanet.org
[5] www.aaanet.org.
[6] www.britsoc.co.uk
[7] www.res.org.uk
[8] www.soas.ac.uk
[9] www.theasa.org.uk
[10] www.respectproject.com

is too general and actually advises the researchers to "endeavour" to satisfy the code clauses – which is already an approach out of date: the researchers do not endeavour any more, but "ensure" that they keep up with ethical rules[1].

5.3.4. Content of ethical issues

5.3.4.1. Terminology, vocabulary, narratives

The ethical issue of what terminology to use while speaking with research participants and of what words to use when writing, is not new. The problem I really faced is that, due to the theoretical "vacuum" of the project, I have no real specialised terminology to use. Even the initiatives the project studies, have not "regular" names, as already mentioned in chapter three of the dissertation. Particularly in this case,

a. where there is not any established terminology
b. nor any previous research on those networks in Greece,
c. nor any extended research experience in other projects abroad,

what I "write down" becomes terminology whether I like it or not, whether the research participants like it or not, whether the University likes it or not. It is like a "monopoly of interpretation"[2]. Therefore, the questions that arise from this situation are the following:

I) To what extend should the researcher use the research participants' vocabulary?

II) How acceptable is it to use the already existing terminology intending to fit it into what the researcher "meets with" in real world?

III) What is a real research result? The thing that the participants say during free interviews, or the thing they respond to the researcher's questions, previously formulated according to hypotheses?

IV) Who is speaking through research results: the discipline structure, the researcher, the research participants, a combination of them?

---

[1] Otherwise there was not any need to write this section. The researcher could not have said: "Listen, I tried for an ethical research conduct, it was not easy, I am sorry". This "responsible" tendency is also obvious in the proposed revisions of the American Anthropological Association Code of Ethics (file dated 092208), clause A.2, accessed on 12.06.09 from the website www.aaanet.org .

[2] Brinkman & Kvale (2005), p. 164.

The methods used so far to tackle the above questions have been:

- free discussion with scheme and group participants,
- use of original material (texts) from their websites and their leaflets,
- effort to use as “neutral” vocabulary as possible
- effort to define in each time the terms I use, so that it is easier for anyone to criticise, resist, discard those terms,
- there has been mentioned to the participants that they will have access to what has been written about them, before the text is final.

5.3.4.2. Dealing with participants I. How can they accept to participate in the project?

The reactions I faced from scheme and group participants varied from happy acceptance to complete indifference and non-response. There were people who were very happy with the research and they somehow had been waiting for it. There have also been people who asked for more information, identification of the researcher, research funding details, even if they accepted at first instance to work for the research. There have been others who asked for details, but have not replied yes or no, attributing this no-reply to the fact that they needed to consult with their group members. There have also been others who were very reluctant and distrustful at the beginning and wanted to clarify every detail about commitment and the cooperation procedure before accepting. There are also some who have never replied to any contact (I tried several times) that has been done toward their group.

The problems I had to face were the following:

I) How to present the research project?

II) The fact that I depend on the research participants for the project existence and success creates the problem of commitment. What if they accept now and after some months they completely deny to participate? How to agree about the project?

III) The issue of the consent and actually the informed consent of participants is also interrelated with the commitment issue. The participants can at any time opt not to

participate, or ask for more details, or ask for less publicity, or ask for different methods of research, etc[1].

IV) The issues of confidentiality were actually the easiest to tackle with.

V) The issue of not doing harm to the research participants and the researched initiatives was also raised.

VI) People wanted to take part in the research, but were really afraid to do so. They sometimes did not believe I was a student. In other cases, they were telling me stories about researchers working for companies that they used the information participants gave them and never again appeared to give any feedback. This is why in some cases, they asked questions about the funding of the project. Spamming is very common for marketing or for other purposes and schemes coordinators try to avoid disseminating their members' contact details. The questions also revealed bad behavior by researchers in general, which means, instead of persuading about what I am doing, I have also to persuade people about what I do not do and what the project is not about[2]. The case presented in the previous section about Peliti community and how they decided to be negative to the questionnaire survey for reasons irrelevant to my research project, is indicative on how general political conditions affect people's decisions about participating in a research.

To summarise the methods for tackling the problem of how to persuade people to accept to take part into the project, I can say that I used: full information about the research, freedom arrangements (unequal commitment), discussion, I pointed out the ultimate control the participants they will have for their own contributions, I answered all questions posed to me.

Moreover, this researcher's self-imposed regulation was useful to tackle most of the issues, probably because both the researcher and participants can get prepared for possible future situations. At the same time, this "self-regulation" sets a

---

[1] Consent is seen as an ongoing process, too. See Aull Davis (1999) p. 46-50. Silverman (chapter 6 in Caplan 2003), p. 117. Laws with Harper & Marcus (2003) p. 239-240. Goduka (1990), p. 334. Also, Jorgensen (1971), pp. 328-330.

[2] Contrary to the researchers' idea that what they are doing is important enough to persuade people to participate, Silverman's point that people started interacting with her as a researcher only after they managed to know who she was, might need further investigation (See Silverman, chapter 6 in Caplan 2003, pp. 118-119). In any case, if the important thing is "who the researcher is", then the codes of ethics are not enough and the individual quest for morality in the research field is not enough and maybe researchers should at least work on their collective identity and morality as well.

responsible precedent for the following part of the research project[1]. On the other hand, there is no way to tackle situations where participants' or possible participants' reaction gets insulting to you[2]. What makes me continue "research as usual" is that those reactions are participants' clumsy efforts to complain or even struggle for better treatment by researchers and research institutions or to turn my attention to issues I had not thought of . In a sense, they express their fears and their determination to defend themselves and finally, they help me[3] to conduct a better and more considerate project.

5.3.4.3. Dealing with participants II. How to manage info exchange and ownership?

The real thing is that the researcher seeks information and knowledge from the research participants and then the researcher becomes the one who will transfer the information and knowledge to others, i.e. the people who will attend conference presentations, or read the researcher's papers and texts in general. Therefore, the questions that arise in this case are the following:

I) How to present researcher's personal beliefs and ideology and hopes that undermine the so-called objectivity of the research procedure?

II) How to avoid making research participants means to an end, i.e. to the research results, much worse means to a PhD degree or means to enhance one's beliefs or to answer questions related to one's ideology etc. Actually, this is the problem of the role of research participants – how do they act within the research project?

III) How to tackle with the fact that research participants might also have a similar stance, e.g. they use the researcher and the research project as well as the

---

[1] Self-regulation is discussed in Dr. John Horton's unpublished research notes (vignette no3), sent to me by personal correspondence on October 2nd 2009.

[2] Insults or anything (like f.ex. hints) addressed by participants to the researcher to embarrass the latter, is discussed in Dr. John Horton's unpublished research notes (vignette no5), sent to me by personal correspondence on October 2nd 2009

[3] In Advanced Learner's Oxford Dictionary (Oxford University Press, edition of 1989, 8th impression 1993), "embarrass" is defined in two ways: a) cause somebody to feel self-conscious, awkward or ashamed, b) cause mental discomfort or anxiety to somebody. I think, this is the case with participants' tough reaction: they make the researcher anxious, ashamed and self-conscious…

University's authority for their own purposes (for example, to advertise their schemes, propagate their ideas, enhance their personal power within the schemes, etc)?

IV) How to "write down" discussions, and all oral information that is accumulated at the first stage of field research?

I also opted for having myself being researched too, by performing auto-ethnography on myself, the researcher, although the original material from this parallel project is not included in this research project. So reflexivity becomes authorial, in the sense that one may face this intertwining situation using the autobiographical strategy to permit to him/herself and to the audience to trace the way the researcher has treated the participants throughout the entire process[1]. One could also add what Brinkman & Kvale[2] propose: "Ethical as well as scientific objectivity is about letting the objects object to what we as researchers do to them and say about them".

This approach creates a cyclical way of research work. Instead of the linear process of hypotheses formulation, data gathering, data analysis, result discussion, the data is continuously created and analysed throughout the entire process, because the findings from one participant or group are used as input to conduct research with the next participant(s) or research phase, and the experiences gathered through research are introduced via "stories" as issues for discussion in the next part of fieldwork. Therefore, theory becomes the tool of making crucial points on the participants' stories and connecting them from a general perspective[3].

The above have been extremely useful, given that during the three years of research, the schemes and their activity expanded beyond what I could have imagined in February 2009, when this project had started. Exchange networks, free bazaars and parallel currencies became very popular as structures but also as mass-media news, then it has been even more difficult, not only to discern the phases of the research, but also to see how my research has possibly influenced and been influenced by this expansion. Then interaction with participants and continuous dialogue with them has been the only way to keep up with the entire evolving situation and activity, permitting me to understand what has probably being happening and permitting the participants to access the researcher at any time, ask questions, inform her of new

---

[1] Josephides in Caplan (2003), pp. 67-69.
[2] Brinkman & Kvale (2005), p. 170.
[3] Abma, Molewijk & Widdershoven (2009), pp. 241-242, 245.

schemes, criticise her, bring new issues into the discussion and at the end, educate her in ways that she could not find in (non-existing) literature.

5.3.4.4. Help and intervention.

This is, no doubt, the toughest part of all ethical issues. The issue has as following and it already comprises several types of problems:

Problem 1: There have been several cases where I have been asked to help and participate in the design and construction of an exchange network. Throughout this research project, I explained in every occasion that I do not agree to have an active role in the founding and structuring of the schemes and make research with them at the same time, but on the other hand, I am able to answer questions that the schemes might have, or to assist with information or academic material, for example, literature. The reason for this arrangement is (it is also mentioned in my communication with many schemes, as well) that I do not want that the research project arrives to be an experiment with humans. In cases where my involvement was meant to be more than the assistance described above, the schemes to be established have been exempted from the research project. Because, as Winship states[1], it is also a reflective researcher's ethical stance to avoid "experiments" and maybe limit his/her research, so that we know, when something emerges, that "it has emerged organically and not because it has been stimulated by research procedure".

Problem 2: Some of the schemes have invited me to participate as a full member, which enabled me to perform transactions with other members. In all cases, I publicised as much as I could my researcher-identity so that all members are aware that their activity is "under observation". I admit that this participation (and the observation by participation) was really very educative for me, but it created several ethical issues:

a) In most cases I needed to refrain from activity so that I avoided to become "very popular" or to create any "obligation" for scheme members (who would see me as very active within their group) to participate in the research.

[1] Winship (2007), pp. 179-180.

b) In other cases, I needed to know where my intervention should stop. What if I see a serious, structural problem in a scheme that it is probably leading the scheme into failure or inequalities' enhancement? Most important: what happens if i understand that some members, knowing better the scheme structure than other members, are trying to exploit heavily the scheme and its members and at the same time to violate essential principles of the scheme itself?

When such a situation emerged in my research, I decided that no matter how neutral I have to be, I need not to legitimise with my silence the exploitation events which I was clearly watching to arrive. Speaking up, of course, was not easy either. When after some time, the case proved to be more serious than even I could have imagined, I tried not to interfere too much with the scheme members trying to solve the problem[1].

At this point, I would like to say that I am totally opposed to the "action research method"[2], for the same reasons I mentioned above. So, my dilemma is: I do not want to make my project an experiment with people, but I do not want to keep in secret any information or to stand back from helping those who ask for assistance, nor do I want to silence myself while some people exploit others in front of my eyes and while I am doing research. In any case, even if I do not help them, this is also an "experiment" in the sense, that I leave them on their own and watch them to see how they manage without the information or experience I have.

---

[1] That was perhaps the most difficult "ethically important moment" of my research project. It is obvious that I make this research bringing to the project all my ideologies and one of them is that I prefer seeking non-exploitative structures in economy than exploitative ones. One could say that it is my own ideological stance that created the problem and not the scheme members who seek an arrangement, which in my eyes seems exploitative and deceptive but in other people's eyes might seem normal interest-utility seeking. That the scheme itself has as its main principles solidarity and condemns exploitation might have been a good argument. But even if the scheme had not such principles announced, I would still point out the problem – then, the "ethically important moment" has been the direct involvement of the researcher's principles in the research environment. It might have been a serious mistake, but I am not sure what other options I would have if I am expected to be not just a good researcher, but also an ethical researcher. For "ethically important moments" in research, see Gillam & Marilys (2004).

[2] Action research is as widely accepted method, also considered to be very progressive in the sense it permits researchers to "try change". See, Laws with Harper & Marcus (2003), pp. 338-340, Denscombe (2003), p. 80, Bain (1951) and Evered & Susman (1978). Hay &Israel (2006), p. 7. Boser (2006) describes in detail the ethical issues and methods used in action research. The question one would raise after reading Boser (2006) is whether the progressive research attitude (like, the "democratic ethos" and the attention to power relations) are enough to justify action research. Therefore, apart from the question of the means (action research) justified by the end (knowledge and/or change), the other question raised would be whether the end (knowledge and/or change and/via action research) gets better, when the means get better (progressive research methods).

To tackle with all those issues, I used some theoretical approaches concerning ethics which would permit me to understand the individual and collective issues I was dealing with during my field research. First of all, ethics derived from the economic theory reminded me that in the society I am performing my research, there are social classes and morality is often related to one's own class position[1]. Then, I decided to perform my research accepting that I represent a middle class-bourgeois structure and that the participants will see me as middle-class bourgeois researcher and will resist and criticise my research and me as a researcher of an institution that is middle-class bourgeois institution (and even if I am not middle-class bourgeois, I definitely tried not to use my real class position to become more… "popular").

Communitarianism led me to explore the idea that ethics should emerge from a shared philosophical understanding with respect to communal goals and the communal good, providing a community reference point for research ethics instead of focusing on the individual ethics[2]. This has not been easy either. In other words, if we accept that the non-official transaction mechanism initiatives are themselves communities or a big community extending all over Greece, I need to do my research not only avoiding any harm to them, but also providing them with benefits from my own research, because it is them who create the knowledge I am writing down in my dissertation[3].

To this, extensive mass media attention during the last year (2011 onwards) has just complicated the situation. I need to find ways to write down that my own research results do not fit the mass media broadcast information and sometimes this is the schemes' problem, as I know cases where the scheme coordinators give exaggerated or inaccurate information to the media, for several reasons. At this point, advocacy research's emphasis on the "positive tie" between the researcher and the participants advises that the researcher is a facilitator of the researched community's goals while maintaining a commitment to the truth. On the other hand, the research participants have "a right to expect from the field researcher something more

---

[1] Varoufakis (1996) pp. 161-162, 167-169.

[2] Loue (2002), pp. 47-48. Shaw (2008), pp. 401-404, 409.

[3] Of course, when I imagine that there are such communities, then the discussion turns to several methodological and ethical problems. What are my responsibilities to unstructured communities? What are my responsibilities to structured communities, to tightly structured communities or to loosely-structured ones, or to people who perform transactions without official currency, but do not want to participate formally in a scheme? How am I going to understand and explore the risks my project create to all those people not only as individuals but also as members of larger collective entities? See for this Botkin et al (2010).

substantial than bourgeois respect, courtesy and honesty; they have a right to the social power that comes from knowledge"[1]. Therefore, if I have a major obligation to all schemes, to their people and to their communities, this must be their ability to know as much as I do and then they can decide what is best for them.

What is impossible though, it is for me to be neutral to the problems of the activity I study. Fortunately, most of people, who are still the majority in the schemes, want to experiment with economic structures in order to improve their lives and not to make them worse. Then, I rely on this major collective aim to decide that I need to keep telling my own views, correct or not, but genuine whatsoever, and be aware of collective self-consciousness[2] which I am part of, once I am involved so much in this activity due to this research project.

This does not relieve me from my own personal responsibilities. Then, reflexive ethics is my main way of thinking as described by Cannella & Lincoln[3]. Reflexive ethics is considered to be directly connected with a critical approach not only toward research and researchers, but also to itself, i.e. the reflexive ethics. It also includes a "concern for transformative egalitarianism, attention to the problems of representation and continued examination of power orientations". The aim seems not to be ethics for ethics alone, but an effort to support through social science the "knowledges that have been discredited by dominant power orientations…" and "go beyond countering domination to construct unthought ways of being".

In any case this is possible, I try to discuss ethical problems with research participants. At the same time, I keep in mind the conclusions by Horton[4], who proposes that a) any ethics of research should be open to surprise, given that the research situations should be considered ongoing, dynamic and subject to change, b) that both the researchers and research participants should be recognised as vulnerable, fallible, emotional, moody and embodied beings, c) that the relationality and contingency are features of research happenings and encounters and finally, that d)

---

[1] May (1980) pp. 365-367. Advocacy research, although not mentioned with that term, seems to be a main concern for Abma, Molewijk and Widdershoven (2009), pp. 240-241, where they use the notion of "voice", to describe the active involvement of participants, in the research process, as equal partners of the project. Also, advocacy research (again without this term used) is the conclusion of Brinkman & Kvale (2005), p. 178, where they claim that the rationale of research is to lend a voice to that which is other than oneself and they also claim that this is at the same time, the core of ethics.

[2] Comment by D.G. Epstein to May (1980) at the same journal, p. 533. It seems rather a Marxist approach but it is also very elaborated and includes the epistemology aspects of it.

[3] Cannella & Lincoln (2009), p. 279-.

[4] Horton (2008), pp. 375-377.

the research ethics should be open to possibility of fallibility, disappointment, sadness, unpleasantness and mess.

5.4. A final note on methodology and ethics: The position of the researcher toward the knowledge she finds out

The evening I was going to travel for field research which would include my first interviews I received an email from Dr Stevphen Shukaitis (University of Essex, UK) where he was pointing out the following issue

"…the question is how to treat that knowledge, i.e. as 'data' to be analyzed from the proper position of a removed theorist? Thus the question is not whether knowledge is generated, but what is the status and importance of that knowledge, how to relate to it, and the politics of that relationship…"[1].

The trip was long enough to permit me to think about this. I cannot say I had decided when I arrived, but I had made my mind not to disturb the great fair I was going to attend as a volunteer, where I was also going to make the first interviews for the research. I arrived there with all my theoretical assumptions, ideologies, beliefs, questions and prejudices as any researcher does and I knew that it was impossible to get rid of them. Quite the contrary, my "work" would be to find out whether my ideas about the scheme were correct, which means that I was there in a contest with myself to prove that my theoretical arguments had some core of truth but also to prove that I was also able to learn the new things that are emerging from people's activity and the books have not yet paid attention to.

[1] Personal correspondence, April 8th 2010.

CHAPTER 6: RESEARCH FINDINGS I - QUESTIONNAIRE SURVEY

The issues concerning the choice to use a questionnaire to gather data and the problems I have faced in constructing and in disseminating the questionnaire have been presented in chapter five (5).

The survey ended up to have at last 331 filled-in questionnaires. To those I do not count one answer line from the online questionnaire form which seems to have been lost completely for technical reasons and the line was totally empty; and one more questionnaire which was not filled in but the participant wanted to demonstrate his/her opposition to the questionnaire as such[1].

Despite the big number of answers, the problems of not having any ability to define a sample population[2] make this set of filled-in questionnaires useful in terms of getting an idea about the activity I am studying, but not enough to reach any safe conclusions. Moreover, the problems which existed in having the scheme members informed about the survey are presented in chapter five.

The option not to fill-in the questions one is not able or does not want to answer has been a double-edged knife because it has not been possible to discern in which cases the answers have been unanswered in purpose or where the answers have been lost due to the online system problems. This is obvious because in the question about the use of PC and internet connection, there have been empty answers in the online questionnaires, which I attribute to systemic failure (I am not sure whether google-documents have been used to that extent and for such a long questionnaire before).

---

[1] The text the participant had written was the following "I do not like this questionnaire at all, I find it extremely insulting and it is hiding Argentina-type scenarios, which you probably think to apply on our country. I think that there is need that the people agrees not to fill in this insulting questionnaire". No further explanation or information was given. I include the comment because I have exempted the questionnaire, but I think this comment is indicative of the general situation under which this research has been conducted. As a person and as a researcher I understand the stance of the commenter, even if it is attributing to the researchers powers which of course no researcher has. What I cannot understand is why the (possible) insult is connected to Argentina, I mean, why Argentina-type scenarios would ever been insulting for a person in Greece. Of course, I cannot blame the participant, given that the discourse which presents Argentina as the lowest level of economic hardship (i.e. within a context of despising Argentinean experience as something that is much inferior to what one considers appropriate for the greek case) is common in mass media and in political discussions the last two years in Greece. To me, I would like very much that this participant contacted me to explain more about what he/she has written.

[2] See chapter 5.

Apart from those questions from the online questionnaires, which refer to PC use and internet connection, one cannot imagine what the answers could have been in the other cases and the total anonymity of the questionnaires makes it impossible to get back to the participants. Then, in each question, I will present the answers received and the elaboration of tables and percentages is being done using as total number the one of the real answers in each case.

The questionnaire is available in its word format in Annex C. In order to make the results of this chapter easily linked to the questions of the questionnaire, I have followed the structure of the questionnaire in order to number the units of the chapter.

6.A. Questions concerning the general profile of the participants

6.A.1. Gender of participants

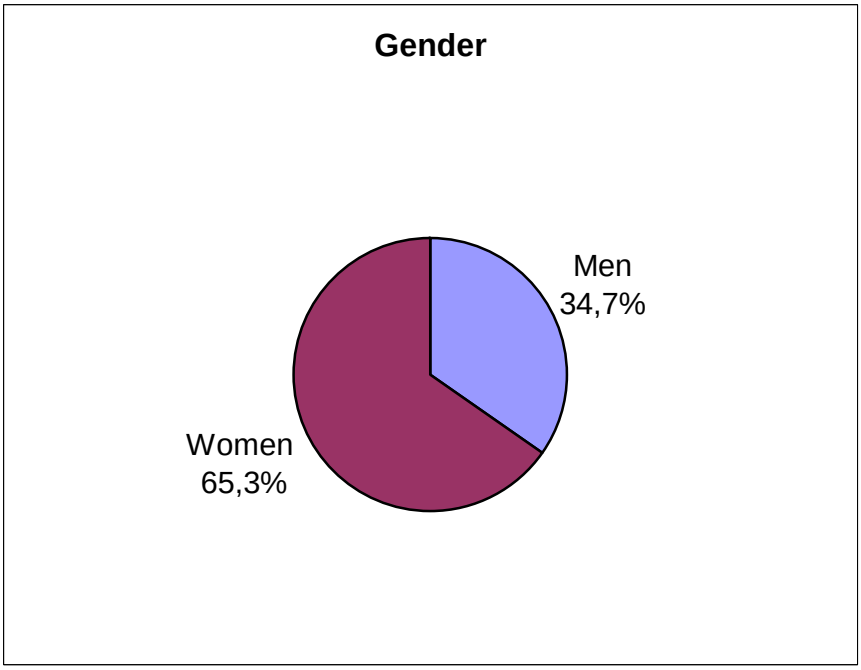
Out of 331 participants, 216 have been women and only 115 have been men. This of course does not show what the real numbers of men's and women's membership might be in the schemes. On the other hand, given that my qualitative (ethnographic) research has shown the heavy involvement of women not only in establishing and running the schemes, but also in trading within them, one can explain this outnumbering by the hypothesis that women, by being more active within the schemes, were also much more active in filling-in the questionnaire.

Below there is the table with the data and the related pie graph

Table 6.A.1 – Gender of participants

Men	Women	Sum
115	216	331

Graph 6.A.1 – Gender of participants



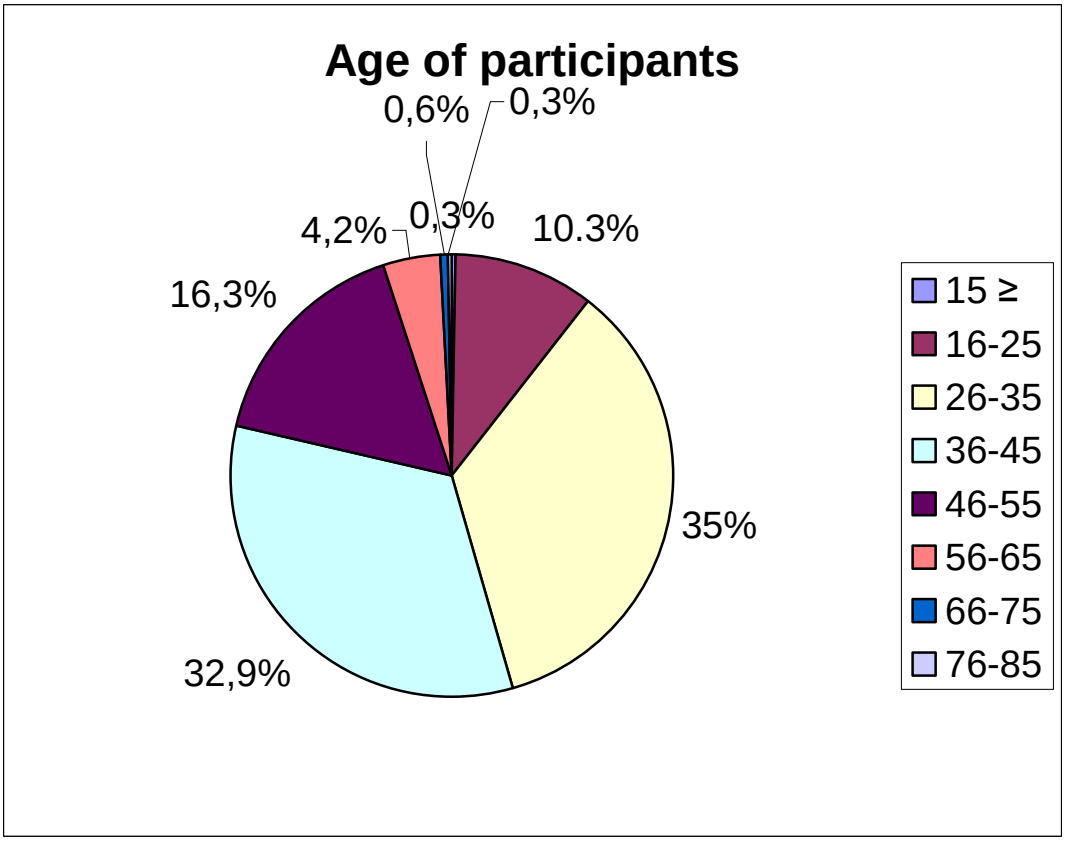
6.A.2 – Age of participants

Just like in my qualitative research, the questionnaires showed that all ages participate in this economic activity. Of course, given that age is not an easy topic to discuss in person-to-person settings, my assumptions were by nature "intuitive". The questionnaires give a predominance of the age range 26-45, being almost half of the participants.

Table 6.A.2 – Age of the participants

Age	No of participants
15 ≥	1
16-25	34
26-35	116
36-45	109
46-55	54
56-65	14
66-75	2
76-85	1
86≤	0

Graph 6.A.2 – Age of participants



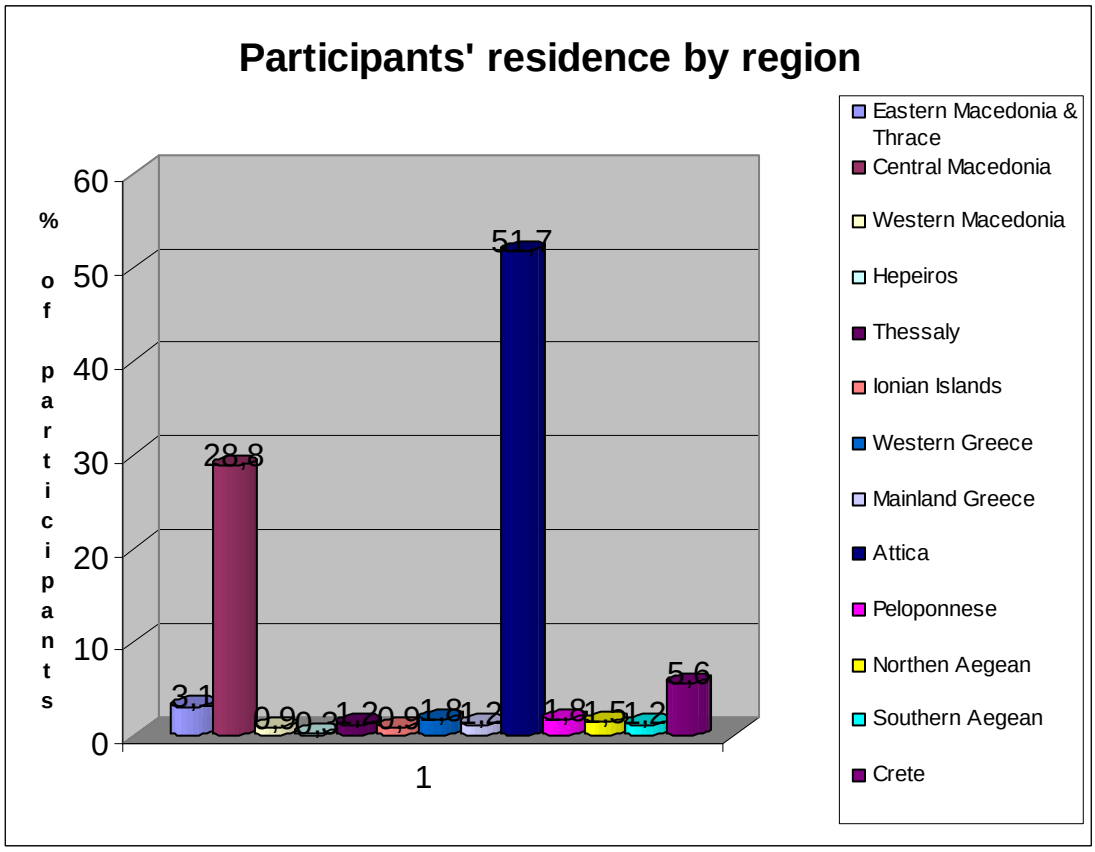
6.A.3 – City or village of residence

This question received 329 answers, while two of them were not specifying the name of the place, they were just writing “village”. Then we have 327 answers which can be geographically located. The two regions where the two major cities of Greece (Athens and Thessalonike) are located, Attica and Central Macedonia, prevail by almost 80% in answering the questionnaires and this is obvious from the table and graph concerning the residence of participants. The data have been grouped into regions just like those in the mapping chapter (13 regions following the actual regional divisions of Greece).

Table 6.A.3 – City or village of residence by region

Regions of Greece	Number of participants
Eastern Macedonia & Thrace	10
Central Macedonia	94
Western Macedonia	3
Hepeiros	1
Thessaly	4
Ionian Islands	3
Western Greece	6
Mainland Greece	4
Attica	169
Peloponnese	6
Northen Aegean	5
Southern Aegean	4
Crete	18
Total sum	327

Graph 6.A.3 – City or village of residence by region



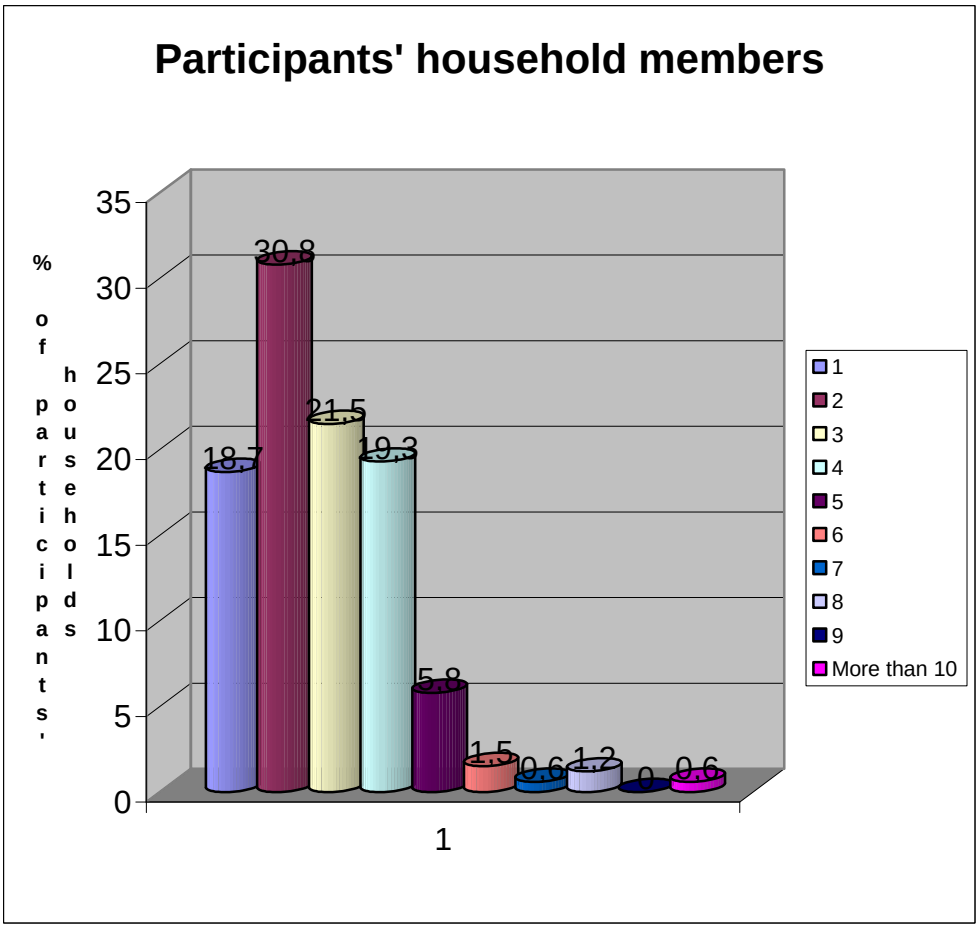
6.A.4 – How many people do they stay together in the same residence?

The members of the household did not seem to present any surprise, as most households host 2 to 4 members. There are of course households with numerous members, but those do not cover a major part of the participants' households.

Table 6.A.4 – Number of household members

Household members	Number of participants' households
1	62
2	102
3	71
4	64
5	19
6	5
7	2
8	4
9	0
More than 10	2
Total sum	331

Graph 6.A.4 – Number of household members



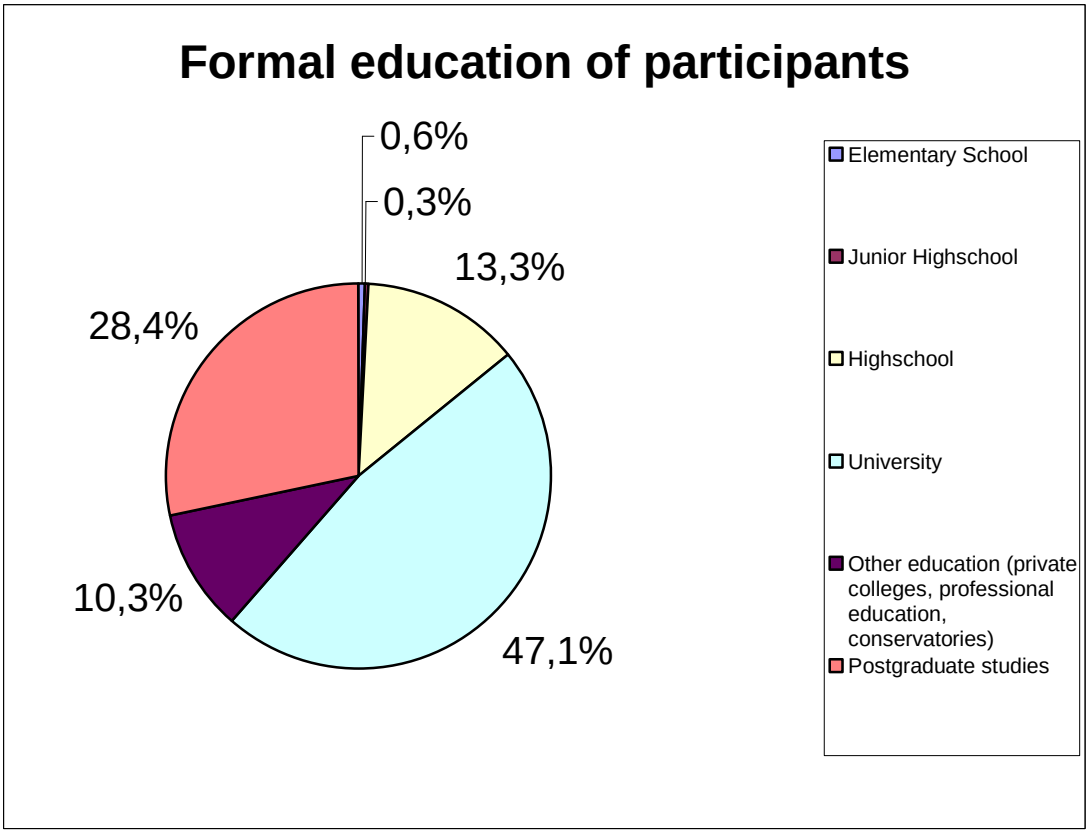
6.A.5 – Formal education of participants

The majority of participants have received higher formal education on graduate or postgraduate level. More than 85% of the participants have received formal education after highschool graduation. Then, one could assume (or research further) that all this economic activity without the use of the official currency is not an attribute of uneducated, ignorant people. The questionnaire did not include any questions about the field of study so we do not have detailed information about the disciplines our participants have studied.

Table 6.A.5 – Formal education of participants

Level of formal education	**Number of participants**
Elementary School	2
Junior Highschool	1
Highschool	44
University	156
Other education (private colleges, professional education, conservatories)	34
Postgraduate studies	94
Total sum	331

Graph 6.A.5 – Formal education of participants



6.A.6 – Language skills of the participants

To avoid favouring western European languages, which are popular among Greek people, I had not given any multiple choice structure to this question. Instead, the questionnaire field was available to write down any language skills they might have (and of course I avoided discerning among mother language and foreign languages). This was very interesting, because apart from western European languages, Balkan or Mediterranean languages seem to appear among the participants' skills. In several cases, the participants did not give any specific answer, but they just replied with the number of languages they can speak. This question gathered 318 replies. However, one can also think that once the questionnaire had been prepared and disseminated in Greek only, all participants were able to handle well the Greek language.

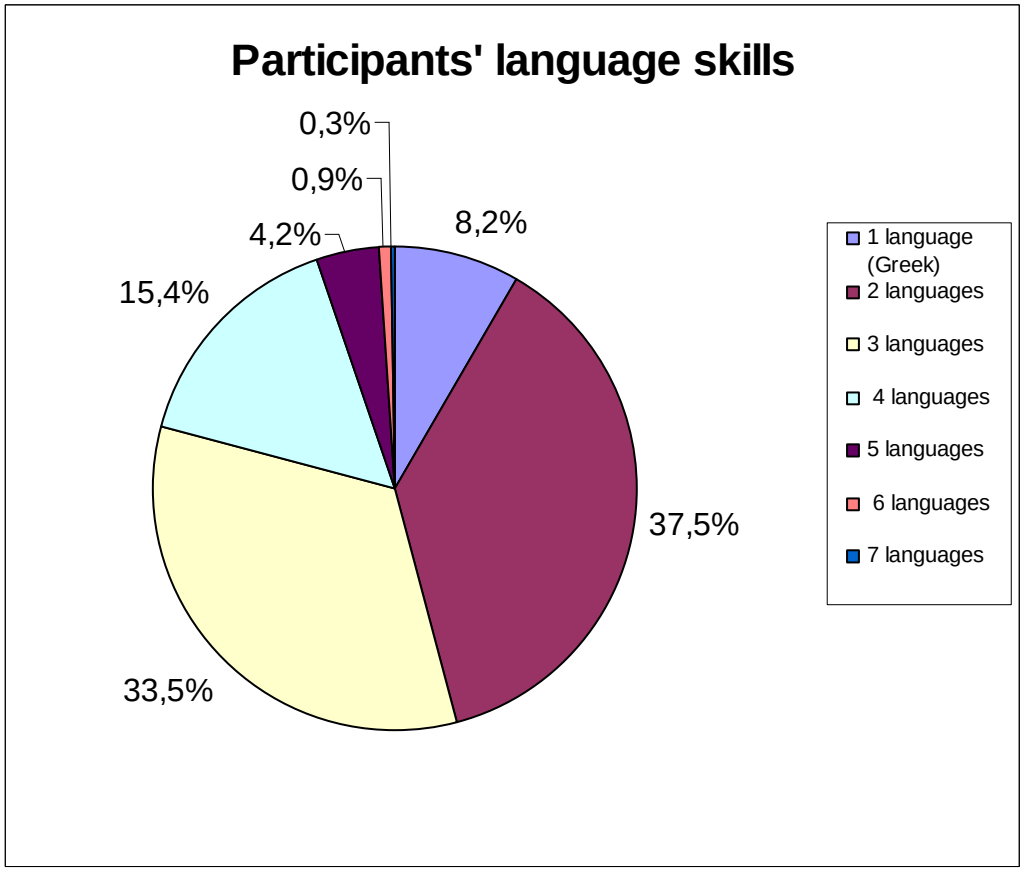
The most important finding of this question is that questionnaire participants, apart from higher formal education, have also very developed language skills. The analysis of language skills, given that the structure of the question was such to permit

free expression by the participants, might be an interesting future research project on its own right. For the purposes of this research, I classified the answers according to the number of languages the participants can use. Then, just according to my qualitative research findings, the majority of participants (by 71%!) speak two or three languages.

Table 6.A.6 – Language skills of participants

Number of languages spoken	Number of participants
1 language (Greek)	27
2 languages	124
3 languages	111
4 languages	51
5 languages	14
6 languages	3
7 languages	1
Total sum	**331**

Graph 6.A.6 – Language skills of the participants



6.A.7 – Do the participants use a personal computer?

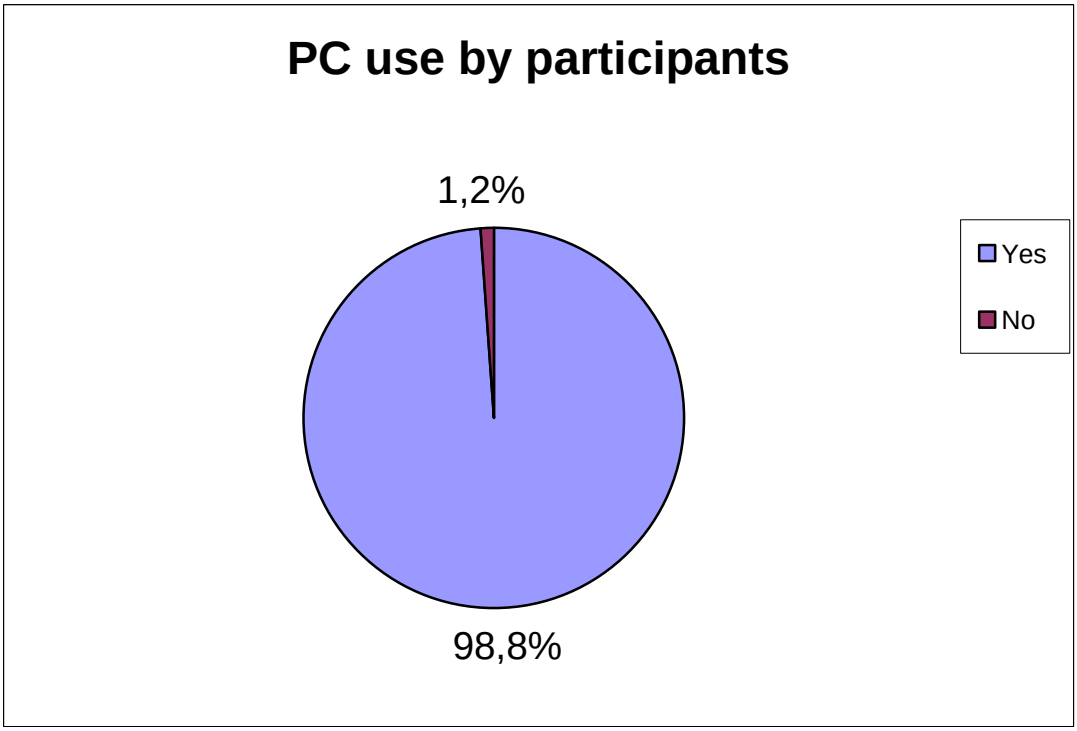
Of course they do! However, as I have mentioned before, the structure of the questionnaire and the dispersion of scheme members all over the country made it almost impossible to travel around and search for participants by meeting them in fairs and in gatherings. This means that all results of the quantitative phase have been biased towards the preferences and the profiles of the people who use personal computers and could easier be informed about and much easier participate in the research. As I have mentioned already, the online questionnaires missed answers (so we have empty cells in the automatic database form) while the negative answers did came from the questionnaires received in print or by email (there are people who might have another member of the household sending the digital questionnaire – I assume that in case someone was filling in the questionnaire for another person who does not use a PC, would have replied so intentionally).

Then, out of 331 answers (answered questionnaires) we have only four negative answers to this question.

Table 6.A.7 – PC use by participants

Yes	No	Total
327	4	331

Graph 6.A.7 – PC use by participants



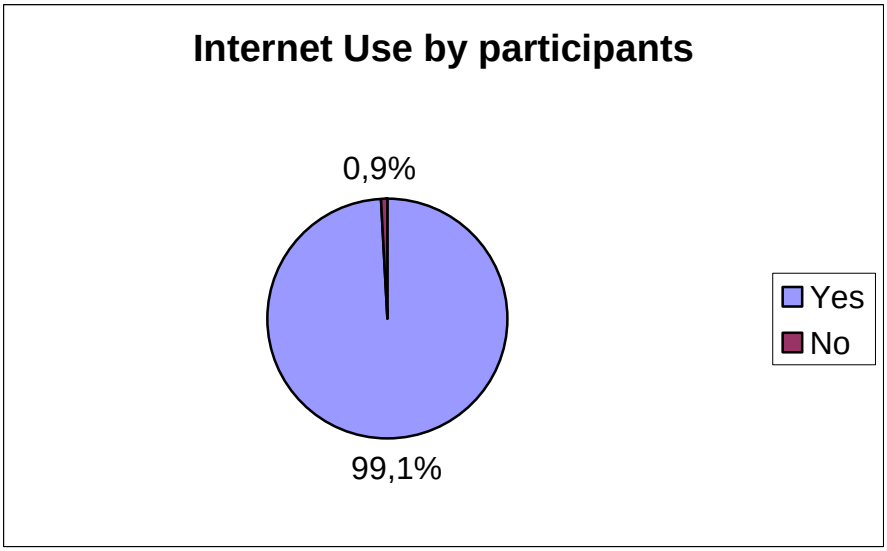
6.A.8 – Internet use by participants

Just like in the previous case, we have three only negative answers. Of course, the first question would be how one can have internet access but not being able to use a personal computer. There are two possible explanations for this little discrepancy: either I have made a mistake in gathering the data (quite possible) or there are people who might have internet access via their mobile phones (also quite possible).

Table 6.A.8 – Internet use by participants

Yes	No	Total sum
328	3	331

Graph 6.A.8 – Internet use by participants



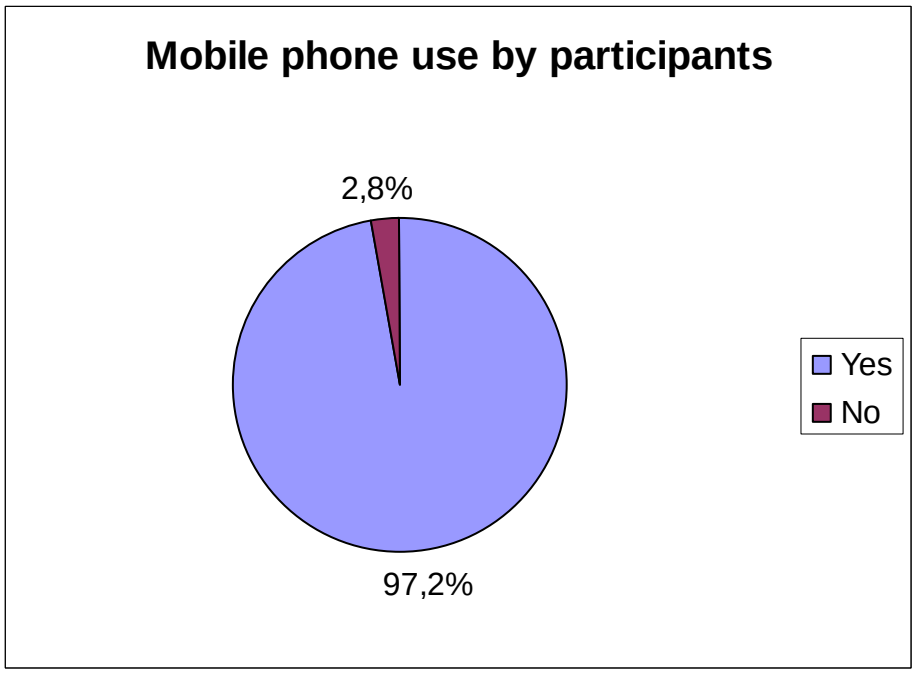
6.A.9 – Mobile phone use by participants

The question concerning the use of mobile phones by participants gathered 324 answers. Most of them were positive, however it seems that mobile phones are slightly less used than personal computers among research participants.

Table 6.A.9 – mobile phone use by participants

Yes	315
No	9
Total	324

Graph 6.A.9 – mobile phone use by participants



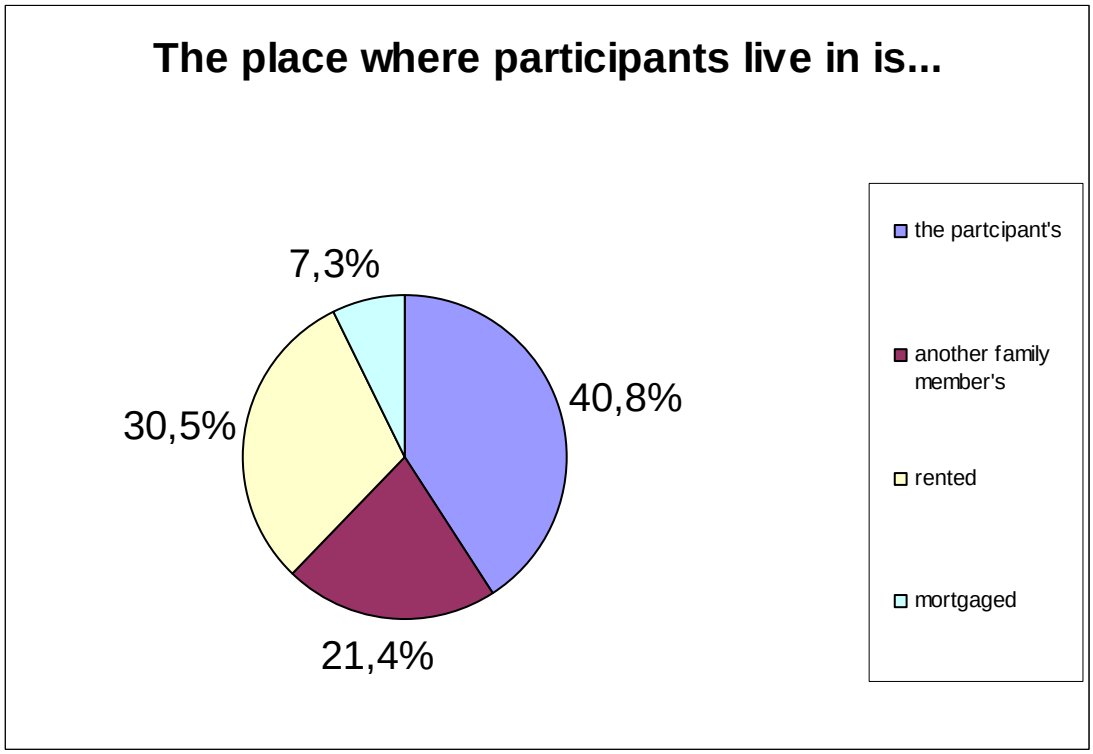
6.A.10 – Whom does the place where they live in belong to?

Out of 331 answers, it is shown that the majority of the participants live in a place (house or apartment) which is owned by themselves or by another member of the family.

Table 6.A.10 – Whom the residency belongs to

Whom the residency belongs to	Number of participants
it belongs to the participant	135
it belongs to another member of the participant's family	71
the participant rents the place	101
it belong to the participant or to another member of the family but it is mortgaged	24
Total sum	331

Graph 6.A.10 – Whom the residency belongs to



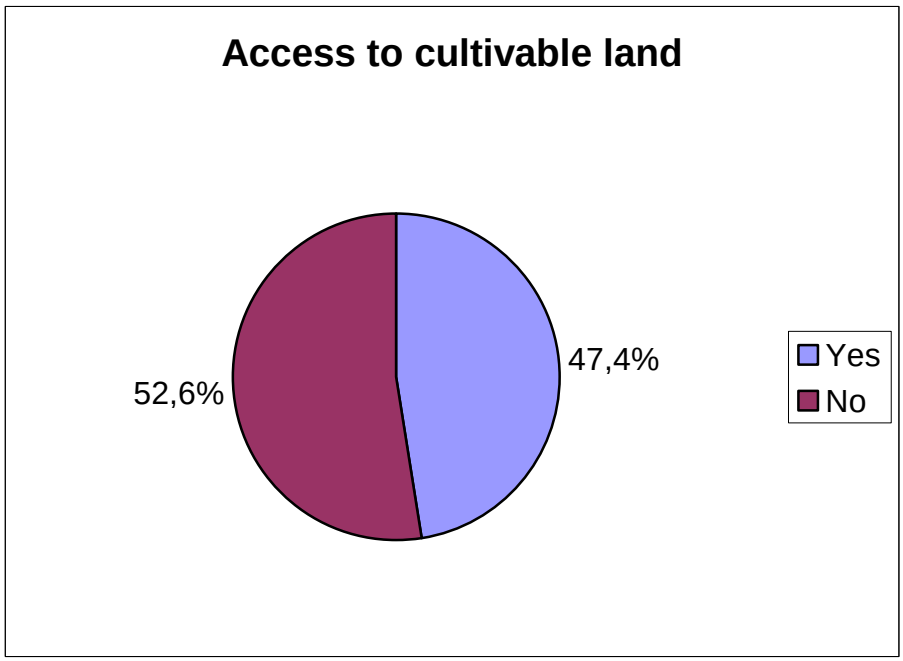
6.A.11 – Do the participants have the chance to cultivate land, their own or owned by another person?

Well, an important number (more than 47%) out of them do have access to cultivable land. However, as it seems, the majority has no such access. The question did not want to ask details about the property rights on cultivation land. The idea was just to examine whether participants have access to any land which can be used for agricultural production. The question did not include details about land that might be owned by the participants but it is far from accessible distance, for example, in the countryside far away from the place they live in. The results for this question are consistent with the fact that most participants live in greater urban areas of Greece. This question received 327 answers.

Table 6.A.11 – Access to cultivable land

Access to cultivable land	Number of participants
Yes	155
No	172
Total sum	327

Graph 6.A.11 – Access to cultivable land



6.A.12 – Participants' main occupation

This has been a very difficult issue to tackle with. First, because I did not want to gather information only about jobs paid with euros – then I explained that in case someone is unemployed and/or is staying at home, taking care of the house and/or of children, then this person might be able to write down "unemployed" or the tasks he/she performs without pay or all occupations he/she might spend his/her efforts on. The other thing I did not want to do is to pre-define the possible jobs or tasks the participants might do in their lives. Far from having a very long choice list, I would have forced my own vocabulary on what they do, sometimes not only despising but also nullifying work which might be very important for participants and their households or communities. Another concern has been that even creating

job/occupation categories in advance (ex ante) would be severely biasing the data, as the participants would be forced to choose a category close to their own and I could miss the data they could have given me without this forcible ex ante categorisation.

This question has received 323 answers and the effort to understand what participants wanted really to tell me has probably been one of the hardest during the study of the questionnaire results. At the end of course, I decided to create categories, but this was done after the participants had offered me an extraordinary picture not only about what they do for a living but also about how they think about what they do for a living. What was revealing for me in this case, is that my effort to create categories (and therefore, attempt to exert my researcher-power to put the participants' ideas into some groupings), proved that all what I thought to be common, like our distinction of production into goods and services, or into production of raw materials, of industries and of services is still not handy, or our distinction between private and public sector was not useful at all.

Replies to this question were various: unemployed (άνεργος, άνεργη), unemployed-occasionally work in stores with payment in kind (άνεργη-περιστασιακά εργαζόμενη σε καταστήματα με πληρωμή σε είδος), unemployed – cooperation with a technical firm without payment (άνεργη – συνεργασία άνευ αμοιβής με τεχνικό γραφείο), unemployed-NGO volunteer (άνεργος-εθελοντής σε ΜΚΟ)[1], fisherman (αλιέας), graphic designer (γραφίστας, γραφίστρια, γραφιστική), yoga teacher-children care-photographer (δασκάλα yoga-φροντίδα παιδιών-φωτογράφος), public servant (δημόσιος υπάλληλος), teacher (εκπαιδευτικός), free lancer (ελεύθερος επαγγελματίας), merchant (έμπορος), businessman (επιχειρηματίας), English teacher (καθηγήτρια Αγγλικών), web developer (κατασκευαστής ιστοσελίδων), cook with payment, housekeeping without payment (μαγείρισσα με αμοιβή, φροντίδα σπιτιού χωρίς αμοιβή), mum ☺ ☺ (μαμά ☺ ☺[2]), housekeeping (οικιακά), housekeeping bringing up a child (οικιακά ανατροφή παιδιού), informatics (πληροφορική), software engineer (προγραμματιστής), sales (πωλήσεις), retiree (συνταξιούχος), housewife (νοικοκυρά), bank officer (τραπεζική υπάλληλος, τραπεζικός υπάλληλος), student

[1] There are many people who work without pay in this survey: they are students, home & hearth CEOs, mothers. However, I felt that I should mention necessarily the cases where people work for professional entities or individuals but they receive no pay or payment in kind. Personally, I am very worried that non-monetary transactions are, within certain contexts, very very exploitative.

[2] I kept the smiles as written. Smiles were all over the questionnaires, people were smiling while filling the questionnaire and they wanted me to know about that.

(φοιτητής, φοιτήτρια), house care (φροντίδα σπιτιού), childcare (φροντίδα παιδιών), photographer (φωτογράφος), analyst (ψυχολόγος), etc.

Therefore, I opted for two sets of categories, and consequently for two sets of data results concerning what participants do in their lives. Common category in both sets of data results is the one referring to all those people who define themselves as unemployed only or retired, without giving any other information about what other tasks they might be performing on a regular basis. I have also decided that home and hearth CEOs[1], volunteers of any kind, cultivators who perform this as a hobby while they have no other occupation, will be attributed to the other categories. My idea has been that once a person apart from unemployment has also one more occupation and mentions it, I would keep this as its main one. This does not change the fact that the person might have no income in official currency and at the end, the second data set covered all those cases where people might have no income in official currency at all.

What I also avoided is to mess up with the fact that a public good can be provided in both public and private sectors and a person might work in education, producing a public good, but at the same time, his/her employer might be a private company. Then, it was impossible to say that a private employee or self-employed works in the public sector stricto sensu, however, this does not dismiss the scope of his/her work, which remains a commonly needed good.

Moreover, I think that household production belongs to all the previous categories, because, for example, taking care of children includes, apart from food production, their health care and education, probably art, too. Same holds for taking care of the elderly or for keeping the household running by paying the bills, arranging repairs, organising home provisioning, etc (yes, those services if provided within, let' say, a hotel context, they are paid employment for the person who provides them). However, I thought that household production could not be divided into parts and dispersed into the rest of categories. It then, became a separate category.

[1] This is not a term used by participants. They usually use the term housewife (νοικοκυρά, οικιακά), as this is also the legal/official term for women working at their own homes without remuneration. Of course there is no legal/official term for men who might work at their own homes and raise their children, let alone that this term of "housewife" is also used for all women who might also be artists, non-regularly employed or unemployed, once they have a family. Then, I decided to use this term, "home and hearth CEO", which might seem fancy, but at the end it can cover both men and women working at their own homes, and can show that this type of work is not a simple or low-value occupation.

The first type of categorisation was constructed using the criterion of the object/scope of production. Then, the categories have been the following:

1) Unemployed - Retired

2) Production of food and raw materials

3) Health

4) Education

5) Production of small and big industrial production (βιοτεχνικά και βιομηχανικά προϊόντα)

6) Art

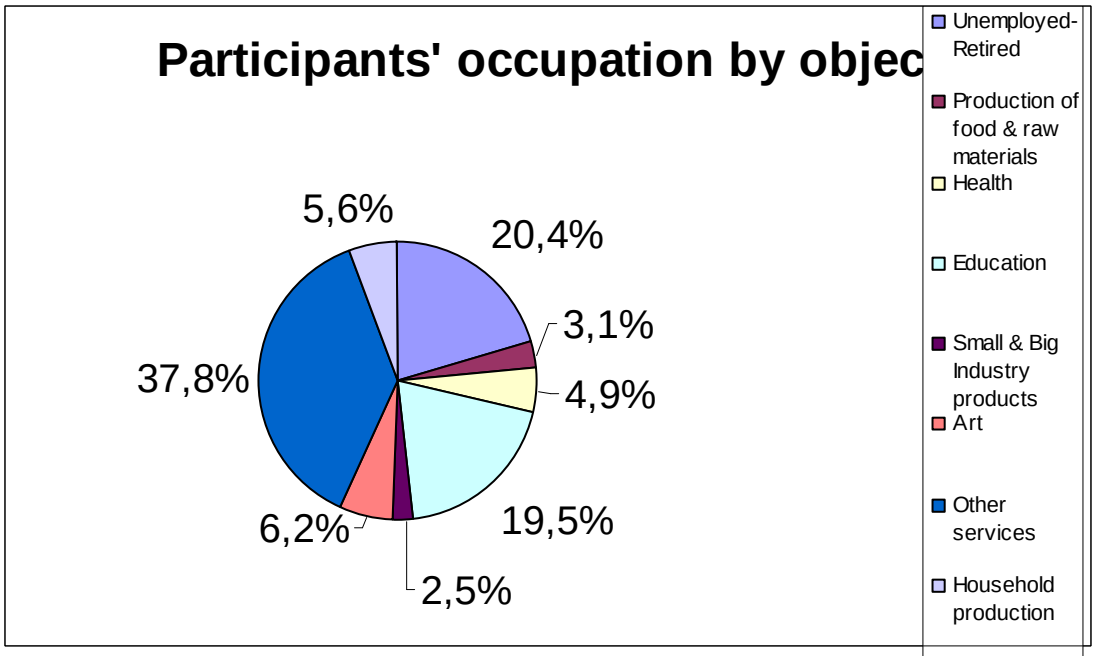
7) Other services

8) Household production

Table 6.A.12.A – Participants' main occupation by object

Object of Occupation	Number of participants
Unemployed-Retired	66
Production of food & raw materials	10
Health	16
Education	63
Small & Big Industry production	8
Art	20
Other services	122
Household production	18
Total sum	323

Graph 6.A.12.A – Participants' main occupation by object



The second type of data set, was a re-arrangement of the same data about participants' occupation, but this time the criterion has been the working status concerning the existence of an employer over the participants' work. Then, the categories have been the following:

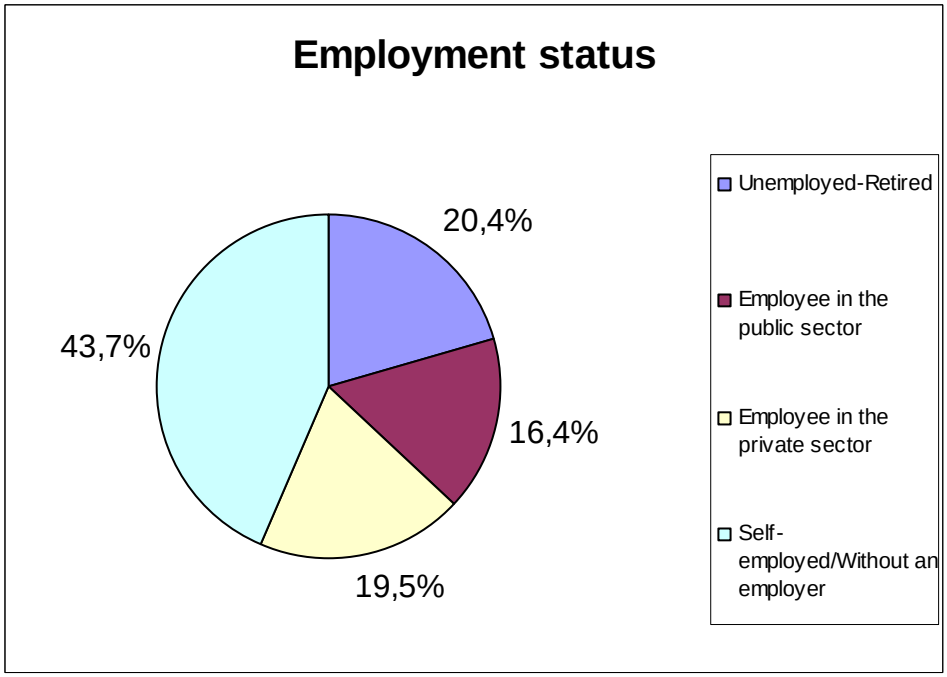
1) Unemployed - Retired
2) Employee in the public sector
3) Employee in the private sector
4) Self-employed/without an employer

As one may understand, this permitted me to see the employment status of the participants. Household production was added to self-employed/without an employer, not because there might not be hierarchies within the household, but because the employer-employee relationship does not exist in the ways it exists in the other cases. Moreover, it is obvious that there have been many assumptions integrated within this data arrangement and calculation, particularly, because the question in the questionnaire was completely open and no details about employment status were required from the participants.

Table 6.A.12.B – Participants' occupation by employment status

Employment status	Number of participants
Unemployed-Retired	66
Employee in the public sector	53
Employee in the private sector	63
Self-employed/Without an employer	141
Total sum	323

Graph 6.A.12.B – Participants' occupation by employment status



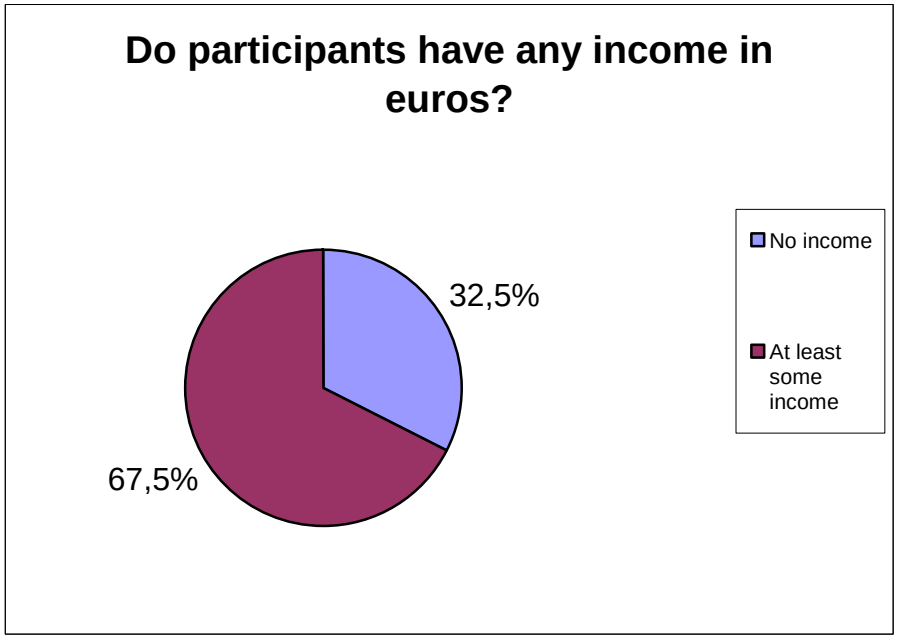
At the end, I recalculated the data, this time searching to see what percentage of the participants' population was in total income hardship, i.e. without income in euros at all. One should note that even the self-employed might have no income at all the last year, because self-employed people face the business cycle as it is, therefore in times of economic recession self-employed income decreases, even to zero levels. On the other hand, I could not assume that the people who described themselves are self-employed were meaning as without income at all, then I counted them with the people who have some personal income, even if this not enough or even if this has decreased the last year(s). I also counted into the people with some income the people who were defining themselves are retired.

The results of this recalculation were shocking. About 1/3 of the participants have no personal income at all in official currency.

Table 6.A.12.C – Do participants have any personal income in official currency (euros)?

Personal income in euros?	Number of participants
No income	105
At least some income	218
Total sum	323

Graph 6.A.12.C – Do participants have any personal income in official currency (euros)?



6.A.13 – What is the household income of the participants?

This has also been a very difficult question, in the sense that I was not sure whether the participants would be willing to answer it. I have already mentioned that income issues are not so easily discussed within the schemes, and this is a rule that as a researcher could not break, so I never asked during my research. Of course, there have been participants who were clear enough to tell me about their economic and financial situation during the qualitative research phase, but those discussions have been impossible to be quantified. What I knew already was that (from a vague

impression I have had due to all those discussions and hints) all income-levels were to be met in the schemes and in the activity without official currency.

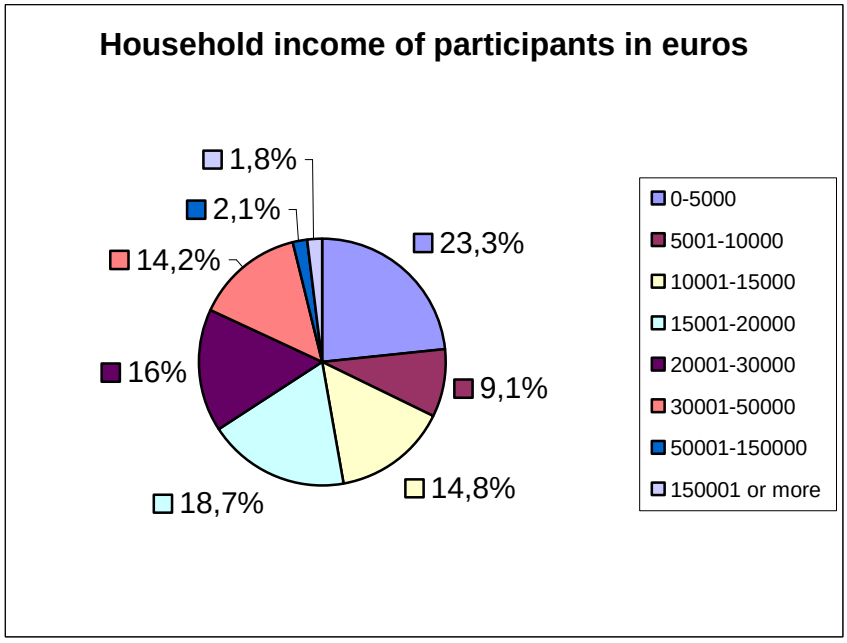
Then, I had to choose between asking about personal income and about household income. Perhaps, in a more detailed research concerning the participants' financial situation this might have been the best option. In my case, already knowing the discretion I need to use while tackling with this topic and while I was able to ask about the participants' occupation, I opted for just one question about income and I chose this to be about household. Of course, living in a wealthy household does not necessarily mean that a person has access to the household wealth, much less that this person has decision-making powers on economic matters along with the rest household members. However, this combination of research questions would go beyond the scope of the present research topic, so I just gathered the data needed and which can be comparable to a more detailed data-gathering in a future project.

The income range was expressed in brackets so that, first the participants did not have to write down exact numbers (this sometimes becomes very frustrating for people, because they will probably not remember) and that they could easily pick up an answer that would express their household's economic situation without the researcher missing any important information at this stage. Fortunately, this question has gathered 331 answers.

Table 6.A.13 – Household income of participants in euros

Household income range in euros	Number of participants
0-5000	77
5001-10000	30
10001-15000	49
15001-20000	62
20001-30000	53
30001-50000	47
50001-150000	7
150001 or more	6
Total sum	331

Graph 6.A.13 – Household income of participants in euros



It seems in the graph that more than 45% of participants live in low-income households, i.e. with up to 15000 euros per year. The lower middle-income group (15000 to 30000 euros per year) is also more than 35% of the participants' households. If one takes into consideration that the last year (2011-2012) the wages in Greece has been decreased by more than 20% and the unemployment has increased, then the situation of the participants households might be much worse now that this analysis is written (March 2012), while the participants answered the questionnaires having in mind their income levels of 2010.

However, one should not forget that among the participants there is also an important group, corresponding to more than 4% of participants, who belong to higher income levels, while the middle-income group gets more than 14% of the participants' population. Then all income levels are represented, although low income people might seem from the questionnaires to prevail in numbers. It is very important though that all those people gather, cooperate and transact together.

6.A.14 – Participation in an exchange scheme or group

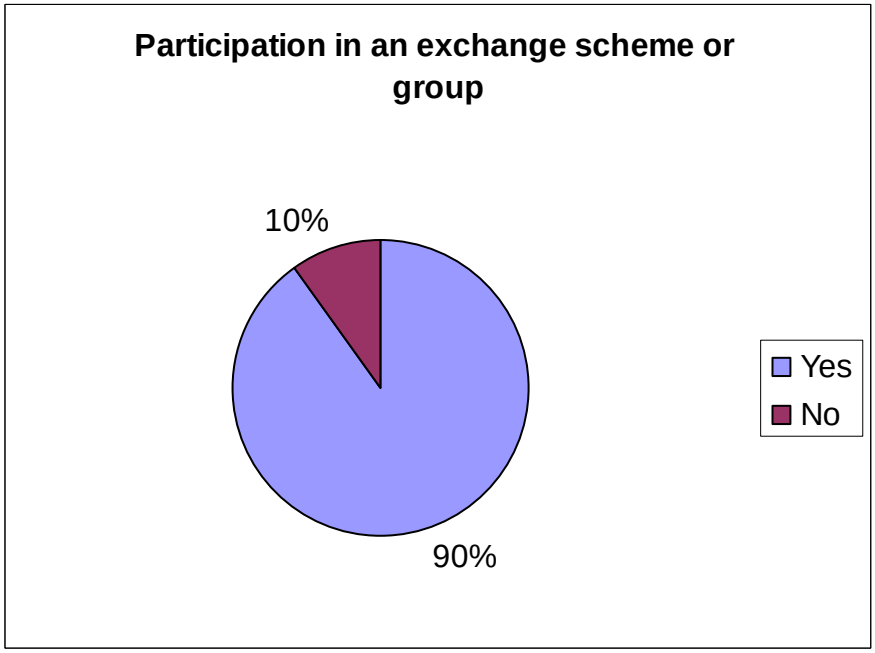
This question was the first to be asked concerning the participants' economic activity without the use of official currency. Actually, if the answer was negative, the

participant was directed to the third part of the questionnaire and skipped the part concerning the participation in schemes and groups. This question gathered 330 answers.

Table 6.A.14 – Participation in a exchange scheme or group

Participation in an exchange scheme	Number of participants
Yes	297
No	33
Total sum	330

Graph 6.A.14 – Participation in an exchange scheme or group



I am not sure whether the questionnaire had really captured the activity without official currency performed by people who are around the exchange schemes (f.ex. they know people or they have relatives and friends in the schemes, so they trade among themselves without registering as formal members) or the people who answered with a “No” perform their transactions generally far from the organised exchange schemes.

6. B. Questions concerning the participation in exchange schemes and groups

A major problem I had to solve while constructing the questionnaire has been to avoid double filling-ins without this being evident in the sum of questionnaires. Of course, one would ask why someone might want to fill in twice or more times the same questionnaire for the same research. However, many people participate in more than one scheme, so they might want to answer the questionnaire more than one times. Given that the questionnaire was meant to be online and offering total anonymity to the participants, I should take some precautions to be able to trace down any double filling-ins.

The choice made at last was to ask the participants whether they have filled in the questionnaire for other schemes and which those have been. This choice proved to be a… disaster, because I am afraid, despite the fact that at the beginning of the second part of the questionnaire concerning scheme participation, I was explaining that we need to avoid any double filling-ins, it seems that something in all wording of questions was not clear enough. Participants in several cases replied that they have had filled the questionnaire in giving the same name of scheme as the one they were giving for first time of answering the questionnaire. This has been so constant as a phenomenon among the replies that it was obvious that they have not filled in the same questionnaire twice for the same scheme, but that participants thought that they were supposed to give the name of the scheme again for which they answered the questionnaire!!

I am really wondering how I should have phrased the questionnaire in order to avoid this mess. On the other hand, this has been the price to pay for not limiting my research into one or two schemes. As one can see from the following, it is not possible to know exactly if anyone really has filled in the questionnaire more than one times, because even in the cases where they mention a second scheme they take part in, when they answer the question which second scheme they have filled the questionnaire in for, they give both scheme names!!! This shows that participants probably take the mentioning of scheme names as enough an indication that they have filled the questionnaire in.

Then I decided not to exclude any questionnaire, because it was impossible to see any clear answer which would indicate that the participants has definitely filled in twice a questionnaire (and for which scheme). The study of the raw data in the data

base shows that probably no double filling-in took place (and in case after the publication of this dissertation the participants can let me know about any such double fillings, I am willing to re-calculate all data) – and this is consistent with the replies concerning the type and volume of transactions, where the participants gave in several cases multiple answers indicating which scheme each answer is for (then they were completely aware that they have filled in the questionnaire once only).

6.B.1.1 – Which network or group have they been filling-in the questionnaire for?

This question received only 289 instead of 297 that one should expect (297 people answered that they are members of an exchange scheme). The free networks (Dosse-Pare, Freecycle Greece & Charise-to) prevail among the participants. One might question this participation by the fact that their members are using the internet every day. However, one should also mention that it is possible that the vast number of members in all those three schemes gave a very little participation in the research, which of course might seem extensive compared to other schemes, but it might also be normal compared to the thousands of members those schemes have all over the country. What is mostly amazing is that the currency of Ovolos[1] despite the more than 2100 officially registered members, only very few have received the questionnaire through other networks they have been members of.

What is also amazing, is that for many of the schemes, I have received just one answer only or very few compared to their membership. I have already mentioned the problems which existed in the questionnaire being acceptable by the participants and the problems the community of Peliti was worrying about. Then, one might assume that it is possible that out of each scheme, I have had very few answers to have a clear picture of each scheme.

Of course, there are schemes which have very few members, or they were newly established when the questionnaire has been disseminated, so one or two or four answers might be enough for this research project, but not enough for me to

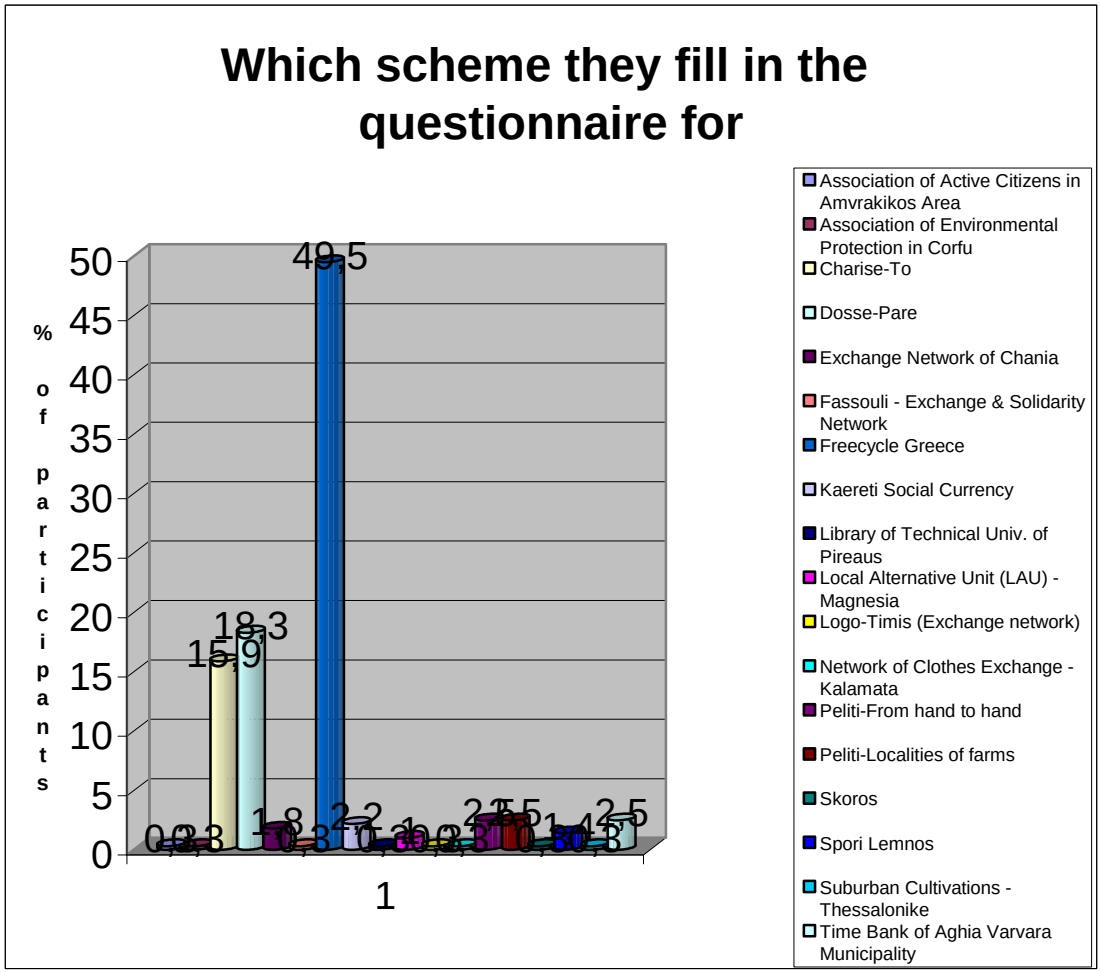
[1] Ovolos in 2011 asked all their members to register officially as members of the Association Ovolos and any member who did not finally register, was erased as a member. Then out of about 5000, more than 2100 members existed in September 2011, according to personal communication with the coordinators.

reach any safe conclusions about the scheme itself. Only the free networks have provided me with lots of answered questionnaires. However, one should better study each scheme separately to acquire more reliable data for a future research.

Table 6.B.1.1. – Which network or group they have been filling-in the questionnaire for

Name of scheme	Number of participants
Association of Active Citizens in Amvrakikos Area	1
Association of Environmental Protection in Corfu	1
Charise-To	46
Dosse-Pare	53
Exchange Network of Chania	5
Fassouli - Exchange & Solidarity Network	1
Freecycle Greece	143
Kaereti Social Currency	6
Library of Technical Univ. of Pireaus	1
Local Alternative Unit (LAU) - Magnesia	3
Logo-Timis (Exchange network)	1
Network of Clothes Exchange - Kalamata	1
Peliti-From hand to hand	7
Peliti-Localities of farms	7
Skoros	1
Spori Lemnos	4
Suburban Cultivations - Thessalonike	1
Time Bank of Aghia Varvara Municipality	7
Total sum	289

Graph 6.B.1.1 - Which network or group they have been filling-in the questionnaire for



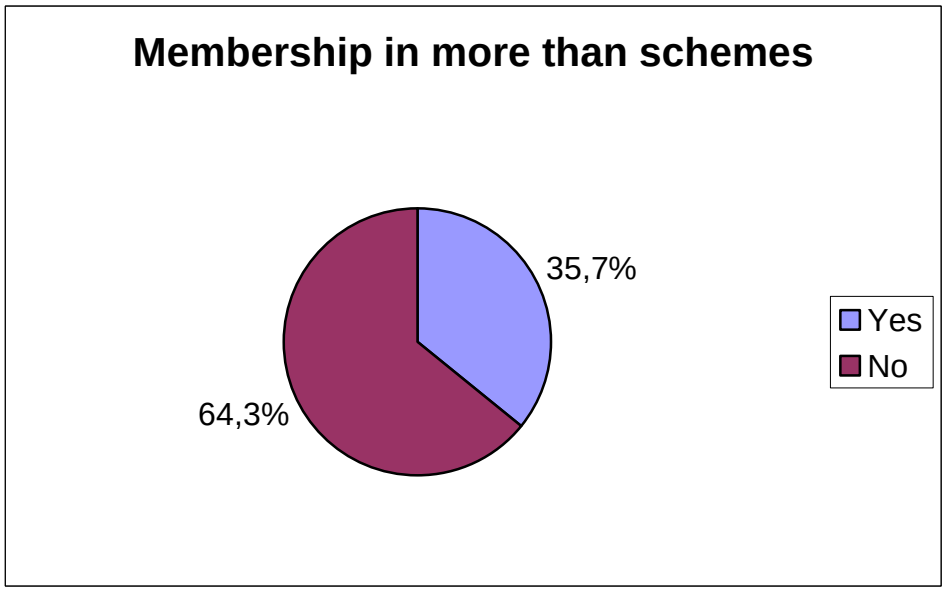
6.B.1.2. – Are the participants members of any other scheme where they do not use the euro in their transactions?

This question received 291 answers.

Table 6.B.1.2- Participation in more than one schemes

Membership in other scheme	
Yes	104
No	187
Total sum	291

Graph 6.B.1.2 – Participation in more than one schemes



6.B.1.3 – Which other schemes the participants are members of

This has also been a very difficult question in the sense that for reasons, probably of questionnaire wording, in many cases the participants repeated the name of the scheme they had already written down in the first question about the scheme they are members of. To find out real multiple participation I had to erase from my data lists all answers which were repeating the name of the "first" scheme, which gave me at last 102 answers.

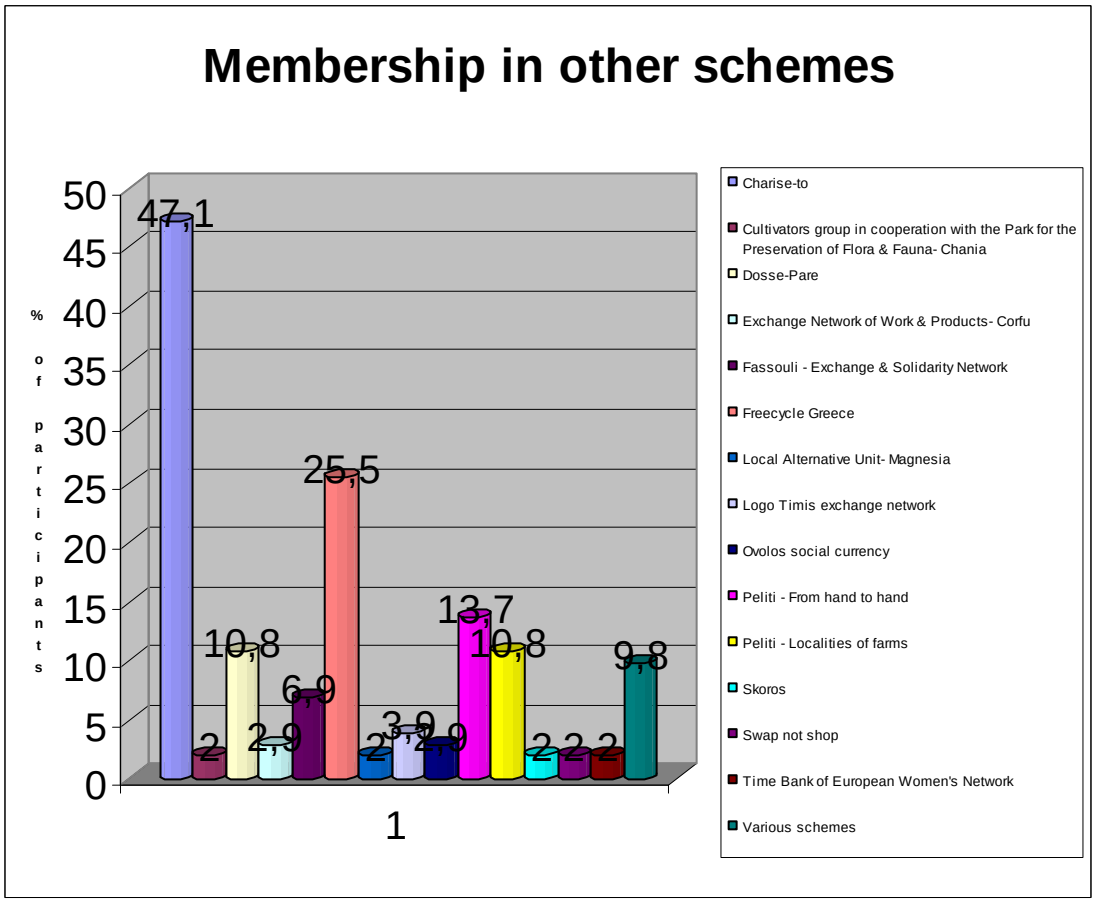
One should note that in some cases, people who had not written any name for the scheme they are members of while they were filling in the previous question, decided to answer this question, in some cases giving the names of two or more schemes. I do not think it is wise to pick up a scheme and "correct" the first answer about scheme participation, so, I just present the results as they are, i.e. the schemes where people participate along with at least one more scheme. The answers and percentages in the table and graph might be more than 102 and 100% in sum, because the participants were allowed to give multiple answers instead of one only as they were meant to in the first question.

It is obvious that in multiple membership the free networks prevail too, as most of participants who are registered with one, prefer to register with similar networks. However, there have been cases where participants are members of numerous schemes, several of which are new schemes or even schemes which are not strictly organised groups (like the occasional free bazaars).

Table 6.B.1.3 – Which other schemes the participants are members of

Name of the scheme	No of participants
Aegina Free bazaars	1
Association for Environmental Protection - Corfu	1
Bookcrossing	1
Charise-to	48
Cultivators group in cooperation with the Park for the Preservation of Flora & Fauna- Chania	2
Dosse-Pare	11
exchange bazaars with friends	1
Exchange Network of Pieria	1
Exchange Network of Work & Products- Corfu	3
Exchanges in local assosiation's library	1
Fassouli - Exchange & Solidarity Network	7
Free Social Space - Botanic Garden of Petroupolis	1
Freecycle Greece	26
LETS-ATI	1
Local Alternative Unit- Magnesia	2
Logo Timis exchange network	4
Ovolos social currency	3
Peliti - From hand to hand	14
Peliti - Localities of farms	11
Permanent Free Bazzar Micropolis- Thessalonike	1
personal network	1
Skoros	2
Swap not shop	2
Time Bank of European Women's Network	2
Total sum of membership	147

Graph 6.B.1.3. - Which other schemes the participants are members of



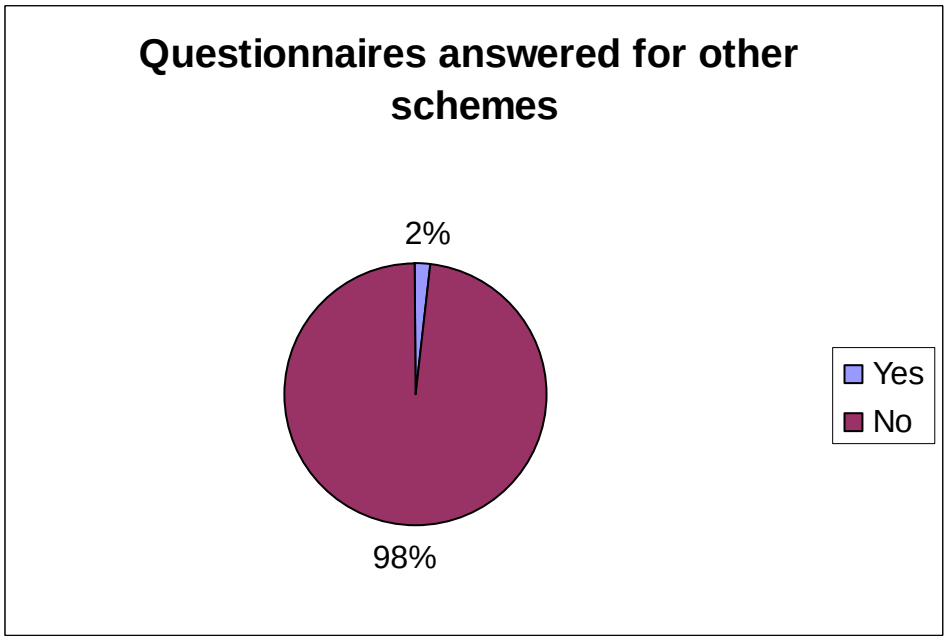
6.B.1.4. – Have the participants filled in the questionnaire for any of the other schemes they are members of?

Curiously, to this question, I received 212 answers only, and only 4 out of them were positive.

Table 6.B.1.4 – Questionnaires answered for other schemes

Questionnaires for other schemes	Number of participants
Yes	4
No	208
Total sum	212

Graph 6.B.1.4 - Questionnaires answered for other schemes



This question was comprising the same list of schemes (with an option of "other" to be filled-in freely by the participant) and the four people who answered yes did not really had answered this questionnaire more than once. Two out of the four cases did not specify the scheme at all, then they have not replied the added question about which other scheme they had filled in the questionnaire. The other two gave exactly the name of the scheme they had filled in the questionnaire for in the first place, then it was obvious that they had not answered the same questionnaire for the same scheme twice and that their answers were given by oblivion or misunderstanding.

Then, I decided to keep questionnaires as they are (331), without omitting or keeping aside any of them, as there was no serious indication of double-answering by the same person.

6.B.2.1. Since when the participants are members of the scheme

This question received 295 answers only. The participants' membership increased the last years and I also think that the slight decrease in membership for

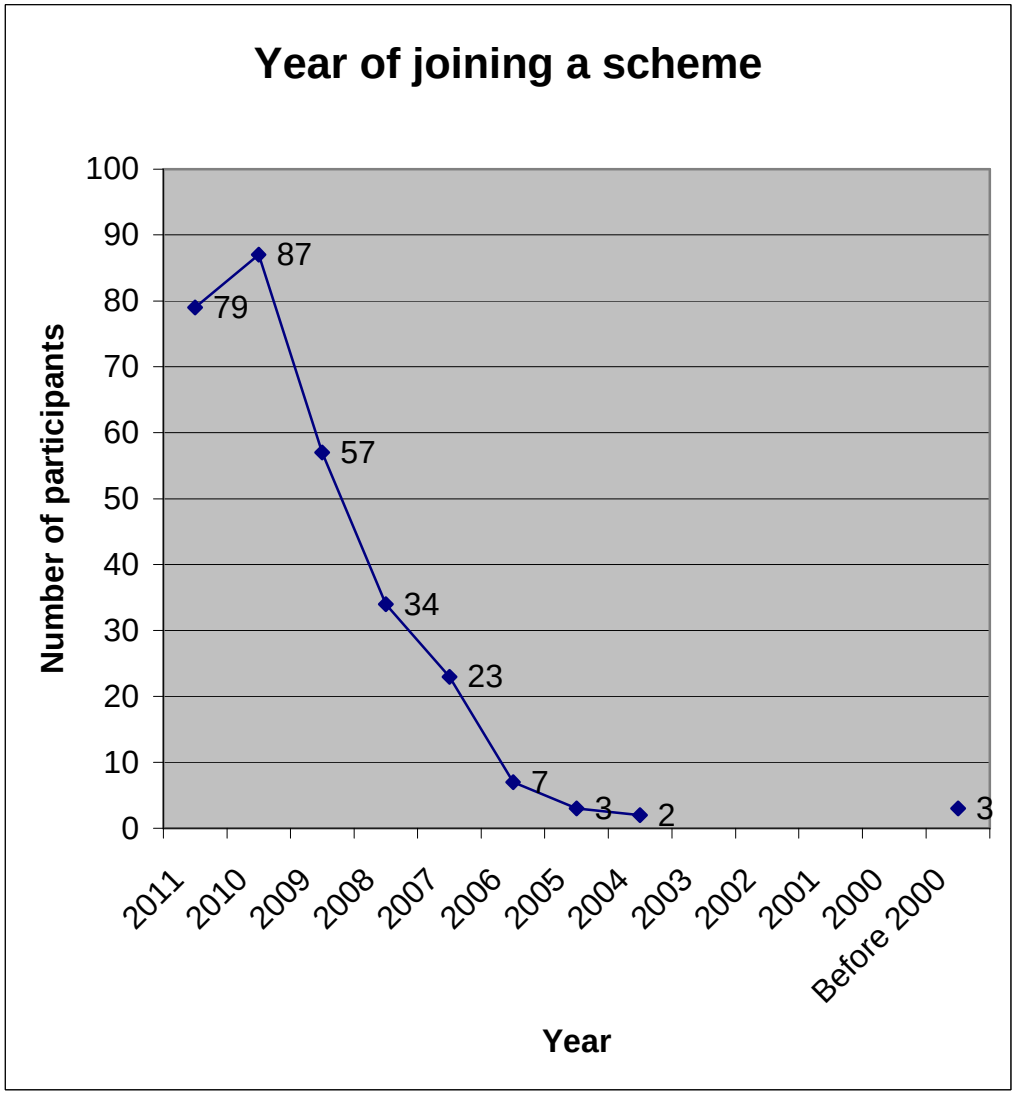
2011 happens because the questionnaire has been disseminated in early autumn of 2011. This means that for the new schemes of 2011 (for example, the Exchange Network of Chania which I am member of and I can have regular information about new members joining), the full membership development time started after December 2011 when actually the questionnaire was more or less “answered” by those who were aware of the research.

The question was also giving an option to answer not only about the year but also about the month of registering, but many of the participants were not really remembering the month.

Table 6.B.2.1. – Year of joining

Year of joining	Number of participants
Before 2000	3
2000	0
2001	0
2002	0
2003	0
2004	2
2005	3
2006	7
2007	23
2008	34
2009	57
2010	87
2011	79
Total sum	295

Graph 6.B.2.1. – Year of joining



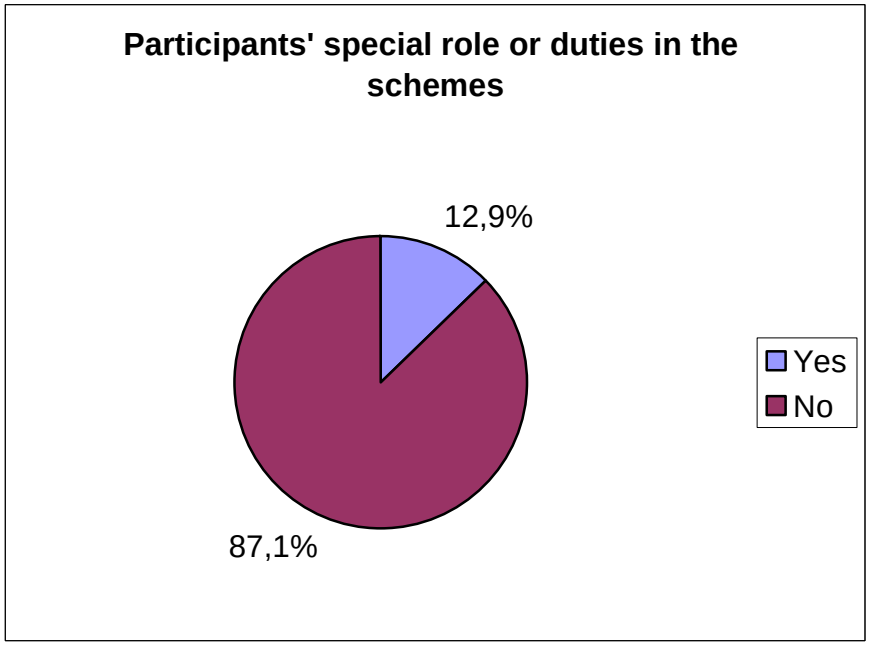
6.B.2.2 – Do the participants have any special role or duties within the schemes?

This question received 295 answers and the general picture is that the vast majority of participants are simple scheme members, without special roles or duties in the schemes.

Table 6.B.2.2 – Participants' special roles or duties within the schemes

Special role or duties	Number of participants
Yes	38
No	257
Total sum	295

Graph 6.B.2.2 - Participants' special roles or duties within the schemes

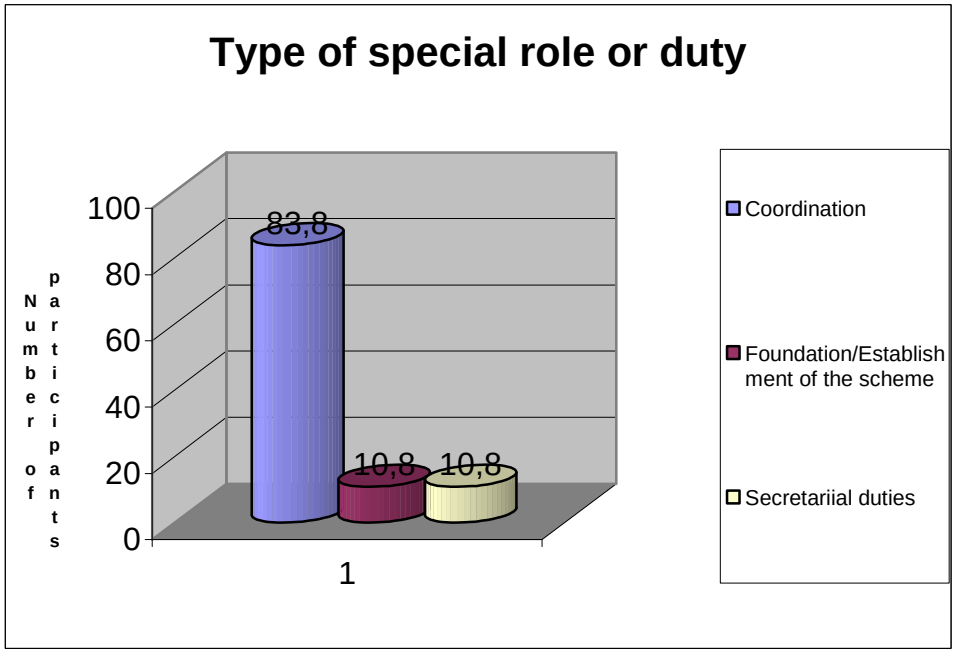


Out of the 37 answers (then one of the people who have some role, has not given us any further specifications) concerning the role and duties of the participants, most of them were concerning coordination of the schemes. In both the table and the graph, the answers and percentages are more than 37 and 100%, because in some cases the participants gave specifications which belonged to more than one category.

Table 6.B.2.2.A – Type of special role or duty

Type of special role or duty	Number of participants
Coordination	31
Foundation/Establishment of the scheme	4
Secretariial duties	4

Graph 6.B.2.2.A – Type of special role or duty



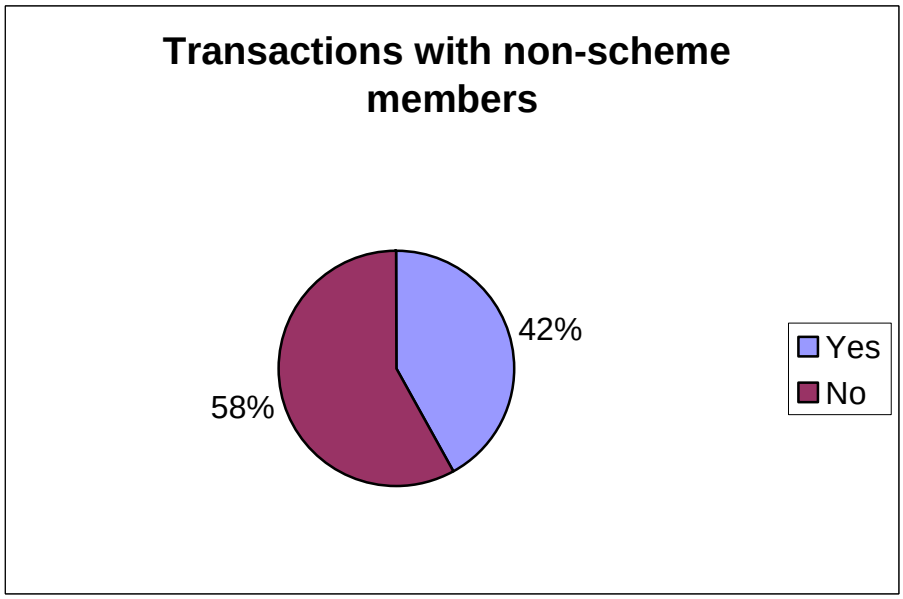
6.B.2.3. – Do participants perform similar transactions just like within the schemes with people who are not official members of the scheme?

This question received 289 answers and to the desperation of the research student, an important part out of the answers were positive, which means that apart from the official members we can see in the schemes, there are also many other people transacting without participating in any structured group or network. This activity is the hardest to grasp through the research data, and I really wonder how biased the research might have been exactly because it focuses on the easy-to-see-easy-to-find publicly announced schemes. Because, there have been only 10% out of the research participants who are not members of any scheme, but if 42% of scheme members perform similar transactions with non-members, then people who take part in this economic activity without having registered with in a scheme are much more numerous than we might think.

Table 6.B.2.3. – Transactions without official currency outside the schemes/with non-scheme members

Transactions with non-scheme members	Number of participants
Yes	121
No	168
Total sum	289

Graph 6.B.2.3. - Transactions without official currency outside the schemes/with non-scheme members



6.B.2.4– Why do the participants joint the scheme(s)?

This question existed also in the qualitative phase. Actually, it has been one of the most crucial questions of the research project, exactly because once the economic activity does not fit mainstream theories, one searches for the reasons which make people to behave in an “unpredictable” or “new” manner. The variety of reasons found in qualitative research made me to leave the answering options completely free to the participants. This made the study of their answers a really difficult experiment, exactly because each answer was revealing a different set of ideas and perceptions.

To make the answers comparable I arrived to discern them into eight categories, just for analysis purposes (where the “other reactions” cover answers irrelevant to the question or non-wordings, like exclamation points etc). Then, one could see that several people were giving answers comprising reasons which belonged to more than one categories (most of the answers were really explicative and long).

Some examples of answers to this question are:

“I need to offer, to create and to feel useful and important. Through my participation I improve myself by observing the function of the team and by learning new things. Moreover, I try to make myself independent (να απεξαρτηθώ) as much as possible from money. I like collegiality (συναδελφικότητα) and solidarity because I believe that we all together can do things that one person alone cannot do”.

“To cover my needs and the needs of my friends and my relatives because of lack of money”.

“For social and economic reasons”.

“To leave no garbage on earth and to offer service to each other”.

“To be able to continue to offer but also to enjoy the things I desire. My aim is human communication and the reduction of my living costs”.

“To untrap myself from the economic crisis”.

“Because I feel well when I give things I do not use. Moreover, I have found useful things for myself”.

“Because it is a wonderful way of recycling and solidarity in very harsh times. It is very important for me to know that there are people who will support me if I need something and I have no money to buy it”.

“Because it is time, the exchanges we do with our friends to open them up to all the rest of society!”.

“Because I consider it to be a waste to throw away things into the bins, while they could have been useful to other people. And, [I consider] that the process contributes to the increase of the volume of garbage and of consumerism, as well as to the improvement of the living standards of people with limited economic chances”.

“Because that way, I make life more beautiful”.

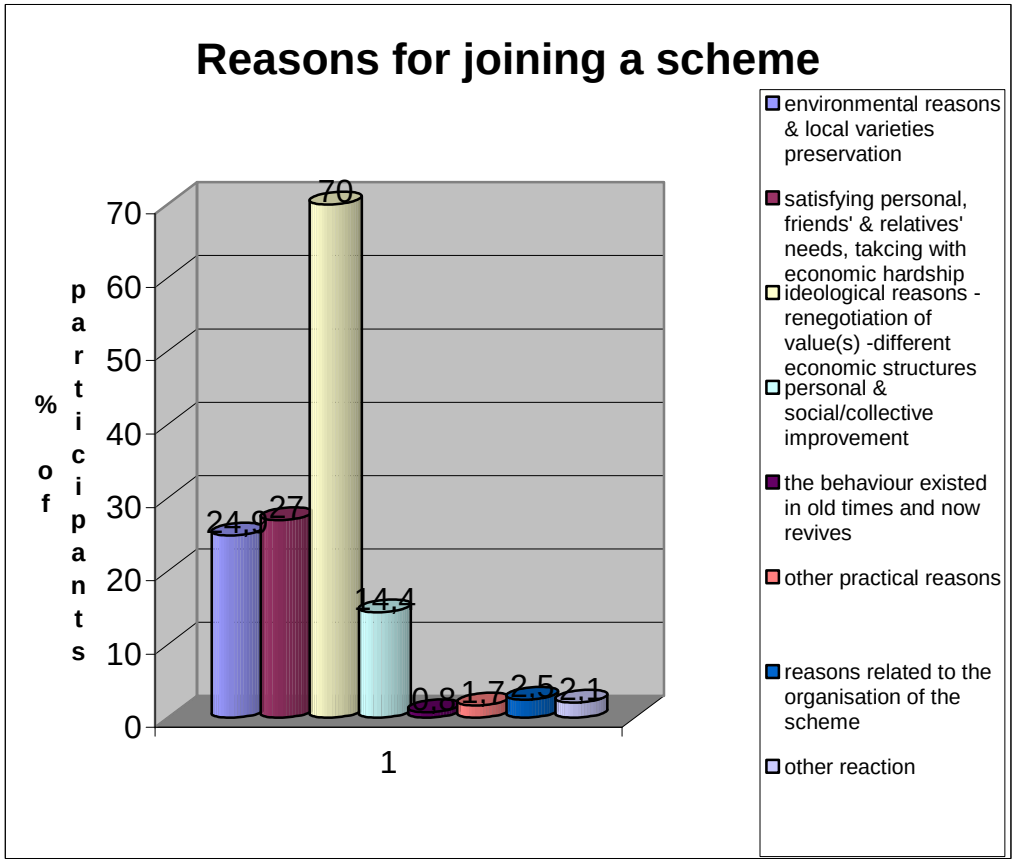
“Because I believe that: “I do not sell anything, I do not buy anything, I am free”.

Therefore, out of 237 answers I received, I counted them more than one times, so that the total sum of answers and the percentages exceed 237 and 100% respectively.

Table 6.B.2.4. – Why participants joined the scheme(s)

Reasons for joining an exchange scheme	No of participants
environmental reasons & local varieties preservation	59
satisfying personal, friends' & relatives' needs, tackling with economic hardship	64
ideological reasons - renegotiation of value(s) -different economic structures	166
personal & social/collective improvement	34
the behaviour existed in old times and now revives	2
other practical reasons	4
reasons related to the organisation of the scheme	6
other reaction	5
Total sum	340

Graph 6.B.2.4. – Why participants joined the scheme(s)



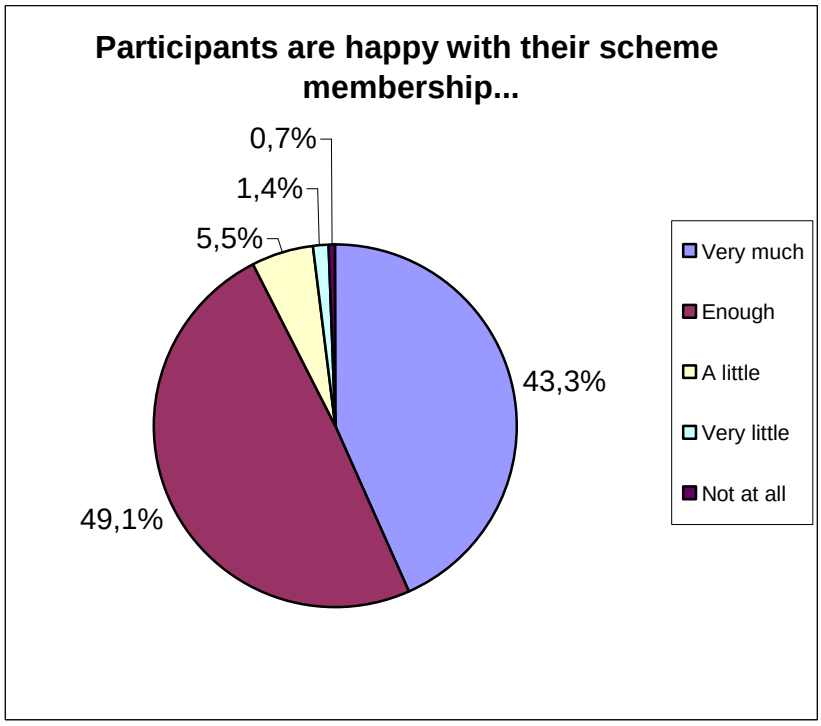
6.B.2.5. – Are you happy with your participation in the scheme?

The answers to this question had the form of choosing from a list ranging from "not at all" to "very much". This question received 291 answers and most of them were positive towards the schemes.

Table 6.B.2.5. – Participants are happy with their participation in the scheme…

Happy with the scheme	Number of participants
Very much	126
Enough	143
A little	16
Very little	4
Not at all	2
Total sum	291

Graph 6.B.2.5 – Participants are happy with their participation in the scheme…



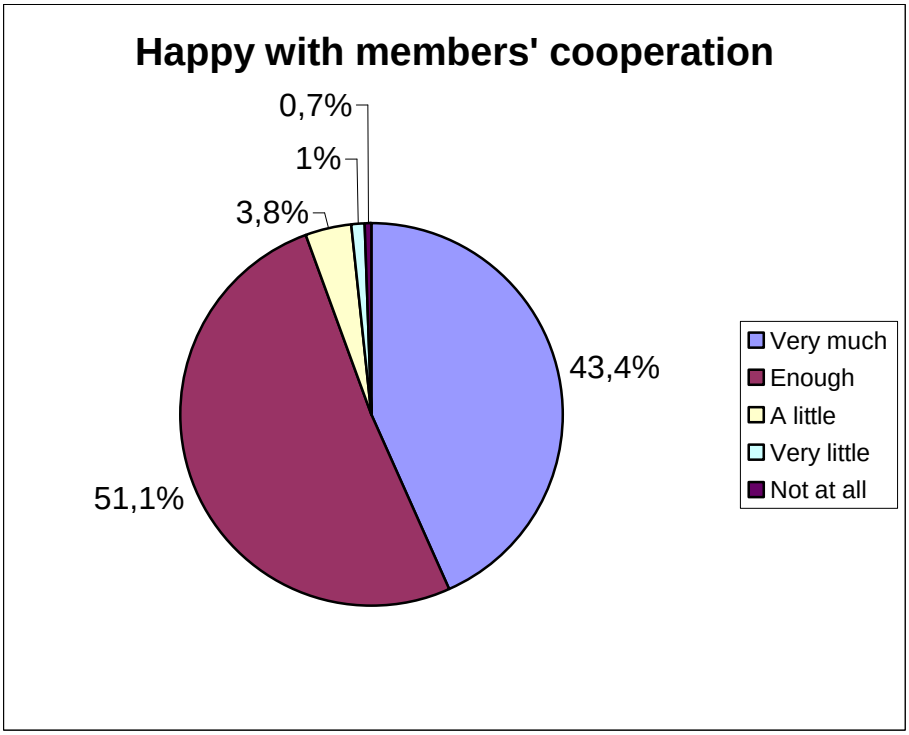
6.B.2.6. - Are you happy with the cooperation by the other members of the scheme?

This question received slightly more positive answers, although the total sum of answers has been less than the previous question, i.e. in this question I received 288 answers.

Table 6.B.2.6. - Participants are happy with the other members' cooperation…

Happy with members' cooperation	Number of participants
Very much	125
Enough	147
A little	11
Very little	3
Not at all	2
Total sum	288

Graph 6.B.2.6 - Participants are happy with the other members' cooperation…



6.C. Questions about the transactions with official currency, irrespective of whether the participants are members of a scheme or not

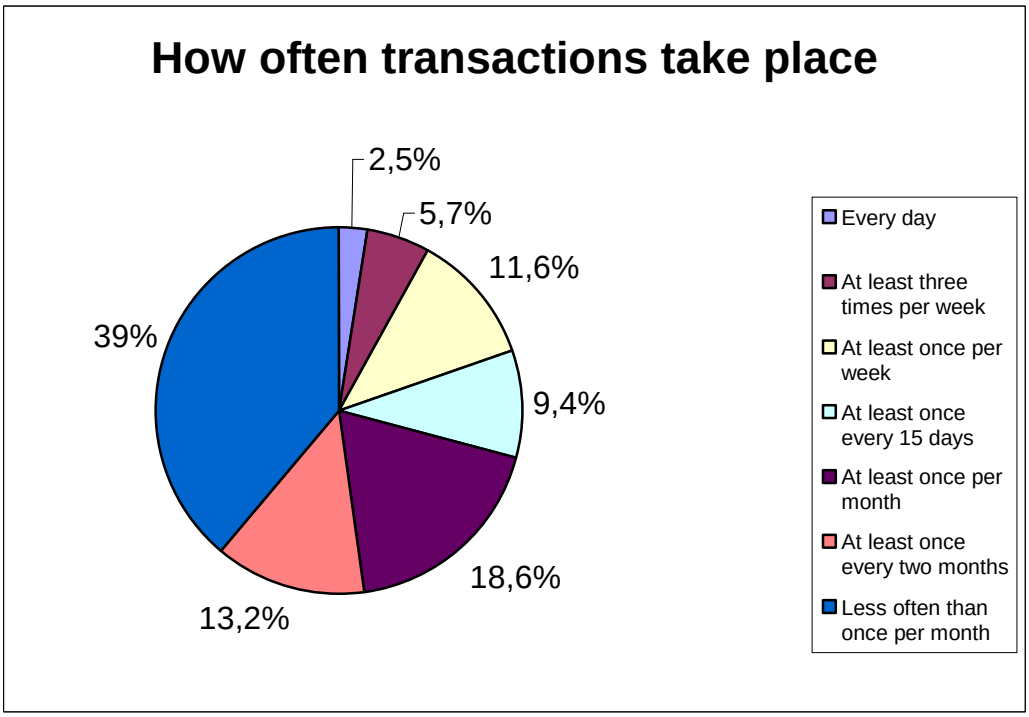
6.C.1 – How often do the participants transact without using the euro currency?

This question received 318 answers. It is obvious from the following table and graph that transactions without the use of the official currency do not take place often but in a sporadic pattern.

Table 6.C.1. – How often the participants transact without using the euro currency

Transaction frequency	**Number of participants**
Every day	8
At least three times per week	18
At least once per week	37
At least once every 15 days	30
At least once per month	59
At least once every two months	42
Less often than once per month	124
Total sum	318

Graph 6.C.1. – How often the participants transact without using the euro currency



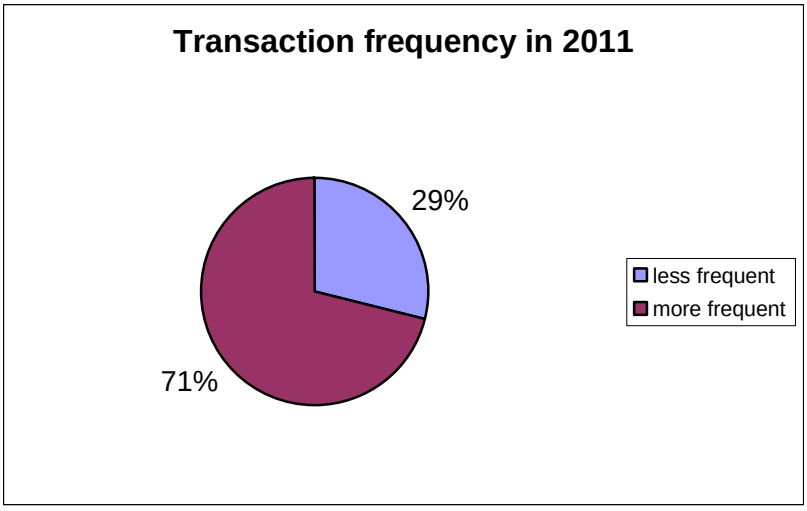
6.C.2 – What about the transactions of the last year (2011)?

This question was addressed to those only who were trading without the use of official currency for more than one year. The question gave only two options "more frequent", "less frequent", but I think that it was a mistake of mine not to have included "the same as last year". When I realised the mistake, it was already too late to make any modification to the questionnaire. The question received 231 answers.

Table 6.C.2 – Transaction frequency in 2011

Transactions in 2011 have been…	Number of participants
less frequent	67
more frequent	164
Total sum	231

Graph 6.C.2.– Transaction frequency in 2011



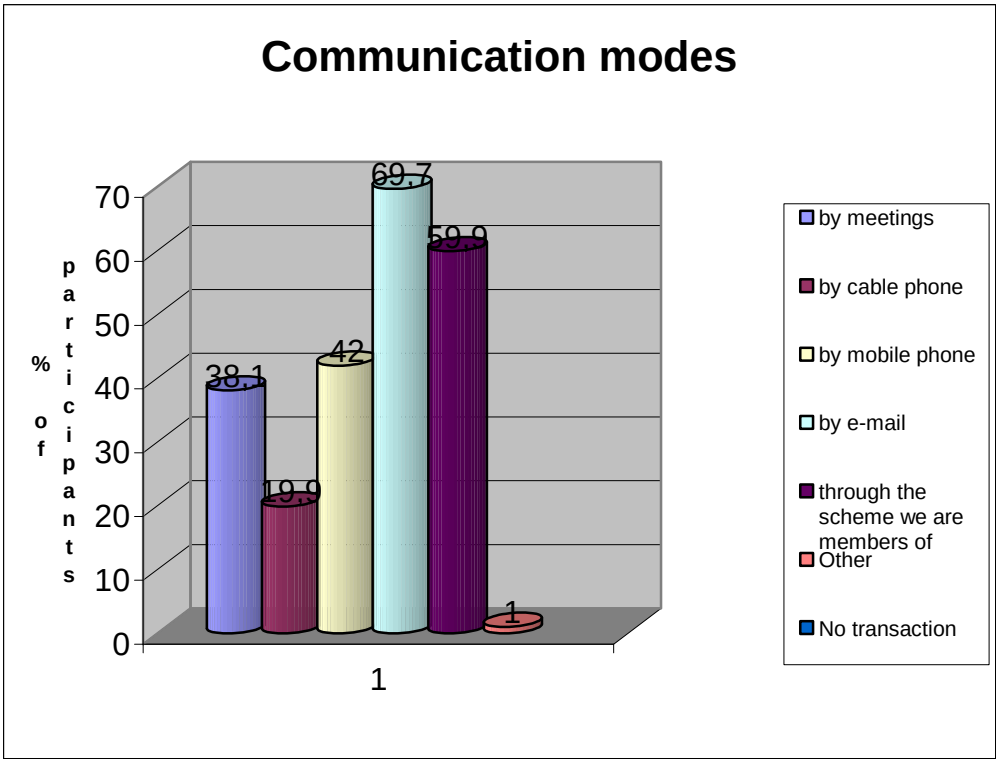
6.C.3. – How do participants communicate with the people whom they transact with?

This question received 308 answers. It seems that new communication technologies are important, but also human effort (meetings and the establishment of schemes) is important, too. The participants were free to pick up more than one answer, then the sums of answers and the percentages do not fit 308 and 100% respectively.

Table 6.C.3.– Communication for transactions

Communication modes	Number of participants
by meetings	117
by cable phone	61
by mobile phone	129
by e-mail	214
through the scheme we are members of	184
Other	6
No transaction	1
Total sum of answers	712

Graph 6.C.3. – Communication for transactions



6.C.4. – In their transactions, how do participants determine the analogy/correlation between offers and receivings?

This has been one of the most messy questions of the entire research. The qualitative phase of the project had already revealed that not only there is a variety in determining the analogies between the offers of each side, but in several cases the analogies do not exist at all. An option existing for me was to set one or two measuring modes and ask the participants to determine the analogies in for example, hours of work or kilos of produce, or even in value in euros. However, I felt that forcing them to put the real analogies onto such strict procrustean beds would drive me miss the point of the entire dissertation. Then, I opted for offering them a) the option to choose many types of analogy setting, instead of just one, plus leaving them an “other” option to describe any other method of analogy determination that I could not think of or my research had not given me yet any clues and b) to offer the analogy setting modes in the same terms as I have found them in my qualitative research or in as simple terms as possible. This question has received 306 answers but the sum of

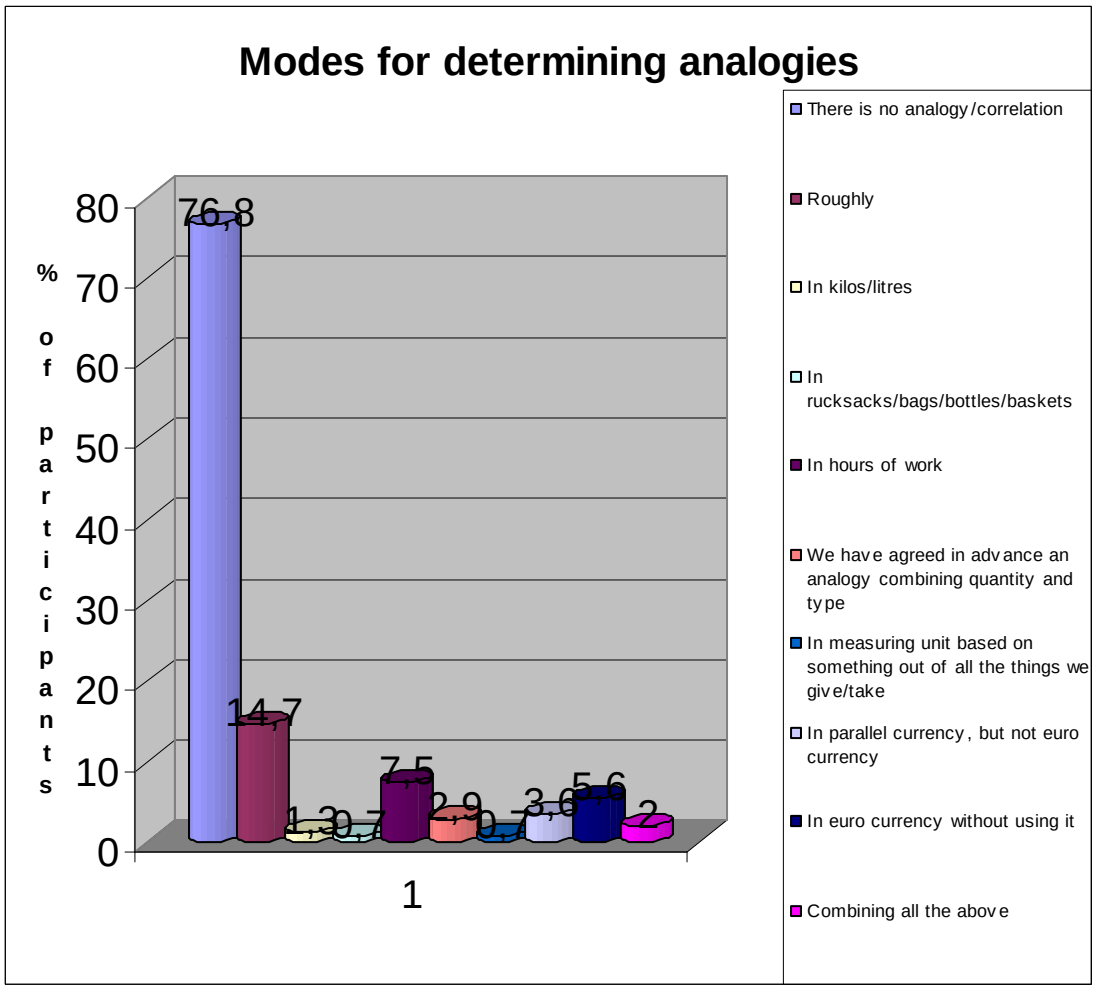
answers and the percentages are more than this sum, because participants had the option to give more than one answer.

The results have been amazing. The most amazing finding is that despite the hypothesis that people are short of euros, so they turn to the transactions without euro currency because they are forced to do this because of economic hardship, the use of the euro currency as accounting unit (i.e. without using any euros in physical terms, but using the official currency as a measuring unit) is very limited. This finding shows first, that the participants are exploring other ways of finding analogies of value, far from the mainstream economy and second, that they are not performing not even aiming at tax evading, because to tax evade, you need hard cash to store the value you gain and you also need a community of tax evaders who count everything in hard cash, so that they are really cheating the state.

Table 6.C.4. – Modes for determining analogy between offers and receivings

Modes for determining analogies	**No of participants**
There is no analogy/correlation	235
Roughly	45
In kilos/litres	4
In rucksacks/bags/bottles/baskets	2
In hours of work	23
We have agreed in advance an analogy combining quantity and type, f.ex. we know that 1 kg of potatoes equals 2kgs of apples, etc.	9
In measuring unit based on something out of all the things we give/take, f.ex. apples, olive oil, etc	2
In parallel currency, but not euro currency	11
In euro currency without using it	17
Combining all the above, f.ex. euro currency and parallel currency, kilos and parallel currency etc.	6
Total sum of answers	**354**

Graph 6.C.4 – Modes for determining analogy between offers and receivings



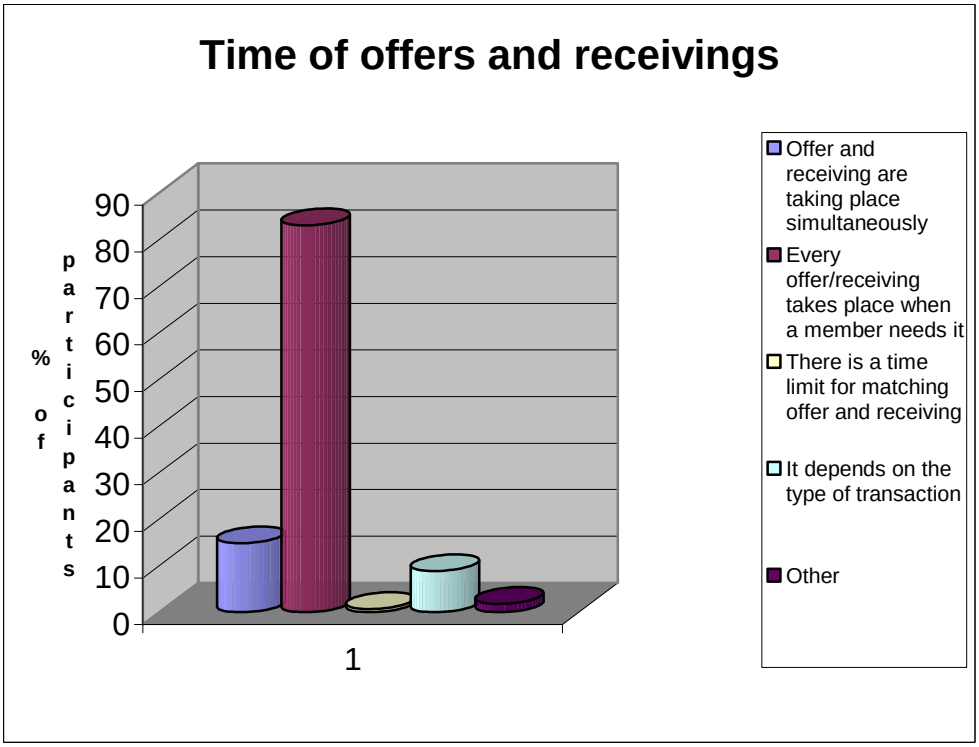
6.C.5 – The time of offers and receivings

The second most tricky issue after the one concerning analogy has been this about time. Qualitative research had already shown that time perception and time use while transacting without official currency works in a very different way than in mainstream economy. In this case, I also opted for allowing participants to choose more than one answers (plus one “other” where they would be free to write down anything missing from the list I had offered them). And I also tried to keep up with the terms and descriptions I have already learned during my qualitative research. This question received 283 answers.

Table 6.C.5 – The time of offers and receivings

The time of offers and recevings	Number of participants
Between two parties, offer and receiving are taking place simultaneously	42
Every offer/receiving takes place when a member needs it and not at the same time	235
There is a time limit for matching offer and receiving	2
It depends on the type of transaction, f.ex.the agricultural products are offered at the season of their harvest.	25
Other	5
Total sum	309

Graph 6.C.5 – The time of offers and receivings



Concerning the time limit, the four participants who specified it, gave a range from two to nineteen months. Unfortunately, the number of answers is so small that we cannot deduce any safe conclusion. Moreover, in the “Other” category the agricultural products follow their own seasonality, but this also holds for other type of produce, like services (therapies or hairdresser’s, or even wall painting which cannot be done easily in winter) who have also their own time schedule to be effective or

needed. One participant stated that he/she tries to fulfill offers and receivings within the same year, while another pointed out that with friends and family transaction time limits are undefined, while with third parties, he/she barters offers and receiving at the same time (then social relations are also important to set the time limit).

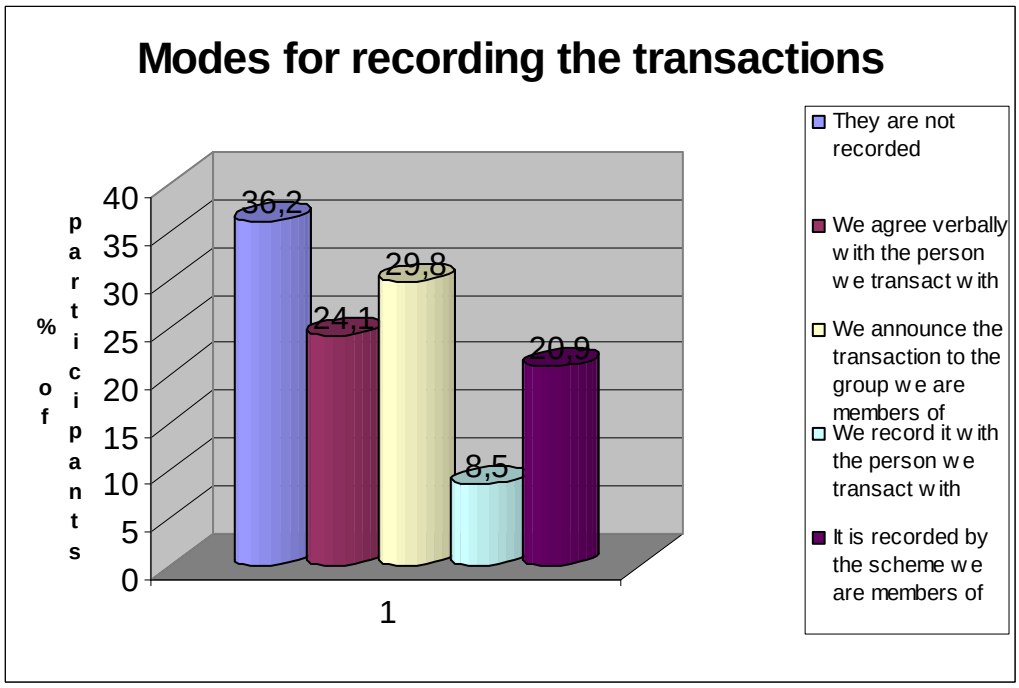
6.C.6 – Recording of transactions, already done or to be done in the future

The question concerning the recording of transactions received 282 answers. The participants were allowed to choose more than one answers, then the sum of answers and the percentages below are more than 282 and 100% respectively.

Table 6.C.6 – Modes for recording the transactions

Modes for recording the transactions	Number of answers
They are not recorded	102
We agree verbally with the person we transact with	68
We announce the transaction to the group we are members of	84
We record it with the person we transact with	24
It is recorded by the scheme we are members of	59
Total sum	**337**

Graph 6.C.6. – Modes for recording the transactions

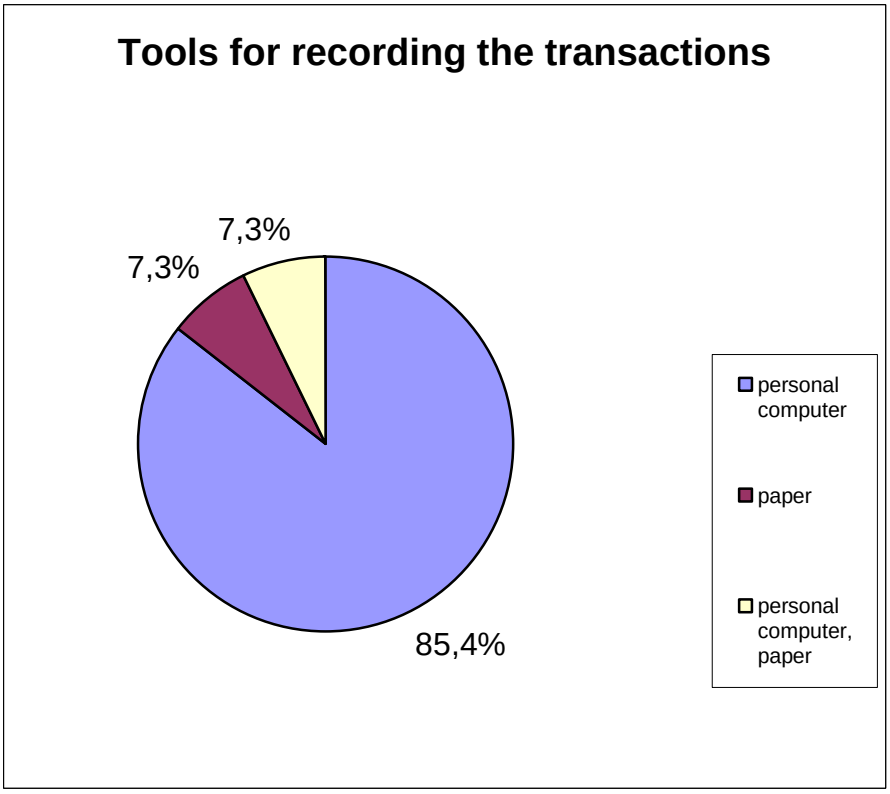


Whenever the transaction is recorded, this recording is done mainly by the use of a personal computer and less by using a paper recording. The related question gathered 179 answers.

Table 6.C.6.A – Tools for recording the transactions

Tools for recording the transactions	Number of answers
personal computer	153
paper	13
personal computer, paper	13
Total sum	179

Graph 6.C.6.A – Tools for recording the transactions



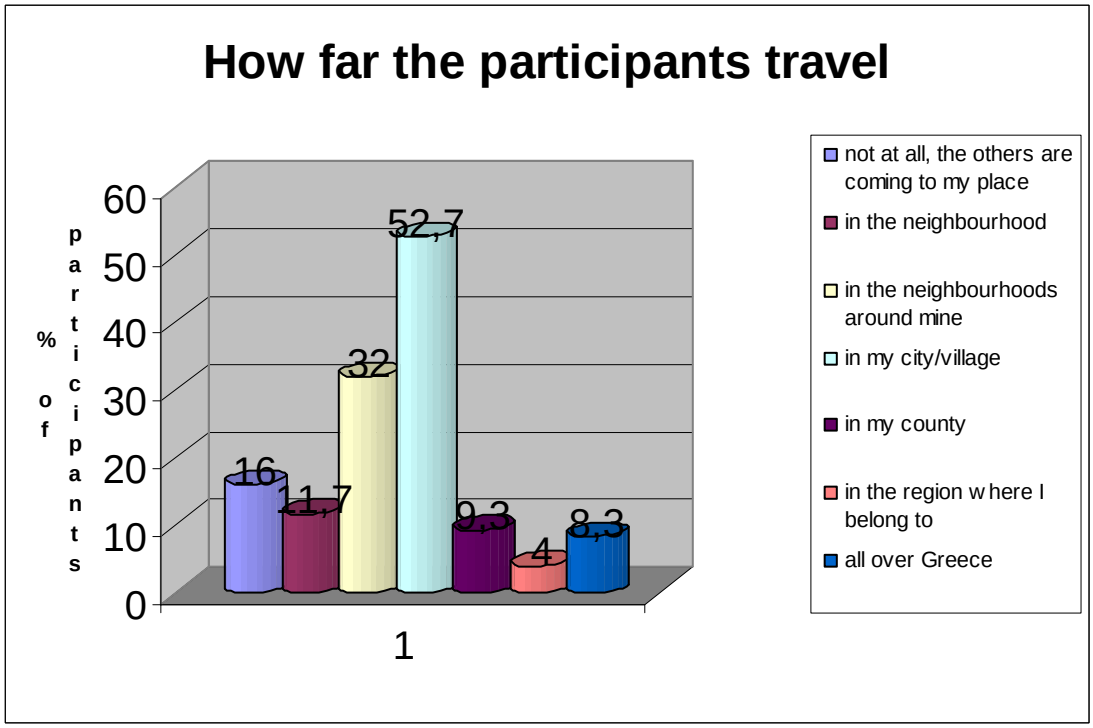
6.C.7. – How far do the participants travel in order to perform a transaction?

This question received 300 answers, but given that the participants were allowed to choose more than one options, the sum of answers and the percentages in the graph below, are more than 300 and 100% respectively.

Table 6.C.7. – How far the participants travel for a transaction

How far the participants travel for a transaction	Number of answers
not at all, the others are coming to my place	48
in the neighbourhood	35
in the neighbourhoods around mine	96
in my city/village	158
in my county	28
in the region where I belong to	12
all over Greece	25
Total sum	402

Graph 6.C.7. – How far the participants travel for a transaction



6.C.8. – How far do the offers (goods and/or work) travel for a transaction?

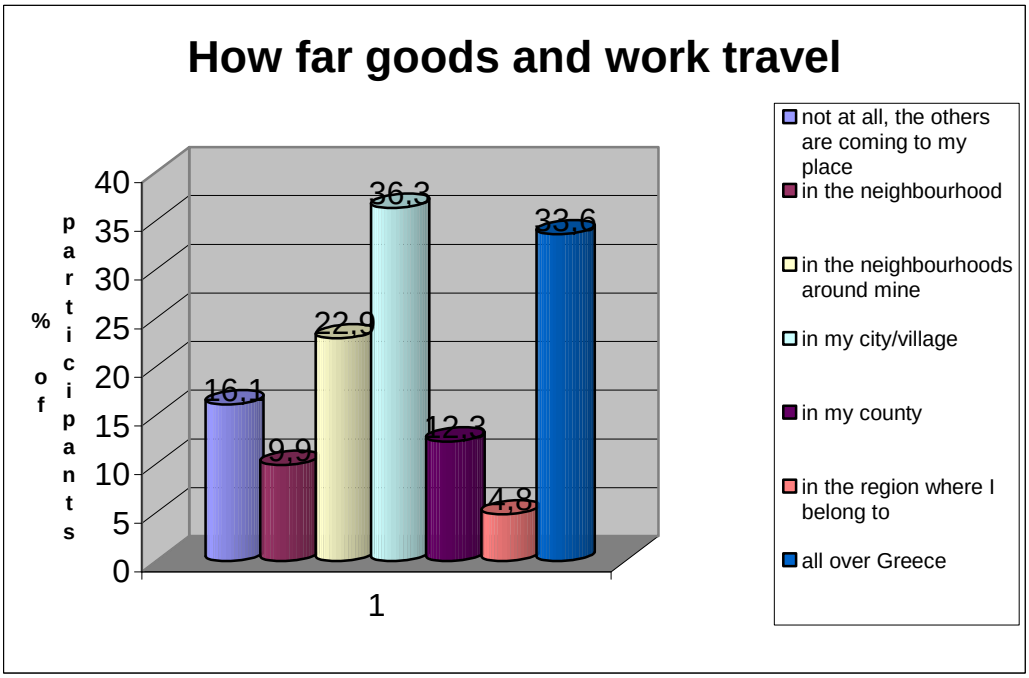
This question received 292 answers and given that the participants were allowed to choose more than one answers, the total sum of answers and the percentages below do not equal 292 and 100% respectively. Just like in the previous

question about the participants travelling for a transaction, the majority of transactions are taking place within the city or village of participants. However, in this case, it seems that goods and work might travel a lot (33,6%) all over the country.

Table 6.C.8. – How far the goods and work travel for a transaction

How far the goods and work travel for a transaction	Number of answers
not at all, the others are coming to my place	47
in the neighbourhood	29
in the neighbourhoods around mine	67
in my city/village	106
in my county	36
in the region where I belong to	14
all over Greece	98
Total sum	397

Graph 6.C.8.– How far the goods and work travel for a transaction



6.C.9. - What type of goods and of work do the participants offer?

This question was kept to be completely free for the participants, so that they can write whatever they want in any terms they prefer. To analyse the results after the questionnaire phase was over, I used the same categories as in the question about the participants' main occupation. This time of course, there was no "unemployed-retired" category, but I added one more as "Other & unspecified offers", because many participants preferred to give answers like "many things", "things I do not need", "old stuff", etc. In this case, although one could assume that those things might have been produced in an industry, I could not add them directly to the industrial produce category.

The categories used in the analysis of answers to this question comprise both materials and work. For example, the work of a psychologist goes under the label of health, just like the aromatherapy products offered by the participants. Same with education: used books and all types of lessons and training are all together in the same category. However, one could note that books are products of industry just like CDs and DVDs which I put in the art category, because of their scope and not of their production mode. Moreover, in the art category there are several cases where people offer their own creations (then, this is not industrially produced art), but as every one would know the inputs for artistic creation are both education (and self-education and artistic experimenting) and industrial materials. The same holds for the category of small and big industry goods: there is included all used or "bought but never used" stuff offered by the participants, but also all handicraft goods produced by the participants themselves.

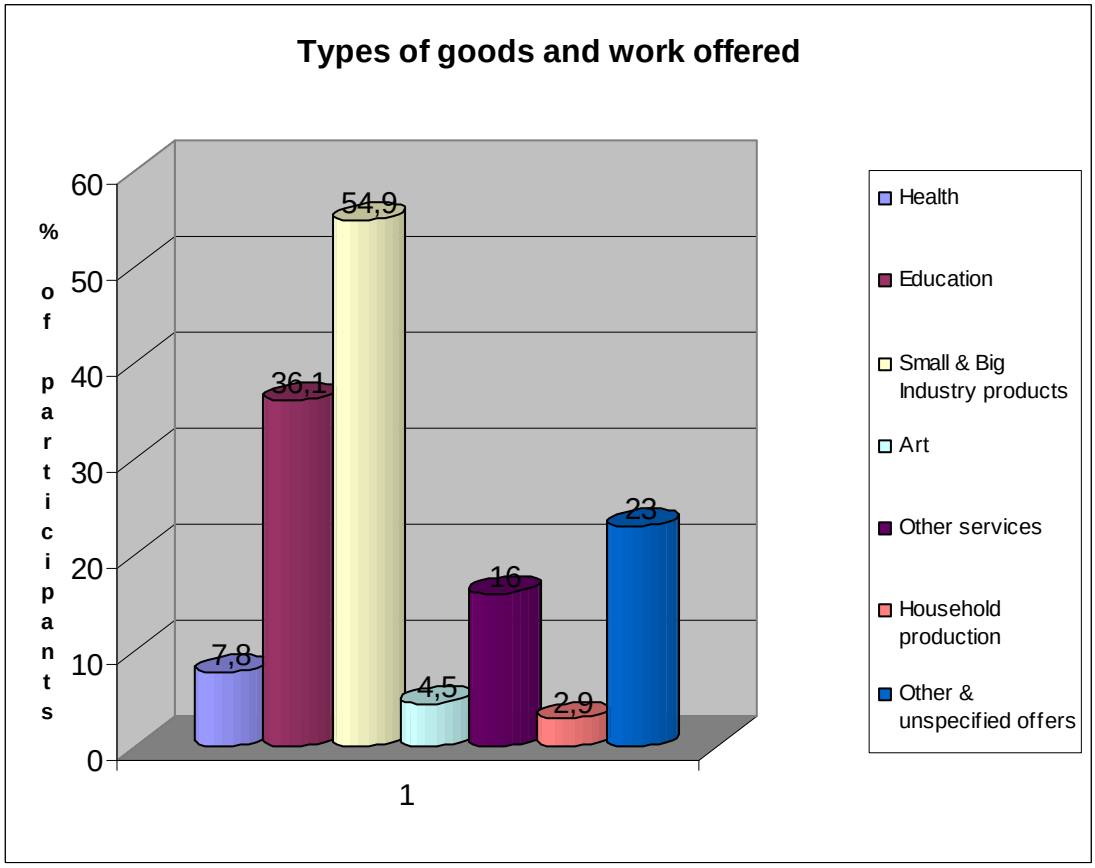
Another research project would be needed to study in detail the articles and work offered but also to see the connection of production modes to the use of other transaction mechanisms than the official currency.

This question received 244 answers but given the free structure of the question, the sum of answers and the percentages below do not equal 244 and 100% respectively.

Table 6.C.9. – Types of goods and work offered by participants

Types of goods and work offered	Number of answers
Production of food & raw materials	40
Health	19
Education	88
Small & Big Industry products	134
Art	11
Other services	39
Household production	7
Other & unspecified offers	56
Total sum	394

Graph 6.C.9. – Types of goods and work offered by participants



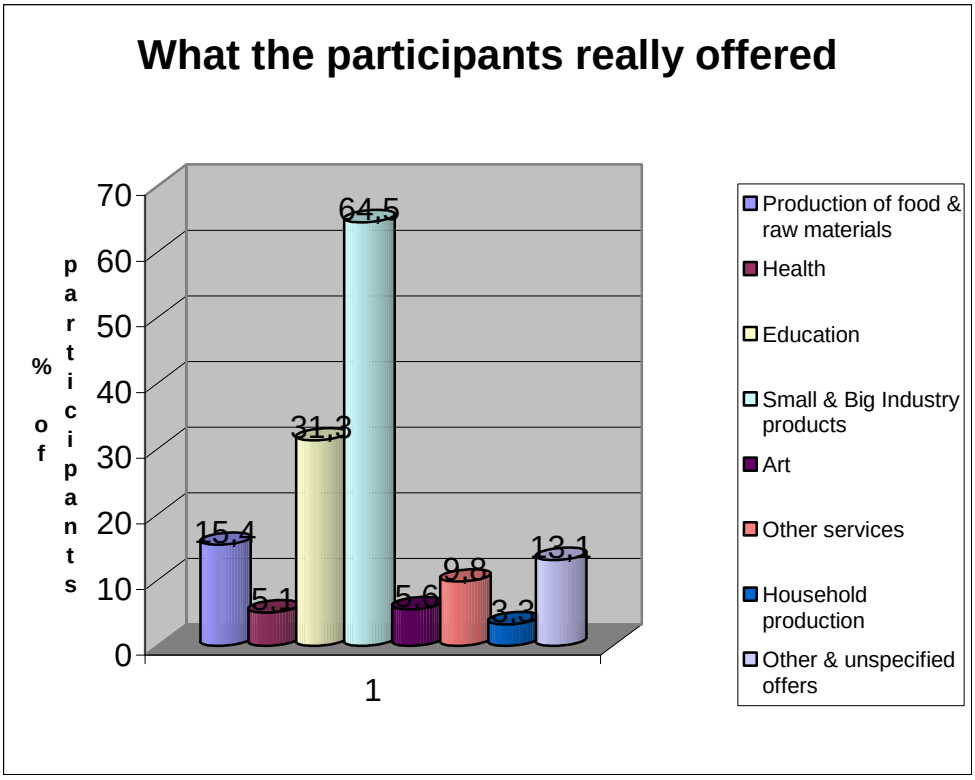
6.C.10 – What the participants have really offered out of all the things and work they offer

This has been also a question where the participants could reply as they wished. During the analysis, I have kept the same categorisation as in the previous question. This question received 214 answers but given the free structure of the question, the sum of answers and the percentages below do not equal 214 and 100% respectively.

Table 6.C.10 – What the participants have really offered

Types of goods and work	Number of answers
Production of food & raw materials	33
Health	11
Education	67
Small & Big Industry products	138
Art	12
Other services	21
Household production	7
Other & unspecified offers	28
Total sum	317

Graph 6.C.10 – What the participants have really offered



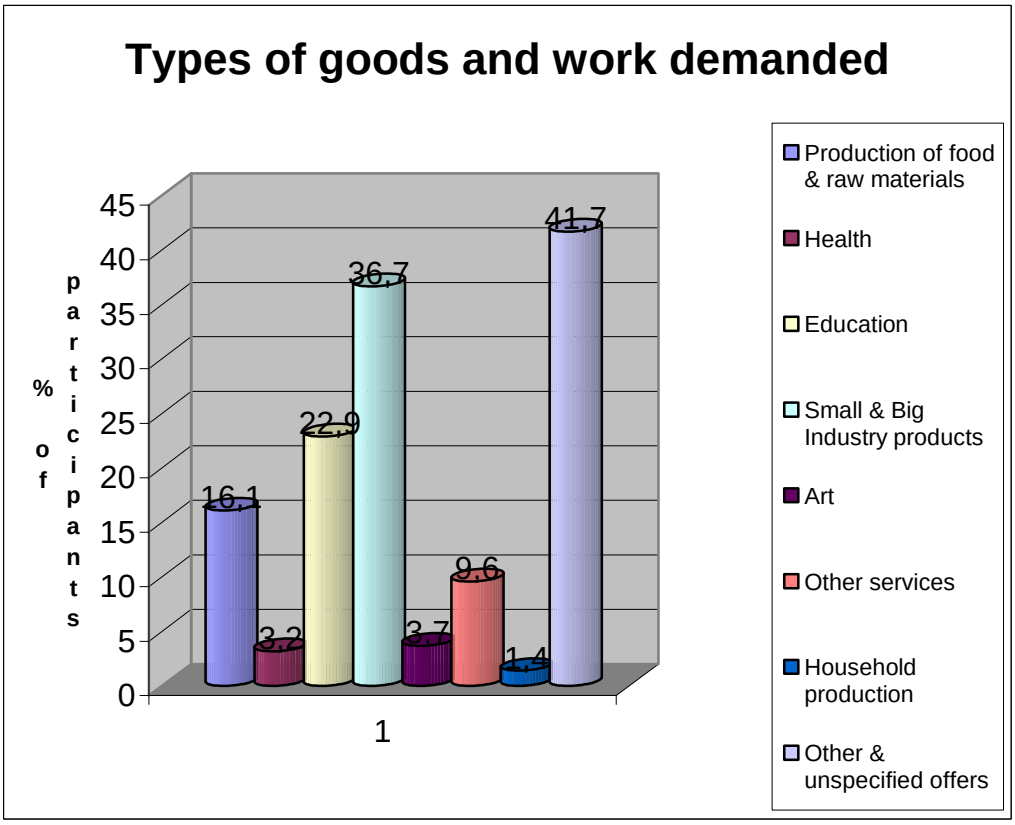
6.C.11.- What type of goods and of work do the participants ask for?

This question has also been with a open-reply space where the participants could write whatever they wished. During the analysis, I have kept the same categorisation as in the previous questions. This question received 218 answers but given the free structure of the question, the sum of answers and the percentages below do not equal 218 and 100% respectively.

Table 6.C.11 – Types of goods and work demanded by the participants

Types of goods and work demanded	Number of answers
Production of food & raw materials	35
Health	7
Education	50
Small & Big Industry products	80
Art	8
Other services	21
Household production	3
Other & unspecified offers	91
Total sum	295

Graph 6.C.11 – Types of goods and work demanded by the participants



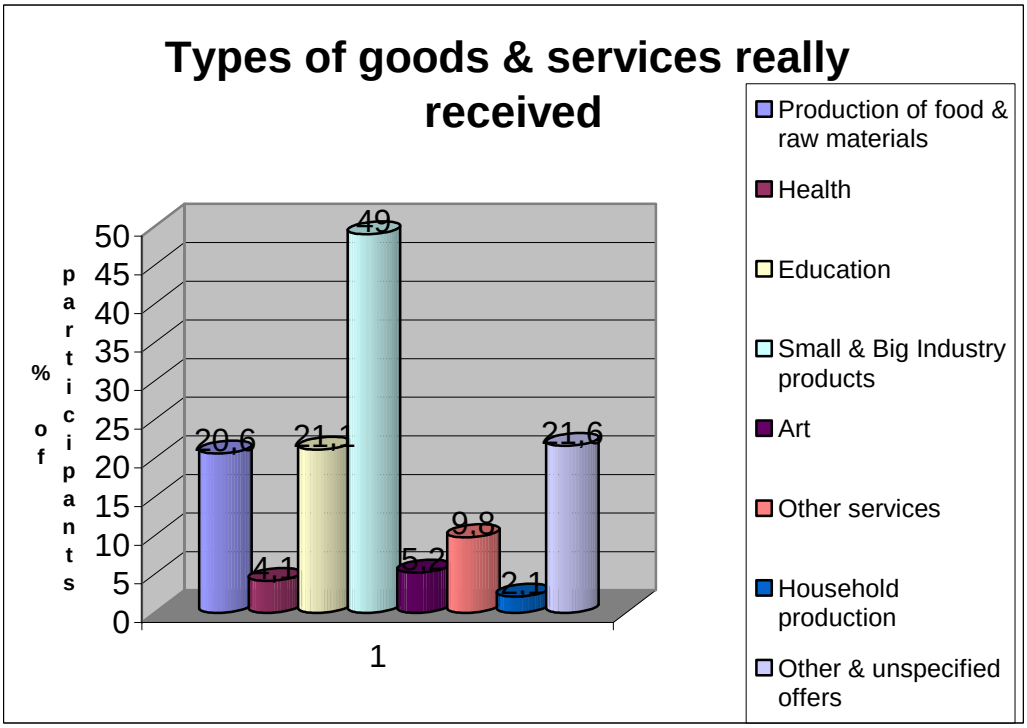
6.C.12. - What the participants have really received

This question has also been with a reply space where the participants could write whatever they wished. During the analysis, I have kept the same categorisation as in the previous questions. This question received 194 answers but given the free structure of the question, the sum of answers and the percentages below do not equal 194 and 100% respectively.

Table 6.C.12 – What the participants have really received

Types of goods and work received	Number of answers
Production of food & raw materials	40
Health	8
Education	41
Small & Big Industry products	95
Art	10
Other services	19
Household production	4
Other & unspecified offers	42
Total sum	259

Graph 6.C.12 – What the participants have really received



6.C.13 – How many goods and how much work do the participants provide?

This question proved to be more difficult than I had anticipated. The difficulty stems of course by my decision to let the participants free to specify the quantity of goods and work they really offer to other people without the use of the official currency. It might have been a mistake or an extreme burden to leave this question open, but on the other hand, I was unable to decide in advance how I was going to measure quantity of so many different provisions offered by people out of which I could not even define a possible sample. It is obvious that the data collected from the answers to this question will need further and detailed study that exceeds the scope of this dissertation.

On the other hand, as a researcher I could not just leave this question completely unanswered, so I decided to count the quantity in terms of provisions compared to time ranges, of week, month and year (12 months). However, this has also been a puzzle in itself. Participants were really very inventive in describing quantity, which means that for the time being and without a deeply analytical study of the replies, it is impossible to create analogies among the different types of quantity measuring. Moreover, there are participants who give exact numbers for things and work provided and others who are less specific.

What should I count then to have even a rough picture of the quantity provided? The only thing I could do within the framework and scope of this dissertation was to search quantity in a more or less arbitrary way. I decided that once a participant was replying “4 things given”, “5 hours of work” then I should keep this… number, four or fifteen, as a data. Of course, I know from the qualitative phase of my research that you might give all your four things or your five hours of work at once to the same person and this in the mainstream economy could be considered either one transaction or 4-5 transactions in a row. But I had already asked about the frequency of the transactions, hadn’t I?

Therefore, I am aware that the analysis of the data gathered from this question is missing in depth and reliability. At the same time, even if one could consider this question as a check-out question for the frequency of transactions, this is not quite the case, although it would be probably a really good pretext for me to overcome the analysis problems. Below, I will present my findings not as really stable data to step

on for conclusions, but as a starting point of discussion on how we really measure quantity in economic activity.

This question was distinguished into three parts, each one dedicated to the quantity of goods and work transacted throughout a week, a month and a year. For each part there is a particular table and graph, because not all participants replied to all three parts of the question.

Table 6.C.13.A – How many goods and how much work the participants provide per week

Number of goods and work offered per week	Number of participants
I don't remember-unspecified answer	26
0	8
1 to 5	26
5 to 10	4
11 to 15	0
16 to 20	0
21 to 30	0
31 to 40	0
41 to 50	0
51 to 100	0
More than 100	0
Total sum	64

Graph 6.C.13.A – How many goods and how much work the participants provide per week

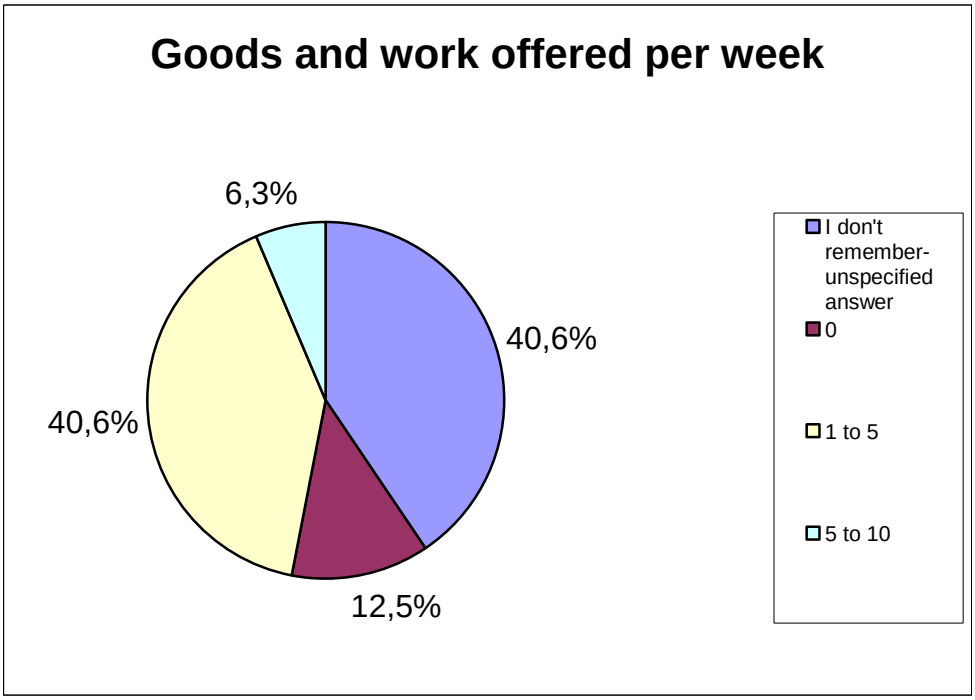


Table 6.C.13.B – How many goods and how much work the participants provide per month

Number of goods and work offered per month	Number of participants
I don't remember-unspecified answer	26
0	7
1 to 5	13
5 to 10	8
11 to 15	4
16 to 20	4
21 to 30	3
31 to 40	0
41 to 50	0
51 to 100	0
More than 100	1
Total sum	66

Graph 6.C.13.B – How many goods and how much work the participants provide per month

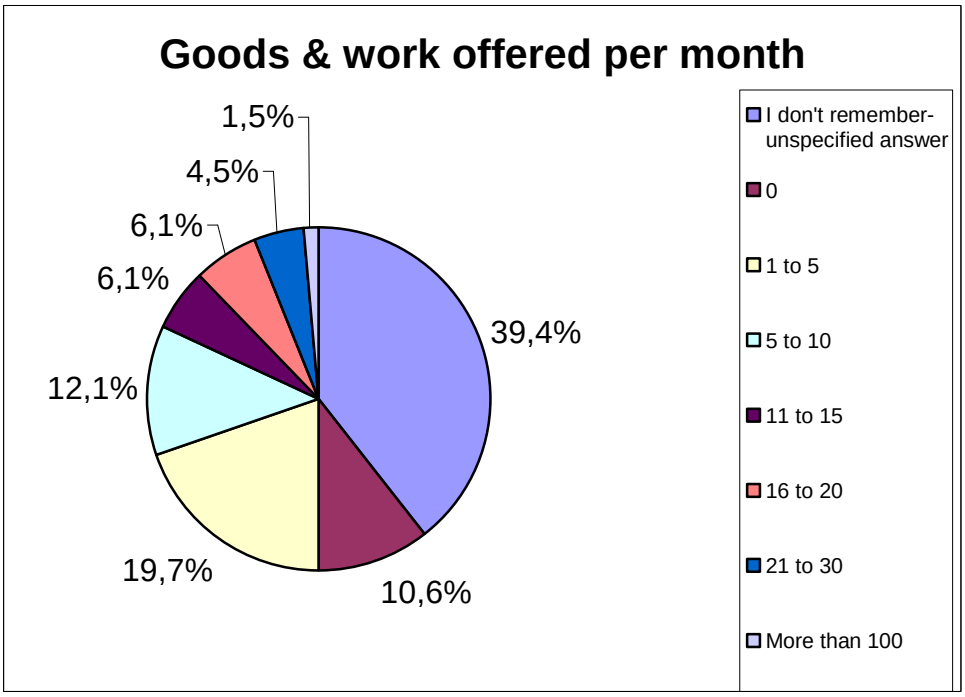
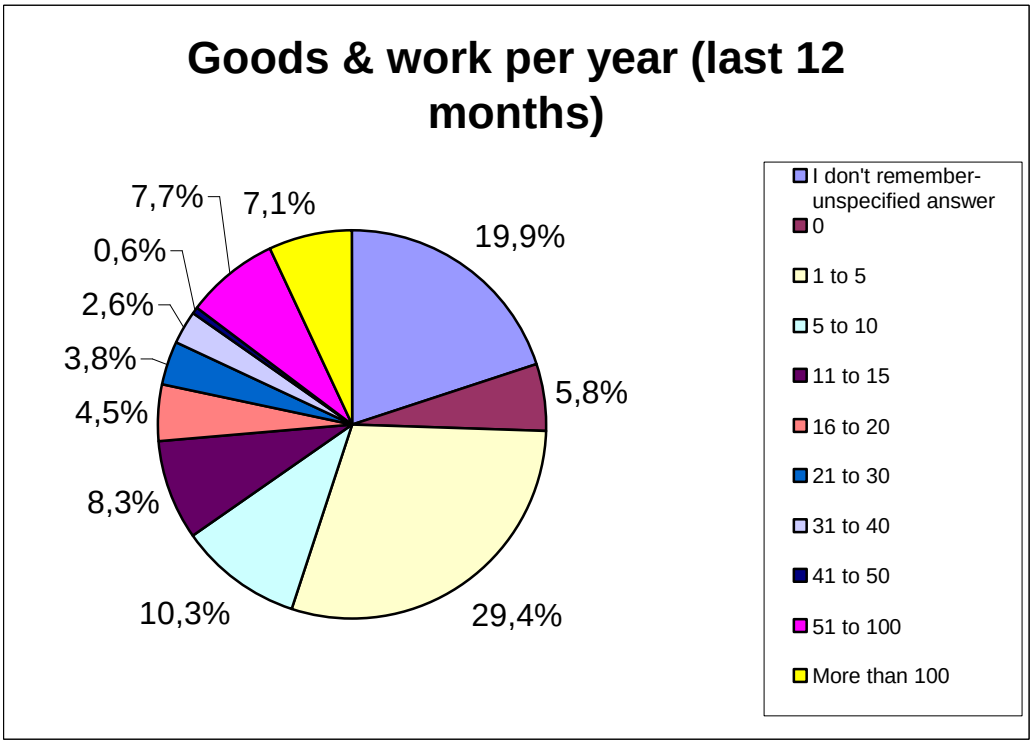


Table 6.C.13.C – How many goods and how much work the participants provide per year (the last 12 months)

Number of goods and work offered per year (last 12 months)	Number of participants
I don't remember-unspecified answer	31
0	9
1 to 5	46
5 to 10	16
11 to 15	13
16 to 20	7
21 to 30	6
31 to 40	4
41 to 50	1
51 to 100	12
More than 100	11
Total sum	156

Graph 6.C.13.C – How many goods and how much work the participants provide per year (the last 12 months)



6.C.14.- How many goods and how much work do the participants receive?

This question has had the same problems as the previous one. Therefore, I will present the data under the reservation that they are both arbitrary and needing heavy study before anyone being able to give reliable conclusions.

Table 6.C.14.A – How many goods and how much work the participants receive per week

Number of goods and work received per week	Number of participants
I don't remember-unspecified answer	14
0	11
1 to 5	15
5 to 10	4
11 to 15	2
16 to 20	1
21 to 30	0
31 to 40	0
41 to 50	0
51 to 100	0
More than 100	0
Total sum	**47**

Graph 6.C.14.A – How many goods and how much work the participants receive per week

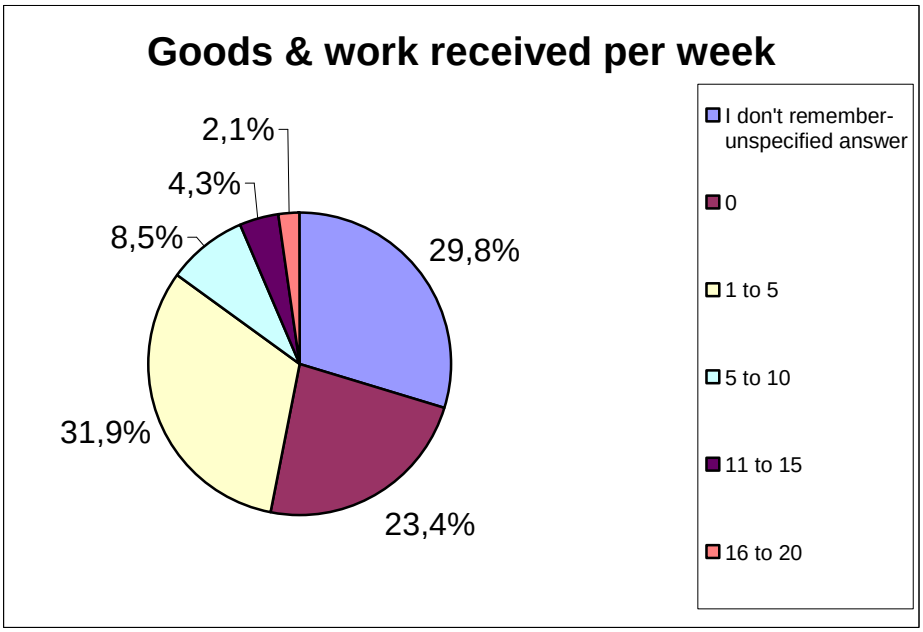


Table 6.C.14.B – How many goods and how much work the participants receive per month

Number of goods and work received per month	Number of participants
I don't remember-unspecified answer	16
0	10
1 to 5	22
5 to 10	6
11 to 15	1
16 to 20	3
21 to 30	2
31 to 40	1
41 to 50	0
51 to 100	0
More than 100	0
Total sum	61

Graph 6.C.14.B – How many goods and how much work the participants receive per month

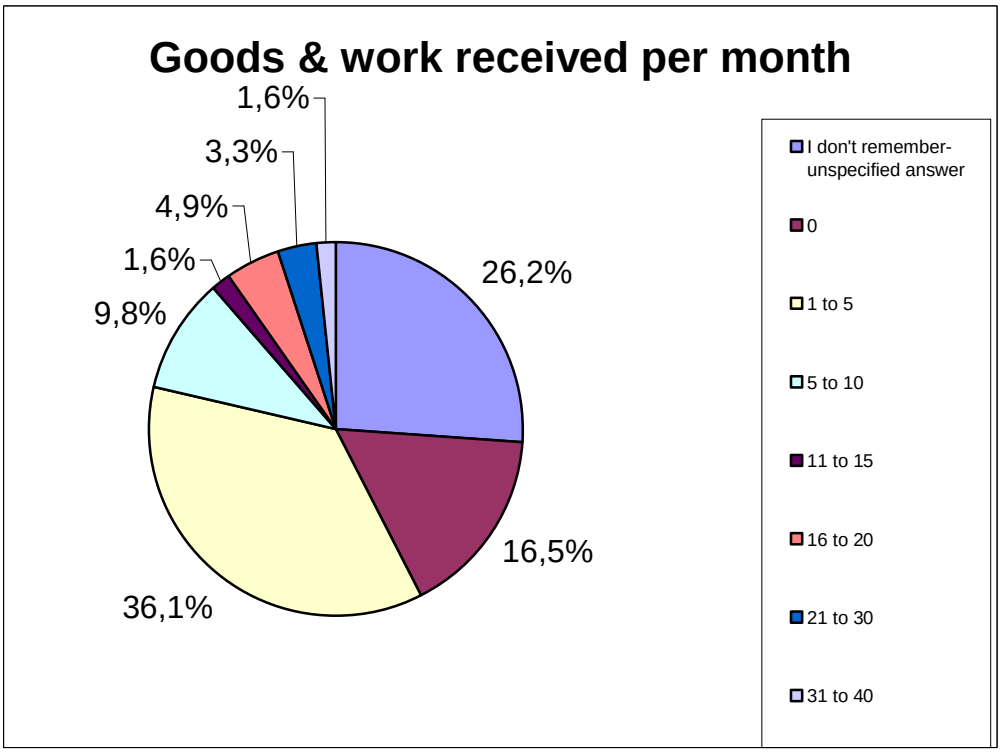
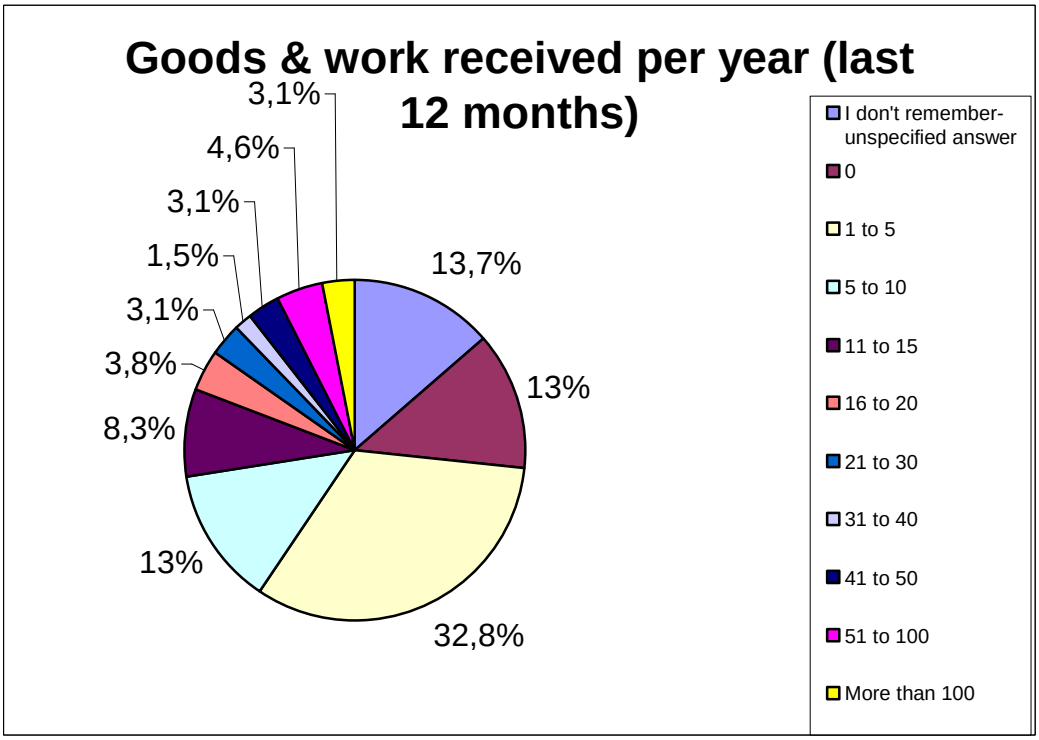


Table 6.C.14.C – How many goods and how much work the participants receive per year (the last 12 months)

Number of goods and work received per year (last 12 months)	Number of participants
I don't remember-unspecified answer	18
0	17
1 to 5	43
5 to 10	17
11 to 15	11
16 to 20	5
21 to 30	4
31 to 40	2
41 to 50	4
51 to 100	6
More than 100	4
Total sum	131

Graph 6.C.14.C – How many goods and how much work the participants receive per year (the last 12 months)



From the rough (and really under question, obviously unreliable) data in this question and in the previous one, it seems that the vast majority of participants do not

transact very often and even if they often trade, they do not do so at high volumes of goods and work.

6.C.15 – Do participants themselves produce what they provide through the transactions without official currency?

This question received 260 answers and from the data below it is obvious that only a small percentage (though not negligible at all) produce what they offer in the transactions without official currency. The same question was asking those who responded positively, how they find their materials for their production.

Table 6.C.15.A – Do participants themselves produce what they provide through the transactions without official currency?

Do they produce themselves?	Number of participants
Yes	57
No	203
Total sum	260

Graph 6.C.15.A – Do participants themselves produce what they provide through the transactions without official currency?

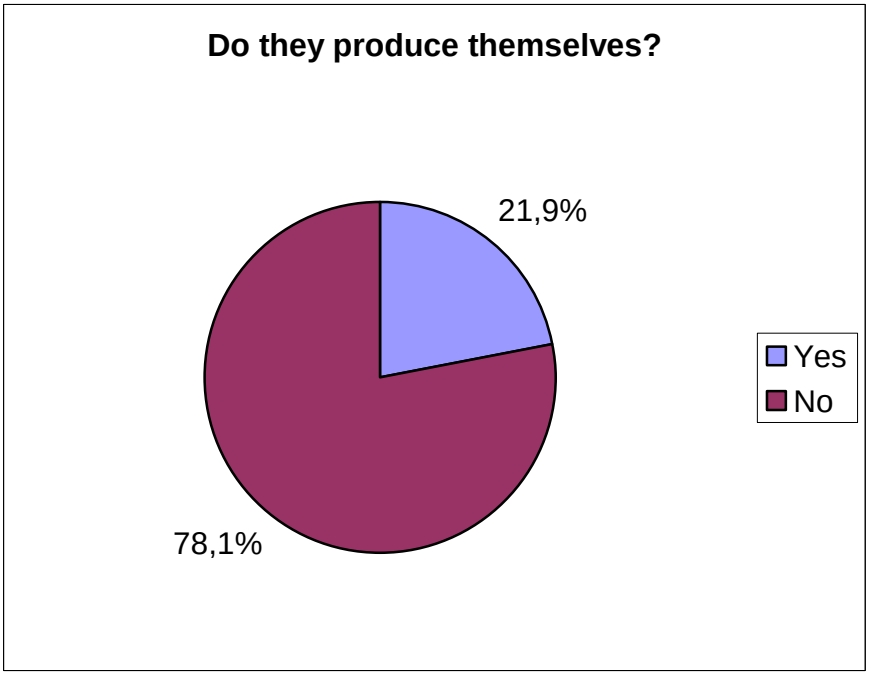
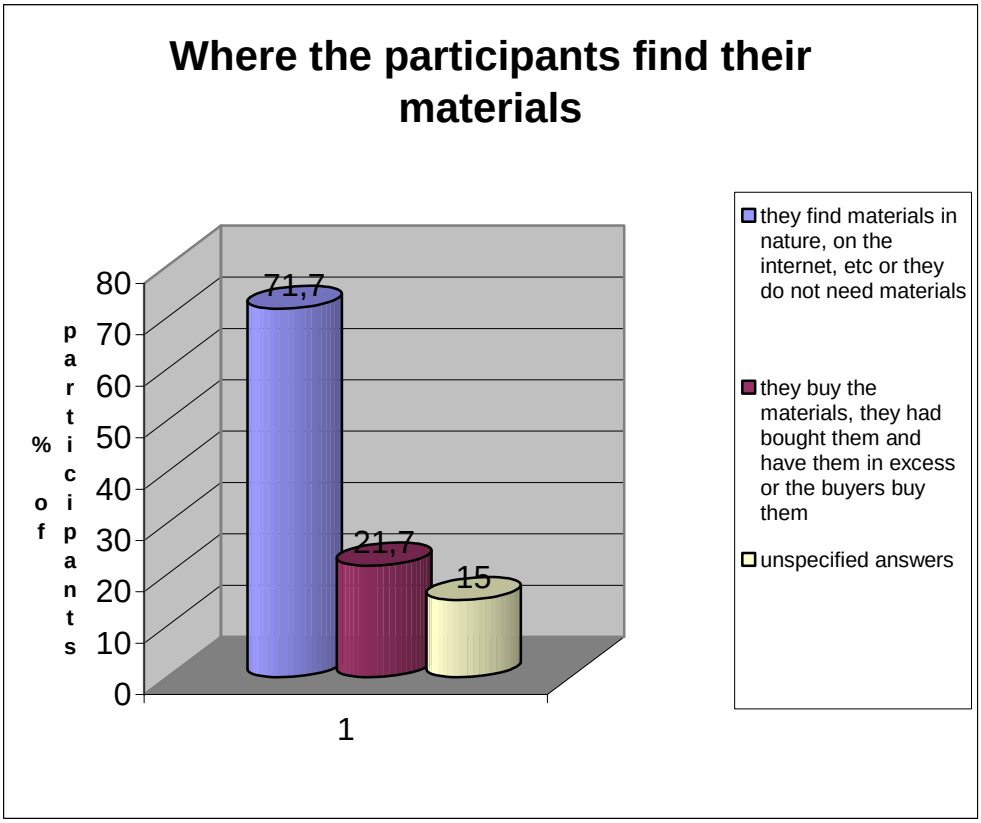


Table 6.C.15.B – Where do participants find the materials for their production?

This sub-question received 60 answers, however the sum of answers and the percentages below are more than 60 and 100% because the participants were free to write the answer as they wished, so in some cases they gave answers which could be labelled under more than one category.

Where do the participants find the materials from	Number of answers
They find materials in nature, on the internet, etc or they do not need materials	43
They buy the materials, they had bought them and have them in excess or the buyers buy them	13
Unspecified answers	9
Total sum	65

Graph 6.C.15.B – Where do participants find the materials for their production?



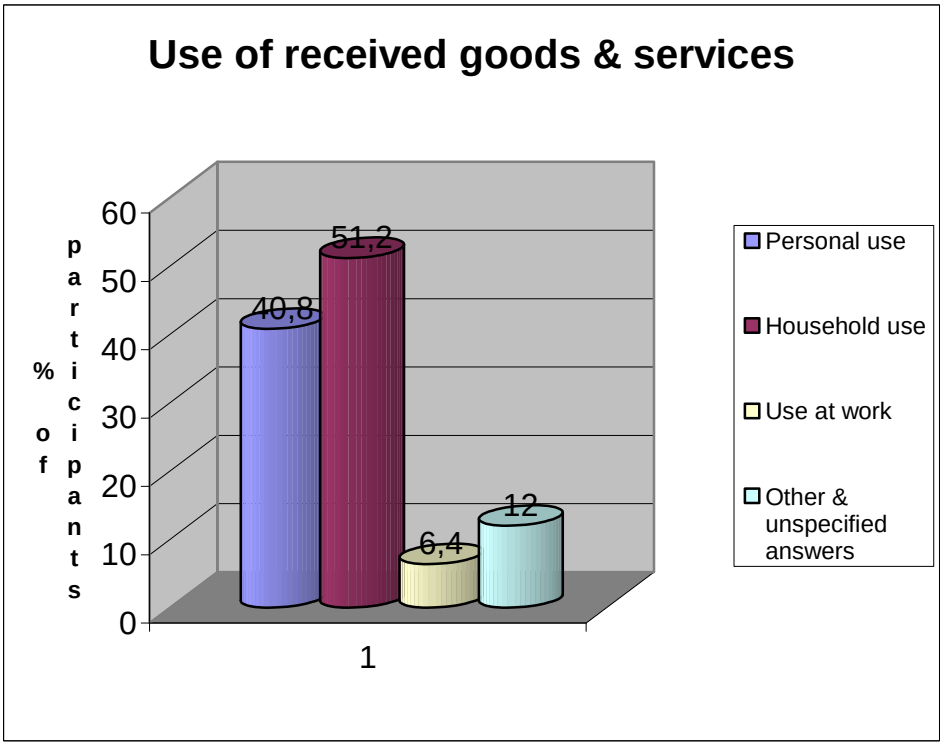
6.C.16 – How/Where do the participants use the goods and work they receive in their transactions without official currency?

The participants were free to answer this question as they wished, so out of 125 answers, some could be labelled under more than one category. Therefore, the sum of answers and the percentages are more than 125 and 100% respectively.

Table 6.C.16 – How/Where the participants use the goods and work they receive

Use of received goods & services	Number of answers
Personal use	51
Household use	64
Use at work	8
Other & unspecified answers	15
Total sum	138

Graph 6.C.16. – How/Where the participants use the goods and work they receive



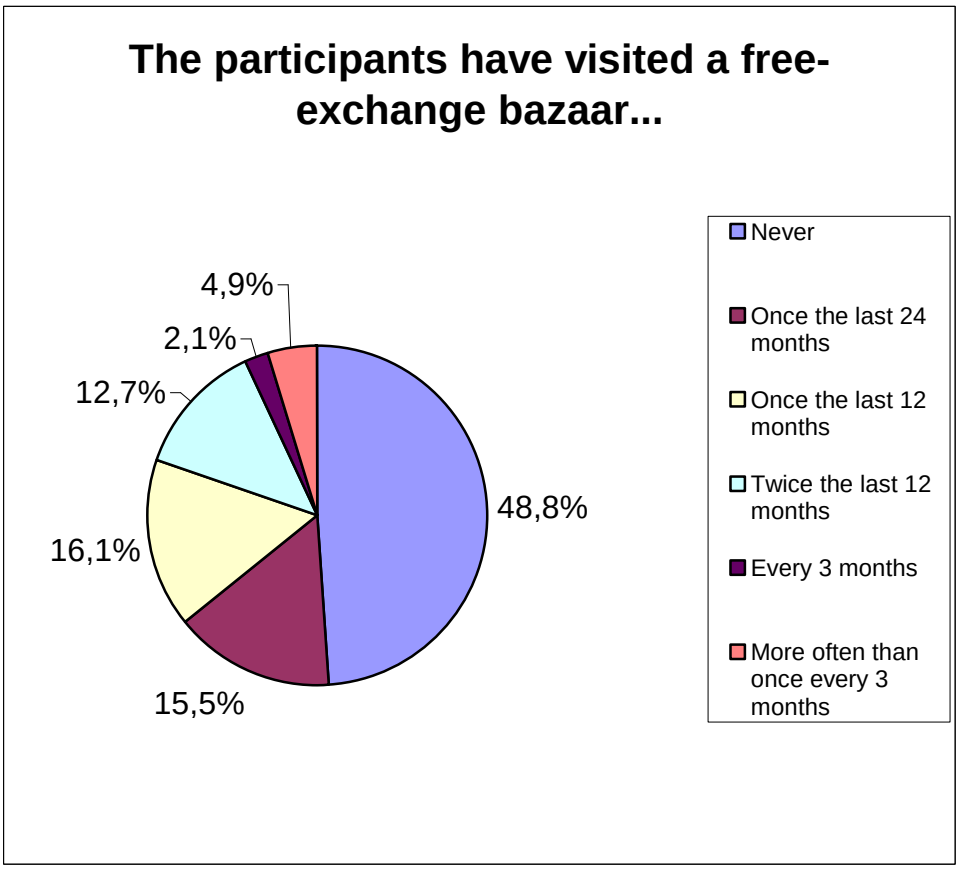
6.C.17 – Have the participants visited a free-exchange bazaar?

This question was of multiple-choice type and received 330 answers.

Table 6.C.17 – Have the participants visited a free-exchange bazaar?

The participants have visited a free-exchange bazaar…	Number of participants
Never	161
Once the last 24 months	51
Once the last 12 months	53
Twice the last 12 months	42
Every 3 months	7
More often than once every 3 months	16
Total sum	330

Graph 6.C.17 – Have the participants visited a free-exchange bazaar?



6.C.18 – What have the participants offered visiting a free-exchange bazaar?

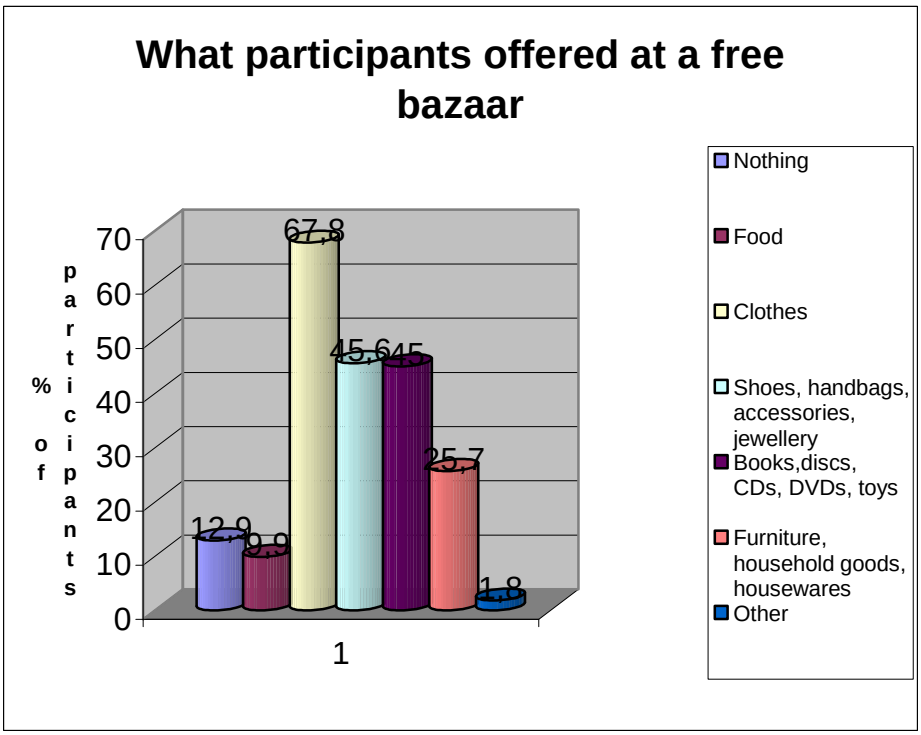
This question received 171 answers (!), while one should expect no more than 169, because in the previous question we received 330 answers out of which 161 were saying that the participants had never visited such a bazaar. What am I supposed to do with this inconsistency? One possible explanation is that people who have not visited a bazaar have also replied “Nothing” in this question. However, I am also unable to pick out two answers from the sum just to “fix” the results. Then, in the following table and graph the results are presented as of 171 answers in total.

Moreover, the participants were free to choose more than one answers, therefore the total sum of answers and percentages are more than 171 and 100% respectively.

Table 6.C.18 - What the participants have offered at a free-exchange bazaar

What the participants have offered at a free bazaar	Number of answers
Nothing	22
Food	17
Clothes	116
Shoes, handbags, accessories, jewellery	78
Books,discs, CDs, DVDs, toys	77
Furniture, household goods, housewares	44
Other	3
Total sum	357

Graph 6.C.18 - What the participants have offered at a free-exchange bazaar



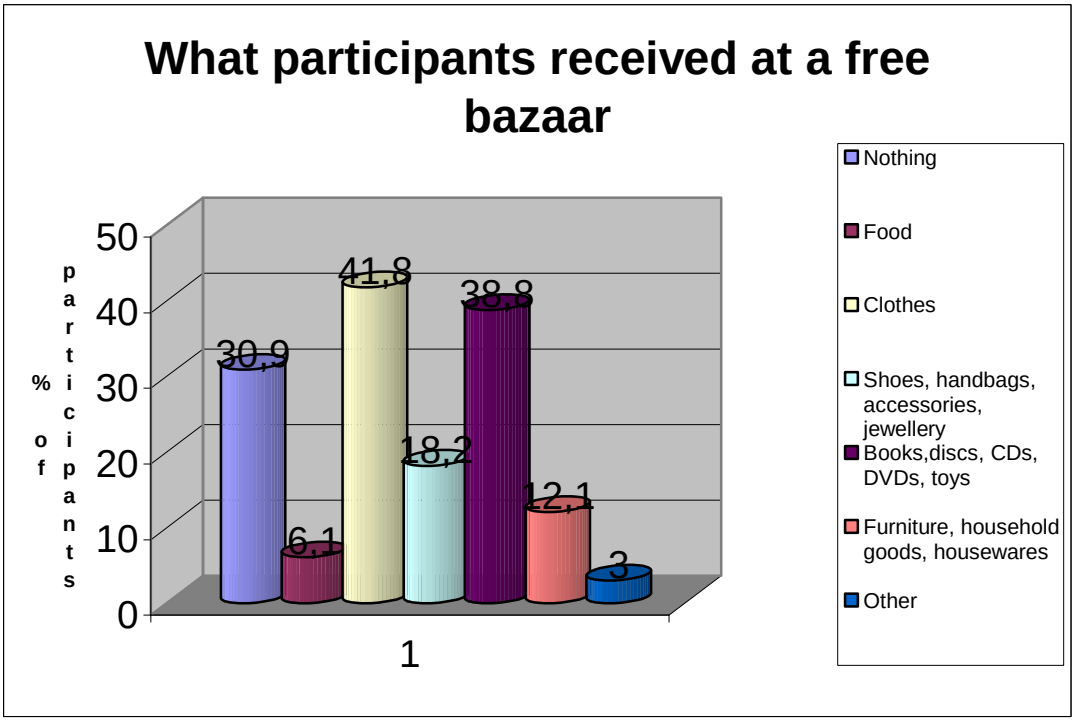
6.C.19 – What have the participants received visiting a free-exchange bazaar?

This question received 165 and the participants were free to choose more than one answers, therefore the total sum of answers and percentages are more than 165 and 100% respectively.

Table 6.C.19 - What the participants have received at a free-exchange bazaar

What the participants have received at a free bazaar	Number of answers
Nothing	51
Food	10
Clothes	69
Shoes, handbags, accessories, jewellery	30
Books,discs, CDs, DVDs, toys	64
Furniture, household goods, housewares	20
Other	5
Total sum	249

Graph 6.C.19 - What the participants have received at a free-exchange bazaar



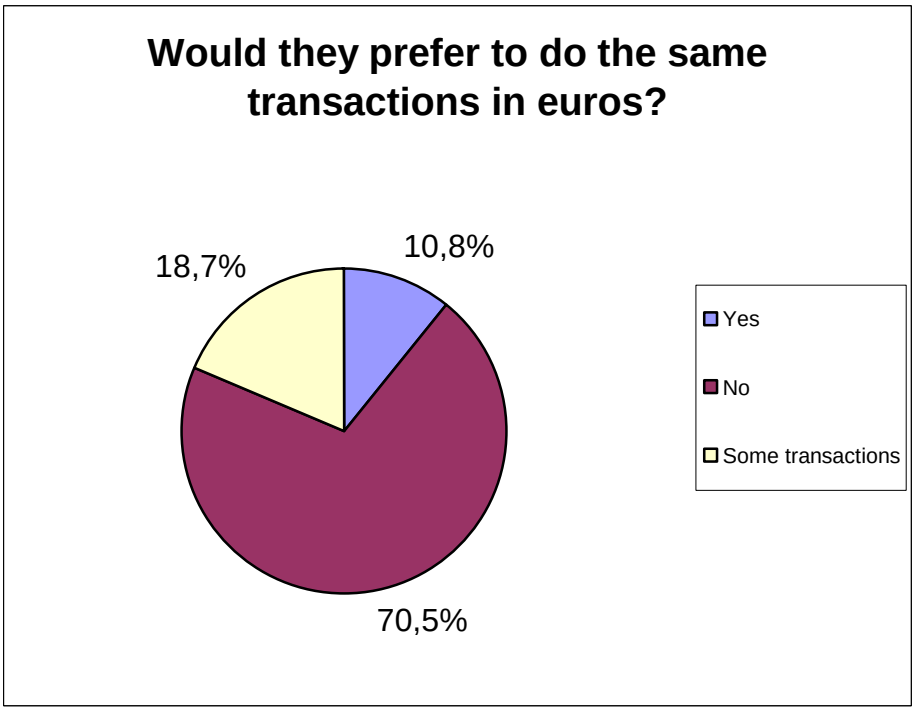
6.C.20 - If the participants have had lots of money (euro currency), would they prefer to pay or/and be paid in euros for the transactions they now perform without euro currency?

This question received 305 answers.

Table 6.C.20 – Would the participants prefer to perform the same transactions in euros, if they had plenty of them?

Would they prefer the same transactions to be done in euros?	Number of participants
Yes	33
No	215
Some transactions	57
Total sum	305

Graph 6.C.20 – Would the participants prefer to perform the same transactions in euros, if they had plenty of them?



6.C.21.– The final comments by the participants

The final question was just asking the participants to comment in case they wanted, in addition to all the information they had provided throughout the questionnaire. Sixty six participants filled-in this space.

Several comments were concerning the questionnaire itself: some participants found that it had questions which were not easy to understand or were not fitting their scheme's nature, other participants found it well-structured and professional, and one out of them thought of it as too oriented to quantity and not to the reasons who turn people to barter economy. Many participants asked that they want to be informed about the results of the research.

Another set of comments were referring to whether they have performed non-monetary transactions yet or whether their scheme is newly established, so they cannot give me more data than what is available. In addition to that, other people were explaining the difficulties they have in their areas to access a free bazaar or to have people interested in transacting without the euros. Many participants think that this

type of economy needs promotion, advertising and legislative support so that it can develop and flourish.

There also exist many comments concerning the participants' views about money and value(s) but also about the mainstream economy. What is very common a comment is that money is just a means and not an end in itself and that non-monetary economy cannot be explained in economistic terms. They also mention that within the schemes they can pursue human values and create real human relationships which the euro currency or money in general affects in a negative way. Solidarity and communication with other people are two terms which appear again and again in the participants' comments.

Finally, I am grateful for the kindness of participants to answer such a long questionnaire and I am also grateful for their wishes to me for good luck with my research. One participant wrote "I want to hope that you have not wasted your time". No, I have not wasted my time, for sure.

CHAPTER 7: RESEARCH FINDINGS II - INTERVIEWS WITH KEY INFORMANTS

Αγρίμια κι αγριμάκια μου,
λάφια μου μερωμένα,
πέστε μου πού'ναι οι τόποι σας,
πού'ναι τα χειμαδιά σας;

- Γκρεμνά'ναι εμάς οι τόποι μας,
λέσκες τα χειμαδιά μας,
τα σπηλιαράκια του βουνού
είναι τα γονικά μας.

My wild beasts and little wild beasts,
My meek deers,
Tell me where are your lands
Where are your winter dwellings?

- Cliffs are our lands
Ravines are our winter dwellings
The little caves of the mountain
Are our parent homes.

Traditional song of Crete, sang by a participant during his interview to send a gift to the Cretans, after he learned I do this research in the University of Crete.

After I had constructed the first three theoretical arguments, there started the first main phase of the research project. This phase comprised interviews with scheme coordinators and members who had a global view of the activity they took part in (for example, they have been old-time or founding members of the scheme). Actually, this phase lasted during the entire project, not only because several schemes emerged well after the first stage of research was more or less performed, but also because due to the financial problems of the project, the travelling which was implied for the interviews to be made, was done whenever this was possible.

The interviews were actually free, in the sense that the questionnaire used in this phase was a short list of questions to be answered freely by the participants. The interviews were typically semi-structured. However, when a participant wanted to speak more or referred to a topic she/he might think of interest to be mentioned, then I let them speak. This meant that in some cases, they were already answering some of the questions – in case his/her answer was clear enough, I did not ask again.

Moreover, I also asked for clarifications if something seemed not clear enough or if it seemed of interest for the project.

The interview questions were nine (9) in total and they are presented in Annex B. The first of them was not usually asked, but only in cases where I had questions bout terminology of the schemes. The ninth question was not common to all participants, but was specialised for the scheme type the participant was a member of: parallel currency, general exchange scheme, traditional varieties exchange schemes, free bazaars and networks. The participants were free to talk as long as they wanted, but the entire interviews were designed to last no more than 15 minutes, in case the participants were to focus only on the topics raised by the questions. I used this same questionnaire as a question-basis for the sui generis schemes, although in this case there was needed to form questions for each one, or just let the participants describe their activity and then ask question based on this description. The participants were free at any moment to stop the recording in case they wanted to say something they did not want to be recorded at all.

The interviews done for this first stage of the research project have been 47 in total. Some of them have been joint interviews, in the sense that people wanted to talk to me as a team, so the interviewees are more than 47. In other cases, it was impossible to isolate the interviewee from other participants and personally, I did not want to isolate anyone who wanted family and friends around during the interview.

There follow the questions of the first research phase and some indicative answers I received by the participants during their interviews.

7.1. Questions common for all participants

7.1.1. Definition of terms not defined in texts, etc.

This question has not been asked to all interviewees, but only to those whose scheme used words in their texts which were not clear to me. At some points in the interviews, even when I had not asked this question, the interviewee might use a word or a phrasing that seemed unclear, then, I also asked for a clarification or definition. There follow some answers:

"All this economy of exchanges is named [by Hazel Henderson], economy of love, i.e. traditional economy, and on which the economy of money has been based, which is the third layer of the cake[1] and which is divided into private and public…. When someone sees the economy as a whole, that part named "economy of love", which includes the economy of exchange, cannot but protect the Earth… because the person who does not work for money, but for survival, he/she tries that their children have a better life then their own, whatever he to be something that does not destroys. I remember, because I have grown up with values of this type (με κάποιες τέτοιες αξίες), that we were going to harvest thyme, herbs with my father, and he used to say "never exhaust them all from one place, you will cut some, and you will go further so that there remain the roots, there remain the flowers", to have the plants renewed… to be augmented… this was self-evident, i.e. the people who lived in this manner could not think in another way. What is happening now: Not only knowledge is lost, but huge values are lost referring to this economy… the idea of renewable is an ancient value… today we talk about Banks of Services Exchange and of Volunteer Exchange, within an effort to find again lost social webs, to create a neighbourhood, even if this… is an internet-neighbourhood, people with common values, people who will influence each other in the way they think, and people who will be able to survive by overturning situations who tend to annihilate us as beings…annihilation is not simply economic, it is moral".

Concerning the question derived from website, about the activities within the scheme experienced as free and not as alienated: "In wage labour (μισθωτή εργασία) someone is employer and someone is the employee, between them, even if they are the closest friends, there is always a power relationship. The employee's continuity of work depends on the employer. In the volunteering space, this does not exist, i.e. the employer is the need, the employer is the offering, the employer is the demand, but it is not an individual. It is very easy to find within the exchange space equivalent relationships… the only [condition] needed it to do well my work, so that they do not tell me "what did you want and you offered painting, while you do not know how to paint?"… the only thing needed is the personal word of honour that "yes, I can manage, or at least, I think I can manage, and I am good-faith person, if you see I cannot do this, do not assign me such a work". It is important that in Time Banks the

[1] Here, the interviewee refers to H.Henderson's economic visualisation as a cake, see for this Henderson, H. (1996), p. 58.

exchanges are not [done] one-to-one, because in those too there are created power relationships….while in a Time Bank, because it is not one-to-one, you have a social space, a group that can guarantee a quality of work and an ethos in the exchange”

“Whatever is alternative currency has not a powerful background structure, it does not stem from an agent who a priori gives towards the population the status (of currency) needed to be trusted. Therefore, the way by which this is covered – and we have seen this in smaller societies - … by the social contact and social networking of the participants. Therefore, there is created a down-to-top movement, thus the people who participate getting to know each other more or less acquire a social familiarity and a human relationship which helps the use of a common tool just like an alternative currency is”.

7.1.2. Why/what are the reasons you decided to participate/establish this scheme?

This has been one of the crucial questions of the entire dissertation. I asked the same question in the questionnaire leaving them space to write what they wanted. However, the interviews were also very revealing, as there was not the barrier of “have to write something down”:

“Because through this I would find was I was looking for, and I generally believe I have found it till now… I realised how important is to save the seeds, and second, I have found people whom I will have as siblings for all my life”

“the aim is that each person has a seed which will give a good fruit, without this person being in need to go and buy seeds, not to owe anyone… to pay for patents”

“what is being done in [the name of the scheme], it has been done throughout many years, this is how the varieties have been created… then this is not a new practice, we do not do something we have now invented… at some point of time, the corporations intervened and cut off this tradition… in the 50s, after 50s, I do not know well about that”

“we do not depend on this [traditional varieties] to live on”… another participant intervenes mentioning the peasants in India where they preserve traditional seeds for survival. Then the same interviewee mentions that he joined [the name of the scheme] for “I saw that serious work is done and I said to help for next year and this is how I

started… of course, through this I also found the seeds I wanted, so I satisfied a part of my own need… but then I understood and I saw that having myself only the seeds… why should not my neighbour have them too?... producing seeds does not cost you money, nature gives generously… as [a name of another member is mentioned] says, nature is the best bank, you take interest by 1000%, you might take 100, 200 seeds out of one tomatoe… when a seed of melon gives you 2000 seeds, without paying something for this, and it gives you the melon to eat to enjoy, then why won't you give it to the person next to you to plant a melon too?... in this case, you have nothing to lose".

An interviewee asked why he joins the [name of the scheme] fair while the expenses for the trip are high "I might not have economic profit, but I have sentimental profit (συναισθηματικό κέρδος)" – another interviewee intervenes "it is not money only".

"because when you give, you receive joy, when you take something, you receive joy too, but when you give, you receive more joy… between us we do not give seeds only, but we also give other things… sweets we make, tomatoes we produce, aubergines, what our garden produces, fruit, vegetables… [we give them] both to [name of the scheme] members and to the people where we live…".

"we offer lodging and products from our garden, vegetables etc and we ask from the network olive oil that we do not have… they send us, yes, and now, they have brought us olive oil… these are people who we have given them something and friends, whom we might have not given them anything… but between us, something might have been given".

"the aim is to save our seeds, this is the main aim, the aim is self-sufficiency, i.e. to produce as many as possible products that we use. In this way, we avoid all food scandals… money is the thing which destroyed human relationships and it risks to destroy the planet. … we try to put it aside as much as possible".

"…money does lots of evil. Although it does good to some people, it has harmed the planet in general, all the world, apart from minorities to which it has done good. Imagine that if there was no money, there would be no rich people, how would they collect the billions? What would they do, would they collect potatoes, tomatoes, what would they have done with them? They would give them and the people would have something to eat. Instead, now they have managed to make people starve".

"There were many seeds and were destroyed. Those seeds had been collected walking by foot and under very difficult conditions. Then, I had to find a way to preserve those

seeds. The idea has been that I do not keep seeds anymore but I give them to other people who undertake their preservation and rescue".

"[name of the scheme] was functioning in this way from the very first moment of its creation, given that it involved no money at all. Simply, inspiration came to be in 2002 through some readings I did. The occasion has been LETS of England, but it is completely different compared to LETS".

"Because I see that it is matter of life to have the old varieties surviving and it is also a matter of life the individual to return to nature, he/she has lost contact with nature"

"If I could right now, speaking freely, find a main reason, I would say that it is Health, with capital H, just as we mean it. Health in its human dimension has been given by an excellent definition by Vythoulkas, who is the teacher of us, the homeopathy doctors, who is already a Professor, who says that Health is Freedom, on body level [freedom] from pain, which leads to a condition of body wellness, on level of feelings, [freedom] from passions, which leads to a condition of dynamic quietness, and on mental level, freedom from ego, which leads to a condition of unification with truth. Therefore, liberation… includes also the liberation from artificial needs…. The idea of exchange for me has been a completely natural process, i.e. it has been more natural than the idea of payment. Thus, it lies closer to natural law and to the natural laws that govern our health. Just like you have in a family the provision of services to a child [and] you consider it a natural process. You do not as for a remuneration (ανταμοιβή). If you ask for a remuneration (ανταμοιβή), this means that you get away from the natural law. Or, if… imagine the common way of thinking "while you stay in my house, you will listen to my rules"… starts to get away from the natural process of relationships. The main reason (for the exchange network) has been that such a process could relieve some people from the stress that while there are economic upheavals (ανακατατάξεις)… thus, there is the possibility to reduce the ability of a person to have access to the services needed, this is the more practical reason. We go from a deeper spiritual reason to a more functional reason… What I wanted… was that this be a natural evolution, not to be pressed by anything, we have not advertised yet, we have let it evolve just like a natural process. Another reason… I could say… the communication between people who will believe something like this, or that they are familiar with something like this, but they had not any chance to dare it, or to try it, while in reality it might be happening in practice – i.e. it might in everyday routine, be happening among friends – but it might have not been tried in a more team-like

way (κάπως πιο ομαδικά μπορεί να μην είχε δοκιμαστεί), then a reason has been to give the chance – I was imagining it as a square (πλατεία)[1] … in which people completely different among themselves… from completely different classes, with completely different mentalities, nevertheless with something common to believe that it is possible that the mutual exchange, the mutual offering, to their own mental health (ψυχική υγεία)… It is possible that someone who enters the network and see that there are 500 people there and he/she feels well only because if he/she needs anything, there are 500 people and this might be enough to keep him/her in a balance. Then a reason has been to give… a space where there could interact (συναναστρέφονται) people who can believe in this, the mutual exchange. Those are the main three reasons: one more spiritual, one more practical and one more social, related to the social structure".

"You will see that there are many Time Banks in rural areas, f.ex. Italy, Spain, Ireland. Why? Because exactly exchange is a tradition in rural areas. It is not something that seems weird to them or new or anyhow strange… Exchange of stuff is easier – we see that this happens anyway… In services, this is a bit more difficult because we have learned that services are paid, because exactly services demand a very big difference in specialisation/expertise (εξειδίκευση), i.e. it is one specialisation to cook, another specialisation to fix the electricity installation, another specialisation to baby-sit, another specialisation to give legal advice, or to teach English. And this differenciation in specialisation, because it is remunerated in money with different prices, it is a bit more difficult to get accustomed to the idea that it is possible that one hour of English teaching is equal to f.ex. cooking, or legal counselling to [be equal with] wall painting… It is easier to search for a job afterwards, which is remunerated…You do a work for which you are remunerated, it is much easier, because you mental balance is restored, you see that people really need you, you see that what you offer is valuable for some people… By staying for some time out of the market you lose skills… if someone remains unemployed for 3-4 years, it is not money that he/she lacks, he/she loses contact with the market, does not know the changes in the profession, he/she loses in knowledge… in experience. Therefore, you can restore your self-confidence and enter the market and from that point you will be able as a professional to search better… the children who are

[1] This quote originates in a key informant interview held in summer 2010, i.e. a year before the indignant movement. The wording and description are not, therefore, influenced by this movement.

unemployed for some time or who do another job than the one they studied for, they have the chance to see whether and to what extent they really love what they studied and how socially useful they can be, and upgrade their skills…The Time Banks attract people who have in one way or another an ethos of volunteering, they are in political and environmental organisations, they are cultivators, they want to exchange seeds, they want to exchange tools… they have this ethos anyway, or they are people who feel some protection and some certainty by changing their way of life and entering this style of existence… in those people there are very high specialisations, [they are] professionals and anything you want,

"The market economy is the economy of exploitation of Earth, of humans, generally of exploitation. A big percentage goes to what is called hyper-profit (υπερκέρδος) with all its goods, I do not deny them, it might have its advantages too, it might have offered many many things to the history of humans, it might be that many very important discoveries would not have been advanced if there was no industrial revolution… but I think that there has been lost a very big part of human work which is related to another perception of work itself… if we recognise the human rights, the equality of humans, that each one can offer and enjoy the best possible on this earth within a perception of equality, if we do not have this, even the spaces of exchange can be spaces of exploitation. And the ways of exploiting the other human are many… One can choose people and corrupt (εξαχρειώσει) them through exploitation, even without money. [One] can behave in an authoritarian (εξουσιαστικό) way, to humiliate, [one] can insult, can discriminate… therefore, if the agenda of human rights is not integrated, which is for tall people, for short people, for green, red, yellow people, that there is mutual respect, that I offer my services not only, f.ex. to tall people, nor ask I services from tall people only, for me it is not worth to be in this space, I do not want to be in this space and I go away, I go to play elsewhere… Constructing therefore, an educative workshop I put the agenda of human rights, because I want to entrench the free land I want to be in, and when I say "free", it is a space where you can feel safe, not to be humiliated and not to humiliate, and to feel that you are empowered ethically as a person and you empower [others]…".

"The network was already a space of volunteering… for me personally, it has been a way of life because I have grown up like this, but what made me decide it is the lifting of humiliation for socially excluded people, i.e. if they give, give, give to you, you start being humiliated very badly…I had seen that volunteers were coming,

individuals who were willing to give but were not willing to take, i.e. they did not say "I need, I want", because they wanted to help and were people with ethos and good people, but on the other hand, because of their own personal adventure, they had not learned to say "I want", they had not learned to say "I need", or to put limits, to work on their own limits… then I thought that the Time Bank would help everyone, including me, to start putting personal limits, to admit what we want, what we need, and not to see the other person, the co-human (συνάνθρωπο), as the vessel to dump our great kindness but as a co-human whom we need. You now, I tomorrow, and this helps all people, the one who will be in need tomorrow, the one who will be in need the day after tomorrow... In the volunteering space, is there humiliation? There is great humiliation, the humiliation of giving... therefore, where you can balance, to feel at the same time a volunteer and at the same time that you can give, it is a space of greater decency".

"[there was]need to intervene in social economy, rather a psychological need… there is faith that there are other moral values apart from money… we believe that there should be facilitated the relations of people in the logic of transactions, not only by the means of money, the known money… because this created the bubbles… generally, moral bubbles, currency bubbles, whatever… there are not only the bubbles of banks and of loans, there are also the bubbles of people, which stems from how we learn to live… it is related to the way of life, in the sense that you go to simpler things and to simpler logic, you do not enter the hunt of semblance… with referent to human values.

"I had not any information, I had no picture about what was happening abroad, I have been informed… by [name of another scheme member], and from that moment, maybe the first, second, third day, I had disdained them… social currency, barter, because I was living within companies and I was a protagonist in transactions with euros, it seemed to me non-real somehow. When I started thinking the experiences of the people around me concerning the chances and skills they might have… then it came to my mind and I remembered that there are many exchanges of services… there was on a mass level an exchange economy… and an estimation the last two years [interview made in 2010] that the market was collapsing… there was already lack of liquidity… it is happening, it is not happening in an organised way… I was seeing that it was serving many people, both those who by hobby had some skills, some potential anyway and some companies who aimed to sell something".

“It is an ideological issue. The first reason is, that I had been informed at some point in 2003 about a similar move (κίνηση) which existed in Italy, it happened to me to be in Ireland where i saw this system running... in Dublin. We had said here to start this [a parallel currency scheme] through an EQUAL project, the project proposal has not been approved, so it remained in paper. At some moment there came the idea by [he mentions the name of another scheme member]- i do not know how he found it – he says “i have heard something like this”, i tell him “you know, i know several things about that too, etc”, then there has been found [another name of scheme member], some things have been found, the Cyclos software... because I am for social economy... [which is] an effort to see what else can exist beyond traditional economy, beyond traditional commodity-relations (παραδοσιακές εμπορευματικές σχέσεις)… whether we can create some other too, commercial relations or social relations, whether we can get into another framework (πλαίσιο) and function in a parallel way or even some other relations [to function] separately (μόνες τους κάποιες άλλες σχέσεις).

“I take part ten years now, as a priest too, in various structures related to providing services to third parties but without using the specific type of currency, i.e. euros, etc… where we volunteered to various structures… therefore, de facto and as a priest I was interested when [the name of another scheme member] proposed this to me, to create a system which will enhance on regional level the economy of a household and a person.

“There happens the following: we are being exploited… There is somewhere an intermediary, who regulates and takes advantage…”

7.1.3. Do you think that if the scheme did not exist, the aims you seek would not be achieved?

I am not sure I was right to include this question into the question list. In some cases, when I had to ask the question, I felt that it was out of the point. In other cases, the answers were revealing in the sense that this question permitted the interviewees to explore the possibility of not joining. In most interviews, I asked this question not as number three but as one of the last ones, as the discussion was not permitting that this question to be asked among the first ones.

A member of a traditional varieties scheme “look, I alone would have not started what is being done, I consider it very important, first, people gathering here gives you strength, and second, despite my complaining, there has been done a lot of work by … the members of the group”

“…if [the name of the scheme] did not exist… I was searching for seeds, but I did not want to buy…because the seeds sold are not traditional varieties, most of them are hybrids, this means they cannot reproduce… I am not interested in having a super-variety which is tasteless and colourless”.

“we would be alone”… another interviewee intervenes “and we would know less”

“I would have done absolutely nothing, because my colleague-peasants were mocking at me”

“there would have been created another [the name of the scheme]… it was necessary, it would happen anyway, then it would be some other [scheme] with some other name, it would do the same” [the interviewee mentions same initiatives in other countries].

“I would have created another group… Anyway, this is the second organisation I create. The first had been established in 1990, it was the Agricultural Practice Workshop… it has been the bridge so that I went to [scheme name], to mature and clarify some things, ranging from how I want a group to be organised, where its headquarters should be, various issues… this group has developed into [mentions the name of a group with similar scope, which does not participate in the research] ”.

“I would go forward alone. We are under the umbrella of [scheme name] but at the end of the day, each one works alone. That means [each one] alone does its cultivations, makes its observations, writes down what he/she observes”

“If this [network] did not exist, another person probably would have created something else. I have seen in some blogs… “we wanted to do it, but someone else did it” and with joy they receive this information… I believe that all those mature as a natural process, i.e. I am sure that neither this is unique – there will be other [networks] too - just like I think that if this [network] did not exist, someone else would have done it. In other words, I do not consider it to be something unique in that sense, and I have made it exactly without having seen what is happening abroad, i.e. I started being informed afterwards, therefore it came as a natural reaction, obviously, to things as they happen, I imagine that someone else would do it, or he/she might develop it more or do it better”

“Yes, even without the Time Bank, we did exchanges, but in that case, the disadvantage is that you limit yourself to your circle, i.e. the Time Bank gives you the chance to meet people from other social classes, with other education, of other age, of other cultural origin. It is not about your circle anymore, it is about a way of life, which is very different”.

“if there was another [scheme], I might support the one which would exist… a similar initiative. This one started because as a logic, it did not exist”.

“there would always be a way to be expressed somehow, the essential thing is to be expressed in a successful and permanent way”.

“Up to a certain point, yes, indirectly, not directly. In other words, a person has a chance to help him/herself by providing services and getting rewarded. Indirectly through some other services, one could [do this], but unfortunately in this case we also talk about charity which has also a negative nature, isn’t it? There are structures in [the name of the city], but they do not serve 100 % what [the name of parallel currency] serves. For example, I have nothing to eat, there is the [a local charity organisation], one could go there…while in the [parallel currency], I offer services, I am paid for my services, and I use this digital unit to be able to buy something to cover my needs”.

7.1.4. How do you think that your own aims are achieved by this participation?

This question and the next one have been my attempt to discern the individual and the collective aspect of scheme participation. I am not sure I managed to have any meaningful results, because the overall impression I have is that those two aspects are very intertwined and affect each other in ways that surpass the scope of this research project to analyse. However, the interviewees have been very understanding and tried to explain to me, despite the “prejudiced” structure of the questions:

A member of a traditional varieties scheme: “I am very strict and my aims are being partially achieved”.

“yes, [the aims] are clearly met. First, you see that this thing… is highly esteemed, and where we have been ten people, the ten people became 20, then 20 became 100… and so on”.

“each of us, we are crazy… in his area each one is finger-pointed and looked at with irony… but here we all share an utopia, which for us is not utopia at all, it is realised,
“what we do in [scheme for the preservation of varieties] we do it also on local level”
“Whatever we do, it basically satisfies us, either we go volunteering somewhere or we work. It is related to a personal deeper need of us, our enjoyment and satisfaction. Through those networks, I take strength - personally, I like all this process, to function without money, I like that I also help, I put my little stone so that the local landraces are not lost”.
“Yes, with all the difficulties we face, because when you tackle with a Time Bank you tackle with humans and the greatest difficulty is always the human relationships, but exactly when there is friction, the angles are rubbed… the problems are those who also bring the smoothing, and perception and co-perception (συναντίληψη), the common dealing with things through very different viewpoints”.
“if a parallel currency works, it gives itself the reply that money only is the value of our life. I do not believe in the value of money as a value of life”.
“It is an ideological issue. From that point onwards,… if I manage to gain some things, some products through such a system, I will not stop. It will be as if I go out to work and produce some stuff for someone. I will do the same thing now, too. So, it will be facilitating me to work with services without having necessarily euros in my pocket”.
“My own work is to help co-humans (τον συνάνθρωπο). Since I can offer, I can alleviate someone even to boost one’s self-esteem and self-confidence through [the name of the parallel currency], then I do it. I put him into the system just for him/her to be able to transact easier and to survive, because here we talk about a survival issue”.

7.1.5. In which way do you think that the scheme aims are being achieved?

I am not sure I captured collective thinking here, as I am afraid the answers give the interviewee’s perception about the collective attitude within the scheme. however, it is still very interesting to read the answers:

"We have a partial co-perception (συναντίληψη), not… total co-perception, but we have some co-perception and we accept the difference (διαφορετικότητα) of each other"

"because they feel obliged to give something because they take, when they find some seeds, they bring them to us".

"the aims of [the scheme name] are being achieved, it has grown, we are already in a very good condition, we have our own land, we design our own seeds bank, all those are very big steps… [we achieve this] through trust, solidarity, cooperation, those are the main criteria for achieving our aims".

"when those people [network members] are moved by the scope (θέμα) of the network, and take part in this, then it becomes an issue for all of us.. [The scheme name] simply gives the direction, it defines the spaces and times so that there exists a point of reference… from that point onwards… there are many co-hikers and helpers".

"The seeds… cannot be priced (δεν μπορούν να κοστολογηθούν), they are a possession of nature and not ours, we are just users and we owe to give them back to nature, and we owe to disseminate them. This happens, for a responsibility to our children and to the seeds themselves… [quoting another scheme coordinator] "maybe at this moment, keeping your own seeds might be the greatest revolution you can do, because revolution is not only taking arms, getting out in the streets, is keeping my own freedom… those who manage the seeds, they manage food,… therefore, they manage your freedom…. You take what you are given, you eat what you are given, you are dependent permanently, because those [bought] plants might need support with medicines[1], fertilisers, many waterings, etc, while the local seeds are clearly more independent, stronger, [they have] less needs, and greater sustainability (βιωσιμότητα). … We are used to say that some other people are to be blamed for this issue, we blame the corporations, we blame the agri-experts, we blame the states which have made agreements, and no-one does not say to which extent we are to blame… If we stop for a minute and we think "with our today meal, what have we chosen?" and how does this choice go like a chain and what it means, if I at this moment, choose to eat tomatoes, I have chosen for sure the cultivation of tomatoes during winter, therefore, I take tomatoes out of their season, and a bunch of other

[1] I suppose it is meant "pesticides" here, but I keep translation close to the initial wording.

processes… if I choose to eat the coconut which has come from the other side of the world, no matter how organic it might be, I have not made an organic choice, because this [coconut] has costed to the environment very much. If I choose to eat the X hybrids which circulate, I have not chosen to support local landraces. If the other day… I make a somehow different choice, me being here, you in Athens, and thousand other people in different places, with our choices we push things elsewhere. Our choices drive cultivators to plant other varieties…"

"The signs that the aims are already achieved can be seen. They have been achieved not at a very high percentage... I will give you an example: While leaving last year from the Seeds Fair, with [name of another scheme member], I asked him "…Out of 2500 people who have been there today, what do you think, how many we achieved to attract and give them the stimulus to start doing something?" and he replied to me "Twenty". I was shocked. And I say "they are very few" – "No [the name of the interviewee], they are really many". Thinking his words, I finally said that it was worth it, even for one person to be attracted. One person will bring one more person… This is why you try not to be formal, to be substantive (ουσιαστικός) in what you do… Or, you cannot… say other things your actions to show other things and this to create drawbacks afterwards, you should be completely real".

"I think that they have not been achieved yet anyway [interview held in 2010]. I have the feeling that people are registering at this moment, feeling some safety and a sense of entering a process where they have chance, along with other people who have the same ideas, to be able to exchange. From what I have seen, there are fewer the exchanges which have essentially happened, in relation to the registered members, but I think that people position themselves in this way at this moment. Thus, the only main aim that has been achieved till now is the third one, i.e. the creation little by little of a social web that might believe in exchange, and the first one [reason], in the sense that someone feeling that there is something like this [network], that I can send an email and exchange services with someone, this in itself offers more mental balance (ψυχική ισορροπία). In reality, the functionality of the network has not been shown yet, in statistical terms, based on the exchanged that have happened".

"… [the aims are achieved] by the scheme being open, clearly non-profit for everyone, adaptable to the needs and demands of the users themselves and with a logic of down-to-top organisation. I would not call this self-organisation, because we are not sure it can be self-organisation…"

"…[the aims are achieved] when the participants start to see something to change concerning the moral part (το ηθικό κομμάτι), i.e. to be practically able to offer a service, a hobby, one might speak perfect German but one might not have ever used it. If I can offer this and in reward I can receive some [the name of the local currency] which I can use to buy a chaige-longue for the beach, you feel morally satisfied (ηθικά ικανοποιημένος). And of course, the long-term criterion of success for [the name of the local currency] is to achieve on entreprise level – I see it mostly easy for services – that a part of their trade volume to start getting done by the means exchange, i.e. through [the name of the local currency]. However this thing needs a bit of time to be done… but massification (μαζικοποίηση) is the criterion of success… that means to take part in [the scheme] as many as possible, both individuals and entreprises."

"I believe that it is important to achieve in finding the real needs that we will cover for someone… it is the interest (συμφέρον) that someone wıll have. If one's interest is being covered (αν καλύπτεται το συμφέρον του), the system will proceed, so will the exchange transaction in general. If this is not covered, it will function within an ideological framework (πλαίσιο), but it does not seem to me that it will manage to last for long time… The interest is: Today for example, there is some crisis where it stops some people from having access to some goods. So, if we say that though such a system we can put exchange (ανταλλαγή) at its right place. In other words, money in reality can be something symbolic, we put it beside a bit and we say that the exchange can be achieved by the means of the real exchange relation (πραγματική ανταλλακτική σχέση). Then, someone can say "you know, I have work to offer". If someone else could receive this, there could be developed a relation between those two and they could enter again the production process. This person can be the unemployed, the retired, the woman that as we have said, faces many problems today, and particularly if she is over 40, it is very difficult to find a job, therefore, if there is some way-out, if there is given, at a small percentage to those certain groups, I think that it will be successful by 100%".

"seeing that the problem at this moment is a problem of liquidity, therefore, if there is need for offer and the need for someone to receive some services or products, one can use [the name of the parallel currency]".

7.1.6. How and who did choose this specific structure for the scheme? Why?

I tried to learn about the choice of each scheme concerning its type and how this choice has been made. For some schemes, which have been created the last year or so, I have a better picture as I could know from the scheme announcements and free discussions how the choice might have been done. Concerning the older schemes the only information we have till now is this set of answers to this question:

"[The scheme name] is a very open community, it is a pleasant company there is no here the cashier, the leader, the president, we are all together….it comes of its own, if you do not want to do something, you do not do it"

About the same scheme as above: the structure "has been instinctive" – another interviewee says "it started from a group of people"

"The decisions are tried, whichever are good are being kept, whichever do not work, they are rejected. What helps a lot is that tomorrow at the end of the fair [he talks about the annual fair]… we all volunteers will gather and there all can speak from the oldest to the youngest… even the five-year old. Through this it is renewed… that there is no leader, it makes a huge impression to some people".

"I chose it [the network structure] my self…because it is more flexible. We do not function according to the principles of democracy as democracy today works – there is a central person, who is me at this point of time, and around me some things move and based on the principles I set… [Decision making is made] by me and [mentions the name of another scheme member]".

"this is society (κοινωνία), … and through this children socialise, they listen to stories, they connect to the past, there are dimensions that we do not imagine"

it is very moving for me that through networks, either for seeds, or for exchanges, there has been created a pan-hellenic fellowship… and now a worldwide fellowship"

"the exchange network of [the name of the scheme] has as its philosophy the following: to be brought in contact with you, to feel trust for what you are doing, to see it , enjoy it, and to exchange on that basis what you are doing with what I am doing".

"Any decisions made, are made as a group… however [the names of the two main coordinators] are always conciliatory, they are open to everything, they apply many things of those who hear as an idea, and I believe that it is built on that… [In the

meeting of the group], there is heard the opinion of every one, how the entire event of the fair has worked, what [each one] has observed, what would be one's observation or idea for an issue that is problematic… many things come out of this [meeting]".

The founder of an exchange scheme: "I intend not to remain a coordinator, I would like to have a public administration (δημόσια διαχείριση)… to find a formula where the coordinators alternate… it is interesting to see whether the members themselves can protect something that belongs to them, this is also another experiment…personally I do not intend to become neither the coordinator, nor the inspector, nor the leader nor … would I peep in to see whether exchanges are taking place or not…Because there is a continuous flow of things, such a network should self-formulate and self-evolve and this could happen only if there is not a permanent coordinator but the coordinators can alternate having it evolving each time, putting each time their own little piece, embracing its basic principles – but even this will be flowing, i.e. basic principles could also be re-established, I do not think that in such a story someone could assert the paternity of basic principles, I do not think that this would have any meaning".

Concerning parallel currencies: "the groups can be smaller, 2, 3 or 5, 10 people know each other, and not in the form where we do gatherings for conversion or to produce ideology on this thing… we would rather [act] by the logic of circle (παρέα)… we have a logic of self-regulation (αυτορρύθμιση) of circulation and of its conditions, there is no regulatory authority… the only we try for is that someone does not put into [the scheme] something crazy, that is illegal or immoral, which is related to what someone sells… neither is there any definition, because someone comes and asks "why one sells at this price and another, a private institute, sells at another price?"… from that point onwards, whoever sets the higher price… no-one is going to buy their service. Basically, the system is self-regulated and for this reason we consider as a very big advantage, that because of the use of euros being forbidden [within the scheme], then… within a system that has been created voluntarily, where no-one has anything to gain on monetary level, there is no money, therefore, there is no danger to receive any questioning by its members… it is a system which is open".

"The logic that we made [the parallel currency] to be pan-hellenic at last, is very simple: once the platform is online, nothing prevents any group of people in a city of Greece to establish their own [scheme], the exchanges will be simply done on greater extent within their city. The logic for making it pan-hellenic is to have it self-

regulated from grassroots… the software is open to all, you need to be simply a member for the legal issue, the tax issue".

"The structure has been chosen by the acceptance… that a social currency has not the caliber of state-nature of a central bank (της κρατικής υπόστασης μιας κεντρικής τράπεζας), so it should have the caliber of its members themselves, of the products and services which are produced and exchanged by the members. So, there has been a structure which would designate inclusivity (συμμετοχικότητα) and freedom".

"The association (σωματείο) is completely free (ελεύθερο) to all Greek citizens and any foreigner who lives in Greece, and foremost, the legal framework is common for the association, it is not defined by its founders… this protects that we have not designed anything".

"From the initial stage, i.e. the way we started it, it has evolved ten time more, based on the ideas of those people [other members], because it is interactive with the inspirators. Now the people who inspired the [name of the scheme] cannot be considered to be 2-3 people only, inspirators are at least 50-60 people who have influenced things from the statutes, how there will be the transaction forms, how the products will be sold. In other words there is no godfather in this initiative.

"It was important that some people in Uruguay offer something for free and what they ask in return is hat "well, guys, when you do the translation, send it to us, not to exploit it, but to put it with English, French, Italian… to have Greek in it too". This has been a very nice element, of another internationalisation now. I did not expect that someone will offer this in that manner and the only thing he asks in return is something that I will offer to many people. As for the rest of structure, this is an association of people (ένωση προσώπων), it is open, it is transparent, it is decided by the entire team… everybody from the beginning said… to be something open, to be easy for someone to enter… that someone has concrete responsibilities and realises them, this is something given. There is no coordinating board, just, if you undertake something, then do it! Or you will say "folks, I have not time to do it" and someone else will do it".

"Generally, the currency is a social convention which has been chosen only to facilitate the transactions of the people. At times, there have been used both various materials, various sizes, only because there was a philosophy concerning the utility (χρησιμότητα) and till which point one can reach using a certain form of currency… We used the unit so that this does not refer and does not charge (φορτίζει) negatively

the feeling of the other person that this is involving the currency (το νόμισμα)… it has direct correlation (αντιστοίχιση) with the euro currency…”

7.1.7. Are you happy with the way the scheme is working? Why? Why not?

Most of the answers to the previous questions revealed whether the interviewee was happy with the scheme at the particular moment of the interview or not. However, I insisted in asking this specific question as it was:

“I think that the greatest enemy of the traditional varieties and of the effort by the people to preserve them is the people and the life of big cities. The person who lives in a big city is possibly and unintentionally the biggest enemy of this effort…. He becomes an anonymous consumer in a super market chain who is under economic pressure and buys anything that is the cheapest to survive”.

“If I was not happy [with the scheme], I would not participate… each one comes and dedicates what he/she is able to, as much as she/he is able to”

“If I was not happy [with the scheme], I would not have been here…because I see every year very moving things… I receive very moving phone calls by people”

“I am very happy and at this age… I make the sacrifice and I come here, I follow as much as I can”

“[The network] for the seeds goes very well, the exchange [network] not so… with the products, it goes very slowly. Very few are those who call and ask to be hosted”

“I am happy in general terms [with the function of the scheme]”

An ex-member of a general exchange network “I had registered at the beginning for services exchange, but two-three calls came up to me and I understood that there was no real interest about what I am doing, there was no real interest to learn from me… What they were interested in has been to simply be hosted, to have a nice time for some days and actually a lady told me that she is unemployed and she tries in this manner, playing volunteer, to go around from city to city, from farm to farm, and have a nice time without paying anything… this bothered me and I thought that I cannot enter this process and make indiscreet questions to understand what the other people try to do, because they are strangers to me. However, I thought something else: in case there are proposals… by people I see, which I discuss with, I understand…

about what he/she is really interested in, and I propose myself “come to my farm, for a week, to work as a volunteer, and take what you need. I give knowledge generously because knowledge should be transmitted, in any way, and now there are all means for this to happen. And actually, my son proposed that I created a webpage where to give such information and the other to pay to enter the site, and I denied completely to do this… there is no possibility for such a thing to happen…because there is always balance in universe, i.e. when I give information to you, you will feel that I gave a gift to you, even if this is in another form. For example, I give seeds, they ask me how much those cost, and I say “they do not cost anything, they are from hand to hand and from heart to heart” just like our motto is and I believe this completely. The other says “But… I have to give you something, so that a reward exists”, I say “please, when you will have your first tomato, your second tomato, send me a tomato as a gift… or a little envelope out of the seeds you have kept”. Therefore, to have a continuity in what we are doing, there must be behind an infrastructure, i.e. I ask questions to the person who calls me and asks for seeds, what space you have, you have a garden, you have a veranda, you use some pots in your balcony, and from this I will start for what seeds I will send… and I will ask the question “have you worked on this before? Is this your first time?”, thus I will write on the little envelope additional information on the date of sowing, seed collection modes, I will give information that I have in written form, to give them the motive, by seeing the work I have done, to estimate this and go forward. And all this, too, is accompanied by a letter which has been prepared by [a name of a scheme member], in which he says that “attention to the seeds you will take, to plant them with lots of love, with lots of attention, to spread them, to give them to your friends, because what we seek is to give the seeds and this to be spread”… I give a two-years grace. Therefore, if you call me at the third year and you tell me that… you want apple-tomatoes, and if I have given you apple-tomatoes twice, that means that you had two chances to keep the seed, or at least, if you could not cultivate it, another person could do it and keep the seed for you. In this case, I understand whether there is continuity in this… the second year, you will try to persuade her that it is necessary (επιβάλλεται) to keep the seed so that we have the continuity. Therefore, the community is an idea at this moment, for me at least.. I believe that all… most people see this that way. It is something very deep, it is a life attitude (στάση ζωής), it is the continuity of this world, it is what we will deliver to our children… when you see a young person being interested [in traditional seeds], I

give them all I have… I feel that there is an idea, let's say a big umbrella, underneath which there are different roads, which go outwards and at some moment they go inwards. They are round trip roads (δρόμοι μετ' επιστροφής). And, now, if you have become a cultivator by choice who will cultivate some things and return the seeds to [the scheme name] or if you do this alone and bring seeds to [the scheme name], this does not matter, provided that seeds are moving… And each of us, should try to in our areas to find the old seeds, to approach the old lady, to learn information, to learn about the moon, to learn how they were sowing, to learn how they were tackling with [plant] illnesses with natural means, [to learn] the unwritten information, the oral information, because it is being lost. And this is a word of advice to everyone to write down what they hear, the information which is not written, but it is oral… We always want balance to exist in the universe. When there is one-sided service, it destroys many things… We should never underestimate a human… no-one is useless… but you do the approach, you do the step first, you trust to be trusted…I do not feel that [the scheme name] does not work correctly (σωστά). Once I function well, [the scheme name] is also functioning well. When I am right (σωστή) in what I do, I feel responsible for what I do, and I want that what I do helps the other to find his/her way, in any way, without me trying to impose my view or anything else, I do what I do, you follow if you want – this is optional. If everyone works correctly, the entire system works correctly (σωστά). "

"No, I will never be happy, because you always want something better. It is not possible to be happy with something that you want to improve afterwards, if I was, I would stop… [I would improve] the digital organisation, for which I have not the money at the moment…"

"I want that we escape from the stage of curiosity and we proceed to the stage of real function. Because now, all participation has a bit of nature of curiosity: what this is, the new one".

"Till the moment, personally I am quite happy with the cooperation of the team".

"Till now, yes [I am happy], because all this time that we tell people about it, they have expressed a big interest…"

7.1.8. How is your scheme participation connected to your other economic activities?

I asked this question because, given that I did not ask information concerning the profile of the interviewee (but in case she/he wanted to tell me, she/he was mostly welcome), I had no picture how the scheme activity might interlink with the entire economic activity of the interviewee. With the term "economic activity" I mean all productive activities, i.e. all activities undertaken by the interviewee to cover material needs. Then, I clarified to the interviewees that the economic activity might comprise monetary and non-monetary actions, which means that I was not interested in learning just their job and income -and this was not my intention anyway:

"this does not deprive me from my economic activities… I might leave my work to come here and I spend some money, but you also spend money to go skiing to Parnassus mountain"

An interviewee who is member of [the scheme name] "Not even the profession I have is related to the economy, for me peasantry is a deposition of soul (κατάθεση ψυχής)… earth for me is a teacher, nature is a teacher… Me too, I have economic income but this is not what earth cultivation really gives you"… another interviewee says "this [money] is collateral".

"[my activity with the scheme] has a quite big part [of my activity], which bothers my husband very much. But I continue undeterred, I have clarified to him that this is my aim and I follow it, and you may say what you want, [your words] do not touch me, those arrows come and go… however, we have managed to be domestic/home-fed (οικόσιτοι) which means that we need very few things when we will go to the nearby village where there is a supermarket, and this is very important. If every greek household achieved in being home-fed (οικόσιτο), I believe that there would be solve the 90% of food provision in Greece. And if we tried a bit to integrate in this the economy too, not in the sense of stinginess, but with the spirit of saving (το πνεύμα της οικονομίας), not to throw absolutely anything and all those things to be recycled, we would arrive to having no need of money. In other words, to me it is a greater cost to buy all materials [to pack and send the traditional seeds]…"

"It is not connected at all [to my other economic activities], because my other activities include the euro currency, while here there is no euro at all. It is completely

disconnected. Only ideas I have been given, my activities are related to other countries (εξωτερικό)".

"[we do spend for the scheme] not many hours, the things we do are not so numerous. [the name of another member scheme] is mainly working…"

"on two levels: as a priest, I want to offer to the people and there is no need to be paid in this specific type of currency, and second, as a human who participate as a "producer" [quotes added by the participant], I want to sell something, I am an icon painter, and I promote my icons receiving [the name of the parallel currency]. So, I provide the satisfaction to the other person to have a worship item, but to be able to pay for this through the local unit".

"My half occupation is the school [she is a school teacher], because I adore school too, and the other half occupation is with [the scheme name]. When I have spare time, I am also occupied with home, sometimes [she laughs]… [the scheme name] is a meraki…The meraki (μεράκι), if you put work schedule and limit and interest, it stops from being meraki. Meraki has no limits, it is something else."

"Since the old times… In 1954 my father died and I took over the store we had in the public market… in [the name of a city in the northern part of Greece], and someone was needed to take over the store, my brother was in military service, my other brothers were at highschool, and I stayed with the store. And little by little – in those years there did not exist these things that exist today, the supporting stuff to the vegetables, you see what I mean – and I continued with the same way. Then, I tried to find with my own care (έννοια), my own responsibility (ευθύνη), the bug, the worm, the seed, what does it get to be, how does it get to be, I wanted the source (πηγή), and I discovered that with plant waterings I can fight out quite a lot of worms, and little ones… in other words [I found out] when it must be watered and at what time of the day. If I water them, the vegetable[s] give bugs or worms. I have made observations of this type and they have been successful. And, I continued this way, and I was harvesting a good produce, a genuine produce, a natural produce, natural taste, and the people were content with the taste".

7.2.Questions specialised for each scheme type

The questions have been chosen based on economistic ideas I had found in the literature, concerning the rational behaviour which might be expected in each case.

Therefore, those somehow have been opposition questions in order to see how the interviewees would face those same questions (that I also face as a student).

7.2.1. Parallel currencies: Why would an individual and/or a company would accept to trade with parallel currency instead of euros?

Literature says that lack of official currency turns individuals and companies to accept parallel currencies. However, parallel currencies usually have several disadvantages, like transaction costs, limited variety of goods and services to spend the earned income, etc. Therefore, lack of official currency is not enough an explanation for someone to accept as a means of payment a currency which is not supported by any authorities:

"For two reasons: first, because they might agree with us that we need something else, alternative, that we ourselves regulate and that is not transplanted to us (να μην μας το έχουν φυτεμένο), therefore to have the freedom. Second, because he/she might be interested… it is related to real economy and not to the bubbles which create sur-values, the interests (τόκοι), etc. … and a third reason: because in this way he/she can participate and sell products and services that cannot be sold in euros… because someone, f.ex. has not the chance to pay in euros someone else to take care of an elder or … to have private lessons…".

"the reasons might be economic or moral, and probably social. The social dimension existed for years in the baker stores, the bakers, you know, never throw away bread, they are obliged to give it for free to anyone hungry… this social dimension, the [name of the local currency] comes to enhance it, i.e. to sell the thing with [name of the currency] and then use the currency at the end of the day, i.e. instead of losing the product, to be able to use it. The practical part refers to… because the crisis is developing and is going to increase the following period of time [the interview is being made in summer 2010]… it is a given, it is already reality that there is an abrupt decrease of trade volume in all commercial activities. It is also a way… to continue to exist".

"Because at this moment it is not easy to do this [use euros]. If euros existed, everybody would tell us "what are you now saying?". It is the best moment, I believe, now for something like this to function. In times when things went well, no matter

how much we would talk about, in reality most people who would hear us, would say "leave us alone!". Today people starts to see this as a problem, because they see that people do not step into their stores, there is no money, [clients] do not enter the store, they are full of product stock… "This thing" [the parallel currency of the scheme], they say, "might give me something". They do not even know that, but even a bit is fine, to try this once they have nothing".

"There is big economic crisis, therefore you have two solutions: either you close down your store, or you put some water into your wine, then you work as in sales season, but at least you do not lose the sum of the sale price. For example, a sofa costs 200 euros, that it the price you sell it at. 150 euros is the costs and the VAT plus a small profit, and you have a profit of 50 [parallel currency name], which you can use regionally, and be relieved from certain expenses, like cleaning your store, painting your store, and so on".

7.2.2. Exchange networks: Why would people prefer to search for bartering opportunities within the network instead of covering their needs immediately with euros?

Bartering and all forms of exchange in kind are pictured as not handy at all in most of the literature. They have not only transaction costs but also this crucial problem of people having needs that do not meet to enable the exchange. Then, it might take time and effort to arrange an exchange with someone without the use of any currency:

"The most correct thing is to search in his/her own area and we do this same thing. First we search in our own area because the seeds there are adapted to the soils, to the climates, while the seeds that we will take from the other side of Greece will suffer a shock, just like we go to another place, we will need some time to adapt. Obviously, [the cultivator] will have searched and have not find this is why she/he comes to us".

"The exchange with the tomatoes etc. is more difficult, he will go there [to the super market]. The exchange was done in old times in local communities and we do it locally and more easily with the neighbours and there is no need even to exchange, my neighbour says *[name of the participant], have you aubergines*?... the other time I

might have peaches that I might have in excess or not even in excess -*[name of participant's neighbour] do you have peaches? – I do not have any – Take some!* We do not even measure how many he gave to me, how many I gave to him".

"It might not be doing this [performing exchanges] in his/her neighbourhood… it has some disadvantages, like f.ex. time, but we have hosted people who travel all over the world in this manner… it is clearly more money-saving (οικονομικό) for them to find through the already existing networks a lodging chance, instead of paying the expensive hotels, or even a cheap hotel, because if you add accomodation and food, the money is much".

"There are people who do not want to go to the grocer's and buy it. Because he is interested in who is cultivating it and how he cultivates it… because he is interested in who is producing it and with what meraki is producing it….Because someone is not interested to run from dawn to evening, to have a full pocket and tell you, that you speak English "Come, Miss, and teach English to my child". He can also say "Can you teach my child speak English and I can give you your needs in olives?". Why should he run from dawn to evening to acquire money? Why should he feel, if he has no money in his pocket, while he has orange trees, to feel that he cannot achieve what he wants, that he cannot offer his children what he wants, that he is not important? Because money has be used as a criterion? Why?"

"They are all people who already have been tired by the existing system and its function, those are the people who beyond the product itself, they are looking for a warm chat with another human, they are looking for trust, particularly with all those that we hear about on the issue of food etc. and if you want, they are the crazy people of the fellowship, those who search for the different, to have something else than your need itself for the product or service".

"They could do this if they have no euros… the other issue is… when you offer without [seeking] profit (αφιλοκερδώς), possibly the qualitative value of what you offer might be a bit better. If we recall the moments that we really felt very happy, it is very probable that we find that those have been moment where we offered… and they offered to us with this reason (λογική) of exchange, i.e. offering and exchange are little cousins. Those two can also fight with each other, i.e. if each one presupposes the other, there might be a break up. If the offering is done with necessary condition the exchange, then it is not an offering, it is named exchange… The network does not forbid to someone to offer without taking a reward…

Particularly in issues of high value, as it is health, nutrition, etc. it is not possible… there should be found another way for someone to cover his/her needs than having only monetary exchange…”

“The value of goods and services should be personalised and not to have a common unit of measurement, a currency that puts everything in the same condition. If this happened, then mutual exchange would be much easier, because there would not be any need for an exact system to measure exactly… and if this [he shows his mobile phone] has a value of 300 euros and I reveal to you that 10 people died, suicided in China, for this to be made… is its value 300 euros, or it is beyond any estimation? …and this is very real, it is not abstract… an example: knowledge you offer to a person, let’s say you teach a child, whose nature is to be a musician, to work with computers and you deviate it from its nature. This knowledge [computers] cannot be compared in terms of currency with teaching this child playing viola and making it happy…how will you compare those two services, if you do not integrate them into a framework of health, to see what health process, what you offer to the other person puts that person in?... If we adapt real needs and we measure the services provided compared with the real need of the population, and we kept aside the artificial needs…then we would probably see that the precision of the currency-measuring could have no position in a real society, in a real social web… If you enter the process of offering, you will not finally ask something which is useless to you… then with such an experimental model, we will also see something else: that our real needs are very few”.

“Let’s suppose… that there is the possibility with those virtual currencies for someone to be able to gather some currencies beside. Will not he/she enter again the process… of a transaction which he/she has no need for?... [this is] first. Second, isn’t created a power-like sense (εξουσιαστική αίσθηση)?… i.e. it is not classified according to the real need but according to the ability of someone to buy services. The exchange cannot be in any case measurable and comparative, i.e. the mutual exchange includes by its nature the haze in measurement. And why does it include this? Because, at the end of the day, what gives value to the exchange, is mental investment, sentimental investment of exchange (η ψυχική επένδυση, η συναισθηματική επένδυση της ανταλλαγής), i.e. finally the difference will be made if the one who exchanges, offers or takes, is made a bit happier or not, therefore, a bit more healthy… This is why I do not believe in the creation of exchange currencies… they help for sure and there has

been a need of some people to do this, and numerous people might have surely been benefited by virtual currencies of such type, or alternative currencies. However, beyond this, there is the deeper notion of exchange and offering… if the services cannot be measured in relation to the real needs, it cannot have its value as well, however estimated, overestimated or underestimated might be by something else. It is the same logic by which someone becomes happy because you offered him a book… and the real need in comparison with how this contributes to the evolution of a human… this type of health, i.e. freedom… Not all things can be measured with the same currency, and it is one reason that in Western societies, where there exists in abundance the exchange based on currency units, it is probable that we have people who have lost very much their spiritual evolution, because there is a mental fixation and the continuous measurement of things based on currency value but it is not given their real value on another level".

7.2.3 Traditional varieties exchange networks: Why do not you sell the seeds, even at low price?

We know from mainstream economy that rare varieties with stamina to climate weirdness are well sold and possibly patented for their special characteristics. Then, all those people from the schemes who try to save traditional varieties might receive a huge reward in official currency if they sold their seeds to companies who trade varieties. Instead, they just give them for free or within loose arrangements of exchange that do not equalise the mainstream market value of each seed. This is why I picked up this question to ask the scheme members:

"People usually do not return seeds. They either forget them as time goes by…or…. One of the reasons is that they get into the mentality of dispersion in everyday routine… there is lost the organic relation with, let' say [a name of a cultivator is mentioned]… and it is dispersed". The other member of the group intervenes to point out that she asked people not to bring back the new seeds, because they did not take caution not to cultivate varieties of the same plant in the same land space. "It has entered the rationality of "collection", I am doing a stamp collection, a paper napkin collection… a seeds collection, to have as many as possible out of them… The peasants (γεωργοί) know very well not to mix it [the seeds], and if they do… they

know afterwards how to clear it up. However, in this case we have also lost the peasants and they are all amateurs, and I am afraid that those varieties with those networks, instead of being saved, will be lost…. It is better to have some people to cultivate, no more than ten… for hundreds of years, there has been isolation. This isolation has now be lost… [in old times each one] might introduce something new, but it was done slowly…… my obsession is that if the varieties mix, you will not have any variety at all".

An interviewee gives traditional seeds for free "because I have taken it for free… because I do not want to sell it, I think that it must go from hand to hand without economic charges".

Quoted by an interviewee and attributed to another veteran cultivator: "Guard the seeds… like your eyes"

An old cultivator and peasant "I give the seeds for free so that they are dispersed and the old seed is preserved by other peasants too… because in old times we had good varieties, and I have kept good varieties, tasty varieties, good-looking and productive… those three things I paid attention to… What to do with them, take them with me? With pleasure I give them (και χαλάλι τους)".

"Since old times, the seeds between producers were free, and then, what am I going to gain if I get a penny (μια δραχμή) from the seeds… in other words, we were exchanging seeds without money and we continue in this way… the seed either it is few for me or many, the work is the same. Instead of throwing it away, I give it to [scheme name] for free and [the scheme name] gives it for free".

"First we believe that seeds should be given for free, it is something given to us by nature for free and we should give them for free. However, if we accepted the temptation to sell them, we would give a foothold to those who… do not want us to give them for free… There is not among our aims to gain in terms of money, we gain many things… we gain joy. In our times, working from dawn to evening gaining money, you do not gain it [joy]… We gain in feelings, we gain in love"

"If many people follow, this is the gain. The more varieties exist, this is the pesticide for pests… With the pesticides we disperse a poison all over the planet … which poison through waters comes up again".

"Those who give us the money will have then demands, one reason is this [for not selling]…. Another reason is that the seed cannot have a price (δεν κοστολογείται), we do not think that we can price the seed. It was offered for free and we continue to

give it for free. We want to help people to become free… by producing their food. The basic link of freedom and self-determination is seed".

"I will never do this. Because if everyone did this, then community would be built on other bases, it would not be a community, it would be an economic community. The aim is to offer at last something which is free (Το ζητούμενο είναι να προσφέρεις επιτέλους κάτι που να είναι δωρεάν)". To my question "do you think that the community of [the scheme name] is not an economic one?" she replied "It is economic because it has expenses… [the scheme name] is an exchange that has a return in another way… of course we have cases where we have people who plunge in and take so many seeds that they will never sow them…It is not negative for the community to save (κάνει οικονομία). They save! And actually they try with many means to find ways, either donators, or other ways so that they can have some things, as a support. This is very normal. Just like all producers support with their produce the part of catering [of the fair]... I do not consider it [this activity] economic... why should everything be measured with money? Why "i gave you this, you must give me the correponding payment"? i do not understand this".

7.2.4. Free bazaars and networks: Why people would bother to wait and search for someone to take the item they do not need (much more: to transfer the item to the place of the bazaar) instead of selling it for euros or just dispose it into the garbage bin?

When I started the research, I was thinking that the easiest way of transaction is to give away things, to give stuff for free. Because, not asking for a reward or a remuneration, facilitates the transaction a lot, given that the parties involved do not need to arrange the satisfaction of needs of both. However, after a while of observation and participation, I realised that giving away is complicated and difficult, as well. You need to store the stuff even for long time instead of just throwing it to the rubbish bin. You also need, once you are in a scheme or in a free bazaar, to avoid just giving everything to a person you know, you have made friends with or you think is better person than another. You need to transfer the stuff, sometimes to long distances, to give them away through the scheme. You need to keep everything tidy and in good condition, while you do not need to worry about that if you just throw

them away. Then, I asked this question to the participants, to see what they will tell me about all those problems:

“There are cases where this holds, and cases where this is not the optimum solution. If I have a sofa for long time and I cannot give it away, then I will bring it down to the garbage bin. And this is written in the announcements: “Guy, I want to get rid of the old sofa till Monday, that my new sofa will be here”. The question is when this intermediate phase exists, then why shouldn’t this happen?... in cases where you have this time lag till Monday… My television, which was an old television since 1970s… 1980s… I am telling you, they took it within an hour!... and actually, they did not even want me to help them to move it… then, I did not even need to transfer it downstairs [to the garbage bin]. In some cases it is a bargain (συμφέρει), in other cases it is not. The question is, when it is a bargain, why should it end up in… [garbage]? and even worse: why shouldn’t be known to the one who will anyway will get it downstairs, because one doesn’t know…the issue is: do we have the choice? … how will we manage the cost of a thing and how will we manage our behaviour towards our co-humans and to our environment?...”

“apart from that, I do not think, it will be sold… it will not worth it… someone will not want to sell it because the price will be low and there will enter questions, like “is it in good condition?”.

“In the recycle bin, it will also go to garbage. It will be recycled, but you do not give it a second life chance (δεύτερη ευκαιρία ζωής)… while, I will take it, even if it is broken, and I will fix it, I have the knowledge, let’s say, the artistic one, I will fix it and I will use it… either to use it or to keep it at my place as decoration… the other thing will be recycled, it will become garbage, it will be produced from scratch, while this one, you give it a second life chance, before you destroy it. Then, why shouldn’t this happen?... if something is given for free, the member mentions it “it has this flaw” and the other person knows about it”.

CHAPTER 8: RESEARCH FINDINGS III – PARTICIPATORY OBSERVATION

The less a theorist knows, the safest his position is, because he does not risk having his wings cut by various annoying details.
André Martinet, 1972[1]

8.1. Theory through action

Research participants rarely mention any literature, much less any specific theory they think their activity is based on. An exception to that is the Athens Time Bank, where they use Hazel Henderson's economy cake theory[2] not only to present their ideas to a researcher, but basically to describe the entire scheme's mentality during the members' training. However, schemes generally prefer not to mention writers and tend to create their own texts and discourse. This does not mean that individuals when discussing with the researcher might not recommend a book, or a scheme-model they know or even a TV documentary they think is relevant to their own point of view. But these cases are rare, and each individual prefers to express his/her own views, instead of referring to the X or Y author/intellectual.

This is not negative at all, in the sense that it shows that very few texts outside the scheme are really expressing what the scheme participants want to say and do. It also shows that scheme members are well confident within their teams to explore their own views – texts published by the schemes as well as scheme rules do reveal the groups' long discussions, study and a focus on action and practicality, rather than staying too much on theoretical approaches. They are even quite flexible, especially through time, concerning terms. As a participant said concerning terminology "…things change names…it is not unequivocal and it changes…I promise you that in ten years it will have been changed… and in two years from now it will mean a different thing without changing words".

Therefore, apart from focusing on words, research through observation and observation by participation also focuses on action. For example, when people in a

[1] As translated from Martinet (1985), p. 250.
[2] Henderson's picture of economic cake can be found at Henderson, H. (1996), p. 58. Henderson believes that major part of the economy and actually its base layers are nature and non-monetary economy, while monetary economy is the upper layer and the international financial structures are just the cake's icing. In Athens Time Bank there is also widely used Henderson's idea of "love economy", e.g. non-monetary economy; it can also be found in Henderson, H. (1996), p. 183, but actually its full presentation is well dispersed in the entire book.

scheme use time as a measure for their work, they do enable members to spend their time in an equal manner, i.e. no-one in a Time Bank is able or even allowed to dispose of its time at the expense of him/herself or others. When people permit someone to acquire necessities by parallel currency without the use of official currency, they might keep their euros, or their nutrition, or even their social status (which is maintained by not borrowing official currency for petty purchases) out of the conventional market. Another example: in traditional seeds exchange groups and networks, people do possess material and know-how which is essential in food production and keep it outside conventional market but under specific status or space of transaction: if one wants to trade traditional vegetable seeds, one has the options either to acquire some for free, if available, or to provide other traditional seeds.

The above seem to differentiate the transactions from mainstream market and economy not only in terms of rules and principles, but also in terms of space and time. Particularly about the latter, obligations expand in time following scheme members' ability to offer work or goods whenever they can, or even following nature's seasonal cycles. Even in parallel currency schemes, where one would see a structure closer to mainstream economy, interest payments do not exist[1] and actually, the credit of one member is another member's debt, which means that a) debt is necessary for the scheme to work but also that b) overall debt does not exceed credit.

On the other hand, when scheme participants mention that the environment is important and they want to protect it by, for example, re-using the items the free-network members do not need anymore, instead of selling them for euro currency, they do keep environment out of transaction (while re-cycling in a factory would not do this, in fact it is possible that re-cycling in a factory is as harmful as using natural resources for first time) and they participate in the network to transact on items they would not be economically active about, in normal terms.

Weiner's position[2] explains, too, activity which makes the "valuable" (like vegetable genetic material) to enter the transaction, but not in market terms, or in market terms that are totally different from free market terms. That means, people prioritise things and activities in ways which are different from those used for prioritisation in conventional market(s). Or, even if they make this priority same as in

[1] To be specific, nominal interest rate is zero. Whether there is difference between nominal and actual interest rate and whether this can happen, is a question to be answered.
[2] Weiner, A. (1992).

conventional market (traditional wheat and corn seeds are again a good example: both conventional market and exchange networks perceive the seeds to be of great value), they do set a different way of transaction rules when it comes to the same, highly-valued items.

Then, all those scheme participants use different techniques and actually *they do combine several techniques in order to achieve their umbrella aim* (keep the most valuable out of transaction, or create another economic space more consistent than the conventional one, or do something beyond what is imposed on them by capitalist market rules) *and the aims under this principal one:*

I) they decide that *some things are out of transaction at all* (any type of transaction included, like gift-giving). So, the things are tagged as "priceless". Environment is considered to be priceless in this case. Human survival (particularly, right to food) is considered to be priceless, too.

II) they decide to *give for free things* (quite opposite to the previous technique, but quite interesting how both techniques might lead to same result) that are the most valuable (human time, knowledge and know-how or traditional fruit seeds) or the least valuable (used clothes, shoes, etc in a swishing party). So, the price in this case is zero while value attributed to transacted things might vary!

III) They *create several types of markets along or outside or in contradiction with the main market type,* which is the free/self-regulating market as we know it in conventional economy. In this case, they create rules for transacting on one item only (like traditional seeds exchange networks and groups); or, they set another measure of value/equivalence (like Time Banks); or, they set new rules for transacting, like exchange with no measure (like exchange without rate, free exchange or without time limit for reciprocation, for example, in free bazaars); or, they set new rules for transacting with measure units and even money, but they do create measure units and money as they wish (like parallel currencies).

That a market may exist without prices or without price fluctuation but with set and fixed prices or even without the conventional supply-demand-price mechanism as we know *it is not a path-breaking option* – in other times and places (in Greece, too), markets were structured in several ways. In other words, self-

regulating/free market is one type of market only among many[1]. In addition, price as we know it in conventional economics is the offspring of value within the framework of a specific viewing and historical moment and position of the viewing person (middle/bourgeois class authors of 18th and 19th centuries in Western Europe). The same holds for exchange – we define exchange as the mainstream economics do – but it has not been everywhere and always like this[2].

IV) *They seem to create economies in parallel with the conventional one*. For example, Peliti network has created niches of traditional seeds preservation, cultivation, info-dispersion and exchange, which now exist and act throughout the country. They follow the same transaction patterns as Peliti network, they might participate in Peliti's feasts or not (or just send some "delegates" with seeds, speeches/theory and information!) but they surely transfer the entire idea and structure throughout the country, parallel to the conventional market of seeds provided in stores. Those economies comprise more than the transaction itself: it is cultivation, experimentation (for example, to see which varieties will survive in areas where they have not been traditional so far), creation of new household production and nutritional customs, education of adults and (particularly) children in those customs, etc.

V) *They seem to attempt a re-definition of the context within which economic activity is taking place*. Peliti network, for example, enables people from all over the country to exchange traditional varieties at the mailing cost only. This means that in "economic" terms it is not "efficient" for cultivators but also for any other person to travel to the other side of the country to attend a fair or to volunteer for the network. Nevertheless, the Peliti annual fair as well as all other fairs have hundreds of visitors, cultivators and volunteers (who all spend hundreds of euros to cover their travel expenses). The work that each fair requires is of enormous volume but everyone can work or rest, eat or dance, wander around or talk with friends, as they like. So, the exchange of traditional seeds seems reversed as a transaction: it is officially the scope and the pretext of the gathering, but actually it arrives to be the result of it: *the*

[1] See Neale, Walter C. (1957).
[2] See Arensberg et al (1957).

exchange is not done because this is the most "efficient" way[1]*, but because this is the best way to be done*. The criteria for the "best" might depend on the people who are involved, on the social interaction among friends and strangers as well as on what the people involved want to experience in this space: they seek the realisation of values which do not exist in conventional economy, or they create a living example, even for just a day, of how it would be when many people can survive together without conventional economic constraints.

However, as a research participant has told me (and he had already assured me of his anti-capitalist ideology), it is not possible to be completely unconnected to the mainstream economy. I have not either any impression that the scheme participants' aim is to disconnect from the main economy or to create closed circles of transactions beyond the mainstream. Even if their activity or discourse might appear like a cracking to a commonly-shared view about economic and monetary structures, they are not conflictual at all and they usually avoid claiming so about themselves. Nevertheless, the dissidence takes place de facto, which integrates the notion of "crack" – it is not fight nor struggle at all, but it works towards challenging the conventional economic structures.

Why do I bother to discuss all the above about value and its main role in exchange? Why do I abstain so quickly from the mainstream value theories, once they do not fit my case studies, instead of trying hard to apply the theories on reality? What is this that makes the scheme participants' views on value (and on market, money, exchange, etc) important to the researcher to the extent that their own views are equally discussed as conventional academic literature?

It is because, each scientific method is developed by the dominant group in the previous period and that still influences the formation of the new system of thought of the new dominant group[2]. So, it is possible that academic thought is connected to the previous and modern dominant groups than to any other's views. Clearly, this is not enough for understanding economic events. Instead, we need, as Niebyl proposes, a) to grow conscious of the socio-economics bases of our value judgments, b) to recognise the value bases in the explanations of particular events offered to us and finally c) to construct a theory of value by transcending the limited boundaries of a

[1] An important critical view on the "efficiency" principle that runs through economic science is presented in Goerner, S. et al (2010). This critique states that "efficiency" might not be the only principle a sustainable economy should seek.
[2] Niebyl, Karl (1940), p. 209.

particular social group[1]. If we cannot do all those three with a degree of certainty, we can at least pay attention to several groups' views and discuss the value judgments that emerge here and there; and, we can have in mind that if you cannot avoid your positionality, you can at least avoid your position to appear as the only one.

8.2. Environmental awareness & good life

Most of the initiatives studied in this project do have an explicit environment-friendly character, because this is either their main scope or one of the aims targeted through the scheme activity. Another common characteristic is that most schemes do provide a space for "good life" to their members. This happens through an interconnected pattern of actions: for example, the scheme's feast is not a chance for people to gather and meet each other in order to be able to transact afterwards; *the feast is the transaction*, around of which several other activities take place, like children education, or dancing, or common lunch for all, etc. Therefore, the social character of economic activity is accepted and promoted as such. At the same time, economic activity becomes itself part of people's quality of life and it is not an action separated from the latter (life and quality), much less is it the "sacrifice" required to obtain quality of/and life.

Of course, one can discern the differences among schemes. Those which are more business-oriented tend to forget the above or at least, they seem not to have "good life" as their immediate concern. The same schemes usually tend to see environmental issues as parallel or connected to their main scope, but not as their principal aim.

Peliti and the networks or groups also oriented to the preservation of traditional varieties organize and participate in several fairs related to ecology and nature preservation that are held in Greece throughout the year. However, the most important fair is the annual one, organised by Peliti themselves in spring, the first Saturday after Easter. The fair lasts one day and attracts hundreds of cultivators and volunteers and thousands[2] of visitors from all over the country but also from abroad.

---

[1] Niebyl, Karl (1940), p. 210.

[2] The three annual fairs of Peliti where I was present, have attracted approximately 1200 (2009), 2500 (2010) and 3200 (2011) visitors in just one day.

The fair is organised around the exchange of traditional varieties of plants and domestic animals and it includes an entire day with live music, speeches, dance and a common lunch for all. Attending the fair and all the activities is free, including the common lunch. Visitors can take traditional plant seeds for free and without obligation to give anything in return, after, of course, the cultivators have exchanged the varieties among themselves[1]. The fair is being organised on a volunteer basis, and most volunteers gather some days in advance to help with the arrangement of the place, the preparation of food and the packing of the traditional seeds provided by cultivators for the fair. The food is prepared with ingredients offered by the scheme participants, therefore it is traditionally produced[2] as well.

Following the model of the annual Peliti fair, there are organised several fairs throughout Greece, where people gather, have fun and exchange traditional varieties. The fairs are organised by the local groups of traditional farmers, either as special events or as part of the schedule of major events that might last for more than one day.

On the other hand, most free-exchange bazaars are organised in several neighbourhoods of Greater Athens area, but also in many other cities of Greece for an afternoon or a day, usually combined with other activities (like kitchen collectives[3], handicraft fairs, etc). Moreover, the free bazaars and networks are seeing their activities as belonging to a general, anti-consumerist mentality, where the "old, used stuff" is not only useful but actually it is the starting point for creation.

Skoros bazaar offers free workshops for sewing and altering clothes[4], but they also organise several fairs to enhance the general mentality where the free bazaar stems from. A big fair was held in late May 2010 and it was dedicated to children: it

---

[1] A new system for the exchange has been introduced at the Peliti fair in 2011: exchange starts earlier during the day and all, cultivators and visitors, exchange at the same time, but they are given five vouchers (for free) so that they can exchange them for seeds or little plants. Therefore, cultivators, who usually come to the fair earlier than the visitors, may have better access to seeds but during the fair time, all have equal access to the seeds offered. The vouchers have been introduced so that people who are first in front of the cultivators' booths can get no more seeds than those who are after them.

[2] Traditional agriculture is something which is promoted through Peliti in contrast to the idea of "organic farming". Traditional agriculture does not only include traditional varieties of plants and traditional methods of farming, but it also excludes pesticides and fertilisers of any kind (so, organic pesticides and fertilisers are also excluded and the use of animal dung is under severe debate) and the excessive use of water resources. Of course, the food produced that way is more than delicious.

[3] A kitchen collective (συλλογική κουζίνα) is a gathering where people cook food together and have common lunch or dinner. Some kitchen collectives in Athens are regular (Skoros holds one every Friday evening), but several occasional free bazaars tend to include a kitchen collective as well.

[4] The "motto" of the activities is well summarised in a Skoros sticker where it is stated that "*Free bazaars and sewing kill "fashion" and they are fun" [Τα χαριστικά παζάρια και το ράψιμο σκοτώνουν τη «μόδα» και έχουν πλάκα]*.

included, apart from clothes, toys and books[1], artistic and creative workshops for children, theatre and story-telling performances, face-painting, etc. Creativity, then, is well praised within the free bazaars and networks and many people are encouraged through organised workshops or free advice by the scheme members to alter the clothes and other stuff they take through the schemes or to create new things; some of the creations are really very elaborated or artistic and members do offer for free many of those creations to the other members of the scheme.

This attitude is common to all free bazaars, permanent or not, because they are never held separated from other activities, which are productive directly (through creation of things) or indirectly (through educational workshops), or from activities that are not "useful" or "productive" at first sight: art performances and concerts, movie shows, assemblies for discussing issues, etc. Therefore, the free bazaar is the space or the pretext of the gathering or is just one activity among the rest.

The free networks, given that their space is virtual, have not such a global activity scope, but they, nevertheless, do foster gatherings or even free bazaars (for example, Charise-to network organises free bazaars in Thessaloniki, Dosse-Pare has organised several meetings for exchange and their gathering in mid-May 2011 has been dedicated to the "creators", i.e. to the people who create new stuff by using things offered for free through the network). Swishing parties, on the other hand, are what their name says: parties where people swap clothes and accessories; soft drinks are offered, while there is music, dance, and several activities and happenings that will amuse the party guests and create a friendly atmosphere while the latter are exchanging or seeking expert advice about making alterations to the newly acquired clothes.

As for the parallel currencies, the Time Bank of Athens understand their activity as a contribution to the "love economy" which is directly connected to "what nature gives to us", e.g. the first layer of the economy cake. Far from Athens, the Local Alternative Unit of Magnesía has the use of local resources as one of its main aims. However, the environmental issues are not directly mentioned by the scheme as such, although there are members of this network who consider environmental issues as being of highest importance.

[1] At this "children's weekend", there have been offered for free new-unused clothes that had been the stock of a store which was closed down.

Sui generis schemes seem to be also environmentally aware: the Money Back System is supposed to induce people to use mass transportation and do their shopping at local companies, but due to the non-provision of data, we cannot know whether this aim has bee achieved so far. The artistic collective LATHOS work on open source technologies concerning water and renewable energy management with a clear focus on making a household well integrated into its natural environment.

My experience from the bazaars (open markets) of the Exchange Network of Chania is also very interesting. Music is all around, and usually a buffet dinner or lunch is organised with offerings from members and possibly visitors. In some bazaars, live music concerts, acrobatics performances, story-telling, etc are also organised during or just after the bazaar is over. The most important is that kids are really having a good time during the bazaars, either because they enjoy the big school playground (the bazaars are hosted within school premises) or because special play and educational activities have been prepared by teachers who are scheme members. Same for the bazaars of the Rethymnon Exchange Network Rodia: children are cherished and there are special activities for them in case they get bored with playing in the playground.

Recycling and re-use within all schemes (of any type) is taking place, not only because people dispose used stuff through the schemes; but also because, given that what they receive is not in official currency, they probably cannot afford to buy without limits raw materials from the mainstream economy. Then, everything can be re-used, from old jars for bottling home made jam, to old clothes for creating a rack-carpet. Unfortunately, it was impossible within the framework of this project to study thoroughly the environmental aspects of this activity in Greece. We know already from literature that parallel currencies are well defended by academics[1] as environment-friendly. It would be very interesting to investigate this same question not only for greek parallel currencies, but also for all types of schemes.

This would be interesting for one more reason: consumerism might be a habit that we, people, cannot discard as easily as we would wish. Then, I have experienced but I have also received comments by scheme coordinators and scheme members, that people, once they do not face the official currency “barrier”, i.e. they are “not short of money” any more, they ravage what they can take or buy through schemes, what they

[1] See chapter 2, section 2.1.

always wanted to do with official currency, but they did not have the chance to. I have seen people filling-up big bags during free bazaars, even if they have no chance given the place and conditions, to try the clothes they take or to consider whether they really need to take everything they fancy.

8.3. Structures and economic behaviour without official currency

The issue of consumerism being suppressed and finally released through the schemes and how this might work has not been mentioned above without a purpose. The contradiction of the schemes concerning consumerism and re-use or recycling is evident: people are trained to re-use within the schemes, but they are also free now to acquire things they could not acquire because of lack of official cash or "thriftiness" concerning official currency. Buying a used thing of course is another type of consumerism than buying a new thing while unused similar stuff is forgotten in closets and boxes.

Personally, I do not consider it to be a bad thing that people who could not afford to have a fancy dress or one more pair of shoes, can now satisfy their need and/or desire. Issues arise on how this need is being covered, I mean, whether the thing disposed within a scheme should be there at all, what has been the burdens to humans and nature for its production and whether this disposition reproduces the consumerist lifestyles which have been a common ground the last decades. However, I can say that I understand every person's desire to have beautiful things around her/him, to have one more colourful scarf and, if she/he is a kid, to have one more toy to play with. Then, I cannot but admit that this "abundance", this chance to have this little, funny thing you were looking at a shop-window with frustration, might be a good thing, at least it can free them from the idea that everything is scarce.

However, there is a point here where the lifestyle ends: buying in official currency and disposing in parallel currency or in a barter transaction, or for free, is not a sustainable economic activity in financial terms. I mean, it is impossible to renew the used stuff every week in free bazaars and exchange schemes. Even in the open markets/bazaars of the Exchange Network of Chania, the used stuff seemed to become less and less in numbers and in offerings as time went by since January 2012, when I started attending the bazaars regularly.

That means, if people in the schemes do not produce new stuff, either by producing from scratch or by re-using and altering the stuff they acquire without official currency, the needs and desires for new stuff will not be met through the schemes. To meet those needs and desires through the schemes would need other arrangements: first, reward for human work cannot be anymore hidden under “what the market says” – this does not mean that schemes will be necessarily the workers’/producers’ heaven, but that they can be a space where injustice will be more evident and concrete than in mainstream economy; second, raw materials need to keep simple and nature-friendly: if you cut now all herb’s leaves to sell at the open market for parallel currency, you will have nothing to sell in the next bazaar. And the important thing is that even if you do this for the mountain’s herbs, that will be worse: you cannot afford paying in official currency to travel too far to find new wild harvest, if you destroy the local herb plains.

Suddenly, the limits become too many within the economy without official currency: nature, space, time, raw materials, human effort. There is no possibility to have now very cheap clothes made in a faraway country by workers paid two dollars per day, nor is there any luxury of plundering gardens, fields and mountains to have “big production”, because there is no big market, but only the one around you, the one who accepts a local currency or the one which accepts that you reward them in kind after a while.

I am not sure how people within the schemes will react to those structural limits if time goes by. Maybe some of them are not really happy with this and they will stop participating with the fervour they had when each scheme started. Maybe some others will adapt to the new conditions and learn to use the resources they really have within the scheme. What is important: this economic activity re-raises the issue of the limitations in economic activity, in a context of a mainstream economy where the main argument is “there are no limits”.

In that sense, it might be important that all those schemes create new economic structures and people voluntarily try themselves by testing whether and how they can adapt to limitations that they did not have before, under the condition, of course, that they had official currency at hand. The fact that even very wealthy

people participate in the schemes[1] shows that purchasing power issues are not the only reason for getting into this adaptation process.

The issue of the structures changing economic behaviours is important for one more reason. During my research and through my research notes, as I was writing everything I could remember from my observations, I realised that I was writing many many negative things. Most of them were not "systemic failures" of the schemes but behaviours I was considering as bad or negative by people who participate in the schemes. Usually, those behaviours were not addressed to me, and this was interesting, as they treated the researcher in a different way, than their colleagues in the scheme. I could not stop from taking notes from the bad behaviour within a scheme and as I was writing all this, I was thinking that I had become too much of a gossiper and that all this information is completely irrelevant to the project.

After a while, and after reading my notes again and again, I realised that it is not irrelevant at all. People, no matter how progressive, alternative, visionary or path-breaking might be, still remain human with their qualities and with their flaws. A person might not like his/her colleague at the scheme for any reason, and actually, he/she has this right not to like someone. The question I was asking at the end, as an economist, was: what happened at the end of the day, with the transactions which were supposed to take place within the scheme? All this behaviour that revealed several attitudes by some people, did that prevent the transactions from taking place as they should? Was the other person able to get what she/he needed even if there was someone in the scheme gossiping negatively about her? Yes, that person was able to cover a need and/or a desire no matter what the view by another person might be.

Then, the scheme had achieved its aim, i.e. to make the transaction possible fulfilling some conditions of dignity for all people involved. Therefore, what the schemes might seek might be a set of ways to make transactions possible, so that people cover needs and desires, without suffering attacks to their dignity. I mean, it is not the schemes' aim to make people better humans[2], but to enable humans to live

[1] This is not only a finding from observation and free discussions with scheme members and coordinators. The results from the questionnaire survey showed that all economic groups participate in this activity.

[2] Bad behaviours exist in the schemes, just like in all parts of society. Whenever those behaviours get out of some decent limits, then this coincides with systemic problems of the scheme itself. This might not have only a connection with economic rules and how transactions are done, but also with the decision-making process of the scheme, the democratic or undemocratic structure of the scheme, the decline of assembly attendance, etc.

better, even if they live all together (perhaps because they want to live all together) and some of them are not really kind people or have attitudes which could not be thought of as very social. To the contrary, the mainstream economy makes even the best of people to behave like bad ones: if you have not enough cash at hand, you will buy that T-shirt for just one coin, although you know that it has been made by a badly-paid worker in the other side of the globe, at the expense of that worker's life and by degrading natural resources

I do not want to present the schemes where the official currency is not used, as the perfect economic spaces. Quite the opposite, there are many problems there too[1]: some of the problems originate in the pressure those economic spaces receive from mainstream economy, but other problems originate from a scheme's systemic deficiencies – which means that even in a non-capitalist framework this same structure could lead to the same problem. However, it seems that there are some good features in them, giving hints on what the potential of those structures might be for making our economies better.

8.4. Women's involvement

A major observation concerning the schemes, of all types, is the involvement of women, as members but also as founders, coordinators and decision-makers. Women participate massively in those economic spaces where the official currency does not exist and they also seem very happy for this[2]. Actually, this involvement is a major question, because the schemes require a lot of time for people to make transactions, attend assemblies, organise events, resolve conflicts, tackle with practical problems etc and women in Greece are usually nothing but time-free. We have no time-use surveys yet to see how this affects the everyday life of women and of their families, so I cannot write more about that.

Moreover, the women who participate or appear to visit the schemes belong to all ages and their social background varies. What might be linking all those women to decide and get involved with the schemes?

[1] See for this, Sotiropoulou, I. (2012d).
[2] For further detailed information, see Sotiropoulou, I. (2012b).

A first explanation might be that women are very experienced in the non-monetary economy, exactly because they live in a patriarchal society, where they are supposed to manage the domestic production space, where monetary transactions do not take place. Then, the emergence of schemes gave them a public space to perform what they already know to do well, and manage economic activity, possibly without the restrictions of patriarchal capitalism or capitalist patriarchy. Unfortunately, there is no possibility of investigating more onto this direction within this project.

What is in question here, is that women in the public space working with men and children and elders on different economic structures is something meaningful, in the sense that it cannot be a coincidence and it would need further research to understand what those meanings might be for women and for their social circles. Moreover, I think that it could be linked, in a future research project, to Peterson's approach on economic crisis as a crisis of social reproduction as such[1]. Then, women, who participate vastly in social reproduction, both the one expressed in money and the one which is beyond any monetary appreciation, undertake the initiative, role, responsibility or even burden to solve the crisis to best of their ability.

8.5. A final point from research notes[2]

It might be something that exceeds the scope of this project, but I think it might add to the discussion of what all those people in the schemes are really doing. There is the question that all the above observations and comments might be hints that people are struggling about things which are more than mere economic structures. I mean, I study transaction modes, therefore my own focus is on economic structures, but it is not sure that this is necessarily the participants' focus.

Then, it might be that this is a cultural struggle in general, not only an economic one. It is not a coincidence that people from the schemes do not seem to miss the drachma currency, nor do they mention it at all in their discourse. I do not ask about it either, especially because it never comes up in the discussions. Then, it is not a struggle connected to the specific official currency of the moment and its replacement by another currency of similar type.

[1] Peterson, V.S.(1997, 2010).
[2] See, Sotiropoulou, I. (2012f).

If this explanation holds even partially, then it is also well fit into the idea that all those transaction modes I am studying are not something new and weird, but they existed, perhaps far from the academic spaces and from the mass media, along with the culture(s) which were also far from publicity. We do not know much about the culture(s) which are connected to those transaction modes either. We can see only some elements out of them, like: women in public space talking and deciding about the economy, children playing around, work on the earth and handicrafts being cherished, fairs and feasts organised by the community and reversal of the economistic attitude, i.e. nature, humans, collective and good life being in first priority instead of utility and profit-seeking.

Then the transaction modes are the tools, or some of the tools, for the people to access this type of culture(s), not vice versa. I mean, it seems to me that the economy and material production are again under negotiation concerning their role and part in everyday life. It is too early to reach any conclusions and even this observation might be completely wrong or biased that it would be better to wait for time and/or other researchers to check this question out.

CHAPTER 9: CONCLUSIONS

9.1. Conclusions related to the research questions and hypotheses

9.1.1. There is no doubt that this activity, i.e. the transactions performed without the use of official currency and beyond a family or friendship framework, belongs to the economic discipline, as a subject-matter. Measurement difficulties and different perceptions about quantity, measurement and time are not reasons to exclude this activity from economic research. Quite the contrary, economics might be enriched by studying this activity; the connection of economic to everyday life can thus be enhanced, as this activity is well placed in grassroots spaces.

Using a combination of methods and interdisciplinary experience, which exist in social sciences in general, proved to be useful in terms of approaching such a peculiar research topic. Chapter three (3) concerning the theoretical arguments used to study this activity, showed that there is a lot of economic knowledge “hidden” or “forgotten” in social sciences and economics need to take advantage of the opportunities this subject-matter offers to explore this knowledge.

9.1.2. Setting a different agenda from the mainstream economy, the scheme members as individuals and as collectives, show that the notions of market and economy we know from economic textbooks are just one possibility among many. They insist in organising bazaars and open markets in different ways and what cannot be denied, is that no matter any deficiencies, the economic activity is not perceived as separated from the rest social activity of people. Contrary to the mainstream idea that the market and the economy can be independent from society, it seems that within the schemes social and economic activities cannot be distinguished and that scheme members have chosen this to happen in purpose. This makes achievements and failures of the schemes to be very evident, but on the other hand, all achievements and failures appear to be within the reach of the schemes themselves. Whether successful features will evolve and problems will be resolved is too early to know; however, it seems that the people who participate in the schemes are not completely disempowered as people in mainstream economy during times of economic upheaval.

Within this framework, the questions whether the schemes are separate economies or markets prove to be a matter of definition and history. We now know that there have been several types of markets and several types of economies. It is not of course, evident that we can have separated economies[1], but it seems that we can have at least well-defined economic spaces where rules might differ from space to space. A market can exist without money in its typical form, and an economy can also exist without the economists being able to measure in official currency. Obligatory or instant payments are not the main rule and reciprocity can exist in many different arrangements involving long distances in time and space.

This creates already many questions about how to define values and how to price things and human effort, whenever it is possible to be priced. The use of zero price in many cases where the mainstream economy attributes a high price shows that zero price can be still efficient and socially fruitful, depending on the context it is used in. The loose nature of obligations in many cases and the cyclical nature of paying-back, respecting natural and human cycles, both show that economics needs to explore new ways to solve problems like balancing of offers and production procedures. Therefore, reciprocity is put into a new framework where several aspects need to be taken into account apart from a "determined" value of the traded goods and services.

9.1.3. The issue of value has been one of the most difficult this dissertation had to tackle with. It was not possible to reach any definite conclusions but at the same time, it has been possible to reach some point where it seems that the issue of values, or the space where economic values are agreed, is really a research field with more to offer to economics. Transacting without official currency revived all those questions which seemed to have been more or less agreed, if not solved. Through non-mainstream transaction modes people show clearly that they prefer other valuing processes and other valuing results than the mainstream economy, or at least, they try to challenge mainstream valuings and struggle in support to their own perceptions of value. Zero price proved clearly that it does not mean zero value; quite the contrary, zero price revealed various challenging valuations which prices in mainstream economy hide or impede.

[1] I am rather with the view that the economy is a set of intertwined spaces where there can be no absolute barriers between one space and another. Sotiropoulou, I (2012c).

The collective nature of this challenge is the most important feature. On the one hand, it seems to follow the typical struggle pattern, of social groups fighting collectively against choices imposed by structures well beyond their influence. On the other hand, the issues of class, gender, educational background, property rights, are open and seem to be re-arranged in ways well different from usual class-struggle. This does not mean that there is no class struggle but that we need to investigate more to see how class and other hierarchy axes affect economic activity without official currency.

We really do not know what happens with the value of stuff and the value of the currency. To me, if I had to choose a position, I would stand by the ideas of Annette Weiner and the other anthropologists (see for this chapter three) that people transact for political economic reasons and not for economic reasons (as mainstream economy wants them, picturing them as if they do not live in society or within any collective arrangements). Collective viewings of value can be a useful framework which permits, as a descriptive tool, to integrate the idea of collective struggle in perceiving value and values and in up-valuing what mainstream market underestimates. The people in the schemes but also outside the schemes are well aware that they cannot as individuals affect valuings, but on the other hand, they also understand that human work or effort is not the only criterion of value, and nature can have value for humans without the latter being able to estimate any possible amount of labour to create nature or to restore it to its previous uncontaminated condition.

Obviously, we are in front of a struggle about value that has not been set straight and clear yet, but the very first elements of this struggle we can still trace and study. It seems that the economic space where an action or a thing circulates is important for establishing the rules of valuing this action or thing. This same space is important for enabling us to see whether those collective viewings of value can co-exist with the mainstream ones.

In those economic spaces, the fetish of measurement is well put in its proper place: people count and measure whenever they think it is appropriate, possible, effective and according to the purpose of the transaction, not vice versa. Lack of measurement is not a problem, over-measuring everything is, i.e. mis-valuing created by over-measuring is the major issue.

This observation can also explain the problems of equalising the value of services. In other words, it might not be an equalisation of values, because this would

mean that people are accepting the equalisation of values which already exist in mainstream economy. It might be an equalisation of people, or the idea that reproduction effort is for people not for labour's reproduction value[1]. However, this hypothesis does not answer the question of the basis of value, or what the criteria are for people to decide to equalise themselves through their offerings.

This does not mean that human effort, talent, personal involvement and meraki do not count, or that people in the schemes try to carpet-flatten individual contributions. Quite the opposite: individual contribution and effort are well praised and remembered (with names, not just "someone told…", unless there is no memory of the person of course) and those who offer much, receive much. Nevertheless, this does not create a hierarchy of value, in the sense that each person's unique contribution does not become absolute value for the rest of people. I do not know whether this can challenge our ideas about hierarchies in economy, and I would like to examine this topic, but this would extend far beyond the scope of this research.

On the other hand, accepting a currency used by few people only, might seem a non-rational choice. It might also be an unfair one, because, if you are in hardship, the other person might save its official currency and actually press you to accept the parallel currency because this is the only currency he/she wants to pay with. And if we take into account that a currency, even a parallel one, works as a measure of value, then we return to the discussion about value presented previously: how such a currency acquires value and how it represents the value of people's produce?

The parity 1:1 set for the parallel currencies in relation to the euro currency is one more major experiment, not only because parallel currencies will tend to reproduce valuings and behaviours already common in the mainstream economy. It is too early to say anything about this parity and whether it will be possible for the parallel currencies to keep really this parity working[2].

9.1.4. The arguments that people might accept to participate in a transaction where the benefit might not be economic at all would hold at first instance, looking at

[1] In other words, this re-arrangement might support the non-industrious poor to spend time with their friends and family improving the world in ways we cannot anticipate right now, because they avoid the value of actual money which expresses the value of mere power to turn people into money, Graeber, D. (2011), p.171, 390 . Or, it might be that the view expressed by Weiner in Weiner, A. (1980) that reproduction might be even more important and social and egalitarian a notion than reciprocity, takes a new meaning within the context of the schemes studied.

[2] See Sotiropoulou, I. (2012d).

quantitative and qualitative research results: meeting other people, establishing social bonds, experimenting with ideological beliefs put into practice have been mentioned as motives for people to participate in the activity studied. However, it seems that economic benefits might comprise receivings well beyond what one could count in official currency. Ensuring that your valuings and your community's valuings are taken into account and protected, this is a major economic benefit. Establishing new economic arrangements where nature and humans are not in opposition, is also a major economic benefit.

Moreover, it seems that this utmost worry about equalising offers and receivings at once, exists only in economic textbooks. People are quite comfortable in transacting by the means of long-term thinking and counting and it seems natural to them, not to write down transactions made and obligations pending, much less to measure exactly what has been given and what is expected to be reciprocated. They seem to be easily adaptable to accounting units just written down in a computer, and use them to price goods and services, while there is no authority to guarantee the redeemability of the credited units. They also seem to accept payments in kind, particularly edible goods, which means that the means of payment need not be hard currency at all, to be popular and widely accepted by producers.

9.1.5. In this context, one would understand the variety of motives co-existing in the participants' explanations for founding and/or participating in a scheme. Unidimensional explanations could not be valid at all, but a multi-level reasoning where economic motives are intertwined with social ones. This reaffirms that economic activity is not perceived as separated from society. Moreover, it points out that political motives cannot be separated from economic aims either. Therefore, the behaviour of people who perform transactions without official currency becomes a major topic of political economy.

The political economic nature of the subject-matter is of course, not a typical one, in the sense that public authorities are not usually involved in this activity, with the exception of few municipalities who support or establish schemes themselves. Therefore, this collective effort to establish transaction modes far from the centralised-currency system, is linked to local authorities (which are directly elected by the city dwellers) and to grassroots groups, well embedded to local conditions and needs.

Participation in more than one scheme shows variety of aims for the scheme members, too. From the data presented in the previous chapters, it seems that some of the aims are met, at least to some extent. The most important element of course, is that even if the aims pursued by people and their schemes are not satisfied yet, there is a strong possibility that they can be achieved through this activity. Or, at least, this possibility is perceived as strong and therefore, the people continue participating, experimenting and working within the schemes.

In other words, people participate in the schemes, because they find them accessible and manageable and more appropriate to their economic and social needs. The needs are to be defined in each case, and the aims may vary from person to person and from community to community. However, in terms of political economy, it means that scheme members, and non-scheme members, who nevertheless do not use official currency for their transactions, take into account multiple reasons of different types to decide whether and how to turn to other transaction modes than using official currency.

Then, it seems that people who participate in schemes are more or less content with their participation – till now. I am sure that it would be very interesting to talk with same people or perform another research after three or five years and ask the same question after they have a long experience from the schemes. Nevertheless, research participants are not people who want to picture everything as perfect, nor are they closing their eyes to the problems which arise. Yes, being in a structure where many people are involved means that you need to negotiate, wait, explore ideas and solutions, but it does not mean that people wanted to give me a falsely positive impression. In most cases, they always started their discussions with their complaints and observations about problems and issues needing a solution, instead of presenting the achievements first.

This critical approach by the participants themselves made me think of my data as more or less reliable, in the sense that I have not the impression they tried to create a shop-window image of their activity for my research. Moreover, I know several cases where the problem mentioned to me at some point, was solved some months or a year afterwards in a positive or even inventive way. That means, not only they are happy with their participation, but they are actively working on continuing being so.

9.1.6. Consequently, unidimensional connection between the economic and financial crisis and the scheme participation and expansion does not exist and it would be absurd to exist, given the aforementioned issues. However, the influence of the actual economic situation is not to be neglected either: the point of view by V.Spike Peterson[1] shows that there are many flows of political, economic and social collective struggles taking place and transforming themselves in the long term and the non-mainstream transaction modes might just be a surface symptom of them. Thus, if economics need accurate explanations about those modes, need not only to focus on historical research, but also to use all those interdisciplinary tools which are available nowadays for such a investigative project.

9.1.7. I am not sure whether it is an unfortunate or fortunate incident to see the Greek schemes being so far away from the existing typologies on international level. Personally, I consider this to be a rich contribution by the schemes themselves to theory and practice of this subject-matter. Even if I did not manage to reach any definitive conclusions on the reasons this peculiarity exists, I am glad my *hypothesis, which has been constructed due to those “weird” findings, permits me to have some clues for further research in this direction.

Variety of scheme structures, dispersion all over the country, horizontal and/or network organisation show that this activity cannot be a unique, temporary, coincidental phenomenon. The lack of academic or activist literature on similar structures in the Balkans or in the Mediterranean does not mean that the amazing variety of non-mainstream transaction modes is a Greek invention, but that more investigation needs to be done in order to understand what is the real regional and international context of this economic grassroots know-how which exists underneath the schemes.

Special attention is needed to the case of parallel currencies, both concerning time banks and fiat/virtual currencies. It is not common that country-wide schemes exist, like Ovolos, while regional or prefecture-wide schemes are more common. In cities like Athens or Thessalonike, it is interesting that parallel currencies might

[1] Peterson, V.S. (1997, 2010).

overlap, without usually opting for organisation at neighbourhood or suburb level. In most cases known from literature, schemes prefer not to overlap[1].

Of course, it is not clear whether the situation abroad is the final picture after several schemes merging with each other, like the LETS-ATI and Free-economy schemes have already done in Athens, or like Tsouknida group members who joined the Rethymnon Exchange Network, or after other schemes having stopped to function without ever been mentioned in academic literature.

It seems, that economic resilience and efficiency[2] might be interacting, too, in this case and there is a need for an in-depth research work to make any accurate comparisons on how co-existence of parallel currencies affects economic activity. The question would also include the issue of how the co-existence of schemes of different types cover social and economic needs in a more global way than just having one only parallel currency in a city or neighbourhood.

This variety of structures and co-existence of different schemes and the multiple participation in schemes of same people, or the non-participation in schemes of people who nevertheless perform non-official-currency transactions makes comparison with the Argentinean case almost impossible. Mass media discourse and even everyday discussions mention Argentina and its economic and financial crisis of 2000-2002 as a common topic to analyse. The parallel currencies of Argentina, namely the trueque nodes, are known in Greece, and this makes discussions very impressive in terms of comparing how IMF and neoliberal policies affected the economic conditions in both Argentina and Greece, and how parallel currencies and barter emerged at that time as survival solutions. From the information we have till now about the Argentinean schemes, it seems that this comparison cannot be done on this ground. First, because the Argentinean and Greek economies have been and still are very different in general. Second, there is no information about this variety of schemes in Argentina-while there is information about vast numbers of people participating in the parallel currency schemes in the Greater Buenos Aires area. In addition, since mid-1980s, the Argentinean people had experience in local currencies issued by city councils, meaning that in 2000, there existed already a 15-year

[1] See Aldridge, T. et al (2001a, 2001b), Seyfang, G. (1996, 1997, 2001a, 2001b, 2004), Williams C. (1995b, 1996a, 1996c, 1996d, 1997).
[2] Goerner, S. et al (2009a, 2010).

experience on this type of economic activity[1]. This experience does not exist in Greece, however, it seems that other experience and know-how exist and the variety of schemes and their quick expansion are good hints about that, although it would need another research project to make sure we have some accurate information on this.

9.1.8. Given that the conclusions concerning the hypotheses on the role of the economic and financial crisis in the expansion of the schemes and on the social struggle issues, have already been presented in the previous paragraphs, I would only refer to the issue of small production. As already mentioned, the entire research project ended up to investigate practices of small production. I discussed this finding in Section 3.5. What is important in this case, is that contrary to the usual practice to link small production to small land lots (whether individually owned or not), the case of small production linked to non-mainstream transaction modes makes me to look more to the direction of the household level of production. In other words, it seems that small production practices through activity without official currency are well based and interlinked with the household, not as a separate or self-sufficient production unit, but as a space where people can organise their cooperations and exchanges with other people and with other households. Collective arrangements seem not to dissolve this household-based economy but to enable it to adapt to situations like public expenditure cuts in social provisions, high unemployment rates and poverty.

It was impossible in this research project, to investigate details about internal household production modes, inter-household exchange patterns and intra-household arrangements by the use of structured schemes or non-monetary practices outside-schemes. Nevertheless, it seems that non-mainstream transaction modes show new directions on small production perceptions and patterns as well as on household economies.

[1] Pearson, R. (2003), Gomez, G. (2012), Powell, J. (2010).

9.2. More conclusions

I am not sure that, even if I have some reliable answers, those still hold, because reality in my research field changes at a pace that I cannot keep up with, anyway. Nevertheless, the transactions performed without the use of official currency have several implications for the lives of the people involved, perhaps for the lives of all of us. If traditional varieties and their cultivation knowledge are preserved through a free-structure, then this will enable the entire communities to have access to those varieties. If children can have access to good food, clothes, toys and particularly, education, while their parents are suffering in an economy where high unemployment and public expenditure cuts are the everyday routine, then this will not endanger the new generation to be less well-lived and less educated than their parents and grandparents (let alone what implications this perseverance will have for the entire society and economy).

The scheme members proved to be extraordinary people and extraordinary economic agents. They seem to have very good knowledge about how economy works and they also are very self-confident to think on their own and be critical to mainstream economic ideas. Of course, this is the picture I have from the active members of the schemes. However, sometimes I wonder whether registering with a scheme and remaining idle for some time is also a strategic option for members who are busy, or who want to learn about this activity without being heavily involved since the beginning, or who want to have a back-up plan in case of economic hardship.

The question about the economic importance of this activity in comparison to the entire economy, is difficult, but also one of the most educative issues, for me at least. First, it seems, that in absolute numbers, for a country of more than ten million habitants, this activity is really marginal in terms of volume. However, this research project taught me that economic importance sometimes is beyond estimation.

For example, natural resources preservation and building a sustainable cultivation or production mode cannot be estimated in any way, because it reaches the realm of survival for both humans and the planet itself. Then, in some other cases economic importance can be estimated, in the same way someone understands the esteem for a good teacher or a tasty meal, but this economic importance cannot be measured at all, although it might have serious economic implications for individual and collective lives. And in other cases, there is some measurability in economic

activity, but this escapes what we know from textbooks: it is not measured in official currency because the offerings are accessible beyond the mainstream economy – and this is a conscious choice by the economic agents who consider that their offerings would not achieve much estimation in mainstream economy and they prefer to give something for free or for another transaction arrangement within another economic space. It is true that what is being produced within schemes is usually of very high quality and the producers cannot dispose it in the mainstream because the prices there do not reward the quality they offer. Then, even if I wanted to measure prices in euro terms, it would be impossible as there are no similar products (or even if there are, they might be very expensive, usually sold in luxury stores) in the mainstream to make a reliable comparison.

Of course, this has also been my own research choice, i.e. to explore valuings as they are taking place in the field, beyond the prejudices originating in textbooks. This might have turned my project into something so difficult that a student cannot handle in a pretty satisfactory way, but exploration itself showed new pathways for study in economic theory and methodology.

Finally, one major conclusion about the schemes is that they facilitate information flows and knowledge/know-why/know-how dispersion through their members and non-members – actually information and education are considered two of the main tools for the schemes to exist and function. Even if this has not been the subject matter of my research, I confirm it: my entire dissertation exists because the participants, but also many other people inside and outside academia accepted to share their ideas and knowledge, while they did not know at that time and they had no clear picture about what I am going to do with all this knowledge which was rather impossible to find in libraries. They were not sure whether I was going to mention their contribution and whether I was going to use their offerings in a manner that would honour the offering and the contributor her/himself. Yes, my dissertation was meant to be publicly available once approved and in most cases this was the only requirement set by the participants, although they had no means to implement this requirement. As for the rest, I was honoured with the trust of many people without really those people asking for any reciprocal return.

9.3. Main issues for future research

Almost every issue emerging from this research can be the topic for a future project. The discussion above is just the beginning, let's say the new proposal for research. As there are not any definitive answers to none of those questions raised through this research project, what one can say is that we at least have more accurate questions to continue studying and researching. However, there are some particular themes which are imminent to be studied:

a) *the methodology issues*.

Ethnographic methods proved to be of major importance, thick description, participation by observation and free discussions were the most important tools to acquire first sight of the subject-matter. Quantitative methods have not been constructed for such economic activity, so one should search for particular quantitative tools which possibly are more appropriate for this field.

b) *the issue of economic value and valuings*.

One can say that we can live without a theory of value, or that we can live with many theories of value applied at the same time in the same case. However, we cannot live without values at all, and even if we are unable to construct clear and sound theoretical tools to perceive value in economy, exploration on this field is more than urgent, as without perception/viewing of value, we cannot have any theoretical tool in economics.

c) *the issue of justice*.

I have asked questions about people being happy with the schemes or with non-mainstream transaction modes, but I have not asked questions about fairness, about possible exploitative practices, etc. In some cases, as it has been shown in the previous chapters, people think that non-mainstream transaction modes are not or are less exploitative mechanisms than the mainstream economy, and that by the use of those modes we can also be fair to nature, not only to humans. It remains a vast field for study and research to see under which conditions and in what ways those non-mainstream transaction modes are also just and fair for all people and their communities[1].

[1] My first attempts to re-arrange the questions of justice and fairness, did show that there are also many problems in this economic activity which need to be addressed. Sotiropoulou, I. (2012c, d).

9.4. Limitations of the research project

a) My personal lack of knowledge and inexperience

Obviously, I was not prepared to face all those issues and despite the fact that I tried to tackle with the subject-matter as well as I could, it is obvious that I was learning by doing. I hope that in the future I will be able to conduct research of better quality on the same field, but this does not change the deficiencies that existed in this one due to my own deficiencies as a researcher and as a student.

b) The lack of literature and lack of similar research projects worldwide to be able to compare methods and results.

It has already been mentioned that this research project has been conducted while international literature is very limited concerning the entire subject-matter. If we add to this the lack of related methods concerning the examination of various types of non-mainstream schemes within the same project, it is obvious that I had to improvise to the best of my knowledge, experiment with methods and theoretical tools and work beyond the limits the literature was imposing on the project. On the other hand, this led me to explore literature in a more inter-disciplinary way, which at last, showed that economics have important lessons to learn from other disciplines and yet continue to create economic knowledge without being trapped into other disciplines' discourse.

c) The emergence of the subject-matter and the expansion of the activity beyond any anticipation created a workload that was unexpected when this project started.

Just like I have mentioned from the very first chapter of this dissertation, the subject-matter of my dissertation has been alive and developing while I had been conducting this research. This has been a major challenge, which made the entire project a major experiment on how to study a topic while social change is so abrupt and rapid. I have no safe answers about that and I am not sure that I have tackled this challenge to its entirety, but on the other hand, I think that if I want, as a researcher, to collect and offer knowledge that has actual meanings for both academics and non-academics, I must work on methods and procedures concerning the study of social phenomena while those are taking place.

d) Financial issues of the project.

The expansion of the activity studied and the necessary expansion of the project scope created severe financial problems, given that I had to travel a lot and

make various expenses to be able to keep up with such a topic. The funding received through the “Herakleitos II” project has been a major contribution and I am grateful for this– however, given that more than 1/3 of it has not been paid at all I had to seek this funding in front of the Greek Courts (where the case will be examined years later than this dissertation). The rest amount has been paid with great delays and discrepancies, and this has made the performance of the research very difficult.

The difficulty of the topic itself was immense, but I do not feel that it was a real limitation in itself – it was rather the reason for the limits of this research to go beyond the boundaries I could imagine when I submitted my research proposal. And it challenged me as researcher, as any research subject-matter should have. So, I cannot complain about the difficulty but I am really grateful about it.

9.5. Final remarks

There are no secure conclusions out of this research apart from one: there is vast work to be done in order to acquire a better picture and more accurate information about the subject-matter of the research. This means that we have partial conclusions or first findings which can lead anyone to better research or even to better examine this dissertation and find its errors and deficiencies that would make the next research project a much better work. Actually, I feel that if there was a possibility to do good research on this topic, this would only be possible after this dissertation.

Moreover, I hope that in the meantime, many other researchers and experts will be interested in joining in this adventure and work on the same field. This is necessary not only because the subject-matter is enormous and only a community of researchers would be able to really study all this activity and explore its various aspects that this research project was impossible to examine; but also because we all need collegial critique, dissent and exchange of ideas, given that, just as John Maynard Keynes wrote in his General Theory (1936) “It is astonishing what foolish things one can temporarily believe if one thinks too long alone, particularly in economics".

ANNEX A – FULL LIST OF SCHEMES

A.1. Parallel currencies

1) Time Bank of the European Network of Women www.enow.gr

2) Time Bank of Agia Varvara

3) Time Bank by Lamia Municipality http://www.lamia-city.gr/netexchange.php (did not manage to achieve full function)

4) Time Bank by Municipality of Pylaia http://www.time4time.gr/

5) Time Bank by Municipality of Pallini http://diktiopallinis.gr/i_news.jsp

6) Time-Bank of Syntagma Square http://www.time-exchange.gr/

7) Moschato Time & Solidarity Bank http://www.mesopotamia.gr/trapeza_xronou.htm

8) Dexameni Time Bank (Δεξαμενή Τράπεζα Χρόνου) (website not working, not clear whether the scheme is functioning)

9) Time Bank of Korinthos http://www.txkorinthou.gr/

10) Ovolos social currency www.ovolos.gr

11) Local Alternative Unit (Τοπική Εναλλακτική Μονάδα – ΤΕΜ) www.tem-magnisia.gr

12) Fasouli Exchange & Solidarity Network http://fasouli.wordpress.com/

13) Kaereti - "Alternative Economy of Ierapetra" [1] www.kaereti.gr

14) Exchange Network of Chania (Δίκτυο Ανταλλαγών Χανίων) www.diktyoantallagonxanion.gr

15) Herakleion Network of Exchange and Barter http://diktyoantallagisirakleiou.espiv.net/drupal2/

16) Alternative Economy of Siteia

17) Alternative Economy of Agios Nikolaos

18) Helios - The Local Alternative Unit of Pieria http://union.motherearth.gr/

19) Exchange Network of Thermaikos http://e-thermo.blogspot.gr/

20) Exchange & Solidarity Network of Eurytania http://www.diktyo.evrytania.eu/

21) Koino currency - Exchange Network for Goods & Services of Kalamaria http://koino.com.gr/index.php

22) Exchange Network of Kalymnos http://antallagi-kalymnos.blogspot.gr/

23) Exchange Network of Thessalonike

24) Exchange Network of Trikala http://www.antallazo.net/

25) EMRO- Alternative Unit of Rodopi http://www.emro.gr/index.php

26) Network of Solidarity & of Non-monetary Exchange Economy of Fthiotida http://www.tem-fthiotidas.gr/index.htm

27) Exchange & Solidarity Network of Lesvos Electro http://diktyolesvou.wordpress.com/

28) Local Alternative Unit Boutsouni http://www.mpoutsouni.gr/forum/

29) Maidi currency - Kyklos Group (Ομάδα Κύκλος) in Kos island http://kyklos-kos.gr/

30) Achaian Solidarity Network Stakraeli www.stakraeli.gr/

31) Solidarity Economy Network Votsalo http://votsalo.org/ in Korydallos

32) Solidarity & Exchange Network of Fokida http://temfokidas.wordpress.com/

33) Alternative Network of Social Innovation – Free Economy http://free-economy.gr which recently has merged with the LETS Athens grouphttp://network.free-economy.gr/%CE%AD%CE%BD%CF%89%CF%83%CE%B7-%CE%B5%CE%BD%CE%B1%CE%BB%CE%BB%CE%B1%CE%BA%CF%84%CE%B9%CE%BA%CE%BF%CF%8D-%CE%B4%CE%B9%CE%BA%CF%84%CF%8D%CE%BF%CF%85-%CE%BC%CE%B5-%CF%84%CE%BF-lets-ati/

34) MONO currency-Exchange & Solidarity Network of Samos http://www.dialas.gr/

35) Exchange Network for Services of the Popular Assembly of Chalandri http://laikisyneleysihalandri.wordpress.com/%CE%B4%CE%AF%CE%BA%CF%84%CF%85%CE%BF-%CE%B1%CE%BD%CF%84%CE%B1%CE%BB%CE%BB%CE%B1%CE%B3%CE%AE%CF%82-%CF%85%CF%80%CE%B7%CF%81%CE%B5%CF%83%CE%B9%CF%8E%CE%BD/

36) S.A.NO. currency- Exchange Network for Goods & Services of Syros http://sanosyros.wordpress.com/

37) DI.AN.A.-Exchange Network for Goods & Services of Argolida (http://ilianthos.wordpress.com/

38) Exchange & Solidarity Network of Euboia http://temevias.gr/index.php Exchange Koukoutsi currency - Network of Messinia “Elia” www.diktioelia.gr/

39) Unit of Produce Valuing (Μονάδα Αξιολόγησης Προϊόντος)- Exchange Network of Veroia http://antalaktikoveria.blogspot.gr/.

A.2. Exchange networks

1) Peliti double network: "From hand to hand"; "Localities of farms" www.peliti.gr

Local groups in: Komotini (Rodopi), Bassilika (Thessalonike), Lemnos island, Kozane, Ioannina, Almyros (Magnesia), Euboia island, Peratia (Aetoloakarnania), Aegina island, Ancient Olympia, Herakleion (Crete island).

2) Spori (Σπόρι) http://sporilimnou.blogspot.gr/

3) Association of Active Citizens in the Amvrakikos Area http://amvrakikos-sos.blogspot.gr/

4) Society for the Protection of the Environment of Corfu http://www.environment-corfu.gr/

5) Exchange Network of Local Seeds of Lesvos island http://lesvosseeds.wordpress.com/

6) Sporites - group of cultivators cooperating with the Park for Preservation of Flora and Fauna of the Technical University of Crete http://www.tuc.gr/index.php?id=2589

7) Logo-Timis network www.logo-timis.gr

8) Rodia Exchange Network in Rethymnon http://www.rodia-reth.gr/

8) Exchange & Solidarity Network of Ikaria island

10) Exchange Network of Chios island - Dyo-dyo http://dyo-dyo.org/

11) Network of Factual Social Solidarity & Exchange Economy in Naxos island http://partoalliosnaxos.blogspot.gr/

12) Alternative Culture Workshop in Corfu/Kerkyra island http://enalaktikoergastiri.wordpress.com/

13) The branch of the Alternative Culture Workshop in Trifylia http://enalaktikoergastiri.wordpress.com/2012/10/26/%CE%B5%CE%BD%CE%B1%CE%BB%CE%BB%CE%B1%CE%BA%CF%84%CE%B9%CE%BA%CF%8C-%CF%80%CE%BF%CE%BB%CE%B9%CF%84%CE%B9%CF%83%CF%84%CE%B9%CE%BA%CF%8C-%CE%B5%CF%81%CE%B3%CE%B1%CF%83%CF%84%CE%AE%CF%81%CE%B9-%CF%84/

14) Internet Free-Exchange Bazaar of Heliohoros http://www.iliohoros.gr/pazari/

15) Exchange Network for Work & Products (Δ.Α.Ε.Π.) in Kerkyra/Corfu http://diktyodaep.wordpress.com/

16) Network Pantado – Produce-Exchange-Give away http://pantado.blogspot.gr/ in Hepeiros region.

A.3. The free-exchange bazaars and free networks

1) Freecycle in Greece http://freecycle.wikispaces.com/freecycle_gr

2) Charise-to network www.xariseto.gr

3) Dosse-Pare http://dwsepare.ning.com/

Swishing parties in Athens & Thessaloniki www.swishing.gr & http://swishing-thess.blogspot.com/.

Skoros http://skoros.espiv.net/

Other permanent free bazaars in: Thessalonike (two), Rodos city, Chania, Ioannina, Kerkyra, Ierapetra.

Regular free bazaars in: Athens city (at least three series of bazaars, one within the framework of Skoros, one with one regular bazaar organised in Syntagma square http://www.adantallaktiko-pazari.gr/ and swishing parties http://swishing.gr/), Aegina island, Anavyssos (Greater Athens area), Ikaria island, Herakleion city, Euboia island, Ioannina, Kaissariani (Greater Athens area), Kilkis, Neo Herakleio (Greater Athens area), Thessalonike (at least two series of bazaars, one organised within the framework of Charise-to network, the other is the swishing parties http://swishing-thess.blogspot.com/), Eleusina (Greater Athens area), Syros island, Alexandroupolis, Tripoli, Katerini and Korinthos.

Occasional free bazaars in: Attiki (Agia Paraskevi, Agia Varvara Agioi Anargyroi/Kamatero, Agios Dimitrios, Galatsi, Laurio, Maroussi, Moshato, Nikaia, Palaio Faliro, Peiraias, Perama, Peristeri, Xalandri, Vyronas, and downtown Athens, where I can count 8 occasional bazaars the last 3 years), Agrinio, Amfissa, Beroia, Chania, Drama, Herakleio, Kalymnos island, Kerkyra/Corfu island, Lamia, Larissa, Patra, Pyrgos, Rethymno, Thessalonike and Thiva.

A.4. Sui generis schemes

1) Money Back System http://www.moneybacksystem.gr/home.html.

2) LATHOS. Collective http://dialoguetechnologies.wordpress.com/

3) ARTBANK http://trapezatehnis.blogspot.gr/ & http://orizontasgegonotwn.blogspot.com/search/label/ArtBank

A.5. Other projects

Organosi 2.0 by Revekka-Eleni Staiou http://.organosi20.gr

Larissa exchange network

https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100003610298315&ref=ts&fref=ts

Network of Lykovrysi-Pefki http://pelykoia.wordpress.com/

Antallagi.Boitheia https://www.facebook.com/Antallagi.Boitheia

Antallaxeto http://www.antallakseto.gr/

Exchange Economy (Ανταλλακτική Οικονομία) http://antallaktiki.gr/

1st Festival on Solidarity & Cooperative Economy http://www.festival4sce.org/

ANNEX B - THE QUESTIONS FOR THE INTERVIEWS WITH KEY INFORMANTS

1) Definition of terms not defined in texts, etc.

2) Why/what are the reasons you decided to participate/establish this scheme?

3) Do you think that if the scheme did not exist, the aims you seek would not be achieved?

4) How do you think that your own aims are achieved by this participation?

5) In which way do you think that the scheme aims are being achieved?

6) How and who did choose this specific structure for the scheme? Why?

7) Are you happy with the way the scheme is working? Why? Why not?

8) How is your scheme participation connected to your other economic activities?

Special questions, depending on scheme type:

1) Parallel currencies: Why would an individual and/or a company would accept to trade with parallel currency instead of euros?

2) Exchange networks: Why would people prefer to search for bartering opportunities within the network instead of covering their needs immediately with euros?

3) Traditional varieties exchange networks: Why do not you sell the seeds, even at low price?

4) Free bazaars and networks: Why people would bother to wait and search for someone to take the item they do not need (much more: to transfer the item to the place of the bazaar) instead of selling it for euros or just dispose it into the garbage bin?

The questions have been asked and replied in Greek:

1) Ορισμός όρων που δεν προσδιορίζονται σε κείμενα, κλπ.

2) Γιατί/ποιοι είναι οι λόγοι που αποφασίσατε να συμμετέχετε/δημιουργήσετε αυτό το σχήμα;

3) Νομίζετε ότι αν το σχήμα δεν υπήρχε, οι σκοποί που επιδιώκετε δεν θα επιτυγχάνονταν;

4) Πώς νομίζετε ότι οι δικοί σας στόχοι επιτυγχάνονται με αυτή τη συμμετοχής

5) Με ποιον τρόπο νομίζετε ότι επιτυγχάνονται οι στόχοι του σχήματος;

6) Πώς και ποιος/ποιοι επέλεξαν τη συγκεκριμένη δομή του σχήματος; Γιατί;

7) Είστε ευχαριστημένος/-η με τον τρόπο που λειτουργεί το σχήμα; Γιατί; Γιατί όχι;

8) Πώς συνδέεται η συμμετοχή σας στο σχήμα με τις άλλες οικονομικές σας δραστηριότητες;

Ειδικές ερωτήσεις, ανάλογα με τον τύπο του σχήματος:

1) Παράλληλα νομίσματα: Γιατί ένας ιδιώτης και/ή μια εταιρεία να δεχθεί μια συναλλαγή με παράλληλο νόμισμα αντί για ευρώ;

2) Δίκτυα ανταλλαγής: Γίατί θα προτιμούσε ο κόσμος να ψάξει για ευκαιρίες ανταλλαγής μέσα στο δίκτυο αντί να καλύψει τις ανάγκες του άμεσα με ευρώ;

3) Δίκτυα παραδοσιακών ποικιλιών: γιατί δεν πωλείτε τους σπόρους, έστω και σε χαμηλή τιμή;

4) Χαριστικά παζάρια και δίκτυα: Γιατί οι άνθρωποι σκοτίζονται να περιμένουν και να ψάχνουν για κάποιον που θα πάρει ένα πράγμα που δεν χρειάζονται (πολύ περισσότερο: να μεταφέρουν το πράγμα αυτό στο σημείο του παζαριού) αντί να το πωλήσουν για ευρώ ή απλώς να το πετάξουν στον κάδο απορριμμάτων;

ANNEX C - THE SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

The next pages consist of the questionnaire as it was prepared in text document format.

In the headlines of all questionnaire pages this information existed(which also existed in the heading of the online version):

Questionnaire for the second phase of the research titled "Network sharing and parallel currencies: Theoretical approaches and the case of Greece" conducted at the University of Crete (Department of Economics) by Irene Sotiropoulou, PhD candidate, under the supervision of Professor George Stathakis

There follows the main body of the questionnaire. After the Greek text, there follows the English translation.

Έρευνα για συναλλαγές στην Ελλάδα χωρίς τη χρήση του ευρώ

Αυτό το ερωτηματολόγιο απευθύνεται σε όσους και όσες είναι μέλη σε δίκτυα ή ομάδες όπου πραγματοποιούνται συναλλαγές χωρίς επίσημο νόμισμα (ευρώ) στην Ελλάδα, είτε με άλλη μονάδα μέτρησης είτε με ανταλλαγές είτε με άλλους τρόπους. Επίσης, απευθύνεται σε όσους και όσες πραγματοποιούν τέτοιες συναλλαγές χωρίς να είναι μέλη κάποιου δικτύου ή ομάδας.

Δεν είναι υποχρεωτικό να απαντήσετε σε καμία από τις ερωτήσεις. Όσες περισσότερες όμως ερωτήσεις απαντήσετε, τόσο περισσότερο θα μας βοηθήσετε με την έρευνα που κάνουμε. Σε καμία περίπτωση δεν πρέπει να γράψετε ονοματεπώνυμο στο ερωτηματολόγιο αυτό. Για οποιαδήποτε διευκρίνιση ή παρατήρηση παρακαλούμε, επικοινωνήσατε με την Ειρήνη Σωτηροπούλου στη διεύθυνση isotiropoulou@econ.soc.uoc.gr ή irene.sotiropoulou@gmail.com και στο τηλέφωνο 6979 609960.

Α. Μερικές ερωτήσεις σχετικά με την εικόνα των ανθρώπων που πραγματοποιούν συναλλαγές χωρίς να χρησιμοποιούν το ευρώ:

1. Φύλο

…. Άνδρας
…. Γυναίκα

2. Ηλικία σε έτη

…. 15 ≥	…. 46-55
…. 16-25	…. 56-65
..... 26-35	…. 66-75
…. 36-45	…. 76-85
	…. 86 ≤

3. Πόλη ή χωριό κατοικίας ……..
Παρακαλώ, εάν μένετε σε κάποια μεγάλη πόλη, γράψτε την περιοχή όπου μένετε και όχι μόνο γενικά το όνομα της πόλης.

4. Πόσοι/Πόσες μένετε μαζί στο ίδιο σπίτι;

…1	…6
…2	…7
…3	…8
…4	…9
…5	…10

… Περισσότεροι/-ες από 10

5. Έχετε σπουδάσει στο

…. Δημοτικό	…. Πανεπιστήμιο (ΑΕΙ-ΤΕΙ)
…. Γυμνάσιο	…. Έχετε κάνει μεταπτυχιακές σπουδές
…. Λύκειο	…. Έχετε άλλη εκπαίδευση (ΙΕΚ, Ιδιωτικές σχολές, Ωδεία κλπ)

6. Ποιες γλώσσες ομιλείτε;……

7. Χρησιμοποιείτε ηλεκτρονικό υπολογιστή; ….Ναι ….Όχι
8. Χρησιμοποιείτε διαδίκτυο; ….Ναι ….Όχι

9. Χρησιμοποιείτε κινητό τηλέφωνο; ….Ναι ….Όχι

10. Το σπίτι όπου κατοικείτε είναι
…. δικό σας
…. ανήκει σε άλλο μέλος της οικογένειας
…. το νοικιάζετε
…. δικό σας, ή άλλου μέλους της οικογένειας, αλλά είναι υποθηκευμένο

11. Έχετε δυνατότητα να καλλιεργείτε γη, δική σας ή κάποιου άλλου ατόμου; ….Ναι ….Όχι

12. Έχετε ως κύρια απασχόληση……
Παρακαλώ, γράψτε την παραγωγική δραστηριότητα με την οποία κατά κύριο λόγο ασχολείστε, ανεξάρτητα εάν αυτή η δραστηριότητα αμείβεται σε ευρώ ή όχι. Εάν π.χ. είστε άνεργος/-η, αλλά ασχολείστε χωρίς χρηματική αμοιβή με τη φροντίδα του σπιτιού ή την ανατροφή των παιδιών, μπορείτε να γράψετε είτε «άνεργος/-η» είτε την εργασία που κάνετε χωρίς να αμείβεστε, είτε και τα δυο.

13. Θα λέγατε ότι το ετήσιο εισόδημα του νοικοκυριού σας σε ευρώ είναι της κλίμακας:
Η ερώτηση αφορά όχι μόνο το ατομικό σας εισόδημα, αλλά το συνολικό εισόδημα των ανθρώπων που κατοικούν μαζί σας.

…. 0-5000	…. 20001-30000
…. 5001-10000	…. 30001-50000
…. 10001-15000	…. 50001-150000
…. 15001-20000	…. 150001 και άνω

14. Συμμετέχετε σε κάποιο δίκτυο/ομάδα στο οποίο κάνετε συναλλαγές χωρίς να χρησιμοποιείτε το ευρώ; .....Ναι ……Όχι

Αν απαντήσατε Ναι, συνεχίζετε κανονικά στην ενότητα Β του ερωτηματολογίου. Αν απαντήσατε Όχι, συνεχίζετε απευθείας στην ενότητα Γ του ερωτηματολογίου (παραλείποντας την ενότητα Β).

<u>Ενότητα Β του ερωτηματολογίου</u>

Β.1. Μερικές ερωτήσεις για να διασφαλίσουμε ότι εάν συμμετέχετε σε δύο ή περισσότερα δίκτυα/ομάδες που συμμετέχουν στην έρευνα, <u>δεν θα υπολογίσουμε απαντημένα ερωτηματολόγια σαν να προέρχονταν από περισσότερα του ενός άτομα</u>.

1. Παρακαλούμε επιλέξτε το όνομα της ομάδας ή του δικτύου για το οποίο συμπληρώνετε αυτό το ερωτηματολόγιο από τον παρακάτω κατάλογο.
Εάν δεν βρίσκετε το όνομα στον κατάλογο, παρακαλούμε συμπληρώστε το στη θέση «Άλλο» του καταλόγου. Αν το όνομα της ομάδας ή του δικτύου σας λείπει από τον κατάλογο, αυτό μπορεί να συμβαίνει είτε γιατί πρόκειται για μια πολύ νέα πρωτοβουλία είτε γιατί βρισκόμασταν σε συνεννοήσεις μαζί τους όσο ετοιμαζόταν το ερωτηματολόγιο, είτε γιατί πρόκειται για μια πρωτοβουλία που αγνοούμε και εξαρτάται από εσάς που συμπληρώνετε το ερωτηματολόγιο να μάθουμε για την ύπαρξή της. Η έρευνα όπως ακριβώς και οι ομάδες και τα δίκτυα που μελετούμε, βρίσκεται σε δυναμική εξέλιξη και παρακαλούμε για την κατανόησή και τη βοήθειά σας.

…. Δίκτυο Ανταλλαγής Εργασίας & Προϊόντων στην Κέρκυρα
…. Δίκτυο Ανταλλαγής Ντόπιων Σπόρων Λέσβου
…. Δώσε-Πάρε
…. Καερέτι κοινωνικό νόμισμα – Δίκτυο Εναλλακτικής Οικονομίας Ιεράπετρας
…. Λόγω Τιμής (Δίκτυο Ανταλλαγής)
…. Οβολός κοινωνικό νόμισμα
…. Ομάδα καλλιεργητών σε συνεργασία με το Πάρκο Διάσωσης Χλωρίδας & Πανίδας (Χανιά)
…. Πελίτι- Από χέρι σε χέρι (δίκτυο ανταλλαγής αγαθών και υπηρεσιών)
…. Πελίτι – Κατά τόπους αγροκτήματα (δίκτυο για παραδοσιακές ποικιλίες & οικόσιτα ζώα)
…. Σπόρι Λήμνου
…. Σύλλογος Ενεργών Πολιτών Περιοχής Αμβρακικού
…. Σύλλογος Προστασίας Περιβάλλοντος Κέρκυρας
…. Τοπική Εναλλακτική Μονάδα (ΤΕΜ) – Δίκτυο Ανταλλαγών & Αλληλεγγύης Μαγνησίας
…. Τράπεζα Χρόνου Δήμου Αγίας Βαρβάρας
…. Τράπεζα Χρόνου Δικτύου Γυναικών Ευρώπης
…. Φασούλι - Δίκτυο Ανταλλαγής & Αλληλεγγύης
…. Freecycle Ελλάδας
…. Χάρισέ-το
…. Άλλο……

2. Εκτός από αυτό το δίκτυο ή ομάδα, συμμετέχετε και σε κάποιο άλλο δίκτυο ή ομάδα όπου δεν χρησιμοποιείτε το ευρώ για τις συναλλαγές σας;
….Ναι ….Όχι

3. Αν ναι, ποιο/ποια είναι αυτά;
Μπορείτε να επιλέξετε περισσότερες της μιας απαντήσεις.
…. Δίκτυο Ανταλλαγής Εργασίας & Προϊόντων στην Κέρκυρα
…. Δίκτυο Ανταλλαγής Ντόπιων Σπόρων Λέσβου
…. Δώσε-Πάρε
…. Καερέτι κοινωνικό νόμισμα – Δίκτυο Εναλλακτικής Οικονομίας Ιεράπετρας
…. Λόγω Τιμής (Δίκτυο Ανταλλαγής)
…. Οβολός κοινωνικό νόμισμα
…. Ομάδα καλλιεργητών σε συνεργασία με το Πάρκο Διάσωσης Χλωρίδας & Πανίδας (Χανιά)
…. Πελίτι- Από χέρι σε χέρι (δίκτυο ανταλλαγής αγαθών και υπηρεσιών)
…. Πελίτι – Κατά τόπους αγροκτήματα (δίκτυο για παραδοσιακές ποικιλίες & οικόσιτα ζώα)
…. Σπόρι Λήμνου
…. Σύλλογος Ενεργών Πολιτών Περιοχής Αμβρακικού
…. Σύλλογος Προστασίας Περιβάλλοντος Κέρκυρας
…. Τοπική Εναλλακτική Μονάδα (ΤΕΜ) – Δίκτυο Ανταλλαγών & Αλληλεγγύης Μαγνησίας
…. Τράπεζα Χρόνου Δήμου Αγίας Βαρβάρας
…. Τράπεζα Χρόνου Δικτύου Γυναικών Ευρώπης
…. Φασούλι - Δίκτυο Ανταλλαγής & Αλληλεγγύης
…. Freecycle Ελλάδας
…. Χάρισέ-το
…. Άλλο……

4. Αν ναι, έχετε συμπληρώσει το ίδιο ερωτηματολόγιο για κάποιο ή κάποια από αυτά; ….Ναι ….Όχι

Παρακαλώ, επιλέξτε τα ονόματα των δικτύων/ομάδων για τα οποία έχετε ήδη συμπληρώσει το ερωτηματολόγιο αυτό
Μπορείτε να επιλέξετε περισσότερες της μιας απαντήσεις.
…. Δίκτυο Ανταλλαγής Εργασίας & Προϊόντων στην Κέρκυρα
…. Δίκτυο Ανταλλαγής Ντόπιων Σπόρων Λέσβου
…. Δώσε-Πάρε
…. Καερέτι κοινωνικό νόμισμα – Δίκτυο Εναλλακτικής Οικονομίας Ιεράπετρας
…. Λόγω Τιμής (Δίκτυο Ανταλλαγής)
…. Οβολός κοινωνικό νόμισμα
…. Ομάδα καλλιεργητών σε συνεργασία με το Πάρκο Διάσωσης Χλωρίδας & Πανίδας (Χανιά)
…. Πελίτι- Από χέρι σε χέρι (δίκτυο ανταλλαγής αγαθών και υπηρεσιών)
…. Πελίτι – Κατά τόπους αγροκτήματα (δίκτυο για παραδοσιακές ποικιλίες & οικόσιτα ζώα)
…. Σπόρι Λήμνου
…. Σύλλογος Ενεργών Πολιτών Περιοχής Αμβρακικού
…. Σύλλογος Προστασίας Περιβάλλοντος Κέρκυρας
…. Τοπική Εναλλακτική Μονάδα (ΤΕΜ) – Δίκτυο Ανταλλαγών & Αλληλεγγύης Μαγνησίας
…. Τράπεζα Χρόνου Δήμου Αγίας Βαρβάρας
…. Τράπεζα Χρόνου Δικτύου Γυναικών Ευρώπης …. Φασούλι - Δίκτυο Ανταλλαγής & Αλληλεγγύης
…. Freecycle Ελλάδας
…. Χάρισέ-το
…. Άλλο……

Β.2. Μερικές ερωτήσεις γενικά για τη συμμετοχή σας στο δίκτυο/ομάδα για την οποία συμπληρώνετε το ερωτηματολόγιο αυτό

1. Από πότε είστε μέλος της ομάδας/δικτύου;
Παρακαλώ, γράψτε έτος και μήνα, εάν θυμάστε.

Έτος…….. Μήνας ……..

2. Έχετε κάποια ιδιαίτερα καθήκοντα/ρόλο στη διαχείριση ή το συντονισμό της ομάδας/δικτύου; ….Ναι ….Όχι

Αν ναι, ποια είναι αυτά;……..

3. Κάνετε συναλλαγές, όπως μέσα στο δίκτυο/ομάδα, με ανθρώπους που δεν είναι επίσημα μέλη της ομάδας/δικτύου; ….Ναι ….Όχι

4. Γιατί συμμετέχετε σε αυτό το δίκτυο/ομάδα;
……
……..
……
……..

5. Είστε ευχαριστημένος/-η από τη συμμετοχή σας σε αυτό το δίκτυο/ομάδα;
…. Πάρα πολύ
…. Αρκετά
…. Λίγο
…. Πολύ λίγο
…. Καθόλου

6. Είστε ευχαριστημένος/-η από τη συνεργασία των άλλων μελών του δικτύου/ομάδας;
…. Πάρα πολύ
…. Αρκετά
…. Λίγο
…. Πολύ λίγο
…. Καθόλου

Γ. Μερικές ερωτήσεις <u>για τις συναλλαγές σας χωρίς ευρώ ανεξαρτήτως</u> εάν συμμετέχετε σε κάποιο δίκτυο ή ομάδα όπου πραγματοποιούνται τέτοιες συναλλαγές ή εάν δεν συμμετέχετε σε καμία τέτοια ομάδα.

1. Πόσο συχνά κάνετε οικονομικές συναλλαγές χωρίς να χρησιμοποιείτε ευρώ;
…. Κάθε μέρα
…. Τουλάχιστον τρεις φορές την εβδομάδα
…. Τουλάχιστον μία φορά την εβδομάδα
…. Τουλάχιστον μια φορά στις 15 ημέρες
…. Τουλάχιστον μια φορά τον μήνα
…. Τουλάχιστον μια φορά στους δυο μήνες
…. Πιο σπάνια από μια φορά το τρίμηνο

2. Για όσους/όσες έχουν οικονομικές συναλλαγές χωρίς ευρώ για περισσότερο χρονικό διάστημα από ένα έτος: Φέτος (2011) οι συναλλαγές σας αυτές, σε σύγκριση με την προηγούμενη χρονιά, φαίνεται ότι είναι
…. πιο συχνές
…. πιο αραιές

3. Με ποιον τρόπο επικοινωνείτε με τους ανθρώπους με τους οποίους κάνετε τις συναλλαγές χωρίς ευρώ;
Μπορείτε να επιλέξετε περισσότερες της μιας απαντήσεις.
…. με συναντήσεις
…. με το σταθερό τηλέφωνο
…. με κινητό τηλέφωνο
…. με ηλεκτρονικό ταχυδρομείο (e-mail)
…. μέσω του δικτύου/ομάδας όπου είμαστε μέλη
…. με άλλον τρόπο…….. παρακαλώ, εξηγήστε:
……
…….

4. Στις συναλλαγές σας, πως καθορίζετε τυχόν αντιστοιχία αυτού που προσφέρετε και αυτού που λαμβάνετε;
Μπορείτε να επιλέξετε περισσότερες της μιας απαντήσεις.
…. Δεν υπάρχει αντιστοιχία
…. Στο περίπου
…. Σε κιλά/λίτρα
…. Σε σάκκους/σακκούλες/φιάλες/πανέρια
…. Σε ώρες εργασίας
…. Έχουμε συμφωνήσει από πριν μια αντιστοιχία με συνδυασμό ποσότητας και είδους, π.χ. ξέρουμε ότι 1 κιλό πατάτες είναι ίσο με δύο κιλά μήλα, κλπ
…. Σε μονάδα μέτρησης με βάση κάτι από όλα που δίνουμε/παίρνουμε, π.χ. μήλα, λάδι, κλπ
…. Σε παράλληλο νόμισμα, όχι όμως σε ευρώ
…. Σε ευρώ χωρίς να το χρησιμοποιούμε
…. Σε συνδυασμό από τα παραπάνω, π.χ. ευρώ και παράλληλο νόμισμα, κιλά και παράλληλο νόμισμα κλπ. **Παρακαλώ, εξηγήστε**……..
……

5. Σχετικά με το χρόνο προσφοράς και λήψης στις συναλλαγές:
Μπορείτε να επιλέξετε περισσότερες της μιας απαντήσεις.
…. μεταξύ δύο πλευρών, η προσφορά και η λήψη γίνονται ταυτόχρονα
…. κάθε προσφορά/λήψη γίνεται όποτε κάθε μέλος το χρειάζεται και όχι μαζί προσφορά-αντιπροσφορά
…. υπάρχει χρονικό όριο για αντιστοίχιση προσφοράς και λήψης, π.χ. οι υποχρεώσεις καθενός/καθεμιάς εκπληρώνονται το αργότερο σε…….. μήνες (παρακαλώ συμπληρώστε τον αριθμό των μηνών)
…. εξαρτάται από το είδος της συναλλαγής, π.χ. τα γεωργικά αγαθά προσφέρονται στην εποχή της συγκομιδής.
…. Άλλο. Παρακαλώ, εξηγήστε…….

Παρακαλώ, εάν επιλέξατε την απάντηση «εξαρτάται από το είδος της συναλλαγής, εξηγήστε:
……..
……
……

6. Πώς καταγράφονται υποχρεώσεις που εκκρεμούν, λήψεις που έγιναν και δεν εκκρεμούν, συμφωνίες που θα εκπληρωθούν στο μέλλον;
Μπορείτε να επιλέξετε περισσότερες της μιας απαντήσεις.
…. Δεν καταγράφονται
…. Συμφωνούμε δια λόγου με όποιον έχουμε δοσοληψίες
…. Το ανακοινώνουμε στην ομάδα όπου συμμετέχουμε
…. Το καταγράφουμε με όποιον/όποιαν έχουμε δοσοληψίες
…. Το καταγράφει η ομάδα/δίκτυο όπου συμμετέχουμε

Η καταγραφή γίνεται σε…
Μπορείτε να επιλέξετε περισσότερες της μιας απαντήσεις.
…. χαρτί
…. υπολογιστή

7. Πόσο μακρυά μετακινείστε για μια συναλλαγή;
Μπορείτε να επιλέξετε περισσότερες της μιας απαντήσεις.
…. καθόλου, οι άλλοι συναλλασσόμενοι έρχονται στο χώρο μου
…. στη γειτονιά
…. στις γύρω γειτονιές/περιοχές
…. στην πόλη/στο χωριό μου
…. στον νομό μου
…. στην περιφέρεια όπου ανήκω
…. σε όλην την Ελλάδα

8. Αυτά που προσφέρετε (αγαθά ή/και εργασία), πόσο μακρυά μετακινούνται;
Η ερώτηση αφορά και τυχόν αγαθά ή εργασίες, των οποίων το αποτέλεσμα μεταφέρεται μακρυά μέσω ηλεκτρονικού υπολογιστή. Μπορείτε να επιλέξετε περισσότερες της μιας απαντήσεις.
…. καθόλου, οι άλλοι συναλλασσόμενοι έρχονται στο χώρο μου
…. στη γειτονιά
…. στις γύρω γειτονιές/περιοχές
…. στην πόλη/στο χωριό μου
…. στον νομό μου
…. στην περιφέρεια όπου ανήκω
…. σε όλην την Ελλάδα

9. Τι αγαθά και εργασίες προσφέρετε;
……
……

10. Τι από όλα όσα προσφέρετε έχετε ήδη παράσχει σε συναλλαγή χωρίς ευρώ έστω και μια φορά μέχρι σήμερα;
……
……..

11. Τι αγαθά και εργασίες ζητάτε;
……
……..

12. Τι από όλα όσα ζητάτε έχετε ήδη λάβει σε συναλλαγή χωρίς ευρώ, έστω και μια φορά μέχρι σήμερα;
……
……..

13. Πόση εργασία ή αγαθά παρέχετε:
α) Ανά εβδομάδα;…….
β) Ανά μήνα; ……..
γ) Θυμάστε μήπως πόσα αγαθά ή εργασίες προσφέρατε όντως μέσα στους τελευταίους 12 μήνες;
…….

14. Πόση εργασία ή αγαθά λαμβάνετε:
α) Ανά εβδομάδα;……..
β) Ανά μήνα; ……..
γ) Θυμάστε μήπως πόσα αγαθά ή εργασίες λάβατε όντως μέσα στους τελευταίους 12 μήνες;
……..

15. Αυτά που παρέχετε στις συναλλαγές χωρίς ευρώ τα παράγετε εσείς; …..Ναι
….Όχι
Αν ναι, θέλετε να μας περιγράψετε που βρίσκετε τα υλικά;
……
……
……..……
……..

16. Τα αγαθά και εργασίες που λαμβάνετε στις συναλλαγές χωρίς ευρώ, τα χρησιμοποιείτε που/πως;
……..

17. Επισκεφθήκατε ένα χαριστικό-ανταλλακτικό παζάρι:
…. Ποτέ
…. Μια φορά τους τελευταίους 24 μήνες
…. Μια φορά τους τελευταίους 12 μήνες
…. Δυο φορές τους τελευταίους 12 μήνες
…. Κάθε τρεις μήνες
…. Πιο συχνά από μια φορά κάθε τρεις μήνες

18. Αν έχετε απαντήσει ότι έχετε επισκεφθεί χαριστικό-ανταλλακτικό παζάρι, τότε εκεί προσφέρατε:
Μπορείτε να επιλέξετε περισσότερες της μιας απαντήσεις.
…. Τίποτε
…. Τρόφιμα
…. Ρούχα
…. Υποδήματα, τσάντες, αξεσουάρ, κοσμήματα
…. Βιβλία, δίσκους, CD, DVD, παιχνίδια
…. Έπιπλα, είδη οικιακής χρήσης, οικοσκευή
…. Άλλο……..

19. Αν έχετε απαντήσει ότι έχετε επισκεφθεί χαριστικό-ανταλλακτικό παζάρι, τότε εκεί πήρατε:
Μπορείτε να επιλέξετε περισσότερες της μιας απαντήσεις.
…. Τίποτε
…. Τρόφιμα
…. Ρούχα
…. Υποδήματα, τσάντες, αξεσουάρ, κοσμήματα
…. Βιβλία, δίσκους, CD, DVD, παιχνίδια
…. Έπιπλα, είδη οικιακής χρήσης, οικοσκευή
…. Άλλο……..

20. Αν είχατε πάρα πολλά χρήματα (ευρώ), θα προτιμούσατε να πληρώνεστε ή/και να πληρώνετε σε ευρώ για τις συναλλαγές που τώρα κάνετε χωρίς ευρώ;
…. Ναι
…. Όχι
…. Κάποιες συναλλαγές. Ποιες;……...

21. Έχετε να προσθέσετε κάποιο σχόλιο ή παρατήρηση;
……
……
……
……
……
……

Ευχαριστούμε πολύ.

Παρακαλούμε, τα ερωτηματολόγια με τις απαντήσεις σας χρειάζεται να υποβληθούν διαδικτυακά στην ιστοσελίδα
https://docs.google.com/spreadsheet/formResponse?hl=en_US&formkey=dDVBTXlmZTZNY2xUazlSOS05MWM0UFE6MQ&theme=0AX42CRMsmRFbUy1mNGY3MzQyYi02MzhlLTQ5OTEtOTdiMS1jZjNmNGNiY2I0NGU&ptok=1910293358805281228&ifq
ή να σταλούν στην ηλεκτρονική διεύθυνση isotiropoulou@econ.soc.uoc.gr ή irene.sotiropoulou@gmail.com και θα μας βοηθήσετε ιδιαίτερα για την έρευνα εάν τα συμπληρώσετε/στείλετε συμπληρωμένα **μέχρι την 25η Σεπτεμβρίου 2011**. Για όποιον/όποιαν δεν έχει πρόσβαση σε ηλεκτρονικό υπολογιστή και διαδίκτυο, παρακαλούμε να επικοινωνήσει μαζί μας στο τηλέφωνο 6979609960 για να βρεθεί κάποια άλλη λύση.

Ολόκληρη η διατριβή θα δημοσιευθεί στην ιστοσελίδα του Τμήματος Οικονομικών Επιστημών του Πανεπιστημίου Κρήτης
http://economics.soc.uoc.gr/html/index.php?newlang=ell
και θα μπορείτε να τη βρείτε και στο ιστολόγιο της έρευνας
http://erevnaantallages.blogspot.com/

Research on transactions in Greece without using the euro currency

This questionnaire is addressed to those who are members of networks or groups where transactions take place without official currency (Euro) in Greece, either by the means of another accounting unit, or by barter exchanges or in other ways. Additionally, it is aimed at those who make such transactions without being members of any network or group.

It is not obligatory to answer any of the questions. However, the more questions you answer, the more you help us with the research we do. Under no circumstances should you write your name in this questionnaire. For any clarification or comment please contact the Irene Sotiropoulou at isotiropoulou@econ.soc.uoc.gr or irene.sotiropoulou@gmail.com or dial 609 960 6979.

A. A few questions about the image of people who perform transactions without using the euro:

1. Sex

…. Male
…. Female

2. Age in years

…. 15 ≥	…. 46-55
…. 16-25	…. 56-65
..... 26-35	…. 66-75
…. 36-45	…. 76-85
	…. 86 ≤

3. City or village of dwelling……..
Please, if you live in a big city, enter the area where you live, not just general city name.

4. How many do you live together in the same house?

…1	…6
…2	…7
…3	…8
…4	…9
…5	…10

… More than 10

5. You have graduated from

…. Elementary school	…. University
…. Junior High School	…. You have a postgraduate degree
…. High School	…. You have other education (Professional, Private Colleges, Conservatories, etc)

6. What languages do you speak?
……

7. Do you use a personal computer? ….Yes ….No
8. Do you use the internet? ….Yes ….No

9. Do you use mobile phones? ….Yes ….No

10. The house where you live is
…. your own
…. property of another family member
…. on rent
…. yours, or property of another family members, but on mortgage

11. You can cultivate land, your own or someone else's? ….Yes ….No

12. Your main occupation is
……
Please, write the productive activity with which you are primarily involved, regardless whether that activity is remunerated in euro or not. If, for example you are unemployed, but you are occupied without financial reward with the care of the house or raising children, you can write either "unemployed" or the work you do without remuneration, or both.

13. You would you say that the annual income of your household in euros is of the range:
The question concerns not only your individual income, but the total income of the people living with you.

…. 0-5000	…. 20001-30000
…. 5001-10000	…. 30001-50000
…. 10001-15000	…. 50001-150000
…. 15001-20000	…. 150001 or more

14. Do you participate in a network/group where you perform transactions without using the euro?
.....Yes ……No

If you answered yes, continue directly to Section B of the questionnaire. If you answered No, continue directly to Section C of the questionnaire (omitting the section B).

Section B of the questionnaire

B.1. Some questions to ensure that if you take part in two or more networks/groups which participate in the survey, we will not compute questionnaire responses as coming from more than one people.

1. Please select the name of the group or network about which you fill in this questionnaire from the list below.
If you do not find the name on the list, please fill in the "Other" point of the list. If the name of the group or network is missing from the list, this may be because it is a very recent initiative or because we were in consultation with them while preparing the questionnaire, or because it is an initiative that we do not know about and it depends on you who are filling out the questionnaire to make us learn about its existence. The research, just like the groups and networks we are studying, is buoyant and we ask for your understanding and your help.

…. Exchange Network of Work & Products in Kerkyra/Corfu
…. Exchange Network of Local Seeds in Lesvos Island
…. Dosse-Pare
…. Kaereti social currency – Alternative Economy Network of Ierapetra
…. Logo Timis (Exchange Network)
…. Ovolos social currency
…. Cultivators' group in cooperation with the Park for Preservation of Flora and Fauna (Chania)
…. Peliti – From hand to hand (exchange network for goods & services)
…. Peliti – Localities of farms (network for traditional varieties and domestic animals)
…. Spori of Lemnos island
…. Association of Active Citizens of Amvrakikos area
…. Society for the Protection of the Environment of Corfu
…. Local Alternative Unit (LAU/TEM) – Exchange & Solidarity Network of Magnesia
…. Time Bank of Agia Varvara Municipality
…. Time Bank of the European Network of Women
…. Fasouli – Exchange & Solidarity Network
…. Freecycle Greece
…. Charise-to
…. Other……

2. Apart from this network or group, do you participate in any other network or group where you do not use the euro for your transactions?
….Yes ….No

3. If yes, which is that?
You may choose more than one answers.
…. Exchange Network of Work & Products in Kerkyra/Corfu
…. Exchange Network of Local Seeds in Lesvos Island
…. Dosse-Pare
…. Kaereti social currency – Alternative Economy Network of Ierapetra
…. Logo Timis (Exchange Network)
…. Ovolos social currency
…. Cultivators' group in cooperation with the Park for Preservation of Flora and Fauna (Chania)
…. Peliti – From hand to hand (exchange network for goods & services)
…. Peliti – Localities of farms (network for traditional varieties and domestic animals)
…. Spori of Lemnos island
…. Association of Active Citizens of Amvrakikos area
…. Society for the Protection of the Environment of Corfu
…. Local Alternative Unit (LAU/TEM) – Exchange & Solidarity Network of Magnesia
…. Time Bank of Agia Varvara Municipality
…. Time Bank of the European Network of Women
…. Fasouli – Exchange & Solidarity Network
…. Freecycle Greece
…. Charise-to
…. Other……

4. If yes, have you filled-in this same questionnaire with respect to any of them?
….Yes ….No

Please select the names of the networks/groups for which you have already completed this questionnaire
You may choose more than one answers.
…. Exchange Network of Work & Products in Kerkyra/Corfu
…. Exchange Network of Local Seeds in Lesvos Island
…. Dosse-Pare
…. Kaereti social currency – Alternative Economy Network of Ierapetra
…. Logo Timis (Exchange Network)
…. Ovolos social currency
…. Cultivators' group in cooperation with the Park for Preservation of Flora and Fauna (Chania)
…. Peliti – From hand to hand (exchange network for goods & services)
…. Peliti – Localities of farms (network for traditional varieties and domestic animals)
…. Spori of Lemnos island
…. Association of Active Citizens of Amvrakikos area
…. Society for the Protection of the Environment of Corfu
…. Local Alternative Unit (LAU/TEM) – Exchange & Solidarity Network of Magnesia
…. Time Bank of Agia Varvara Municipality
…. Time Bank of the European Network of Women
…. Fasouli – Exchange & Solidarity Network
…. Freecycle Greece
…. Charise-to
…. Other……

B.2. Some general questions about your participation in the network/group for which fill in this questionnaire

1. Since when you are member of this group/network?
Please, write year and month, if you remember. .

Year…….. Month ……..

2. Do you have any special duties / role in managing or coordinating this group/network? ….Yes ….No

If yes, which are those duties?
……..

3. Do you perform transactions, in the network/group, with people who are not official members of the group/network? ….Yes ….No

4. Why do you participate in this network/group?
……
……..
……
……..

5. Are you happy with your participation in this network/group?
…. Very much
…. Fairly
…. A little
…. Very little
…. Not at all

6. Are you happy with the cooperation of the other members of the network/group?
…. Very much
…. Fairly
…. A little
…. Very little
…. Not at all

C. Some questions <u>about your transactions without euros regardless</u> whether you participate in a network or group where such transactions take place or you do not participate in any such group

1. How often do you perform economic transactions without using the euro?
…. Every day
…. At least three times per week
…. At least once per week
…. At least once every 15 days
…. At least once per month
…. At least once every two months
…. Less often than per quarter

2. For those who perform economic transactions without euros for longer than one year: This year (2011) your transactions are seemingly, in comparison to the previous year,
…. more frequent
…. sparser

3. How do you communicate with the people with whom you perform transaction without euros?
You may choose more than one answers.
…. through meetings
…. by cable phone
…. by mobile phone
…. by e-mail
…. through the network/group which we are members of
…. in another way…….. please, specify:
……
…….

4. In your transactions, how do you specify any correspondence between what you offer and what you get?
You may choose more than one answers.
…. There is no correspondence
…. By approximation/roughly
…. In kilos/litres
…. In bags/handbags/bottles/baskets
…. In work hours
…. We have agreed in advance a correspondence combined with quantity and type, f.ex. we know that 1 kilo of potatoes equals two kilos of apples, etc.
…. In accounting unit based on something out of what we give/receive, f.ex. apples, olive oil, etc.
…. In parallel currency, but not in euros
…. In euro currency without using it
…. In a combination of the above, f.ex in euros and in parallel currency, in kilos and parallel currency, etc. **Please, specify**
……..
……

5. Concerning the time of offering and taking in transactions:
You may choose more than one answers.
…. between two parties, offer and receiving are done at the same time
…. every offer/receiving takes place when each member needs it and not together offering-counteroffering
…. there is a time limit to correspond offering and receiving, f.ex. the obligations of each person are fulfilled the latest in …… months (please, fill-in the numbers of months)
…. it depends on the type of the transaction, f.ex. agricultural products are offered at the season of harvest.
…. Other. Please, specify
…….

Please, if you chose the answer "it depends on the type of the transaction", specify:
……..
……
……

6. How are outstanding obligations recorded, receivings which took place and are not pending anymore, agreements which will be fulfilled in the future?
You may choose more than one answers.
…. They are not recorded
…. We agree by word of mouth with anyone we trade with
…. We announce it to the group we are members of
…. We record it with anyone we trade with
…. It is recorded by the group/network we are part of

Recording is made…
You may choose more than one answers.
…. on paper
…. by the use of a PC

7. How far do you commute for a transaction;
You may choose more than one answers.
…. not at all, the other people come to my place
…. in the neighbourhood
…. in the neighbourhoods/areas around mine
…. in my city/village
…. within my prefecture
…. within the region I live in
…. all over Greece

8. What you offer (goods or/and work), how far does it move?
This question also refere to any goods or works, the result of which is carried away by computer. *You may choose more than one answers.*
…. not at all, the other people come to my place
…. in the neighbourhood
…. in the neighbourhoods/areas around mine
…. in my city/village
…. within my prefecture
…. within the region I live in
…. all over Greece

9. What goods and services do you offer?
……
……

10. Which out of all those you offer, you have already provided with in a transaction without euro currency at least once till today?
……
……..

11. What goods and services do you ask for?
……
……..

12. Which out of all those you ask for, have you already received in a transaction without euro currency, at least once till today?
……
……..

13. How many goods or how much work do you provide others with:
α) per week?…….
β) per month? ……..
γ) can you remember how many goods or how much work you really provided others with the last 12 months?
…….

14. How much work or how many goods do you receive:
α) per week?…….
β) per month? ……..
γ) can you remember how many goods or how much work you really received the last 12 months?
…….

15. What you offer in the transactions without euro currency, are they produced by yourself?
…..Yes ….No
If yes, do you want to tell us where do you find the materials from?
……
……
……..……

16. The goods and services you receive in the transactions without euro currency, how and where do you use them?
……..

17. You have visited a free-exchange bazaar:
…. Never
…. Once during the last 24 months
…. Once the last 12 months
…. Twice the last 12 months
…. Every three months
…. More often than every three months

18. If you answered that you have visited a free-exchange bazaar, then you offered there:
You may choose more than one answers.
…. Nothing
…. Food
…. Clothes
…. Shoes, handbags, accessories, jewelry
…. Books, discs, CD, DVD, toys
…. Furniture, houseware
…. Other……..

19. If you answered that you have visited a free-exchange bazaar, then you took from there:
You may choose more than one answers.
…. Nothing
…. Food
…. Clothes
…. Shoes, handbags, accessories, jewelry
…. Books, discs, CD, DVD, toys
…. Furniture, houseware
…. Other……..

20. If you had too much money (euros), would you rather get paid and/or pay in euro currency for the transactions you perform now without the euro?
…. Yes
…. No
…. Some transactions.
Which ones?……...

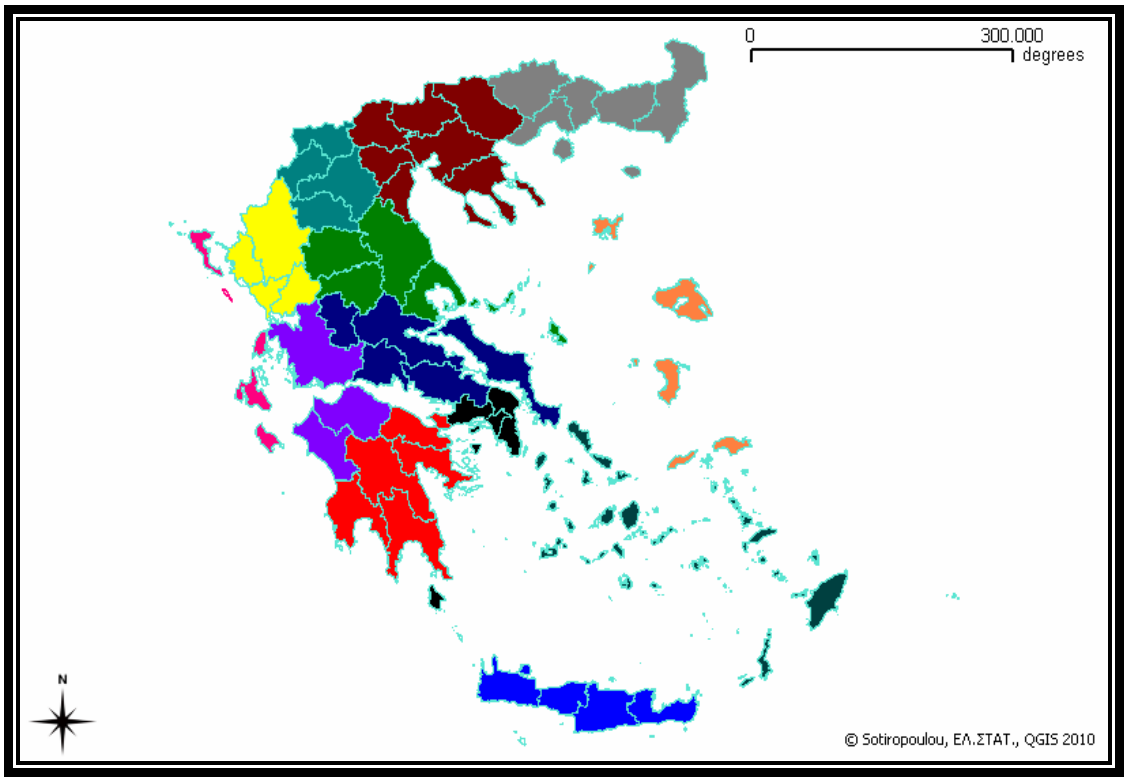
21. Do you have any comment to add?
……
…….
……
…….
……
……

Thank you very much.

Please the questionnaires with your answers need to be submitted online at the webpage
https://docs.google.com/spreadsheet/formResponse?hl=en_US&formkey=dDVBTXlmZTZNY2xUazlSOS05MWM0UFE6MQ&theme=0AX42CRMsmRFbUy1mNGY3MzQyYi02MzhlLTQ5OTEtOTdiMS1jZjNmNGNiY2I0NGU&ptok=1910293358805281228&ifq
or be sent to e-mail address isotiropoulou@econ.soc.uoc.gr orirene.sotiropoulou@gmail.com and you will help us very much for the research, if you fill them in or send them **until September 25th 2011**. For anyone who does not have access to a computer and internet, please contact us by telephone at 6979609960 to find another solution.

The entire thesis will be published on the website of the Department of Economics, University of Crete
http://economics.soc.uoc.gr/html/index.php?newlang=ell
and you will be able to find it at the research blog too
http://erevnaantallages.blogspot.com/

ANNEX D – MAP OF GREEK REGIONS[1]



REGION BY COLOUR
Thrace & East. Macedonia
Central Macedonia
Western Macedonia
Hepeiros
Thessalia
Mainland Greece
Western Greece
Peloponnese
Attica
Ionian Islands
N.Aegean
S.Aegean
Crete

[1] Information on new regional boundaries one can find from the map of Greek Ministry of Internal Affairs which also has been used to construct the map on new regional administration http://www.ypes.gr/el/Regions/programma/xartes/RegionAdmin/

BIBLIOGRAPHY & REFERENCES:

1) Abma, Tineke, Molewijk, Bert & Widdershoven, Guy (2009): Empirical Ethics as dialogical practice, *Bioethics*, vol. 23, no 4, pp. 236-248.
2) Ackerly, Brooke & True, Jacqui (2008): Reflexivity in practice: Power and ethics in feminist research on international relations, *International Studies Review*, vol. 10, pp. 693-707.
3) Akerlof, George & Shiller, Robert J. (2009): *Animal Spirits – How human psychology drives the economy and why it matters for global capitalism*, Princeton & Oxford, Princeton University Press.
4) Aldridge Theresa, Lee Roger, Leyshon Andrew, Thrift Nigel, Tooke Jane & Williams Colin (2001a), "Recasting work: The example of Local Exchange Trading Systems", *Work, Employment & Society*, vol. 15, No. 3 pp. 565-579.
5) Aldridge Theresa, Lee Roger, Leyshon Andrew, Thrift Nigel, Tooke Jane & Williams Colin (2001b), "The role of the Third Sector in paving a 'Third Way': Some lessons from Local Exchange and Trading Schemes (LETS) in the United Kingdom", *International Journal of Community Currency Research*, Vol. 5, downloadable from the website www.ijccr.net
6) Allemand Sylvain & Boutillier Sophie (editors) (2010): Social and Solidarity Economy – New routes of innovation (Économie sociale et solidaire – Nouvelles trajectoires d'innovations), in French, L' Harmattan, Paris.
7) Anderson Chris (2009): *Free – the future of a radical price*, Random House Business Books & Hyperion, London & New York.
8) Arensberg Conrad M., Pearson Harry W. & Polanyi Karl, editors (1957): *Trade and market in early empires*, Free Press, Glencoe, Illinois.
9) Aukutsionek, S. (2001): Barter – New data and comments, *Journal of East-West Business*. Vol. 6 (4) pp. 23-35.
10) Aull Davies, Charlotte (1999): *Reflexive anthropology – A guide to researching selves and others* (London & New York, Routledge).
11) Bain, Read (1951): Action research and group dynamics, *Social Forces*, vol. 30, no 1 (October), pp. 1-10.
12) Barker Drucilla K. & Kuiper Edith (editors) (2003): *Toward a feminist philosophy of economics*, Routledge – Taylor & Francis Group, London & New York.
13) Barnes, T. J. (1989). "Place, space and theories of economic value: contextualism and essentialism in economic geography." *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers, New Series* vol. 15, no. 5: 299-316.
14) Bates K. Lisa & Lepofsky Jonathan (2005), "Helping everyone have PLENTY: Addressing distribution and circulation in an HOURS-based Local Currency System", *International Journal of Community Currency Research*, Vol. 9, pp. 1-20, downloadable from the website www.ijccr.net
15) Bateson Gregory (1972): *Steps to an ecology of the mind – Collected essays in anthropology, psychiatry, evolution and epistemology*, Jason Aronson Inc., Northvale NJ & London.
16) Beach Doré (1996): *The responsible conduct of research* (Weinheim, Germany, VCH Verlagsgesellschaft mbH,).
17) Bensman Joseph & Vidich Arthur (1960): Social theory in field research, *The American Journal of Sociology*, vol. 65, no. 6 – May, pp. 577-584.

18) Biddle Erika, Graeber David & Shukaitis Stevphen, editors (2007): *Constituent Imagination: Militant Investigations//Collective Theorization*, AK Press, Oakland-Edinburgh-West Virginia.
19) Biggart Nicole Woolsey & Delbridge Rick (2004): Systems of exchange, *Academy of Management Review*, vol. 29, no. 1 – January, pp. 28-49.
20) Birch Dawn & Liesch W. Peter (1998), "Moneyless business exchange – Practitioners' attitudes to business-to-business barter in Australia", *Industrial Marketing Management*, Vol. 27, pp. 329-340.
21) Blanc Jerome & Fare Marie (2010): Les monnaies sociales en tant que dispositifs innovants: une évaluation [The social currencies as innovative devices: an evaluation]", manuscript in French, published at X Meeting of inter-university network of social and solidarity economy (RIUESS), Luxembourg, accessible at http://halshs.archives-ouvertes.fr/docs/00/51/83/49/PDF/BlancFareRIUESSLux.pdf
22) Blanc Jerome (2011): Classifying "CCs": Community, complementary and local currencies' types and generations, *International Journal of Community Currency Research*, vol. 15, Special Issue, Section D, pp. D4-10. Accessible at https://ijccr.files.wordpress.com/2012/05/ijccr-2011-special-issue-02-blanc.pdf
23) Borg Ingwer & Groenen Patrick J.F. (2005): *Modern Multidimensional Scaling – Theory & Applications*, Spriner, New York – USA.
24) Boser Susan (2006): Ethics and power in community-campus partnerships for research, *Action Research*, vol. 4, no 1, pp. 9-21.
25) Botkin Jeffrey R., Gehlert Sarah, Kost Rhonda, Loup Allan, Nelson Robert M., Ross Lainie Friedman (2010): Human subjects protections in community-engaged research: A research ethics framework, *Journal of Empirical Research on Human Research Ethics*, vol. 5, no.1, pp. 5-17.
26) Bowring Finn (1998), "LETS: An eco-socialist initiative?", *New Left Review*, No. 232 (November-December), pp. 91-111.
27) Boyle David (1999), *Funny Money: In Search of Alternative Cash*, (London, Harper Collins Publishers).
28) Boynton Petra M (2005): *The Research Companion - A practical guide for the social and health sciences* (Hove & New York, Psychology Press-Taylor & Francis Group).
29) Bradshaw Alan, Chatzidakis Andreaw & Maclaran Pauline (2012): Heterotopian space and the utopics of ethical and green consumption, *Journal of Marketing Management*, Vol. 28, no 3-4, pp. 494-515.
30) Brennan Goeffrey (1996): The economist's approach to ethics – A late twentieth century view, in Groenewegen, Peter: *Economics and Ethics?* (London & New York, Routledge), pp. 121-137.
31) Brewer Marilynn B. & Crano William D (2002): *Principles and methods of social research* (Mahwah, NJ & London, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Publishers), 2nd edition.
32) Briggs Kaitlin (1996): Geography lessons for researchers: A look into the research space for humanity lost or gained, *Anthropology & Education Quarterly*, vol. 27, no. 1 – March, pp. 5-19.
33) Brinkerhoff Merlin, Jacob Jeffrey, Jovic Emily & Wheatley Gerard (2004): "The social and cultural capital of community currency – An Ithaca HOURS case study survey", *International Journal of Community Currency Research*, Vol. 8, pp. 42-56, downloadable from the website www.ijccr.net

34) Brinkman Svend & Kvale Steinar (2005): Confronting the ethics of qualitative research, *Journal of Constructivist Psychology*, vol. 18, pp.157-181.
35) Brunsveld Ton (2000-2001): Innovative initiatives for welfare – Non-banking and banking initiatives – An overview, paper of the FACET BV-Supporting Small Entreprises, Zeist-The Netherlands, June 2000, available at http://www.socioeco.org/bdf/_docs/innovative_initiatives_for_welfare.pdf
36) Bush P.D. (1991): Reflections on the twenty-fifth Anniversary of AFEE: Philosophical and Methodological Issues in Institutional Economics, *Journal of Economic Issues*, vol. 25, no. 2 – June, pp. 321-346.
37) Cahn Edgar (2001): On LETS and Time Dollars, *International Journal of Community Currency Research*, Vol. 5, downloadable from the website www.ijccr.net
38) Caldwell Caron (2000): Why Do People Join Local Exchange Trading Systems?, *International Journal of Community Currency Research*, Vol. 4, downloadable from the website www.ijccr.net
39) Cannella Gaile & Lincoln Yvonne (2009): Ethics and the broader rethinking/reconceptualization of research as construct, *Cultural Studies <=> Critical Methodologies*, vol. 9, pp. 273-285.
40) Caplan, Pat (ed.) (2003): *The ethics of anthropology: Debates and dilemmas* Routledge, London & New York.
41) Carlin Wendy, Fries Stephen, Schaffer Mark & Seabright Paul (2000): "Barter and non-monetary transactions in transition economies: evidence from a cross-country survey". In Seabright Paul (ed.): *The Vanishing Rouble: Barter networks and non-monetary transactions in former Soviet societies*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge & New York, pp. 236-256.
42) Catton William R. (1959): A theory of value, *American Sociological Review*, vol. 24, no. 3- June, pp. 310-317.
43) Charusheela S. (2003): Empowering work? Bargaining models reconsidered, in Barker Drucilla K. & Kuiper Edith (editors): *Toward a feminist philosophy of economics*, Routledge – Taylor & Francis Group, London & New York, pp. 287-303.
44) Cherryholmes, Cleo H. (1988): Construct validity and the discourses of research, *American Journal of Education*, vol. 96, no 3 (May), pp. 421-457.
45) Chilungu, Simeon W. (1976): Issues in the ethics of research method: An interpretation of the Anglo-American perspective, *Current Anthropology*, vol. 17, no 3 (September), pp. 457-481 (with comments by various authors and reply).
46) Christidou Evangelia (2008): *Ντόπιες Ποικιλίες: Τι, Ποιος και Γιατί; [Local varieties: What, who and why?]*, MSc Thesis, Department of Environmen – University of Aegean, Mytilene – Greece.
47) Collom Ed (2007): The motivations, engagement, satisfaction, outcomes and demographics of Time Bank participants: Survey findings from a US system, *International Journal of Community Currency Research*, vol. 11, pp. 36-83.
48) Collom Ed (2003/2004): "Community currencies in the United States: The environments in which it emerges and survives", paper downloaded on 04.09.2004 from the website www.appropriate-economics.org/materials/cc_in_usa.pdf .
49) Connolly Kate & Reid Adela (2007): Ethics review for qualitative inquiry: Adopting a value-based, facilitative approach, *Qualitative Inquiry*, vol. 13, no. 7 (October), pp. 1031-1047.

50) Consesa-Sevilla Jorje (2006): The intrinsic value of the whole: Cognitive and utilitarian evaluative processes as they pertain to egocentric, deep ecological and ecopsychological "valuing", *The Trumpeter*, vol. 22, no. 2, pp. 26-42.
51) Creutz, H. (1982): *The money syndrome – Paths to an economic order free from crises*, preliminary translation in English by H.Eisencolb & R.Mittelstaedt, accessible online at http://userpage.fu-berlin.de/~roehrigw/creutz/geldsyndrom/english/.
52) Dalla Costa Mariarosa (2007): Food as common and community, *The Commoner*, no. 12, pp. 129-137, accessible at www.thecommoner.org.
53) Dalton George (1965): Primitive money, *American Anthropologist (New Series)*, vol. 67, no. 1-February, pp. 44-65.
54) Dalton George (1982): Barter, *Journal of Economic Issues*, vol. 16, no. 1-March, pp. 181-190.
55) Danson M.W. & Pacione Michael (1999): "The other side of the coin: Local currency as a response to the globalisation of capital" *(Debates & Reviews), Regional Studies*, Vol. 33, No. 1 (February), p.63 (1).
56) DeMeulenaere Stephen & Lopezllera-Mendez Luis (2000): "Towards an economy in the hands of the people - The Tianguis Tlaloc Local Currency System in Mexico", *International Journal of Community Currency Research*, Vol. 4, downloadable from the website www.ijccr.net
57) DeMeulenaere Stephen, Greco Thomas & Lopezllera-Mendez Luis (1999): Towards an economy in the hands of the people: Parallel currencies in the Majority World – Study of the Tianguis Tlaloc Local Currency System in Mexico City, paper published on October 30th 1999, downloaded on 08.09.2004 from the website www.appropriate-economic.org/materials/Towards_an_Economy_in_the_hands_of_the_People.pdf
58) Denscombe Martyn (2003): *The good research guide for small-scale social research projects*, Open University Press, Maidenhead, Philadelphia, 2nd edition.
59) Derudder Philippe & Holbecq Andre-Jacques (2010): *Une monnaie nationale complementaire*, Yves Michel, Gap-France.
60) Diamond Jr Arthur M.(2009): Fixing ideas: how research is constrained by mandated formalism, *Journal of Economic Methodology*, vol. 16, no. 2, pp. 191 – 206.
61) Dillard Dudley (1942): Silvio Gesell's monetary theory of social reform, *American Economic Review*, vol. 32, no. 2 – Part 1 – June, pp. 348-352.
62) Dimitrakos Dimitrios (1936): Μέγα Λεξικόν Όλης της Ελληνικής Γλώσσης [Great Dictionary of the Entire Greek Language], Δομή (Domi Publishing), Athens.
63) Diquattro Arthur (2007): The labor theory of value and simple commodity production, *Science & Society*, vol. 71, no. 4 – October, pp. 455.483.
64) Doherty (O') Richard K., Dürrschmidt Jorg, Jowers Peter & Purdue Derrick A. (1999): Local Exchange and Trading Schemes: A useful strand of community economic development policy?, *Environment and Planning A*, Vol. 31, No. 9 (September), pp. 1639-1653.
65) Donaldson Tom (2003): Editor's comments: Taking ethics seriously: A mission now more possible, *The Academy of Management Review*, vol. 28, no 3 (July), pp. 363-366.

66) Douthwaite Richard (1999): *The ecology of money*, online edition of the Schumacher Briefing "The ecology of money" (Green Books 1999), downloaded on 13.05.2004 from the website www.feasta.org/documents/moneyecology.
67) Douthwaite Richard (2006): *Short Circuit*, online edition updated till July 2006, downloadable from the website www.feasta.org/documents/shortcircuit/index.html.
68) Ehrenreich Barbara & Russell Hochchild Arlie, editors (2003): *Global Woman – Nannies, maids and sex workers in the new economy*, Granta Books & Metropolitan Books, London and US.
69) Ehrenreich Barbara (2002): *Nickel and Dimed – Undercover in low-wage USA*, Granta Books, London.
70) Eikeland Olav (2006): Condescending ethics and action research: Extended review article, *Action Research*, vol. 4 pp. 37-47.
71) Engels Friedrich. & Marx Karl (1985): *Η Ελλάδα, η Τουρκία και το Ανατολικό Ζήτημα [Greece, Turkey and the Eastern Question]*, Introduction-Translation-Notes by Panayotis Kondylis, Series: Phislophical & Political Library, (Athens: Εκδόσεις «Γνώση» [Gnossis Publishing]).
72) Evered Roger D. & Susman Gerald I. (1978): An assessment of the scientific merits of action research, *Administrative Science Quarterly*, vol. 23, no 4 (December), pp. 582-603.
73) Eysenbach Gunther & Till James E. (2001): Ethical issues in qualitative research on internet communities, *British Medical Journal*, no. 323, pp. 1103-1105.
74) Fantacci Luca (2004): Complementary Currencies: A prospect on money from a retrospect on premodern practices, *ISE Working Paper*, of Bocconi University No 1/2004, Milan-Italy.
75) Fayazmanesh Sasan (2006): *Money and exhange – Folktales and reality* (New York & London: Routledge-Taylor & Francis Group).
76) Feiner Susan F. (2003): Reading neoclassical economics – Toward an erotic economy of sharing, in Barker, Drucilla K. & Kuiper, Edith (editors): *Toward a feminist philosophy of economics*, Routledge – Taylor & Francis Group, London & New York, pp. 180-193.
77) Fine Ben & Lapavitsas Costas (2000): Markets and money in social theory: What role for economics?, *Economy & Society*, vol. 29, no.3 – August, pp. 357-382.
78) Fisher Irving (1933): *Stamp Scrip*, assisted by Hans R. L. Cohrssen & Herbert W. Fisher, Adelphi Company Publishers, New York, downloaded on.04.09.2004 from the website www.appropriate-economics.org/ebooks/fisher/contents.html, also available at http://userpage.fu-berlin.de/~roehrigw/.
79) Fitzpatrick Tony (2000): "LETS and Benefit Claiming in the UK: Results of a Pilot Project", *International Journal of Community Currency Research*, Vol. 4, downloadable from the website www.ijccr.net
80) Flicker Sarah, Guta Andrian, Meagher Aileen, McDonald Sean & Travers Robb (2007): Ethical dilemmas in community-based participatory research: Recommendations for Institutional Review Boards, *Journal of Urban Health: Bulletin of the New York Academy of Medicine*, vol. .84, no 4, pp. 478-493.

81) Francis Steve & Wilber Charles K. (1986): “The methodological basis of Hirschman’s Development Economics: Pattern model vs general laws”, World Development, vol. 14, no. 2, pp. 181-194.
82) Gardner Katy (1999): Location and relocation: Home, “the field” and anthropological ethics (Sylhet, Bangladesh), in Watson, C.W.: *Being there – Fieldwork in anthropology* (London – Sterling, Virginia, Pluto Press), pp. 49-73.
83) Gelleri Christian (2009). "Chiemgauer regiomoney: Theory and practice of a local currency." *International Journal of Community Currency Research* vol. 13, pp. 61-75.
84) Gemmill Elisabeth & Mayhew Nicholas (1995): *Changing values in Medieval Scotland – A study of prices, money and weights and measures* (Cambridge & New York: Cambridge University Press).
85) Gesell Silvio (1906): *The natural economic order*, online version (transl. in English by Philip Pye), downloaded on 04.09.2004 from the websites www.appropriate-economics/ebooks/neo/neo.htm and www.systemfehler.de/en/neo/index.htm.
86) Gill Flora (1996): Comment on Ethics and Economics Science, in Groenewegen, Peter: *Economics and Ethics?* (London & New York, Routledge), pp. 138-156.
87) Gillam Mynn & Marilys Guillemin (2004): Ethics, reflexivity and “Ethically Important Moments” in Research, *Qualitative Inquiry*, vol. 10, pp. 261-280.
88) Glese-Davis Janine (2008): Community/Research collaborations: Ethics and funding, *Clinical psychology: Science and Practice*, vol. 45, no. 2 (June), pp. 149-152.
89) Glover Paul & Hargraves Monica (1998): “In each other we trust – Local currency brings communities together”, *Whole Earth*, spring, p. 50 (1).
90) Goduka Ivy N. (1990): Ethics and politics of field research in South Africa, Social Problems, vol. 37, no 3 (August), pp. 329-340.
91) Goerner Sally, Lietaer Bernard & Ulanowicz Robert E. (2009a): Options for managing a systemic bank crisis, *Sapiens*, vol. 1, no. 1, pp. 1-15.
92) Goerner Sally J., Lietaer Bernard & Ulanowicz Robert E. (2009b): “Quantifying economic sustainability: Implications for free entreprise theory, policy and practice”, *Ecological Economics.* Vol. 69 pp. 76-81.
93) Goerner Sally, Lietaer Bernard, McLaren Nadia & Ulanowicz Robert E. (2010): Is our monetary structure a systemic cause for financial instability? Evidence and remedies from nature, *Journal of Future Studies*, vol. 14, no. 3 – March, pp. 89-108.
94) Gomez Georgina (2012): Sustainability of the Argentine Complementary Currency Systems: Four governance systems, *International Journal of Community Currency Researc*h, vol. 16, Special Issue-Section D, pp. 80-90.
95) Graeber David (2011): *Debt – The first 5000 years*, Melville House, Brooklyn-New York.
96) Graeber David (2001) : *Towards an anthropological theory of value – The false coin of our dreams*, Palgrave, Houndmills & New York.
97) Graeber David (2006): Turning modes of production inside out – Or, why capitalism is a transformation of slavery, *Critique of Anthropology*, vol. 26, no. 1, pp. 61-85 .

98) Gran Even (1998): "Green domination in Norwegian Letsystems: Catalyst for growth or constraint on development?", *International Journal of Community Currency Research*, Vol. 2, downloadable from the website www.ijccr.net
99) Greco H. Thomas (Junior) (2001): *Money – Understanding and creating alternatives to legal tender*, e-book excerpted version, Chelsea Green Publishing Company, White River Junction, Vermont, downloaded from the website www.appropriate-economics.org.
100) Greco H. Thomas (Junior) (2009): *The end of money and the future of civilization*, Chelsea Green Publishing, White River Junction- Vermont, USA.
101) Gregory Christopher A. (1997): *Savage money – The anthropology and politics of commodity exchange*, Harwood Academic Publishers, The Netherlands.
102) Gregory Lee (2009): Change takes time: Exploring structural and development issues of the time banking, *International Journal of Community Currency Research*, vol. 13, pp. 19-32.
103) Gullbekk Svein (2005): Natural and money economy in medieval Norway, *Scandinavian Journal of History*. Vol. 30 (1) pp. 3-19.
104) Hallsmith Gwendolyn & Lietaer Bernard (2011): *Creating wealth – Growing local economies with local currencies*, New Society Publishers, Gabriola Island – Canada.
105) Halse Christine & Honey Anne (2005): Unravelling ethics: Illuminating the moral dilemmas of research ethics, *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, vol.30, no.4, pp.2141-2162.
106) Hammen Oscar J. (1972): "Marx and the Agrarian Question", *The American Historical Review*. Vol. 77(3 – June) pp. 679-704.
107) Harding Sandra & Norberg Kathryn (2005): New feminist approaches to social sciences methodologies: An introduction, *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, vol. 30, no. 4 (summer), pp. 2009-2015.
108) Harrison Robert S. & Wilber Charles K. (1978): "The methodological basis of institutional economics: Pattern model, storytelling and holism", *Journal of Economic Issues*, vol. 12, no. 1-March, pp. 61-89.
109) Haughton Graham (1990). Manufacturing recession? BHP and the recession in Wollongong. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, vol 14, no 1, pp. 70-88.
110) Haughton Graham (1998). Principles and practice of community economic development. *Regional Studies (Debates & Reviews)* vol 32, no 9 – December, pp. 872-878.
111) Hay Iain & Israel Mark (2006): *Research Ethics for Social Scientists - Between ethical conduct and regulatory compliance* (London-Thousand Oaks – New Delhi, Sage Publications).
112) Hechter Micahel (1974): *Internal colonialism – The Celtic fringe in Celtic national development, 1536-1966* (Berkeley & Los Angeles: University of California Press).
113) Henderson Hazel (1996): *Building a win-win world – Life beyond global economic warfare*, Berrett Koehler Publishers, San Francisco.
114) Hirschheim Rudy & Klein Heinz K. (1994): Realizing emancipatory principles in Information Systems Development: The case of ethics, *MIS Quarterly*, vol. 18, no 1 (March), pp. 83-109.

115) Hodges Josephine & Stott Martin (1996): "Local Exchange and Trading Systems – Never knowingly undersold?", *Local Economy*, Vol. 11, No. 3 (November), pp. 266-268.
116) Hodgson Geoffrey M. & Itoh Makoto (eds) (2001): *Capitalism in evolution: Global contentions – East and West* (Cheltenham, UK & Northampton, MA-USA: Edward Elgar).
117) Hodgson Geoffrey (2001): "The evolution of capitalism from the perspective of institutional and evolutionary economics". In Hodgson, G.M. & Itoh, M. (eds): *Capitalism in evolution: Global contentions – East and West* (Cheltenham, UK & Northampton, MA-USA: Edward Elgar) pp. 63-82.
118) Holloway John (2010): *Crack capitalism*, New York, Pluto Press.
119) Hornborg Alf (1992): Machine fetishism, value and the image of the unlimited good: Towards a thermodynamics of imperialism, *Man (New Series)*, vol. 27, pp. 1-18.
120) Horton John (2008): A "sense of failure"? Everydayness and research ethics, *Children's Geographies*, vol.6, no 4, pp. 363-383.
121) Humphrey Caroline (1985): Barter and economic disintegration, *Man (New Series)*, vol. 20, no. 1-March, pp. 48-72.
122) Ingham Geoffrey (2004): *The nature of money*, Polity Press, Cambridge UK & Malden MA.
123) Ingham Geoffrey (2007): The specificity of money, *Archives of European Sociology*, vol. 48, no.2, pp. 265-272.
124) Ingleby Julie (1998): "Local Economic Trading Systems: Potentials for new communities of meaning: A brief exploration of eight LETSystems, with a focus on decision making", *International Journal of Community Currency Research*, Vol. 2, downloadable from the website www.geog.le.ac.uk/ijccr/vol1-3/2no2.htm.
125) Iwai Katsuhito (2001, 1997)): Evolution of money, RIJE Discussion Paper 1997-F-37, also published in Pagano, Uno & Nicita, Antonio (editors) (1997): *Evolution of Economic Diversity*, Routledge, London, pp. 396-431, also available in its last version from the author's webpage http://iwai-k.com.
126) Jayaraman Rajshri & Oak Mandar (2001): "Local currency as a development strategy", paper published in March 2001, downloaded on 04.09.2004 from the website www.appropriate-economics.org/materials/hours_currency_as_development_strategy.pdf
127) Jorgensen Joseph (1971): On ethics and anthropology, *Current Anthropology*, vol. 12, no 3 (July), pp. 321-334.
128) Kalmonick Paul (2001): Simmel's legacy for contemporary value theory, *Sociological Theory*, vol. 19, no. 1-March, pp. 65-85.
129) Kapogiannis Dimitris & Nikolopoulos Takis (2010): Crises are the mothers of invention: Alternative-Social Currencies (Κρίσεις τέχνας κατεργάζονται: Εναλλακτικά Κοινωνικά Νομίσματα), unpublished paper (in Greek).
130) Karatzas Leonidas & Tuncay Faruk (2000): *"Τουρκο-Ελληνικό Λεξικό" [Turkish-Greek Dictionary]*, Centre of Oriental Languages and Culture, Athens.
131) Kaskarelis Ioannis (2009): The moneyless free time, *International Journal of Social Economics*, vol. 36, no. 12, pp. 1153-1166.

132) Kennedy Margrit (1995): "Interest and Inflation Free Money", *Seva International*, downloaded on 04.09.2004 from the website www.appropriate-economics.org/ebooks/kennedy/kennedy.htm

133) Kennedy Margrit and Lietaer Bernard (2008). *Monnaies régionales: De nouvelles voies vers une prospérité durable*. Paris, Éditions Charles Léopold Mayer. Trans. by V. Guimard.

134) Keynes John Maynard (1936): *The general theory of employment, interest and money*, Macmillan & Co LtD, London.

135) Kichiji, Nozomi & Nishibe, Makoto (2012): A comparison in transaction efficiency between dispersive and concentrated money creation, *International Journal of Community Currency Research*, vol. 16, Special Issue-Section D, pp. 49-57.

136) Kocherlakota Narayana (1999): The two-money theorem, *International Economic Review*. Vol. 43 (2-May) pp. 333-346.

137) Kosmas Petros & Vatikiotis Leonidas (2011): Nominal and Real Aims of Austerity Programs: the Greek (extreme) Case, paper presented at the 2nd International Conference in Political Economy *Neoliberalism and the Crises of Economic Science* **(**20-22.05.2011) Istanbul – Turkey, available at http://www.iippe.org/wiki/images/f/ff/CONF_2011_Vatikiotis_Kosmas.pdf .

138) Kraay Colin (1964): Hoards, small change and the origin of coinage, *The Journal of Hellenic Studies*, vol. 84, pp. 76-91.

139) Kuiper Edith (2003): The construction of masculine identity in Adam Smith's "Theory of Moral Sentiments", in Barker, Drucilla K. & Kuiper, Edith (editors): *Toward a feminist philosophy of economics*, Routledge – Taylor & Francis Group, London & New York, pp. 145-160.

140) Laacher Smaïn (1999): "Nouvelles formes de sociabilités ou les limites d' une utopie politique - L'exemple des systèmes d'échange local (SEL) (New forms of sociability or the limits of a political utopia – The example of Local Exchange Systems)", *International Journal of Community Currency Research*, Vol. 3, downloadable from the website www.ijccr.net

141) Lapavitsas Costas (2005a): The emergence of money in commodity exchange or money as monopolist of the ability to buy, *Review of Political Economy*, vol. 17, no. 4, 549-569.

142) Lapavitsas Costas (2005b): The social relations of money as universal equivalent: A response to Ingham, *Economy & Society*, vol. 34, no. 3, pp. 389-403.

143) Lapavitsas, Costas (2010): Financialisation and capitalist accumulation: Structural accounts of the crisis 2007-2009, *Research on Money and Finance Discussion Paper* No 16, available at http://www.researchonmoneyandfinance.org/media/papers/RMF-16-Lapavitsas.pdf

144) Latouche Serge (2004): *Survivre au developpement [Surviving development]*, Mille-et-une nuits, Paris-France.

145) Latouche Serge (2008): *Το στοίχημα της αποανάπτυξης [The bet of degrowth- in English it had been translated as "Farewell to growth"]*, Banias-Perasmata Publishing, Thessalonike-Greece.

146) Laws Sophie with Harper Caroline & Marcus Rachel (2003): *Research for development – A practical guide* (London-Thousand Oaks – New Delhi, Sage Publications).

147) Lee R. (1996): "Moral money? LETS and the social construction of local economic geographies in Southeast England", *Environment & Planning A*, Vol. 28, pp. 1377-1394.
148) Leyshon Andrew & Thrift Nigel (2005): *Money/Space – Geographies of monetary transformation*, Routledge, London & New York.
149) Liesch W. Peter & Palia P. Aspy (1999): "Australian perceptions and experiences of international countertrade with some international comparisons", *European Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 23, No. 5-6, pp.488-511.
150) Lietaer A. Bernard (1998): "Community Currencies: A New Tool for the 21st Century", downloaded on 04.09.2004 from the website http://www.appropriate-economics.org/materials/21stcent.html
151) Lietaer, Bernard (2010): "Monetary monopoly as structural cause for systemic financial instabilities?". In Mouatt, S. & Adams, C. (eds) *Corporate and social transformation of money and banking: Breaking the serfdom* (Palgrave Macmillan) chapter 2.
152) Longhurst Noel & Seyfang Gill (2011): "Harnessing grassroots innovations: Complementary currencies and sustainability", paper presented at the International Conference on Community and Complementary Currencies held (16-17 February 2011) at Lyon, France, available at http://conferences.ish-lyon.cnrs.fr/index.php/cc-conf/2011/paper/viewFile/64/31.
153) Loue Sana (2002): *Textbook of research ethics – Theory and practice* (New York-Boston-Dordrecht – London – Moscow, Kluwer Academic Publishers).
154) Macy Michael W. (1988): Value theory and the "golden eggs": Appropriating the magic of accumulation, *Sociological Theory*, vol. 6, no. 2 – Autumn, pp. 131-152.
155) Martin A. (2006): "Endogenous multiple currencies", *Journal of Money, Credit & Banking.* , Vol. 38 (1 – February) pp. 245-262.
156) Martinet André (1985) : Θέματα λειτουργικής σύνταξης [Studies in Functional Syntax], Εκδόσεις Νεφέλη [Nefeli Publishing], Athens.
157) Marvasti Akbar & Smyth David (1998): Barter in the US economy: a macroeconomic analysis, *Applied Economics*. Vol. 30 (8) pp. 1077-1088.
158) Marx Karl (1976, 1990): *Capital* vol I, II, III, Penguin Books, London.
159) Mascornick Jeff (2007): "Local Currency Loans and Grants: Comparative Case Studies of Ithaca HOURS and Calgary Dollars", *International Journal of Community Currency Research*, vol. 11, www.uea.ac.uk/env/ijccr
160) Masoudi Nejad R. (XXXX). "Social bazaar and commercial bazaar: comparative study of spatial role of Iranian bazaar in the historical cities in different socio-economical context." Retrieved from http://www.spacesyntax.tudelft.nl/media/Long%20papers%20I/rezamasoudi.pdf and last accessed on 31 October 2010.
161) Mateo Tomé Juan Pablo (2011): Financialization as a Theory of Crisis in a Historical Perspective: Nothing New under the Sun, *University of Massachussetts Political Economy Research Institute Working Paper* no 262, available at http://www.peri.umass.edu/fileadmin/pdf/working_papers/working_papers_251-300/WP262.pdf .
162) Mauss Marcel (2002): *The gift*, Routledge, London & New York.

163) May William F. (1980): Doing ethics: The bearing of ethical theories on fieldwork, *Social Problems*, vol. 27, no 3 – Ethical problems of fieldwork (February), pp. 358-370.
164) Mazower Mark (2002): *Τα Βαλκάνια [The Balkans]*, trans. Constantinos Kouremenos (Athens: Εκδόσεις Πατάκη [Patakis Publishing].
165) Moseley Fred (2005): Introduction, in Moseley, Fred (editor): *Marx's theory of value: Modern appraisals*, Palgrave Macmillan, Houndmills Basingstoke & New York, pp. 1-18.
166) Moseley Fred (editor) (2005): *Marx's theory of value: Modern appraisals*, Palgrave Macmillan, Houndmills Basingstoke & New York.
167) Nash, Dennison & Wintrob, Ronald (1972): The emergence of self-consciousness in ethnography, *Current Anthropology*, vol. 13, no 5 (December), pp. 527-542 (with comments by various authors and reply).
168) Neale Bill & Shipley David (1987): Industrial barter & countertrade, *Industrial Marketing Management*, vol. 16, pp. 1-8.
169) Neale Walter C. (1957): The market in theory and history, in Arensberg Conrad M., Pearson Harry W. & Polanyi Karl: *Trade and market in early empires*, Free Press, Glencoe, Illinois, pp. 357-372.
170) Nexus Magazine (2003): "Complementary currencies for social change – An interview with Bernard Lietaer", by Ravi Dykema, *Nexus Magazine* (July-August 2003), downloaded on 04.09.2004 from the website http://www.appropriate-economics.org/materials/complementary_currencies_social_change.html.
171) Nguyen, Hung T. &Wu, Berlin (2006): *Fundamentals of Statistics with Fuzzy Data*, Springer, The Netherlands.
172) Niebyl Karl H. (1940): The need for a concept of value in economic theory, *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, vol. 54, no. 2 – February, pp.201-216.
173) Niehans Jürg (1971): Money and barter in general equilibrium with transaction costs, *American Economic Review*, vol. 61, no. 5 –December, pp. 773-783.
174) Niehans Jürg (1987): Classical monetary theory, new and old, *Credit and Banking*, vol. 19, no. 4-November, pp. 409-424.
175) North Peter (1996): "LETS: A policy for community empowerment in the inner city?", *Local Economy*, Vol. 11, No. 3 (November), pp. 268-277.
176) North Peter (1998a): "LETS, "Hours" and the Swiss "Business Ring" – Alternative currency systems and business development programmes", *Local Economy*, Vol. 13, No. 2 (August), pp. 114-132.
177) North Peter (1998b): "Exploring the politics of social movements through "sociological intervention": A case study of Local Exchange Trading Schemes", *Sociological Review*, Vol. 46, pp.564-582.
178) North Peter (2007): *Money and liberation – The micropolitics of alternative currency movements*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis & London.
179) North, Peter (2010): *Local Money – How to make it happen in your community*, Green Books, Dartington & Devon- UK.
180) Oh Seonghwan (1989): A theory of a generally accepted medium of exchange and barter, *Journal of Monetary Economics*, vol. 23, pp. 101-119.
181) Oliver, Paul (2003): *The student's guide to research ethics* (Maidenhead, Philadelphia, Open University Press).

182) Ozanne Lucie K. (2010): Learning to exchange time: Benefits and obstacles to Time Banking, *International Journal of Community Currency Research*, vol. 14, pp. A1-16, also available online at http://www.uea.ac.uk/env/ijccr/.

183) Pacione Michael (1997): "Local Exchange Trading Systems as a response to the globalisation of capitalism", *Urban Studies*, Vol. 34, No. 8, pp.1179-1199.

184) Pacione, Micahel (1997a). "Local Exchange Trading Systems - A rural response to the globalisation of capitalism." *Journal of Rural Studies* vol 13, no 4, pp. 415-427.

185) Pacione, Michael (1999). "The Other Side of the Coin: Local Currency as a Response to the Globalization of Capital." *Regional Studies* vol. 33, no 1, pp. 63-72.

186) Parker, Malcolm (2009): Two concepts of empirical ethics, *Bioethics*, vol. 23, no 4, pp. 202-213.

187) Papavasiliou, Faidra (2008): *The Political Economy of Local Currency: Alternative Money, Alternative Development and Collective Action in the Age of Globalization*, PhD thesis, Department of Anthropology – Emory University, Atlanta-USA.

188) Peacock S. Mark (2000): "Local Exchange Trading Systems: A solution to the employment dilemma?", *Annals of Public and Cooperative Economics*, Vol. 71, No. 1, pp. 55-78.

189) Pearson Harry W. (1957): The economy has no surplus: Critique of a theory of development, in Arensberg Conrad M., Pearson Harry W. & Polanyi Karl: *Trade and market in early empires*, Free Press, Glencoe, Illinois, pp. 320-341.

190) Pearson Ruth (2003): "Argentina's barter network: New currency for new times?", *Bulletin of Latin American Research*, Vol. 22, No. 2, pp.214-230.

191) Peckham Robert S. (2004): "Internal colonialism – Nation and region in 19th century". In Todorova, M. (Ed.) *Balkan identities-Nation and memory* (London: Hurst & Company) pp. 41-58.

192) Perelman, Michael (1999): Marx, devalorization and the theory of value, *Cambridge Journal of Economics*, vol. 23 pp.719-728.

193) Peterson Spike V. (2010): A long view of globalization and crisis, *Globalizations*, vol. 7, no 1-2, pp.187-202.

194) Peterson, Spike V. (1997): Whose crisis? Early and post-modern masculinism, in Gill Stephen & Mittelman Jame H. (eds): *Innovation and transformation in International Studies*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge-New York-Melbourne, pp. 185-202.

195) Pierret Dorothée (1999): "Cercles d'échanges, cercles vertueux de la solidarité - Le cas de l'Allemagne (Exchange circles, solidarity virtuous circles – The case of Germany)", *International Journal of Community Currency Research*, Vol. 3, downloadable from the website www.geog.le.ac.uk/ijccr/vol1-3/3no1.htm.

196) Polanyi Karl (2001): *The Great Transformation: The political and economic origins of our times*, Boston, Beacon Press.

197) Ponderotto Joseph G. (2006): Brief note on the origins, evolution and meaning of the qualitative research concept "thick description", *The Qualitative Report*, vol. 11, no. 3 – September, pp. 538-549.

198) Potts, Nick (2011): Marx and the crisis, paper presented at the 2nd International Conference in Political Economy *Neoliberalism and the Crises of Economic Science* **(**20-22.05.2011) Istanbul – Turkey, available at http://www.iippe.org/wiki/images/9/9e/CONF_2011_Nick_Potts.pdf .

199) Powell Jeff (2002) : "Community Currencies: Alternative Development at the Conjuncture", *International Journal of Community Currency Research*, Vol. 6, downloadable from the website www.ijccr.net

200) Powell Jeff (2010): Petty capitalism, perfecting capitalism, or post-capitalism? Lessons from the Argentinean barter experiments, *Review of International Political Economy*, vol. 9, no. 4 - November, pp. 619-649.

201) Priddat Birger P. (1998): Theory of subjective value in German national economics, *International Journal of Social Economics*, vol. 25, no. 10, pp. 1509-1919.

202) Redding Gordon (2005): The thick description and comparison of societal systems of capitalism, *Journal of International Business Studies*, vol. 36, no. 2 – March, pp. 123-155.

203) Resnik, David B. & Shamoo, Adil E. (2003): *Responsible conduct of research* (Oxford & New York, Oxford University Press).

204) Romanell, Patrick (1950): Ethical problems and scientific method, *Ethics*, vol. 60 no 4 (July), pp. 294-295.

205) Roumeliotis, Andreas (2012): *Μπορώ και χωρίς ευρώ [I can do without euros]* (Athens, Ianos Publishing).

206) Schoenberger Erica (2008): The origins of the market economy: state power, territorial control and modes of war fighting, *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, vol. 50, no. 3, pp. 663-691.

207) Schraven Jorim (2000): "The economics of Local Exchange and Trading Systems: A theoretical perspective", *International Journal of Community Currency Research*, Vol. 4, downloadable from the website www.ijccr.net

208) Schroeder F.H. Rolf (2002): "Talente Tauschring Hannover (TTH): Experiences of a German LETS and the relevance of theoretical reflections", *International Journal of Community Currency Research*, Vol. 6, downloadable from the website www.geog.le.ac.uk/ijccr/vol4-6/6no2.htm.

209) Schumacher, E.F. (1974): *Small is beautiful – A study of economics as if people mattered* (London: Abacus Edition – Sphere Books Ltd).

210) Seaford Richard (2004): *Money and the early Greek mind*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge & New York.

211) Searing, Donald D. (1970): Values in empirical research: a behavioralist response, *Midwest Journal of Political Science*, vol. 14, no 1 (February), pp. 71-104.

212) Seyfang Gill (1996): "Local Exchange and Trading Systems and Sustainable Development", *Environment*, Vol. 38, No. 2 – March, pp. 5-6.

213) Seyfang Gill (1997): "Examining Local Currency Systems: A Social Audit Approach", *International Journal of Community Currency Research*, Vol. 1, downloadable from the website www.ijccr.net

214) Seyfang Gill (2000): The euro, the pound and the shell in our pockets: Rationales for complementary currencies in a global economy, *New Political Economy*, vol. 5, no. 2, pp. 227-246.

215) Seyfang Gill (2001a): "Community currencies: Small change for a green economy?", *Environment & Planning A*, Vol. 33, No. 6 (June), pp. 975-996.

216) Seyfang Gill (2001b): "Working for the Fenland Dollar: An evaluation of Local Exchange Trading Schemes as an informal employment strategy to tackle social exclusion", *Work, Employment & Society*, Vol. 15, No. 3, pp.581-593.

217) Seyfang Gill (2003): Growing cohesive communities one favour at a time: Social exclusion, active citizenship and Time Banks, *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, vol. 27, no. 3 – September, pp. 699-706.

218) Seyfang Gill (2004): "Time banks: Rewarding community self-help in the inner city?", *Community Development Journal*, Vol. 39, No. 1 (January), pp. 62-71.

219) Seyfang, Gill (2006): "Time Banks in the UK: Building Sustainable Communities", 'Monetary Regionalisation' conference, (September 28-29th 2006), Weimar, Germany, accessible at http://files.uniteddiversity.com/Money_and_Economics/Community_Currencies/Time_Banks/Time_Banks_in_the_UK-Building_Sustainable_Communities.pdf

220) Shaw, Ian (2008): Ethics and the practice of qualitative research, Qualitative Social Work, vol. 7, pp. 400-415.

221) Shore, Cris (1999): Fictions of fieldwork: Depicting the "self" in ethnographic writing (Italy), in Watson, C.W.: *Being there – Fieldwork in anthropology* (London – Sterling, Virginia, Pluto Press), pp. 25-48.

222) Simmel Georg (2004): *The philosophy of money*, 3rd edition, edited by David Frisby, Routledge – Taylor & Francis Group, London & New York, trans. by Tom Bottomore and David Frisby from a first draft by Kaethe Mengelberg.

223) Sitrin, Marina (2011): *Οριζοντιότητα – Φωνές λαϊκής εξουσίας στην Αργεντινή [Horizontality – Voices of popular power in Argentina]*, trans. by the Assembly for Circulating Struggles (Athens: Συνέλευση για την Κυκλοφορία των Αγώνων [Assembly for Circulating Struggles]).

224) Smithin John (editor) (2002): *What is money*?, Series: Routledge International Studies in Money & Banking, Routledge, London & New York.

225) Soder, Natalie Terese (2008). "Community Currency: An approach to economic sustainability in our local bioregion." *International Journal of Community Currency Research* vol. 12, pp. 24-52, available at www.ijccr.net

226) Sotiropoulou, Irene (2012a): "Economic activity without official currency in Greece: The * hypothesis", *International Journal for Community Currency Research*, vol. 16, pp. 70-79, www.ijccr.net.

227) Sotiropoulou, Irene (2012b): "Women in alternative economy – or, what do women do without official currency?" paper for the 21st IAFFE Annual Conference *"Human Well-being for the 21st Century: Weaving Alliances from Feminist Economics*", held (27-29.6.2012) in Barcelona, Spain.

228) Sotiropoulou, Irene (2012c): "Is there a fair and just price in solidarity economy?", paper for the VII Congress of the Network RULESCOOP *Social economy: identity, challenges and strategies" held (*5-7.9.2012) in Valencia & Castellón de la Plana, Spain

229) Sotiropoulou, Irene (2012d): "Marketing a vintage carpet in a free bazaar and other stories on/off value", paper at the 3rd International Conference in Political Economy *"Political Economy and the outlook of capitalism"*, to be held (5-8.7.2012) in Paris, France, organised as a Joint Conference by AHE, IIPPE & FAPE.

230) Sotiropoulou, Irene (2012e): "Short stories of dependency 2.0 – Ethics in economics research three years later", paper presented at the online 1st International Conference of World Economics Association (WEA) "Economics and Society. The Ethical Dimension" held online in February-March 2012.

231) Sotiropoulou, Irene (2012f): Random thoughts, travelling, for an economy – April 29th 2011, article at www.radiobubble.gr

232) Sotiropoulou, (2011a): "Exchange networks & parallel currencies on the map of Greece: Geographical patterns and schemes' activity", International Conference on Community and Complementary Currencies, 16-17.02.2011 (Lyon, France) available at http://conferences.ish-lyon.cnrs.fr/index.php/cc-conf/2011/paper/viewFile/98/34.

233) Sotiropoulou, I. (2011b): *Οι απόψεις των Καρλ Μαρξ και Φρίντρηχ Ένγκελς για το Ανατολικό Ζήτημα: Μια απόπειρα κριτικής προσέγγισης [Karl Marx and Fridriech Engels' positions on Eastern Question: An attempt for critical approach]*, unpublished essay (Turkish & Contemporary Asian Studies Department, University of Athens).

234) Sotiropoulou, I. (2011c): "Economic activity in Greece without the euro" Paper at the 5th Biennial Hellenic Observatory PhD Symposium, held in London, United Kingdom (02-03.06.2011) and organised by the Hellenic Observatory of London School of Economics.

235) Sotiropoulou, Irene (2011d): Economic activity in Greece without official currency: The terms and their economies, in Valeontis Costas (ed.): *Hellenic language and terminology – Communications of the 8th Conference*, Hellenic Society for Terminology, Athens – Greece, pp. 203-217.

236) Sotiropoulou, Irene (2011e): Transactions without euros in times of crisis: coincidence, affinity or challenge?, paper presented at the Conference titled Europe and Greece beyond the "Economy Crisis" (November 10-11th 2011), Messolonghi – Greece, accessible in Greek and in English at http://www.economy-krisis.net/wordpress/?page_id=213.

237) Sotiropoulou, Irene (2011f): How environmental awareness can be practical and funny while puzzling economists: exchange networks, parallel currencies & free bazaars in Greece, *Journal of Innovation Economics*, no 8 (2011/2), p. 89-117

238) Sotiropoulou, I. (2010a): "Exchange networks & parallel currencies: Theoretical issues or research in Wonderland", paper at the 1st International Conference in Political Economy, titled "Beyond the Crisis", Rethymno (Greece), September 10-12th 2010, available at http://www.iippe.org/wiki/images/d/d2/CONF_APE_Sotiropoulou.pdf

239) Sotiropoulou, I. :"Alternative Exchange Systems in Contemporary Greece" (Regional Review) (2010b), *International Journal of Community Currency Research*, 15: Special Issue: The State of the Art, D27-31. Accessible at http://www.ijccr.net/IJCCR/2011_(15)_files/06%20Sotiropoulou.pdf.

240) Sotiropoulou, Irene (2010c): Notes, reply to discussion – part B, about the book by Friedrich Engels & Karl Marx (1948) [2008]: The Manifesto of the Communist Party, Open Source Socialist Publishing, Utrecht (trans. by Samuel Moore), as submitted to the *Political Economy Workshop* on 09.03.2010, organised by the Department of Economics, Univ. of Crete. Unpublished digital manuscript.

241) Staiou, Eleni-Revekka (2012): Organosi 2.0. and the website http://organosi20.gr. This is an online mapping platform created by Staiou within the framework of her PhD project (started December 2011) in the National & Kapodistrian University of Athens, Department of Communication & Mass Media.

242) Starn, Randolph (1971): Historians and "crisis", *Past & Present*, no 52 (August), pp. 3-22.

243) Stent, Gunther S. (1976): The poverty of scientism and the promise of structuralist ethics, *The Hastings Center Report*, vol. 6, no 6 (December), pp. 32-40.

244) Stodder, James (2009): Complementary credit networks and macroeconomic stability: Switzerland's Wirtschaftsring, *Journal of Economic Behavior & Organization*, vol. 72, pp. 79-95.

245) Szporluk, R. (1988): *Communism and Nationalism – Karl Marx versus Friedrich List* (New York & Oxford: Oxford University Press).

246) Taussig, Michael (2010): *The devil and commodity fetishism in Latin America*, 30th anniversary edition with a new chapter by the author (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press).

247) Thorne L. (1996): "Local Exchange Trading Systems in the United Kingdom: A case for re-embedding?", *Environment & Planning A*, Vol. 28, pp. 1361-1376.

248) Thye Shane R. (2000): The status value theory of power in exchange relations, *American Sociological Review*, vol. 65, June, pp. 407-432.

249) Tibbet Rachael (1997): "Alternative currencies: A challenge to globalisation?", *New Political Economy*, Vol. 2, No. 1, pp. 127-135.

250) Timberlake Richard H. (1981): The significance of unaccounted currencies, *The Journal of Economic History*, vol. 41, no. 4 – December, pp. 853-866.

251) Timberlake Richard H. (1987): Private production of scrip money in the isolated community, *Journal of Money, Credit & Banking*, vol. 19, no. 4-November, pp. 437-447.

252) Todorova, Maria (1994): "The Balkans: From Discovery to Invention" *Slavic Review*. Vol. 52 (2-Summer) pp. 453-482.

253) Todorova, Maria (Ed.) (2004): *Balkan identities – Nation and Memor*y (London: Hurst & Company).

254) Varoufakis, Yanis (1996): O tempora, o mores! – Economics as the ethos of our times, in Groenewegen, Peter: *Economics and Ethics?* (London & New York, Routledge), pp. 157-172.

255) Vlachou Andriana (2002): Nature & Value theory, *Science & Society*, vol. 66, no. 2- summer, pp. 169-201.

256) Wainwright, Saul (2012): Democratizing money: The historical role of the US Federal government in currency creation, *International Journal of Community Currency Research*, vol. 16, Special Issue – Section D, pp. 5-13.

257) Wales Institute for Community Currencies (2004): *Currency Design Systems – How to design currency systems which serve humanity and sustainability, Version 1.1.-September 2004*, Concept evolved by the Wales Institute for Community Currencies-Geoff Thomas, Becky Booth, John Rogers & Sarah James, WICC, Ebbw Vale – UK.
258) Weiner Annette (1992): *Inalienable Possessions*, University of California Press, Berkeley & Los Angeles.
259) Weiner, Annette (1980): Reproduction: A Replacement for Reciprocity, *American Ethnologist*, vol. 7, no. 1, pp. 71-85.
260) Williams C. Colin (1995a): "Trading favours in Calderdale", *Town & Country Planning*, Vol. 64, No. 8 (August), pp. 214-215.
261) Williams C. Colin (1995b): "The emergence of local currencies", *Town & Country Planning*, Vol. 64, No. 12 (December), pp. 329-332.
262) Williams C. Colin (1996a): "An appraisal of Local Exchange and Trading Systems in the United Kingdom", *Local Economy*, Vol. 11, No. 3 (November), pp. 259-270.
263) Williams C. Colin (1996b): "Informal sector responses to unemployment: An evaluation of the potential of Local Exchange Trading Systems (LETS)", *Work, Employment & Society*, Vol. 10, No. 2 (June), pp.341-359.
264) Williams C. Colin (1996c): "Local currencies and community development: an evaluation of Green Dollar exchanges in New Zealand", *Community Development Journal*, Vol. 31, No. 4 (October), pp. 319-329.
265) Williams C. Colin (1996d): "Local Exchange and Trading Systems: A new source of work for the poor and unemployed?", *Environment & Planning A*, Vol. 28, pp. 1395-1415.
266) Williams, C. Colin (1996e). "Local purchasing schemes and rural development: an evaluation of Local Exchange and Trading Systems (LETS)." Journal of Rural Studies 12(3): 231-244.
267) Williams C. Colin (1996f): "The new barter economy: an appraisal of Local Exchange and Trading Systems (LETS)", *Journal of Public Policy*, Vol. 16, No. 1, pp. 85-101.
268) Williams C. Colin (1997): "Local Exchange and Trading Systems (LETS) in Australia: A new tool for community development?", *International Journal of Community Currency Research*, Vol. 1, downloadable from the website www.ijccr.net
269) Williams C. Colin (2000): "Are local currencies an effective tool for tackling social exclusion?", *Town & Country Planning*, Vol. 69, No. 11 (November), pp. 323-325.
270) Williams Colin C. & Windebank Jan (2003): The slow advance and uneven penetration of commodification, *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, vol. 27, no. 2 – June, pp. 250-264.
271) Wilson, John (1938): A note on Marx and the trade cycle, *The Review of Economics Studies*, vol. 5, no 2 (February) pp. 107-113.
272) Winship, Gary (2007): The ethics of reflective research in single case study inquiry, *Perspectives in Psychiatry*, vol. 43, no4 (October), pp. 174-182.
273) Zelizer Viviana (1997): *The social meaning of money: Pin money, paychecks, poor relief and other currencies*, Princeton University Press, Princeton NJ.

274) Zelizer Viviana (2001): Fine tuning the Zelizer view, *Economy & Society*, vol. 29, no. 3-August, pp. 383-389.

Newspaper articles:

1) Iefimerida.gr (2012): Αύξηση 25% του αριθμού των αστέγων - Πλησιάζουν, πλέον, τις 20.000 [25% increase of the homeless numbers – they are reaching already 20.000], digital newspaper www.iefimerida.gr, 07.02.2012.
2) News247.gr (2011): Θα αντιμετωπίζουν με κουπόνια τις λιποθυμίες μαθητών [They will face the pupils' faintings with vouchers], digital newspaper www.news247.gr, 11.12.2011.
3) Νίκας, Σωτήρης (2012): Τέσσερα χρόνια συνεχόμενης ύφεσης, στο 6,8% το 2011 [Nikas, Sotiris-Four years of continuous depression, at 6,8% in 2011], digital newspaper www.kathimerini.gr , 15.02.2012.
4) REAL.GR (2012): Στο 20,9% «εκτινάχθηκε» η ανεργία [To 20,9% there shot up unemployment], digital newspaper www.real.gr, 09.02.2012.
5) Σιδηρόπουλος, Ανδρέας (2011): Το 2011 δόθηκε η χαριστική βολή στις μικρές επιχειρήσεις [Sidiropoulos, Andreas – In 2011 there was given the coup de grace to the small businesses], digital newspaper www.iefimerida.gr, 05.11.2011.

Codes of Ethics for social research:

1. American Anthropological Association (1998): *Code of Ethics of the American Anthropological Association*, last accessed on 12.06.2009 from the website www.aaanet.org .
2. American Sociological Association (1999): *Code of Ethics and Policies and Procedures of the ASA Committee on Professional Ethics*, last accessed on 12.06.2009 from the website www.asanet.org.
3. Association of Social Anthropologists of the UK and Commonwealth (1999): *ASA Ethics - Ethical Guidelines for Good Research Practice*, last accessed on 16.07.2009 from the website www.theasa.org.uk .
4. British Sociological Association (2002): *Statement of Ethical Practice for the British Sociological Association*, adopted in March 2002, last accessed on 12.06.09 from the website www.britsoc.co.uk
5. RESPECT Project (2004): The RESPECT code, last accessed on 12.06.09 from the website www.respectproject.com.
6. SOAS-School of Oriental and African Studies (2009): *SOAS Research ethics policy*, available by SOAS on request, www.soas.ac.uk .

OTHER SOURCES USED

1) For the Quantum GIS software: Quantum GIS Development Team (2010). "Quantum GIS Geographic Information System". Open Source Geospatial Foundation Project. http://qgis.osgeo.org or www.qgis.org

2) For statistical data and GIS map vector layers on Greece: www.geodata.gov.gr (esp. http://www.geodata.gov.gr/geodata/index.php?option=com_sobi2&catid=21&Itemid=10) and www.statistics.gr (in English: http://www.statistics.gr/portal/page/portal/ESYE).

3) For Peliti specialised network members' information: Peliti (2010): Localities of Farms Magazine, vol. 10, September 2010-2011.

4) For information on new regions of Greece as of January 2011: The website of the Greek Ministry of Internal Affairs www.ypes.gr (esp. http://www.ypes.gr/el/Regions/programma/xartes/RegionAdmin/).

Πανεπιστήμιο Κρήτης
Σχολή Κοινωνικών Επιστημών
Τμήμα Οικονομικών Επιστημών

<u>Περίληψη Διδακτορικής Διατριβής</u>

Δίκτυα ανταλλαγής και παράλληλα νομίσματα: Θεωρητικές προσεγγίσεις και το παράδειγμα της Ελλάδας

Υποψήφια διδάκτορας: Ειρήνη-Χρυσοβαλάντου Σωτηροπούλου

Επιβλέπων: Καθηγητής Βασίλειος Καρδάσης

Μέλη της Συμβουλευτικής Επιτροπής
Καθηγήτρια Ντίνα Βαϊου (Εθνικό Μετσόβιο Πολυτεχνείο, Σχολή Αρχιτεκτονικής)
Καθηγήτρια Μαρία Καραμεσίνη (Πάντειο Πανεπιστήμιο, Τμήμα Κοινωνικής Πολιτικής)

Ρέθυμνο, Νοέμβριος 2012

Σημείωση για την περίληψη:

Στην περίληψη γίνονται παραπομπές σε βιβλιογραφία και σε κεφάλαια ή ενότητες που είναι όλα περιεχόμενα στην διατριβή – όπου μπορεί ο αναγνώστης/στρια να ανατρέξει.

ΠΕΡΙΛΗΨΗ ΔΙΔΑΚΤΟΡΙΚΗΣ ΔΙΑΤΡΙΒΗΣ

Δίκτυα ανταλλαγής και παράλληλα νομίσματα:
Θεωρητικές προσεγγίσεις και το παράδειγμα της Ελλάδας

1. Γενική περιγραφή της διατριβής

1.1. Το γενικό πλαίσιο του ερευνητικού έργου

Κατά τη διάρκεια των δύο τελευταίων ετών, υπήρξε εκτεταμένο δημόσιο ενδιαφέρον για τη λεγόμενη «ανταλλακτική οικονομία» και για διάφορες πρωτοβουλίες, οι οποίες προέκυψαν σε όλη την Ελλάδα. Νομίσματα δημιουργούνται και χρησιμοποιούνται τοπικά από ομάδες ανθρώπων, χαριστικά – ανταλλακτικά παζάρια, δίκτυα ανταλλαγής, χαριστικά δίκτυα στο διαδίκτυο, συλλογικοί κήποι και συλλογικές κουζίνες φαίνεται να προσελκύουν πολλούς ανθρώπους αλλά και την προσοχή των μέσων μαζικής ενημέρωσης. Φαίνεται ότι αυτή ήταν μια εποχή μεγάλης και άνευ προηγουμένου ανάπτυξης για αυτό το είδος της δραστηριότητας.

Την ίδια στιγμή, ιδίως από την άνοιξη του 2010, η οικονομία της Ελλάδας βρίσκεται σε σημαντικούς δημοσιονομικούς περιορισμούς, δεδομένης της υιοθέτησης νεοφιλελεύθερων πολιτικών που επιβάλλονται μέσω διεθνών και διακρατικών συμφωνιών που αφορούν στην εξασφάλιση της βιωσιμότητας του δημόσιου χρέους της χώρας. Οικονομική δυσπραγία, ύφεση και ανεργία είναι τυπικοί δείκτες για το τί μπορεί να σημαίνουν οι πολιτικές αυτές για την πλειοψηφία του πληθυσμού της χώρας.

Ο πιο συνηθισμένος λόγος σχετικά με την οικονομική δραστηριότητα χωρίς επίσημο νόμισμα τοποθετεί όλους αυτούς τους ανθρώπους και τις δομές που αυτοί δημιουργούν στο πλαίσιο της οικονομικής και χρηματοπιστωτικής κρίσης, σαν να υπάρχει άμεση αιτιώδης συνάφεια μεταξύ αυτών των δύο. Ωστόσο, η σύμπτωση του χρόνου και του τόπου δεν είναι αρκετή για να αποδείξει οποιαδήποτε εσωτερική σύνδεση ανάμεσα σε δύο οικονομικά φαινόμενα, πολύ δε λιγότερο για να εξηγήσει τις επιλογές όλων εκείνων των ανθρώπων που συμμετέχουν σε αυτήν την οικονομική συμπεριφορά.

Το ερευνητικό έργο για το οποίο γράφω αυτή τη διατριβή, είναι λίγο παλαιότερο από την προσοχή των μέσων μαζικής ενημέρωσης για την οικονομική δραστηριότητα χωρίς τη χρήση του επίσημου νομίσματος. Η έρευνα ξεκίνησε επίσημα το Φεβρουάριο του 2009, ενώ η προετοιμασία του ερευνητικού έργου ξεκίνησε τον Οκτώβριο του 2008. Παρά το γεγονός ότι εκείνη την εποχή ήταν αδύνατο για μένα να προβλέψω την εξάπλωση του αντικειμένου της έρευνας, το σύνολο του έργου συνέπεσε χρονικά με αυτήν ακριβώς την εξάπλωση, και μολονότι από τύχη, βρήκε τη δραστηριότητα στο στάδιο ανάπτυξής της.

Στα κεφάλαια της διατριβής παρέχω περαιτέρω λεπτομερή περιγραφή όλων αυτών των συστημάτων και της δομής τους. Το κοινό χαρακτηριστικό που τα διέπει είναι ότι τα μέλη των συστημάτων πραγματοποιούν συναλλαγές μεταξύ τους χωρίς τη χρήση οποιουδήποτε επισήμου νομίσματος. Και αυτό συμβαίνει χωρίς να είναι κατ' ανάγκη στενοί φίλοι ή συγγενείς ώστε να αποφασίσουν να προχωρήσουν σε μια τέτοια οικονομική συμπεριφορά. Υπάρχουν επίσης πολλοί άνθρωποι που πραγματοποιούν συναλλαγές χωρίς επίσημο νόμισμα χωρίς να είναι εγγεγραμμένα μέλη ενός σχήματος. Αυτό σημαίνει ότι το ενδιαφέρον που ελκύουν τα συστήματα αυτά δεν αποκαλύπτει την πραγματική εικόνα της δραστηριότητας ούτως ή άλλως, αλλά μόνο ένα μέρος της.

Στην πραγματικότητα, τα σχήματα βάσης όπου λαμβάνουν χώρα οι συναλλαγές χωρίς επίσημο νόμισμα υπήρχαν πολύ πριν τον Οκτώβριο του 2008, αλλά ήταν πολύ λίγα σε σχέση με τον τρέχοντα αριθμό σχημάτων (το Νοέμβριο του 2012). Ως εκ τούτου, η εν λόγω έρευνα κατάφερε να αποκτήσει πρωτότυπα δεδομένα σχετικά με αυτή τη δραστηριότητα κατά τη στιγμή ακριβώς που εξαπλωνόταν.

Επιπλέον, οι πληροφορίες που συγκεντρώθηκαν μέσω του ερευνητικού έργου ήταν σημαντικές για έναν ακόμη λόγο: η δραστηριότητα αυτή δεν έχει μελετηθεί στην Ελλάδα για τα τελευταία εκατό περίπου χρόνια σε ένα πλαίσιο οικονομικής επιστήμης, αλλά και στο ευρύτερο πλαίσιο των κοινωνικών επιστημών[1]. Συνεπώς, η έλλειψη προηγούμενης έρευνας πεδίου δημιούργησε ένα κενό το οποίο βεβαίως δεν μπορεί να αναπληρωθεί με ένα μόνο ερευνητικό έργο, πολύ λιγότερο με μια διδακτορική διατριβή. Από την άλλη πλευρά, η φιλοδοξία της έρευνας ήταν να συμβάλει όσο το δυνατόν περισσότερο σε αυτό το αντικείμενο, τουλάχιστον με την πρόθεση να αποκτήσουμε κάποια πρώτη εικόνα αυτής της οικονομικής δραστηριότητας για την οποία η ακαδημαϊκή βιβλιογραφία είναι τόσο σπάνια.

1.2. Τα ερευνητικά ερωτήματα[2]

Με άλλα λόγια, το ερώτημα που συνδέει το αντικείμενο της έρευνας με την οικονομική και χρηματοπιστωτική κρίση στην Ελλάδα, αναπτύχθηκε παράλληλα με την εξάπλωση του συνόλου της δραστηριότητας, αλλά αυτό δεν ήταν το κύριο θέμα της έρευνας από την έναρξη του έργου. Αντιθέτως, το ερώτημα αυτό, αν και σημαντικό, ήταν ένα μεταξύ πολλών που το ερευνητικό έργο είχε ως στόχο να απαντήσει:

1.2.1. Αυτή η δραστηριότητα ανήκει στην οικονομική επιστήμη, παρά το γεγονός ότι υπάρχουν σοβαρές δυσκολίες στη μέτρηση των χαρακτηριστικών των συναλλαγών

[1] Υπάρχει μόνο η μεταπτυχιακή διπλωματική εργασία της Χρηστίδου Ε. (2008) στις περιβαλλοντικές επιστήμες και αναφέρεται μόνο σε έναν τύπο σχήματος.

[2] Πολλά από αυτά τα ερωτήματα έχουν ήδη δημοσιευθεί στο Sotiropoulou, I. (2010a). Κάποια άλλα είχαν διαμορφωθεί στην αρχική ερευνητική πρόταση.

(όπως ο όγκος, συχνότητα, κλπ); Πώς μπορούμε να μελετήσουμε αυτή τη δραστηριότητα μέσα σε ένα οικονομικό πλαίσιο, ενώ η δραστηριότητα περιλαμβάνει συναλλαγές χωρίς ακριβή μέτρηση και χωρίς γραμμική αντίληψη του χρόνου;

1.2.2. Πώς γίνονται αντιληπτές οι έννοιες της αγοράς και της οικονομίας και διαμορφώνονται μέσα από τη δραστηριότητα των μελών των σχημάτων και τι επιπτώσεις μπορεί να έχει αυτό για τις πρακτικές τιμολόγησης, για την αποπληρωμή υποχρεώσεων και για ολόκληρη την αντίληψη περί αμοιβαιότητας;

1.2.3. Ποιες είναι οι συνέπειες για την αξία των πραγμάτων και της ανθρώπινης προσπάθειας, όταν τοποθετούνται στο πλαίσιο μιας συναλλαγής χωρίς επίσημο νόμισμα; Τι συμβαίνει με την αξία των προσφορών που δίδονται δωρεάν/με τιμή μηδέν;

1.2.4. Γιατί οι άνθρωποι θα συμμετείχαν σε συναλλαγές όπου δεν θα λάβουν οικονομικό κέρδος ή ούτε καν οποιαδήποτε οικονομική ανταμοιβή; Γιατί να συμμετέχουν σε συναλλαγές στις οποίες η ακριβής μέτρηση είναι ανύπαρκτη ή αδύνατη και γιατί να δέχονται ως μέσο πληρωμής εικονικές μονάδες ή πράγματα τα οποία υποβαθμίζονται γρήγορα;

1.2.5. Γιατί οι άνθρωποι να δεχθούν να συμμετάσχουν σε συναλλαγές όπου οι αξίες των αγαθών και της ανθρώπινης προσπάθειας είναι εντελώς διαφορετικές από εκείνες στην κυρίαρχη οικονομία, συνεπώς επιλέγοντας να χάσουν το κέρδος που θα έχουν στην κυρίαρχη οικονομία εάν διατηρούν τις προσφορές τους εντός του κυρίαρχου πλαισίου;

1.2.5. Σε γενικές γραμμές, γιατί οι άνθρωποι επιλέγουν να πραγματοποιούν συναλλαγές χωρίς επίσημο νόμισμα; Ποια είναι τα κίνητρά τους και πώς εξηγούν τη συμπεριφορά τους;

1.2.6. Ποιος ήταν ο ρόλος της πρόσφατης οικονομικής και χρηματοπιστωτικής κρίσης στην ενίσχυση της συμμετοχής στα σχήματα και στην εξάπλωσή τους και πώς μπορούμε να ερευνήσουμε πραγματικά μια τέτοια σύνδεση;

1.2.7. Ταιριάζουν τα ελληνικά σχήματα στις τυπολογίες σχημάτων όπως αυτές διαμορφώνονται από τα πολυάριθμα δίκτυα σε άλλες χώρες; Ποιες είναι οι ιδιαιτερότητες των σχημάτων στον ελληνικό χώρο, που μπορούν να αποδοθούν αυτές οι ιδιαιτερότητες και τι επιπτώσεις έχουν για το σύνολο της δραστηριότητας; Πώς εντάσσεται η μελετώμενη δραστηριότητα σε ένα περιφερειακό ή διεθνές πλαίσιο, τόσο θεωρητικό όσο και πρακτικό; Ειδικότερα, πως συνδέεται αυτή η δραστηριότητα με συναφή σχήματα σε άλλες χώρες της Μεσογείου ή ευρωπαϊκές χώρες;

1.3. Θεωρητικό πλαίσιο της έρευνας

Το ήμισυ του ερευνητικού προγράμματος ήταν να διερευνηθεί ποιές θεωρητικές προσεγγίσεις θα ήταν καταλληλότερες να αντιληφθούμε, να κατανοήσουμε και να διερευνήσουμε το επιστημονικό αυτό αντικείμενο. Η έλλειψη

βιβλιογραφίας για τα ελληνικά σχήματα δεν σημαίνει ότι δεν υπήρχε βιβλιογραφία σε διεθνές επίπεδο. Ωστόσο, η φύση και η ποικιλία των ελληνικών σχημάτων με οδήγησε να κάνω επιλογές από την άποψη της θεωρίας που φαίνονται μάλλον να είναι εκλεκτικές και σχηματίζονται από κείμενα που προέρχονται από διάφορες επιστήμες.

Κατά πρώτο, τέσσερις ήταν οι θεωρητικές προσεγγίσεις για να εξηγήσουν αυτή τη δραστηριότητα, αντί για μια μόνο θεωρία. Δεύτερον, φαίνεται ότι μέχρι το τέλος του ερευνητικού έργου, καμμία θεωρητική προσέγγιση από τις τέσσερις δεν ήταν δυνατό να απορριφθεί, αντιθέτως φαίνεται ότι συμπληρώνουν η μια την άλλη. Τρίτον, παρά τη συμπληρωματικότητά τους, η καθεμία είχε τη δική της δομή και τις έννοιές της. Τα θεωρητικά επιχειρήματα παρουσιάζονται αναλυτικά στο κεφάλαιο τρία της διατριβής, παρ' όλα αυτά, η αδρή τους παρουσίασή έχει ως εξής:

1.3.1. Το πρώτο επιχείρημα μελετά την οικονομική δραστηριότητα χωρίς επίσημο νόμισμα ως μια ρωγμή ή ένα σύνολο ρωγμών στην επικρατούσα καπιταλιστική οικονομία. Οι ρωγμές δεν δείχνουν αναγκαστικά ακόμη την κατεύθυνση (αντι- ή μετα-καπιταλιστική) των μελλοντικών δομών.

1.3.2. Το δεύτερο επιχείρημα μελετά το ίδιο αντικείμενο ως μια δημιουργική προσπάθεια των ανθρώπων να ξεφύγουν από την κατάσταση διπλών δεσμών που έχει επιβληθεί σε βάρος τους από μια σχιζοειδή καπιταλιστική οικονομία.

1.3.3. Το τρίτο επιχείρημα διερευνά την πιθανότητα ότι η όλη δραστηριότητα είναι ένας αγώνας για να επαναπροσδιορίσουμε συλλογικά οικονομικές αξίες, να τις καθιερώσουμε και να τις υποστηρίξουμε κατά προτεραιότητα. Όλα αυτά τα σχήματα-δομές είναι τα εργαλεία και/ή οι μηχανισμοί που χρησιμοποιούνται από τα μέλη των σχημάτων για να επιτευχθεί αυτό.

1.3.4. Το τέταρτο επιχείρημα εξακολουθεί να είναι χωρίς όνομα σε αυτήν τη διατριβή. Στοχεύει να διερευνήσει διάφορα στερεότυπα σχετικά με τη χρήση πολλαπλών νομισμάτων και τη μη νομισματική οικονομία ως παρωχημένα ή προσωρινά μέσα συναλλαγής και ως λύσεις έκτακτης ανάγκης μόνο. Στο τέλος, θέτει ένα πλαίσιο για να διερευνήσουμε κατά πόσον η μελετώμενη οικονομική δραστηριότητα ήταν πάντα σύγχρονη με την επικρατούσα καπιταλιστική οικονομία και τώρα, κάτω από ορισμένες οικονομικές και κοινωνικές συνθήκες, θέτει μια τελείως διαφορετική ατζέντα από αυτή που ορίζεται στο πλαίσιο του άξονα καπιταλιστική-αντικαπιταλιστική .

1.4. Υποθέσεις εργασίας και πρώτες απαντήσεις

Το επιχείρημα ότι οι άνθρωποι στρέφονται σε μη-χρηματικές συναλλαγές και σε παράλληλα νομίσματα λόγω οικονομικών και χρηματοπιστωτικών δυσχερειών, δεν έχει αποδειχθεί καθ' αυτό. Οι απαντήσεις του ερωτηματολογίου δείχνουν σαφώς ότι η οικονομική δυσπραγία είναι μόνο ένα από τα πολλά κίνητρα, ενώ πολλά

άτομα που συμμετέχουν στα σχήματα είναι περισσότερο ή λιγότερο ευκατάστατα ή πολύ ευκατάστατα. Ωστόσο, συμμετέχουν επίσης πολλοί άνθρωποι που βρίσκονται σε οικονομική δυσπραγία, πράγμα που σημαίνει ότι κάποιος πρέπει να διερευνήσει διάφορες πιθανές αιτίες για αυτήν την οικονομική δραστηριότητα και όχι μόνο την έλλειψη εισοδήματος σε επίσημο νόμισμα.

Υπό αυτή την έννοια, ο ρόλος της οικονομικής και χρηματοπιστωτικής κρίσης τίθεται σε ένα εντελώς διαφορετικό πλαίσιο από αυτό που συνήθως αναφέρεται στον καθημερινό λόγο των μέσων μαζικής ενημέρωσης. Ειδικά δε στο κεφάλαιο τέσσερα, τα δεδομένα σχετικά με την εξάπλωση των σχημάτων, την αύξηση της ανεργίας και για το πώς τα μέλη των ομάδων αντιλαμβάνονται το ρόλο της κρίσης, δείχνει ότι πολλές μακροχρόνιες συνθήκες επηρέασαν τις ατομικές και συλλογικές επιλογές σχετικά με τις προτιμώμενες μεθόδους συναλλαγής.

Από την άλλη πλευρά, η κοινωνική πάλη είναι παρούσα, όμως, όχι στο αυστηρό πλαίσιο της ταξικής πάλης που θα περίμενε κανείς. Τα μέλη των σχημάτων μπορεί να ανήκουν σε διαφορετικές κοινωνικές ομάδες και μπορεί να έχουν διάφορα κοινωνικά χαρακτηριστικά, αλλά μοιράζονται κοινούς στόχους, όπως για παράδειγμα, μια πιο αρμονική σχέση με τη φύση κατά τη διάρκεια της ικανοποίησης των υλικών αναγκών και μια δικαιότερη σχέση με τους άλλους ανθρώπους κατά τη διάρκεια των συναλλαγών μαζί τους. Αγώνες, εν τέλει, υπάρχουν σε όλο τον χώρο των μη κυρίαρχων τρόπων συναλλαγής, ακριβώς επειδή υπάρχουν διάφοροι στόχοι που χρειάζεται να επιτευχθούν, μερικές φορές μέσα στο ίδιο δίκτυο: αλληλεγγύη και συγκεντρώσεις για να επαναβεβαιώσουν τη συλλογικότητα, πρόσβαση σε τρόφιμα, κάλυψη βασικών αναγκών, πρόσβαση στην εκπαίδευση και σε εκπαιδευτικά υλικά, πρόσβαση στην τέχνη και στα όμορφα καθημερινά πράγματα, καθώς και πρόσβαση σε τεχνογνωσία όσον αφορά στην παραγωγή όλων των πραγμάτων: καλλιέργεια των παραδοσιακών ποικιλιών, μαγείρεμα, διακόσμηση, κλπ.

Η μικρή παραγωγή σε όλους τους κύριους τομείς της ανθρώπινης προσπάθειας είναι αυτό που συνάντησα κατά τη διάρκεια αυτής της έρευνας. Τα σχήματα φαίνεται να ευνοούν τη μικρή παραγωγή και τη μικρή κατανάλωση σε όλες τις πτυχές τους, με την ανακατανομή τυχόν πλεονάσματος και με αναδιανομή τεχνογνωσίας, εργαλείων, απλών/μικρών μηχανών, ανακυκλωμένων πραγμάτων/υλικών και αχρησιμοποίητων αποθεμάτων σε ντουλάπια ή μικρά καταστήματα που κλείνουν. Επιπλέον, η μικρή παραγωγή στην ανθρώπινη προσπάθεια, δηλαδή τις υπηρεσίες, επίσης ευνοείται ή, τουλάχιστον, φαίνεται ότι μπορεί να ευνοηθεί πολύ αφού τα σχήματα ενθαρρύνουν τα μέλη τους να παρέχουν ποικιλία υπηρεσιών και να χρησιμοποιούν τις ποικίλες δεξιότητές τους, αντί για μία μόνο επαγγελματική υπηρεσία.

1.5. Μέθοδοι που χρησιμοποιήθηκαν

Για να προσεγγίσω ένα τέτοιο ιδιαίτερο αντικείμενο, τη στιγμή που υπάρχει περιορισμένη βιβλιογραφία βασισμένη σε έρευνα πεδίου, επέλεξα να χρησιμοποιήσω ένα συνδυασμό μεθόδων αντί για μία μόνο. Παρατήρηση και συμμετοχική παρατήρηση, ελεύθερες συζητήσεις με τους συμμετέχοντες, ανάλυση κειμένου, και τήρηση σημειώσεων μέσω πυκνής περιγραφής χρησιμοποιήθηκαν κατά το προκαταρκτικό στάδιο της έρευνας, αλλά και κατά τη διάρκεια ολόκληρου του έργου.

Οι συνεντεύξεις με τους βασικούς πληροφορητές με βάση σύντομο ερωτηματολόγιο ανοικτών απαντήσεων ήταν η ποιοτική μέθοδος που χρησιμοποιήθηκε για το πρώτο στάδιο της έρευνας. Μια έρευνα με ερωτηματολόγιο χρησιμοποιήθηκε για τη συλλογή στοιχείων σχετικά με το προφίλ των μελών των σχημάτων και με τα ποσοτικά χαρακτηριστικά των συναλλαγών που μελετήθηκαν. Το ενδιάμεσο στάδιο της έρευνας αποτελείτο από χαρτογράφηση του αριθμού των μελών των συστημάτων σε όλη τη χώρα, όπου αυτό ήταν δυνατό και τα σχετικά στοιχεία ήταν διαθέσιμα.

Περισσότερες λεπτομέρειες και τα ζητήματα που προέκυψαν σχετικά με τις μεθόδους αλλά και την δεοντολογία αυτού του έργου εξετάζονται στο κεφάλαιο πέντε (5) της διατριβής.

1.6. Η δομή της διατρβής

Η διατριβή αποτελείται από δύο κύρια μέρη. Το πρώτο μέρος αποτελείται από δύο κεφάλαια που είναι αφιερωμένα στα θεωρητικά ζητήματα του έργου. Στο κεφάλαιο δύο (2), μπορεί κανείς να βρει την ανασκόπηση της βιβλιογραφίας σχετικά με θεωρητικά ζητήματα του αντικειμένου, αλλά και την ανασκόπηση της βιβλιογραφίας σχετικά με την έρευνα πεδίου για το ίδιο θέμα. Στο ίδιο κεφάλαιο, γίνεται μια παρουσίαση των υφιστάμενων τυπολογιών στη βιβλιογραφία και της τυπολογίας που χρησιμοποιήθηκε τελικά σε αυτήν την έρευνα. Το κεφάλαιο τρία (3) αναλύει το θεωρητικό πλαίσιο που χρησιμοποιήθηκε στην έρευνα μου: στην αρχή, παρουσιάζει το πρόβλημα της εύρεσης ή της κατασκευής μιας θεωρητικής βάσης για το έργο. Στη συνέχεια, παρουσιάζει τα τέσσερα θεωρητικά επιχειρήματα που τελικά χρησιμοποίησα για να εξηγήσω και να διερευνήσω το θέμα της έρευνας.

Το δεύτερο μέρος της διατριβής αποτελείται από πέντε (5) κεφάλαια, που αναφέρονται όλα στην έρευνα πεδίου που πραγματοποιήθηκε κατά τη διάρκεια του διδακτορικού μου προγράμματος. Το κεφάλαιο τέσσερα (4) είναι μια λεπτομερής παρουσίαση των σχημάτων που ερεύνησα, και η παρουσίαση αυτή γίνεται ανά τύπο και κατηγορία. Η τελευταία ενότητα του κεφαλαίου τέσσερα ασχολείται με το κύριο ερώτημα της εξάπλωσης των σχημάτων κατά τη διάρκεια των τελευταίων ετών και

τις πιθανές συνδέσεις με την οικονομική και χρηματοπιστωτική κρίση στην Ελλάδα, η οποία συνέπεσε το ίδιο ακριβώς χρονικό διάστημα.

Το κεφάλαιο πέντε (5) είναι αυτό που αναφέρεται στις μεθόδους που χρησιμοποιούνται κατά τη διάρκεια της εμπειρικής μου έρευνας. Η πρώτη ενότητα είναι μια επισκόπηση μεθοδολογίας από προηγούμενη βιβλιογραφία που προέρχεται από έρευνα πεδίου, η δεύτερη ενότητα είναι το κύριο μέρος του κεφαλαίου που παρουσιάζει τα μεθοδολογικά ζητήματα που αντιμετώπισα χρησιμοποιώντας μια ποικιλία μεθοδολογικών εργαλείων. Και το τρίτο τμήμα του κεφαλαίου εξετάζει τα δεοντολογικά ζητήματα με τα οποία ασχολήθηκα κατά τη διάρκεια του ερευνητικού μου έργου.

Το κεφάλαιο έξι (6) της διατριβής παρουσιάζει τα αποτελέσματα της έρευνας με ερωτηματολόγιο που πραγματοποιήθηκε κατά τη διάρκεια του τρίτου έτους της έρευνας. Αυτό το κεφάλαιο έχει διαφορετική αρίθμηση ενοτήτων για να ταιριάζει με την αρίθμηση των ενοτήτων του ερωτηματολογίου (διαθέσιμο στο Παράρτημα Γ) και για να καταστήσει ευκολότερο για τον αναγνώστη το να δει τις απαντήσεις μέσα από την προοπτική της όλης δομής του ερωτηματολογίου. Το κεφάλαιο επτά (7) παρουσιάζει τα ευρήματα της έρευνας από τις συνεντεύξεις με τους βασικούς πληροφορητές της έρευνας, δηλαδή με συντονιστές ή μέλη σχημάτων που έχουν μια συνολική εικόνα της δραστηριότητας του σχήματος. Αυτό το κεφάλαιο (7) χωρίζεται σε δύο τμήματα, ένα με τις ερωτήσεις που ήταν κοινές για όλους τους συμμετέχοντες και ένα με τις ερωτήσεις που υποβλήθηκαν σε κάθε συμμετέχοντα σε σχήμα, ανάλογα με τον τύπο του σχήματος.

Το κεφάλαιο οκτώ (8) είναι η συλλογή των βασικών ευρημάτων μου που προέρχονται από τη συμμετοχική παρατήρηση και τις άλλες ποιοτικές μεθόδους, εκτός από τις συνεντεύξεις με τους βασικούς πληροφορητές. Οι ενότητες αυτού του κεφαλαίου αφορούν αντίστοιχα στο πώς η θεωρία δημιουργείται μέσω της δράσης των συμμετεχόντων, πώς η περιβαλλοντική ευαισθητοποίηση και οι αντιλήψεις για την καλή ζωή υλοποιούνται μέσω της δραστηριότητας του σχήματος, πώς οι οικονομικές δομές του σχήματος επηρεάζουν την οικονομική συμπεριφορά των συμμετεχόντων, πως οι γυναίκες εμπλέκονται στα σχήματα, και πώς αυτή η δραστηριότητα θα μπορούσε επίσης να είναι μέρος ενός ευρύτερου πολιτισμικού πλαισίου, το οποίο, όπως κάθε πολιτισμός, χρειάζεται τη δική του οικονομική βάση.

Τα συμπεράσματα της διατριβής παρουσιάζονται στο κεφάλαιο εννέα (9), όπου παρουσιάζονται επίσης οι περιορισμοί του έργου και τα κύρια θέματα για περαιτέρω έρευνα.

Υπάρχουν τέσσερα παραρτήματα σε αυτή την διατριβή: το πρώτο είναι ο πλήρης κατάλογος των πρωτοβουλιών που πραγματοποιούν συναλλαγές χωρίς τη χρήση επίσημου νομίσματος. Το Παράρτημα Β είναι το ερωτηματολόγιο για τις συνεντεύξεις με τους βασικούς πληροφορητές. Το Παράρτημα Γ είναι το ερωτηματολόγιο της έρευνας σε μορφή κειμένου. Και το παράρτημα Δ είναι ένας έγχρωμος χάρτης των ελληνικών περιφερειών για να διευκολυνθεί η απεικόνιση των

πινάκων στο τελευταίο τμήμα του κεφαλαίου τέσσερα, σχετικά με την εξάπλωση των σχημάτων και την αύξηση της ανεργίας μετά το 2008 σε όλες τις ελληνικές περιφέρειες.

2. Συμπεράσματα, περιορισμοί και τελικές επισημάνσεις

2.1. Συμπεράσματα σχετικά με τα ερευνητικά ερωτήματα και τις υποθέσεις εργασίας

2.1.1. Δεν υπάρχει καμία αμφιβολία ότι αυτή η δραστηριότητα, δηλαδή οι συναλλαγές που πραγματοποιούνται χωρίς τη χρήση επισήμου νομίσματος και πέρα από το πλαίσιο της οικογένειας ή της φιλίας, ανήκουν στην οικονομική επιστήμη ως αντικείμενο. Οι δυσκολίες μέτρησης και οι διαφορετικές αντιλήψεις σχετικά με την ποσότητα, τη μέτρηση και τον χρόνο δεν είναι λόγοι για να αποκλειστεί αυτή η δραστηριότητα από την οικονομική έρευνα. Αντιθέτως, τα οικονομικά θα μπορούσαν να εμπλουτιστούν με τη μελέτη αυτής της δραστηριότητας. Η σύνδεση της οικονομικής επιστήμης με την καθημερινή ζωή μπορεί έτσι να ενισχυθεί, καθώς η δραστηριότητα αυτή τοποθετείται σε χώρους που διέπονται από δράση βάσης.

Η χρήση ενός συνδυασμού μεθόδων και διεπιστημονικής εμπειρίας, που υπάρχουν στις κοινωνικές επιστήμες εν γένει, αποδείχθηκε καρποφόρα όσον αφορά στην προσέγγιση ενός τέτοιου ιδιαίτερου ερευνητικού θέματος. Το κεφάλαιο τρία (3) σχετικά με τα θεωρητικά επιχειρήματα που χρησιμοποιούνται για τη μελέτη αυτής της δραστηριότητας, έδειξε ότι υπάρχει εκτεταμένη οικονομική γνώση "κρυμμένη" ή "λησμονημένη" στις κοινωνικές επιστήμες και η οικονομική επιστήμη χρειάζεται να επωφεληθεί από τις ευκαιρίες που αυτό το αντικείμενο προσφέρει για να εξερευνήσει αυτή η γνώση.

2.1.2. Θέτοντας μια διαφορετική ατζέντα από την κυρίαρχη οικονομία, τα μέλη των σχημάτων ως άτομα και ως συλλογικότητες δείχνουν ότι οι έννοιες της αγοράς και της οικονομίας που γνωρίζουμε από τα εγχειρίδια της οικονομικής επιστήμης είναι μόνο μία δυνατότητα μεταξύ πολλών. Επιμένουν να οργανώνουν παζάρια και υπαίθριες αγορές με διαφορετικούς τρόπους και αυτό που δεν μπορεί να αμφισβητηθεί, είναι ότι, παρά τις όποιες τυχόν ελλείψεις, η οικονομική δραστηριότητα δεν θεωρείται ότι διαχωρίζεται από την υπόλοιπη κοινωνική δραστηριότητα των ανθρώπων. Σε αντίθεση με την επικρατούσα ιδέα ότι η αγορά και η οικονομία μπορούν να είναι ανεξάρτητες από την κοινωνία, φαίνεται μέσα στα σχήματα ότι οι κοινωνικές και οικονομικές δραστηριότητες δεν μπορούν να

διακριθούν οι μεν από τις δε και ότι τα μέλη των σχημάτων επίτηδες έχουν επιλέξει να συμβαίνει αυτό. Αυτό καθιστά τα επιτεύγματα και τις αποτυχίες των σχημάτων πολύ εμφανή, αλλά από την άλλη πλευρά, όλα τα επιτεύγματα και οι αποτυχίες φαίνεται να είναι στα χέρια των σχημάτων καθ' αυτών. Το εάν τα επιτυχημένα χαρακτηριστικά θα εξελιχθούν και οι αποτυχίες θα επιλυθούν, είναι πάρα πολύ νωρίς για να το γνωρίζουμε. Ωστόσο, φαίνεται ότι οι άνθρωποι που συμμετέχουν στα σχήματα δεν είναι εντελώς ανίσχυροι όπως είναι οι άνθρωποι στην κυρίαρχη οικονομία σε περιόδους οικονομικής αναταραχής.

Στο πλαίσιο αυτό, τα ερωτήματα αν τα σχήματα αυτά είναι ξεχωριστές οικονομίες ή αγορές, αποδεικνύονται ότι είναι ζητήματα ορισμού και ιστορίας. Γνωρίζουμε σήμερα ότι υπήρξαν διάφοροι τύποι αγορών και διάφοροι τύποι οικονομιών. Δεν είναι βέβαια προφανές ότι μπορούμε να διαχωρίσουμε οικονομίες[3], αλλά φαίνεται ότι μπορούμε να έχουμε τουλάχιστον σαφώς καθορισμένους οικονομικούς χώρους ώστε οι κανόνες ενδέχεται να διαφέρουν από χώρο σε χώρο. Μια αγορά μπορεί να υπάρχει χωρίς χρήματα στην τυπική μορφή της, και μια οικονομία μπορεί να υπάρχει χωρίς οι οικονομολόγοι να είναι σε θέση να μετρήσουν σε επίσημο νόμισμα. Οι υποχρεωτικές ή άμεσες πληρωμές δεν είναι κύριος κανόνας και η αμοιβαιότητα μπορεί να υπάρχει με πολλές διαφορετικές διευθετήσεις που αφορούν σε μεγάλες αποστάσεις στο χώρο και το χρόνο.

Αυτό δημιουργεί ήδη πολλά ερωτήματα σχετικά με το πώς καθορίζουμε τις αξίες και πώς αποτιμούμε τα πράγματα και την ανθρώπινη προσπάθεια, όποτε αυτή είναι δυνατόν να τιμολογηθεί. Η χρήση της μηδενικής τιμής σε πολλές περιπτώσεις όπου η κυρίαρχη οικονομία γενικά αποδίδει μια υψηλή τιμή, δείχνει ότι η μηδενική τιμή μπορεί να είναι εξίσου αποτελεσματική και κοινωνικά καρποφόρα, ανάλογα με το πλαίσιο μέσα στο οποίο χρησιμοποιείται. Τόσο η χαλαρή φύση των υποχρεώσεων σε πολλές περιπτώσεις όσο και η κυκλική φύση των αποπληρωμών, με σεβασμό προς τους φυσικούς και ανθρώπινους κύκλους, δείχνουν ότι η οικονομία πρέπει να διερευνήσει νέους τρόπους για την επίλυση προβλημάτων, όπως η εξισορρόπηση των διαδικασιών προσφορών και παραγωγής. Ως εκ τούτου, η αμοιβαιότητα τίθεται σε ένα νέο πλαίσιο όπου διάφορες πτυχές χρειάζεται να ληφθούν υπόψη εκτός από την "καθορισμένη" αξία των εμπορεύσιμων αγαθών και υπηρεσιών.

---

[3] Κατά βάση υποστηρίζω την άποψη ότι η οικονομία είναι ένα σύνολο αλληλο-συνδεόμενων χώρων όπου δεν μπορούν να υπάρχουν απόλυτα όρια μεταξύ ενός χώρου και ενός άλλου. Sotiropoulou, I (2012c).

2.1.3. Το θέμα της αξίας ήταν από τα πιο δύσκολα που είχε να αντιμετωπίσει αυτή η διατριβή. Δεν ήταν δυνατό να καταλήξω σε οριστικά συμπεράσματα, αλλά την ίδια στιγμή, κατέστη δυνατό να φτάσω σε κάποιο σημείο όπου φαίνεται ότι το θέμα των αξιών, ή ο χώρος όπου συμφωνούνται οι οικονομικές αξίες, είναι πραγματικά ένα πεδίο έρευνας που έχει περισσότερα να προσφέρει στην οικονομική επιστήμη. Οι συναλλαγές χωρίς επίσημο νόμισμα αναβίωσαν όλα αυτά τα ερωτήματα που φαίνονταν να έχουν λίγο ή πολύ συμφωνηθεί, αν όχι και επιλυθεί. Μέσω των μη κυρίαρχων τρόπων συναλλαγής οι άνθρωποι δείχνουν ξεκάθαρα ότι προτιμούν άλλες διαδικασίες αξιολόγησης και άλλα αποτελέσματα αποτίμησης από την κυρίαρχη οικονομία, ή τουλάχιστον, προσπαθούν να αμφισβητήσουν τις κυρίαρχες αξιολογήσεις και αγωνίζονται για την υποστήριξη των δικών τους αντιλήψεων περί αξίας. Η μηδενική τιμή αποδείχθηκε σαφώς ότι δεν σημαίνει μηδενική αξία, αλλά ακριβώς το αντίθετο: η μηδενική τιμή αποκάλυψε διάφορες αξιολογήσεις που προκαλούν ερωτήματα, τα οποία οι τιμές στην κυρίαρχη οικονομία κρύβουν ή εμποδίζουν.

Η συλλογική φύση της πρόκλησης αυτής είναι το πιο σημαντικό χαρακτηριστικό. Από τη μία πλευρά, φαίνεται ότι ακολουθεί την τυπική μορφή πάλης των κοινωνικών ομάδων που αγωνίζονται συλλογικά ενάντια σε επιλογές που επιβάλλονται από δομές έξω από την επιρροή τους. Από την άλλη πλευρά, τα ζητήματα τάξης, φύλου, μορφωτικού επιπέδου, ιδιοκτησιακών δικαιωμάτων, είναι ανοιχτά και φαίνεται ότι αναδιατάσσονται με τρόπους αρκετά διαφορετικούς από τη συνηθισμένη ταξική πάλη. Αυτό δεν σημαίνει ότι δεν υπάρχει ταξική πάλη, αλλά ότι χρειάζεται να διερευνήσουμε περισσότερο για να δούμε πώς η τάξη και οι άλλοι άξονες ιεραρχίας επηρεάζουν την οικονομική δραστηριότητα χωρίς επίσημο νόμισμα.

Στην πραγματικότητα, δεν γνωρίζουμε τί συμβαίνει με την αξία των πραγμάτων και την αξία του νομίσματος. Για μένα, αν έπρεπε να διαλέξω μια θέση, θα στεκόμουν στις ιδέες της Annette Weiner και των άλλων ανθρωπολόγων (δείτε για αυτό στο κεφάλαιο τρία) ότι οι άνθρωποι συναλλάσσονται για πολιτικούς οικονομικούς λόγους και όχι για οικονομικούς λόγους (όπως η κυρίαρχη οικονομία τους θέλει, απεικονίζοντάς τους ωσάν να μη ζουν σε κοινωνία ή μέσα στο πλαίσιο οποιωνδήποτε συλλογικών διευθετήσεων). Οι συλλογικές θεωρήσεις της αξίας μπορούν να είναι ένα χρήσιμο πλαίσιο, το οποίο επιτρέπει ως περιγραφικό εργαλείο

να ενσωματώσουμε την ιδέα της συλλογικής πάλης στην αντίληψη της αξίας και των αξιών και να αξιολογούμε περισσότερο αυτό που υποτιμά η κυρίαρχη αγορά. Οι άνθρωποι στα σχήματα, αλλά και έξω από αυτά γνωρίζουν πολύ καλά ότι δεν μπορούν ως άτομα να επηρεάζουν τις αξιολογήσεις, αλλά από την άλλη πλευρά, κατανοούν ότι η ανθρώπινη εργασία ή προσπάθεια δεν είναι το μόνο κριτήριο της αξίας, και ότι η φύση μπορεί να έχει αξία για τους ανθρώπους χωρίς οι τελευταίοι να είναι σε θέση να υπολογίσουν μια πιθανή ποσότητα εργασίας για τη δημιουργία της φύσης ή για να την επαναφορά της στην προηγούμενη αμόλυντη κατάστασή της.

Προφανώς, είμαστε μπροστά σε έναν αγώνα για την αξία που δεν έχει καθοριστεί ακόμη ευθέως και σαφώς, αλλά τα πρώτα στοιχεία αυτού του αγώνα μπορούμε ήδη να τα εντοπίσουμε και να τα μελετήσουμε. Φαίνεται ότι ο οικονομικός χώρος όπου μια δράση ή ένα πράγμα κυκλοφορεί, είναι σημαντικός για τον καθορισμό των κανόνων αξιολόγησης αυτής την δράσης ή του πράγματος. Ο ίδιος χώρος είναι σημαντικός για να μπορέσουμε να δούμε αν αυτές οι συλλογικές θεωρήσεις της αξίας μπορούν να συνυπάρξουν με τις κυρίαρχες ή όχι.

Σε αυτούς τους οικονομικούς χώρους, το φετίχ της μέτρησης έχει για τα καλά τοποθετηθεί στη σωστή του θέση: οι άνθρωποι μετρούν και καταμετρούν κάθε φορά που νομίζουν ότι είναι κατάλληλο, είναι δυνατόν, είναι αποτελεσματικό και σύμφωνα με τον σκοπό της συναλλαγής και όχι το αντίστροφο. Η έλλειψη της μέτρησης δεν είναι πρόβλημα, πρόβλημα είναι να μετράς τα πάντα, δηλαδή το μείζον ζήτημα είναι η λανθασμένη αξιολόγηση που δημιουργείται από την υπερ-μέτρηση.

Αυτή η παρατήρηση μπορεί να εξηγήσει, επίσης, τα προβλήματα της εξίσωσης της αξίας των υπηρεσιών. Με άλλα λόγια, μπορεί να μην είναι μια εξίσωση των αξιών, επειδή αυτό θα σήμαινε ότι οι άνθρωποι αποδέχονται την εξίσωση των αξιών που υπάρχουν ήδη στην κυρίαρχη οικονομία. Θα μπορούσε να είναι μια εξίσωση των ανθρώπων, ή η ιδέα ότι η προσπάθεια (κοινωνικής) αναπαραγωγής είναι για τους ανθρώπους, όχι για την αναπαραγωγική αξία της εργασίας[4]. Ωστόσο, η υπόθεση αυτή δεν απαντά στο ερώτημα της βάσης της αξίας, ή ποιά είναι τα κριτήρια

[4] Με άλλα λόγια, αυτή η αναδιάταξη θα μπορούσε να υποστηρίξει τους φτωχούς που δεν εργάζονται ώστε να περνούν το χρόνο τους με τους φίλους και την οικογένειά τους, βελτιώνοντας τον κόσμο με τρόπους που δεν μπορούμε να προβλέψομε αυτή τη στιγμή, γιατί αποφεύγουν η αξία του πραγματικού χρήματος, που εκφράζει την αξία της άμεσης ισχύος, να μετατρέπει τους ανθρώπους σε χρήματα, Graeber, D. (2011, σ. 171, 390). Ή, θα μπορούσε να είναι ότι η άποψη που εξέφρασε η Weiner στο άρθρο Weiner, A. (1980) ότι η αναπαραγωγή θα μπορούσε να είναι ακόμη πιο σημαντική και κοινωνική και εξισωτική ιδέα από την αμοιβαιότητα, λαμβάνει μια νέα σημασία στο πλαίσιο των σχημάτων που μελετήθηκαν.

για να αποφασίσουν οι άνθρωποι να εξισώσουν τους εαυτούς τους χρησιμοποιώντας τις προσφορές τους.

Αυτό δεν σημαίνει ότι η ανθρώπινη προσπάθεια, το ταλέντο, η προσωπική συμμετοχή και το μεράκι δεν μετράνε, ή ότι οι άνθρωποι στα σχήματα προσπαθούν να ισοπεδώσουν τις ατομικές συνεισφορές. Συμβαίνει ακριβώς το αντίθετο: η ατομική συμβολή και προσπάθεια είναι ιδιαίτερα αναγνωρισμένες και μνημονεύονται (με ονόματα, όχι μόνο "κάποιος είπε ...", εκτός αν δεν υπάρχει μνήμη του προσώπου φυσικά) και αυτοί που προσφέρουν πολύ, λαμβάνουν πολύ. Παρ' όλα αυτά, αυτό δεν δημιουργεί μια ιεραρχία αξίας, με την έννοια ότι η μοναδική συμβολή του κάθε ανθρώπου δεν καθίσταται απόλυτη αξία για τους υπόλοιπους ανθρώπους. Δεν ξέρω αν αυτό μπορεί να αμφισβητήσει τις ιδέες μας για τις ιεραρχίες στην οικονομία, και θα ήθελα να εξετάσω αυτό το ζήτημα, αλλά αυτό θα επεκτεινόταν πολύ πέρα από το πεδίο της παρούσας έρευνας.

Από την άλλη πλευρά, η αποδοχή ενός νομίσματος που χρησιμοποιείται από λίγους μόνο ανθρώπους, μπορεί να φαίνεται ως μια μη ορθολογική επιλογή. Θα μπορούσε επίσης να είναι και άδικη, γιατί, αν βρίσκεσαι σε δυσπραγία, ο άλλος θα μπορούσε να εξοικονομήσει επίσημο νόμισμα και στην πραγματικότητα να πιέσει για να δεχθείς το παράλληλο νόμισμα, διότι αυτό είναι το μόνο νόμισμα με το οποίο αυτός/αυτή θέλει να πληρώσει. Και αν λάβουμε υπόψη μας ότι ένα νόμισμα, ακόμη και παράλληλο, λειτουργεί ως μέτρο της αξίας, τότε επιστρέφουμε στη συζήτηση για την αξία που παρουσιάστηκε προηγουμένως: πώς ένα τέτοιο νόμισμα αποκτά αξία και πώς αντιπροσωπεύει την αξία της παραγωγής των ανθρώπων;

Η ισοτιμία 1:1 που έχει τεθεί για τα παράλληλα νομίσματα σε σχέση με το νόμισμα του ευρώ είναι ένα ακόμη σημαντικό πείραμα, όχι μόνο επειδή τα παράλληλα νομίσματα θα τείνουν να αναπαράγουν τις αξιολογήσεις και τις συμπεριφορές που είναι συνηθισμένες στην κυρίαρχη οικονομία.. Είναι πάρα πολύ νωρίς να πούμε ο,τιδήποτε σχετικά με αυτήν την ισοτιμία και εάν θα είναι δυνατόν για τα παράλληλα νομίσματα να κρατήσουν πραγματικά σε λειτουργία αυτήν την ισοτιμία[5].

2.1.4. Τα επιχειρήματα ότι οι άνθρωποι μπορεί να δεχθούν να συμμετάσχουν σε μια συναλλαγή όπου το όφελος μπορεί να μην είναι καθόλου οικονομικό, θα ίσχυε σε

[5] Sotiropoulou, I. (2012d).

πρώτη ανάλυση, αν κοιτάξουμε τα ποσοτικά και ποιοτικά αποτελέσματα της έρευνας: το να γνωρίσουν άλλους ανθρώπους, να εγκαθιδρύσουν κοινωνικούς δεσμούς, να πειραματιστούν εφαρμόζοντας στην πράξη ιδεολογικές πεποιθήσεις, έχουν αναφερθεί ως κίνητρα ώστε να συμμετέχουν οι άνθρωποι στη μελετώμενη δραστηριότητα. Ωστόσο, φαίνεται ότι τα οικονομικά οφέλη μπορεί να περιλαμβάνουν δεδομένα πολύ πιο πέρα από όσο θα μπορούσε κανείς να μετρήσει σε επίσημο νόμισμα. Η διασφάλιση ότι οι αξιολογήσεις σου και οι αξιολογήσεις της κοινότητάς σου λαμβάνονται υπ' όψη και προστατεύονται, είναι ένα σημαντικό οικονομικό όφελος. Η εγκαθίδρυση νέων οικονομικών διευθετήσεων, όπου η φύση και οι άνθρωποι δεν αντιτίθενται μεταξύ τους, είναι επίσης ένα σημαντικό οικονομικό όφελος.

Επιπλέον, φαίνεται ότι αυτή η πολύ μεγάλη έγνοια για την εξίσωση προσφορών και λήψεων ταυτόχρονα, υπάρχει μόνο στα οικονομικά εγχειρίδια. Οι άνθρωποι πολύ άνετα συναλλάσσονται χρησιμοποιώντας μακροπρόθεσμη σκέψη και καταμέτρηση και τους φαίνεται φυσικό αυτό, αντί να καταγράφουν συναλλαγές που έγιναν και υποχρεώσεις που εκκρεμούν, πολύ δε λιγότερο να μετρούν ακριβώς τί έχει δοθεί και τί αναμένεται να ανταποδοθεί. Φαίνεται ότι εύκολα προσαρμόζονται σε λογιστικές μονάδες που καταγράφονται μόνο σε έναν υπολογιστή, και τις χρησιμοποιούν για να τιμολογούν αγαθά και υπηρεσίες, ενώ δεν υπάρχει καμμία αρχή που να εγγυάται τη δυνατότητα εξαργύρωσης των πιστωμένων μονάδων. Επίσης, φαίνεται να δέχονται πληρωμές σε είδος, ιδίως βρώσιμα προϊόντα, πράγμα που σημαίνει ότι τα μέσα πληρωμής δεν χρειάζεται καθόλου να είναι σκληρό νόμισμα, για να είναι δημοφιλή και ευρέως αποδεκτά από τους παραγωγούς.

2.1.5. Στο πλαίσιο αυτό, θα γινόταν κατανοητή η ποικιλία των κινήτρων που συνυπάρχουν στις εξηγήσεις των συμμετεχόντων για την ίδρυση ή/και συμμετοχή σε ένα σχήμα. Οι μονοδιάστατες εξηγήσεις δεν θα μπορούσαν να ισχύσουν καθόλου, αλλά θα ίσχυε ένας πολυεπίπεδος συλλογισμός όπου τα οικονομικά κίνητρα συνυφαίνονται με τα κοινωνικά. Αυτό επιβεβαιώνει ότι η οικονομική δραστηριότητα δεν θεωρείται αποκομμένη από την κοινωνία. Επίσης, επισημαίνεται ότι ούτε τα πολιτικά κίνητρα μπορούν να διαχωριστούν από τους οικονομικούς στόχους. Κατά συνέπεια, η συμπεριφορά των ανθρώπων που πραγματοποιούν συναλλαγές χωρίς επίσημο νόμισμα γίνεται ένα μείζον θέμα της πολιτικής οικονομίας.

Η πολιτική οικονομική φύση του αντικειμένου είναι βεβαίως όχι συνήθης, με την έννοια ότι οι δημόσιες αρχές συνήθως δεν αναμειγνύονται σε αυτή τη

δραστηριότητα, με εξαίρεση λίγους δήμους που υποστηρίζουν ή εγκαθιδρύουν σχήματα οι ίδιοι. Επομένως, αυτή η συλλογική προσπάθεια για την καθιέρωση τρόπων συναλλαγής μακριά από το συγκεντρωτικό νομισματικό σύστημα συνδέεται με τις τοπικές αρχές (που εκλέγονται άμεσα από τους κατοίκους των πόλεων) και με τις ομάδες βάσης, που είναι καλά ενσωματωμένες στις τοπικές συνθήκες και ανάγκες.

Η συμμετοχή σε περισσότερα από ένα σχήματα δείχνει επίσης ποικιλία των στόχων για τα μέλη του σχημάτων. Από τα δεδομένα που παρουσιάζονται στα διάφορα κεφάλαια της διατριβής, φαίνεται ότι ορισμένοι από τους στόχους πληρούνται, τουλάχιστον σε κάποια έκταση. Το πιο σημαντικό στοιχείο βέβαια, είναι ότι έστω και αν οι σκοποί που επιδιώκονται από τους ανθρώπους και τα σχήματά τους δεν έχουν ικανοποιηθεί ακόμη, υπάρχει μεγάλη πιθανότητα να μπορούν να επιτευχθούν μέσα από αυτή τη δραστηριότητα. Ή, τουλάχιστον, η δυνατότητα αυτή γίνεται αντιληπτή ως ισχυρή και ως εκ τούτου, οι άνθρωποι συνεχίζουν να συμμετέχουν, να πειραματίζονται και να εργάζονται μέσα στα σχήματα.

Με άλλα λόγια, οι άνθρωποι συμμετέχουν στα σχήματα, επειδή τα βρίσκουν προσιτά και εύχρηστα και καταλληλότερα για τις οικονομικές και κοινωνικές τους ανάγκες. Οι ανάγκες χρειάζεται να προσδιορίζονται σε κάθε περίπτωση, και οι στόχοι μπορεί να διαφέρουν από άτομο σε άτομο και από κοινότητα σε κοινότητα. Όμως, από την άποψη της πολιτικής οικονομίας, σημαίνει ότι τα μέλη των σχημάτων και τα μη-μέλη των σχημάτων, τα οποία, ωστόσο, δεν χρησιμοποιούν επίσημο νόμισμα για τις συναλλαγές τους, λαμβάνουν υπ’ όψη πολλές διαφορετικές αιτίες διαφορετικών κατηγοριών για να αποφασίσουν άν και πώς θα στραφούν σε άλλους τρόπους συναλλαγής από το να χρησιμοποιούν επίσημο νόμισμα.

Έπειτα, φαίνεται ότι οι άνθρωποι που συμμετέχουν σε σχήματα είναι λίγο ή πολύ ικανοποιημένοι με τη συμμετοχή τους - μέχρι τώρα. Είμαι βέβαιη ότι θα ήταν πολύ ενδιαφέρον να μιλήσουμε με τους ίδιους ανθρώπους ή να κάνουμε μια άλλη έρευνα μετά από τρία ή πέντε χρόνια και να ρωτήσουμε την ίδια ερώτηση, αφότου έχουν μακρά εμπειρία από τα σχήματα αυτά. Εντούτοις, οι συμμετέχοντες στην έρευνα δεν είναι άνθρωποι που θέλουν να απεικονίσουν τα πάντα ως τέλεια, ούτε είναι αυτοί που κλείνουν τα μάτια τους στα προβλήματα που προκύπτουν. Ναι, το να είσαι σε μια δομή όπου εμπλέκονται πολλοί άνθρωποι, σημαίνει ότι θα χρειαστεί να διαπραγματευτείς, να περιμένεις, να διερευνήσεις ιδέες και λύσεις, αλλά αυτό δεν σημαίνει ότι οι άνθρωποι ήθελαν να μου δώσουν μια ψευδώς θετική εντύπωση. Στις

περισσότερες περιπτώσεις, άρχισαν πάντα τις συζητήσεις τους με τα παράπονα και τις παρατηρήσεις τους σχετικά με τα προβλήματα και τα ζητήματα που χρειάζονται επίλυση, αντί να παρουσιάσουν πρώτα τα επιτεύγματα.

Αυτή η κριτική προσέγγιση από τους ίδιους τους συμμετέχοντες με έκανε να σκεφτώ τα δεδομένα μου ως λίγο ή πολύ αξιόπιστα, με την έννοια ότι δεν έχω την εντύπωση ότι προσπάθησαν να δημιουργήσουν μια εικόνα βιτρίνας της δραστηριότητάς τους για την έρευνά μου. Επιπλέον, γνωρίζω αρκετές περιπτώσεις όπου το πρόβλημα που μου αναφέρθηκε κάποια στιγμή, λύθηκε μερικούς μήνες ή ένα χρόνο μετά με έναν θετικό ή ακόμη και εφευρετικό τρόπο. Αυτό σημαίνει ότι, όχι μόνο είναι ευχαριστημένοι με τη συμμετοχή τους, αλλά και ότι εργάζονται δραστήρια για συνεχίσει να είναι έτσι.

2.1.6. Κατά συνέπεια, η μονοδιάστατη σύνδεση μεταξύ της οικονομικής και χρηματοπιστωτικής κρίσης και της συμμετοχής και εξάπλωσης των σχημάτων δεν υπάρχει και θα ήταν παράλογο να υπάρχει, δεδομένων των προαναφερθέντων ζητημάτων. Παρ’ όλα αυτά, δεν πρέπει να υποτιμάται η επίδραση της πραγματικής οικονομικής κατάστασης: η άποψη της V.Spike Peterson δείχνει ότι υπάρχουν πολλές ροές πολιτικών, οικονομικών και κοινωνικών συλλογικών αγώνων που λαμβάνουν χώρα και μετασχηματίζονται μακροπρόθεσμα και οι μη κυρίαρχοι τρόποι συναλλαγής θα μπορούσαν απλώς να είναι ένα επιφανειακό σύμπτωμα αυτών των αγώνων. Έτσι, αν η οικονομική επιστήμη χρειάζεται ακριβείς εξηγήσεις για αυτούς τους τρόπους, πρέπει όχι μόνο να επικεντρωθεί στην ιστορική έρευνα, αλλά και να χρησιμοποιήσει όλα εκείνα τα διεπιστημονικά εργαλεία που είναι διαθέσιμα σήμερα για ένα τέτοιο ερευνητικό έργο.

2.1.7. Δεν είμαι σίγουρη αν είναι ένα ατυχές ή ευτυχές γεγονός να βλέπω τα ελληνικά σχήματα να βρίσκονται τόσο μακριά από τις υπάρχουσες τυπολογίες σε διεθνές επίπεδο. Προσωπικά, θεωρώ ότι αυτό είναι μια πλούσια συμβολή των ίδιων των σχημάτων στη θεωρία και την πρακτική του επιστημονικού αυτού αντικειμένου. Ακόμα κι αν δεν κατάφερα να καταλήξω σε οριστικά συμπεράσματα για τους λόγους που υπάρχει αυτή η ιδιαιτερότητα, χαίρομαι που η υπόθεση εργασίας * , η οποία δημιουργήθηκε εξαιτίας αυτών των «περίεργων» ευρημάτων, μου επιτρέπει να έχω κάποιες ενδείξεις για περαιτέρω έρευνα προς αυτή την κατεύθυνση.

Η ποικιλία των δομών των σχημάτων, η διασπορά τους σε όλη τη χώρα, ή οριζόντια και/ή δικτυακή τους οργάνωση δείχνουν ότι η δραστηριότητα αυτή δεν μπορεί να είναι ένα μοναδικό, προσωρινό, τυχαίο φαινόμενο. Η έλλειψη ακαδημαϊκής ή ακτιβιστικής βιβλιογραφίας σχετικά με παρόμοιες δομές στα Βαλκάνια ή στη Μεσόγειο δεν σημαίνει ότι η εκπληκτική ποικιλία των μη κυρίαρχων τρόπων συναλλαγής είναι μια ελληνική εφεύρεση, αλλά ότι χρειάζεται να γίνει περισσότερη έρευνα για να κατανοήσουμε ποιό είναι το πραγματικό περιφερειακό και διεθνές πλαίσιο αυτής της οικονομικής τεχνογνωσίας βάσης που υπάρχει κάτω από τα σχήματα.

Ιδιαίτερη προσοχή χρειάζεται στην περίπτωση των παράλληλων νομισμάτων, και των χρονοτραπεζών και των εικονικών νομισμάτων/νομισμάτων εμπιστοσύνης (fiat). Δεν είναι σύνηθες να υπάρχουν σχήματα σε επίπεδο χώρας, όπως ο Οβολός, ενώ σχήματα σε περιφερειακό επίπεδο ή σε επίπεδο νομού είναι πιο συχνά. Σε πόλεις όπως η Αθήνα ή η Θεσσαλονίκη, είναι ενδιαφέρον ότι μπορεί να επικαλύπτονται παράλληλα νομίσματα, χωρίς συνήθως να επιλέγουν την οργάνωση σε επίπεδο γειτονιάς ή προαστίου. Στις περισσότερες περιπτώσεις που είναι γνωστές από τη βιβλιογραφία, τα σχήματα προτιμούν να μην επικαλύπτονται[6].

Φυσικά, δεν είναι σαφές εάν η κατάσταση στο εξωτερικό είναι η τελική εικόνα μετά από συγχωνεύσεις αρκετών σχημάτων μεταξύ τους, όπως τα σχήματα LETS-ATI και Free-economy που έχουν ήδη συγχωνευθεί στην Αθήνα, ή όπως τα μέλη της ομάδας Τσουκνίδα εντάχθηκαν στο Δίκτυο Ανταλλαγών Ρεθύμνου, ή αφότου άλλα σχήματα που σταμάτησαν να λειτουργούν χωρίς ποτέ να αναφερθούν στην ακαδημαϊκή βιβλιογραφία

Φαίνεται, ότι η οικονομική ανθεκτικότητα και αποδοτικότητα[7] μπορεί να αλληλεπιδρούν, επίσης, σε αυτή την περίπτωση και υπάρχει ανάγκη για μια σε βάθος ερευνητική εργασία για να γίνουν ακριβείς συγκρίσεις για το πώς η συνύπαρξη παράλληλων νομισμάτων επηρεάζει την οικονομική δραστηριότητα. Το ερώτημα θα περιλαμβάνει επίσης το ζήτημα του πώς η συνύπαρξη σχημάτων διαφορετικών τύπων καλύπτει κοινωνικές και οικονομικές ανάγκες με έναν πιο σφαιρικό τρόπο από ό,τι αν έχουμε μόνο ένα παράλληλο νόμισμα σε μία πόλη ή γειτονιά.

---

[6] Aldridge, T. et al (2001a, 2001b), Seyfang, G. (1996, 1997, 2001a, 2001b, 2004), Williams C. (1995b, 1996a, 1996c, 1996d, 1997).
[7] Goerner, S. et al (2009a, 2010).

Αυτή η ποικιλία των δομών και η συνύπαρξη διαφόρων σχημάτων και η πολλαπλή συμμετοχή των ίδιων ανθρώπων σε σχήματα, ή η μη συμμετοχή σε σχήματα ανθρώπων που πραγματοποιούν, εντούτοις, συναλλαγές χωρίς επίσημο νόμισμα, καθιστά τη σύγκριση με την περίπτωση της Αργεντινής σχεδόν αδύνατη. Ο λόγος των μέσων μαζικής ενημέρωσης και ακόμη και οι καθημερινές συζητήσεις αναφέρουν την Αργεντινή και την οικονομική και χρηματοπιστωτική κρίση του 2000-2002 ως ένα σύνηθες θέμα για ανάλυση. Τα παράλληλα νομίσματα της Αργεντινής, δηλαδή οι κόμβοι ανταλλαγής (trueque), είναι γνωστοί στην Ελλάδα, και αυτό κάνει τις συζητήσεις πολύ εντυπωσιακές από τη πλευρά της σύγκρισης πώς οι πολιτικές του ΔΝΤ και των νεοφιλελευθέρων επηρέασαν τις οικονομικές συνθήκες τόσο στην Αργεντινή όσο και στην Ελλάδα, αλλά και πώς τα παράλληλα νομίσματα και ο αντιπραγματισμός προέκυψαν εκείνη την εποχή ως λύσεις επιβίωσης. Από τις πληροφορίες που έχουμε μέχρι τώρα για τα σχήματα της Αργεντινής, φαίνεται ότι αυτή η σύγκριση δεν μπορεί να γίνει σε αυτό το επίπεδο. Πρώτον, επειδή η αργεντίνικη και η ελληνική οικονομία ήταν και εξακολουθούν να είναι πολύ διαφορετικές γενικά. Δεύτερον, δεν υπάρχει καμία πληροφορία σχετικά με αυτή την ποικιλία σχημάτων στην Αργεντινή- ενώ υπάρχουν πληροφορίες για τον τεράστιο αριθμό των ανθρώπων που συμμετείχαν στα σχήματα παράλληλων νομισμάτων στην ευρύτερη περιοχή του Μπουένος Άιρες. Επιπλέον, από τα μέσα της δεκαετίας του 1980, οι Αργεντίνοι είχαν εμπειρία στα τοπικά νομίσματα που εκδίδονταν από τα δημοτικά συμβούλια, πράγμα που σημαίνει ότι το 2000, υπήρχε ήδη μια 15-ετής εμπειρία σε αυτό το είδος οικονομικής δραστηριότητας[8]. Αυτή η εμπειρία δεν υπάρχει στην Ελλάδα, ωστόσο, φαίνεται ότι υπάρχει άλλη εμπειρία και τεχνογνωσία και η ποικιλία των σχημάτων και η γρήγορη εξάπλωσή τους είναι καλές κατευθύνσεις σχετικά με αυτό, αν και θα χρειαστεί ένα άλλο ερευνητικό έργο για να βεβαιωθούμε ότι έχουμε κάποιες ακριβείς πληροφορίες για αυτό το θέμα.

2.1.8. Δεδομένου ότι τα συμπεράσματα σχετικά με τις υποθέσεις εργασίας αναφορικά με το ρόλο της οικονομικής και χρηματοπιστωτικής κρίσης στην εξάπλωση των σχημάτων και σχετικά με τα ζητήματα κοινωνικών αγώνων, έχουν ήδη παρουσιαστεί στις προηγούμενες παραγράφους, θα ήθελα να αναφερθώ μόνο στο θέμα της μικρής παραγωγής. Όπως έχει ήδη αναφερθεί, όλο το ερευνητικό έργο κατέληξε να ερευνά

[8] Pearson, R. (2003), Gomez, G. (2012), Powell, J. (2010).

πρακτικές της μικρής παραγωγής. Συζήτησα αυτό το εύρημα στην ενότητα 3.5. Αυτό που είναι σημαντικό σε αυτή την περίπτωση, είναι ότι σε αντίθεση με τη συνήθη πρακτική να συνδέουμε τη μικρή παραγωγή με μικρές μερίδες γης (με ατομική ή μη ατομική ιδιοκτησία), η περίπτωση της μικρής παραγωγής που συνδέεται με μη κυρίαρχους τρόπους συναλλαγών με πείθει να κοιτάξω περισσότερο προς την κατεύθυνση του επιπέδου παραγωγής των νοικοκυριών. Με άλλα λόγια, φαίνεται ότι οι πρακτικές μικρής παραγωγής μέσω της δραστηριότητας χωρίς επίσημο νόμισμα βασίζονται και διασυνδέονται με το νοικοκυριό, όχι ως ξεχωριστή ή αυτάρκη μονάδα παραγωγής, αλλά ως ένα χώρο όπου οι άνθρωποι μπορούν να οργανώνουν τις συνεργασίες και τις συναλλαγές τους με τους άλλους ανθρώπους και με άλλα νοικοκυριά. Οι συλλογικές διευθετήσεις δεν φαίνεται να διαλύουν την οικονομία που βασίζεται στο νοικοκυριό, αλλά να το καθιστούν ικανό να προσαρμοστεί σε καταστάσεις όπως είναι οι περικοπές των δημοσίων δαπανών σε κοινωνικές παροχές, τα υψηλά ποσοστά ανεργίας και η φτώχεια.

Θα ήταν αδύνατο σε αυτό το ερευνητικό έργο να διερευνήσω τις λεπτομέρειες σχετικά με τους τρόπους εσωτερικής παραγωγής των νοικοκυριών, με τα μοτίβα ανταλλαγής μεταξύ των νοικοκυριών και με τις ενδο-οικιακές διευθετήσεις μέσω της χρήσης δομημένων σχημάτων ή με τις αχρήματες πρακτικές εκτός σχημάτων. Παρ' όλα αυτά, φαίνεται ότι οι μη κυρίαρχοι τρόποι συναλλαγών δείχνουν νέες κατευθύνσεις για τις αντιλήψεις και τα πρότυπα της μικρής παραγωγής, καθώς και για την οικονομία των νοικοκυριών.

2.2. Περισσότερα συμπεράσματα

Δεν είμαι σίγουρη ότι, ακόμη και αν έχω κάποιες αξιόπιστες απαντήσεις, αυτές εξακολουθούν να ισχύουν, επειδή η πραγματικότητα στο πεδίο της έρευνάς μου αλλάζει με ρυθμούς με τους οποίους δεν μπορώ να συμβαδίσω, έτσι κι αλλιώς. Παρ' όλα αυτά, οι συναλλαγές που πραγματοποιούνται χωρίς τη χρήση επίσημου νομίσματος έχουν πολλές συνέπειες για τις ζωές των ανθρώπων που εμπλέκονται, ίσως και για τις ζωές όλων μας. Αν οι παραδοσιακές ποικιλίες και η γνώση καλλιέργειάς τους διατηρούνται μέσω μιας ελεύθερης δομής, τότε αυτό θα δώσει τη δυνατότητα σε ολόκληρες κοινότητες να έχουν πρόσβαση σε αυτές τις ποικιλίες. Αν τα παιδιά μπορούν να έχουν πρόσβαση σε καλό φαγητό, ρούχα, παιχνίδια και ιδίως

σε εκπαίδευση, ενώ οι γονείς τους υποφέρουν σε μια οικονομία όπου η υψηλή ανεργία και οι περικοπές των δημοσίων δαπανών είναι καθημερινή ρουτίνα, τότε αυτό θα αποτρέψει τον κίνδυνο η νέα γενιά να είναι λιγότερο καλοζωϊσμένη και λιγότερο μορφωμένη από τους γονείς της και τους παππούδες της (ας μην σκεφτούμε τί επιπτώσεις θα έχει αυτή η αντοχή για ολόκληρη την κοινωνία και την οικονομία).

Τα μέλη των σχημάτων αποδείχθηκαν εξαιρετικοί άνθρωποι και εξαιρετικοί οικονομικοί δρώντες. Φαίνεται ότι έχουν πολύ καλή γνώση για το πώς λειτουργεί η οικονομία και επίσης έχουν μεγάλη αυτοπεποίθηση ώστε να σκεφτούν από μόνοι τους και να διατηρούν κριτική στάση προς τις κυρίαρχες οικονομικές ιδέες. Βεβαίως, αυτή είναι η εικόνα που έχω από τα ενεργά μέλη των σχημάτων. Ωστόσο, μερικές φορές αναρωτιέμαι άν το να εγγράφεται κανείς σε ένα σχήμα και να παραμένει αδρανής για κάποιο χρονικό διάστημα είναι επίσης μια στρατηγική επιλογή για τα μέλη που είναι απασχολημένα, ή που θέλουν να μάθουν για τη δραστηριότητα αυτή χωρίς να συμμετέχουν πάρα πολύ από την αρχή, ή που θέλουν να έχουν ένα σχέδιο κάλυψης σε περίπτωση οικονομικής δυσπραγίας.

Το ερώτημα σχετικά με την οικονομική σημασία αυτής της δραστηριότητας σε σύγκριση με το σύνολο της οικονομίας είναι δύσκολο, αλλά και ένα από τα ζητήματα που εκπαιδεύουν καλύτερα, για μένα τουλάχιστον. Κατ' αρχάς, φαίνεται, ότι σε απόλυτους αριθμούς, για μια χώρα των περισσοτέρων από δέκα εκατομμυρίων κατοίκων, η δραστηριότητα αυτή είναι πραγματικά περιθωριακή από άποψη όγκου. Ωστόσο, αυτό το ερευνητικό έργο μου δίδαξε ότι η οικονομική σπουδαιότητα είναι μερικές φορές ανεκτίμητη.

Για παράδειγμα, η προστασία των φυσικών πόρων και η οικοδόμηση βιώσιμων τρόπων καλλιέργειας ή παραγωγής δεν μπορούν να εκτιμηθούν με οποιονδήποτε τρόπο, γιατί αγγίζουν τα όρια της επιβίωσης τόσο για τους ανθρώπους όσο και τον ίδιο τον πλανήτη. Στη συνέχεια, σε ορισμένες άλλες περιπτώσεις, η οικονομική σπουδαιότητα μπορεί να εκτιμηθεί, με τον ίδιο τρόπο που κάποιος κατανοεί την εκτίμηση για έναν καλό δάσκαλο ή ένα νόστιμο γεύμα, αλλά αυτή η οικονομική σπουδαιότητα δεν μπορεί να μετρηθεί καθόλου, αν και θα μπορούσε να έχει σοβαρές οικονομικές συνέπειες για την ατομική και συλλογική ζωή. Και σε άλλες περιπτώσεις, υπάρχει κάποια δυνατότητα μέτρησης της οικονομικής δραστηριότητας, αλλά αυτή υπερβαίνει ό,τι γνωρίζουμε από τα βιβλία: δεν μετριέται σε επίσημο νόμισμα, διότι οι προσφορές είναι προσβάσιμες πέρα από την κυρίαρχη οικονομία - και αυτό είναι μια συνειδητή επιλογή από τους οικονομικούς δρώντες

που θεωρούν ότι οι προσφορές τους δεν θα μπορούσαν να επιτύχουν μεγάλη εκτίμηση στην κυρίαρχη οικονομία και προτιμούν να δώσουν κάτι δωρεάν ή μέσα σε μια άλλη διευθέτηση συναλλαγής μέσα σε έναν άλλον οικονομικό χώρο. Είναι αλήθεια ότι αυτό που παράγεται μέσα στα σχήματα είναι συνήθως πολύ υψηλής ποιότητας και οι παραγωγοί δεν μπορούν να το διαθέσουν στην κυρίαρχη αγορά, επειδή οι τιμές εκεί δεν επιβραβεύουν την ποιότητα που προσφέρουν. Έπειτα, ακόμη και αν ήθελα να μετρήσω τις τιμές σε ευρώ, αυτό θα ήταν αδύνατο, καθώς δεν υπάρχουν παρόμοια προϊόντα (ή ακόμα και αν υπάρχουν, θα μπορούσαν να είναι πολύ ακριβά, συνήθως πωλούνται σε καταστήματα πολυτελείας) στην κυρίαρχη οικονομία για να κάνω μια αξιόπιστη σύγκριση.

Βέβαια, αυτό ήταν επίσης δική μου επιλογή για την έρευνα, δηλαδή να διερευνήσω αξιολογήσεις που λαμβάνουν χώρα στον τομέα αυτό, πέρα από τις προκαταλήψεις που προέρχονται από τα βιβλία. Αυτό μπορεί να έχει μετατρέψει την έρευνά μου σε κάτι τόσο δύσκολο που μια διδακτορική φοιτήτρια δεν μπορεί να χειριστεί με αρκετά ικανοποιητικό τρόπο, αλλά η ίδια η διερεύνηση έδειξε νέους δρόμους για τη μελέτη της οικονομικής θεωρίας και μεθοδολογίας.

Τέλος, ένα σημαντικό συμπέρασμα σχετικά με τα σχήματα είναι ότι διευκολύνουν την ροή των πληροφοριών και της διασποράς της γνώσης/τεχνογνωσίας/ερευνητικής γνώσης μέσω των μελών τους και των μη μελών τους - στην πραγματικότητα η πληροφόρηση και η εκπαίδευση θεωρούνται δύο από τα κύρια εργαλεία για να υπάρχουν και να λειτουργούν τα σχήματα. Ακόμη και αν αυτό δεν ήταν το αντικείμενο της έρευνάς μου, μπορώ να το επιβεβαιώσω: ολόκληρη η διατριβή μου υπάρχει επειδή οι συμμετέχοντες, αλλά και πολλοί άλλοι άνθρωποι εντός και εκτός της πανεπιστημιακής κοινότητας δέχτηκαν να μοιραστούν τις ιδέες και τις γνώσεις τους, ενώ δεν ήξεραν εκείνη τη στιγμή και δεν είχαν σαφή εικόνα για το τί επρόκειτο να κάνω με όλες αυτές τις γνώσεις που ήταν μάλλον αδύνατο να βρεθούν σε βιβλιοθήκες. Δεν ήταν σίγουρο αν επρόκειτο να αναφέρω τη συμβολή τους και να χρησιμοποιήσω τις προσφορές τους με έναν τρόπο που θα τιμούσε την προσφορά και τη συμβολή τους καθαυτή. Ναι, η διατριβή μου είχε ως στόχο να είναι διαθέσιμη στο κοινό μετά την έγκρισή της και, στις περισσότερες περιπτώσεις, αυτή ήταν η μόνη απαίτηση που ετέθη από τους συμμετέχοντες, αν και δεν είχαν κανένα μέσο για την εφαρμογή αυτής της απαίτησης. Όσο για τα υπόλοιπα, τιμήθηκα με την εμπιστοσύνη πολλών ανθρώπων χωρίς πραγματικά αυτοί οι άνθρωποι να ζητήσουν οποιαδήποτε ανταμοιβή.

2.3. Κύρια θέματα για μελλοντική έρευνα

Σχεδόν κάθε ζήτημα που προκύπτει από την έρευνα αυτή μπορεί να είναι το θέμα για ένα μελλοντικό ερευνητικό έργο. Η παραπάνω συζήτηση είναι μόνο η αρχή - ας πούμε, η νέα πρόταση για την έρευνα. Δεδομένου ότι δεν υπάρχουν οριστικές απαντήσεις σε καμία από αυτές τις ερωτήσεις που τέθηκαν μέσω αυτού του ερευνητικού έργου, αυτό που μπορεί κανείς να πει είναι ότι έχουμε τουλάχιστον πιο ακριβείς ερωτήσεις για να συνεχίσουμε τη μελέτη και την έρευνα. Ωστόσο, υπάρχουν κάποια συγκεκριμένα θέματα τα οποία επίκεινται να μελετηθούν:

α) τα μεθοδολογικά ζητήματα.

Οι εθνογραφικές μέθοδοι αποδείχθηκαν ότι είναι μείζονος σημασίας, η πυκνή περιγραφή, η συμμετοχή, η παρατήρηση και οι ελεύθερες συζητήσεις ήταν τα πιο σημαντικά εργαλεία για την απόκτηση μιας πρώτης εικόνας του αντικειμένου της έρευνας. Οι ποσοτικές μέθοδοι δεν έχουν κατασκευαστεί για την εν λόγω οικονομική δραστηριότητα, οπότε θα πρέπει να ψάξουμε για συγκεκριμένα ποσοτικά εργαλεία, που ενδεχομένως είναι πιο κατάλληλα για αυτό το επιστημονικό πεδίο.

β) τα ζητήματα της οικονομικής αξίας και αξιολόγησης.

Μπορεί κανείς να πει ότι μπορούμε να ζήσουμε χωρίς θεωρία της αξίας, ή ότι μπορούμε να ζήσουμε με πολλές θεωρίες της αξίας που εφαρμόζονται ταυτόχρονα στην ίδια περίπτωση. Ωστόσο, δεν μπορούμε να ζήσουμε καθόλου χωρίς αξίες, και ακόμη και αν δεν είμαστε σε θέση να κατασκευάσουμε σαφή και θεμελιωμένα θεωρητικά εργαλεία για να αντιληφθούμε την αξία στην οικονομία, η διερεύνηση σε αυτό το πεδίο είναι περισσότερο από επιτακτική, διότι χωρίς αντίληψη/θεώρηση της αξίας, δεν μπορούμε να έχουμε οποιαδήποτε θεωρητικό εργαλείο στην οικονομική επιστήμη.

γ) το ζήτημα της δικαιοσύνης.

Έθεσα ερωτήσεις σχετικά με το αν είναι ευχαριστημένοι οι άνθρωποι με τα δίκτυα ή με τους μη κυρίαρχους τρόπους συναλλαγής, αλλά δεν έθεσα ερωτήσεις σχετικά με τη δικαιοσύνη, με πιθανές πρακτικές εκμετάλλευσης, κλπ. Σε ορισμένες περιπτώσεις, όπως εδείχθη κεφάλαια της διατριβής 6, 7 και 8, οι άνθρωποι πιστεύουν ότι οι μη κυρίαρχοι τρόποι συναλλαγής δεν είναι ή είναι λιγότερο εκμεταλλευτικοί μηχανισμοί από την επικρατούσα οικονομία, και ότι με τη χρήση αυτών των τρόπων συναλλαγής μπορούμε επίσης να είμαστε δίκαιοι και με τη φύση, όχι μόνο με τους ανθρώπους. Παραμένει ένα τεράστιο πεδίο για μελέτη και έρευνα ώστε να δούμε

κάτω από ποιές συνθήκες και με ποιούς τρόπους οι εν λόγω μη κυρίαρχοι τρόποι συναλλαγής είναι επίσης δίκαιοι για όλους τους ανθρώπους και τις κοινότητές τους[9].

2.4. Περιορισμοί του ερευνητικού έργου

α) Η προσωπική μου έλλειψη γνώσης και εμπειρίας

Προφανώς, δεν ήμουν προετοιμασμένη για να αντιμετωπίσω όλα αυτά τα ζητήματα και παρά το γεγονός ότι προσπάθησα να αντιμετωπίσω το αντικείμενο της έρευνας όσο καλύτερα μπορούσα, είναι προφανές ότι μάθαινα κάνοντας την έρευνα. Ελπίζω ότι στο μέλλον θα είμαι σε θέση να διεξαγάγω έρευνα καλύτερης ποιότητας στο ίδιο πεδίο, αλλά αυτό δεν αλλάζει τις ελλείψεις που υπήρξαν σε αυτή την έρευνα εξαιτίας των δικών μου ελλείψεων ως ερευνήτριας και ως φοιτήτριας.

β) Η έλλειψη βιβλιογραφίας και παρόμοιων ερευνητικών έργων σε διεθνές επίπεδο ώστε να μπορώ να συγκρίνω μεθόδους και ευρήματα.

Έχει ήδη αναφερθεί ότι αυτό το ερευνητικό έργο έχει διεξαχθεί τη στιγμή που η διεθνής βιβλιογραφία είναι πολύ περιορισμένη όσον αφορά ολόκληρο το αντικείμενο της έρευνας. Αν σε αυτό προσθέσουμε την έλλειψη σχετικών μεθόδων σχετικά με την εξέταση των διαφόρων τύπων των μη κυρίαρχων δομών στο πλαίσιο του ίδιου ερευνητικού έργου, είναι προφανές ότι έπρεπε να αυτοσχεδιάσω με όσα ήξερα, να πειραματιστώ με τις μεθόδους και τα θεωρητικά εργαλεία και να δουλέψω πέρα από τα όρια που επέβαλλε η βιβλιογραφία σχετικά με την έρευνα. Από την άλλη πλευρά, αυτό με οδήγησε να διερευνήσω τη βιβλιογραφία με έναν πιο διεπιστημονικό τρόπο, που εν τέλει έδειξε ότι η οικονομική επιστήμη έχει σημαντικά μαθήματα να λάβει από άλλους κλάδους και να συνεχίσει να δημιουργεί οικονομική γνώση, χωρίς να παγιδεύεται στον λόγο (discourse) άλλων κλάδων.

γ) Η ανάδυση του επιστημονικού πεδίου και η επέκταση της δραστηριότητας πέρα από κάθε πρόβλεψη δημιούργησε όγκο εργασίας που ήταν μη αναμενόμενος όταν ξεκίνησε η έρευνα.

Ακριβώς όπως έχω αναφέρει από το πρώτο κιόλας κεφάλαιο της διατριβής, το αντικείμενο της διατριβής μου ήταν ζωντανό και αναπτυσσόμενο ενώ πραγματοποιούσα αυτή την έρευνα. Αυτό ήταν μια μεγάλη πρόκληση, η οποία έκανε

[9] Η πρώτη προσπάθειά μου να αναδιοργανώσω τα ερωτήματα της δικαιοσύνης, έδειξε ότι υπάρχουν επίσης πολλά προβλήματα σε αυτήν την οικονομική δραστηριότητα που χρειάζεται να αντιμετωπιστούν. Sotiropoulou, I. (2012c, d).

το σύνολο του έργου ένα σημαντικό πείραμα για το πώς να μελετήσει κανείς ένα θέμα, ενώ η κοινωνική αλλαγή είναι τόσο απότομη και ταχεία. Δεν έχω ασφαλείς απαντήσεις για αυτό και δεν είμαι σίγουρη ότι έχω αντιμετωπίσει αυτή την πρόκληση σε όλη την έκτασή της, αλλά από την άλλη πλευρά, νομίζω ότι αν θέλω, ως ερευνήτρια, να συλλέγω και να προσφέρω γνώσεις που έχουν πραγματικό νόημα και για ακαδημαϊκούς και για μη ακαδημαϊκούς, θα πρέπει να εργαστώ σχετικά με τις μεθόδους και τις διαδικασίες που αφορούν στη μελέτη των κοινωνικών φαινομένων, ενώ εκείνα λαμβάνουν χώρα.

δ*) Οικονομικά ζητήματα του ερευνητικού έργου.*

Η επέκταση της μελετώμενης δραστηριότητας και η αναγκαία επέκταση του πεδίου του έργου δημιούργησε σοβαρά οικονομικά προβλήματα, δεδομένου ότι έπρεπε να ταξειδέψω πολύ και να κάνω διάφορα έξοδα για να είμαι σε θέση να συμβαδίσω με ένα τέτοιο ερευνητικό θέμα. Η χρηματοδότηση που έλαβα μέσω του προγράμματος «Ηράκλειτος ΙΙ» υπήρξε σημαντική συμβολή και είμαι ευγνώμων για αυτήν. Ωστόσο, δεδομένου ότι πάνω από το 1/3 της δεν έχει καταβληθεί καθόλου έπρεπε να αναζητήσω αυτήν τη χρηματοδότηση ενώπιον των Ελληνικών Δικαστηρίων (όπου η υπόθεση θα εξεταστεί χρόνια αργότερα από αυτήν την διατριβή). Το υπόλοιπο ποσό έχει καταβληθεί με μεγάλες καθυστερήσεις και αποκλίσεις, και αυτό κατέστησε την διεξαγωγή της έρευνας πολύ δύσκολη.

Η δυσκολία του ίδιου του θέματος ήταν τεράστια, αλλά δεν αισθάνομαι ότι ήταν καθ’ αυτή ένας πραγματικός περιορισμός - ήταν μάλλον ο λόγος ώστε τα όρια αυτής της έρευνας να πάνε πέρα από τα πλαίσια που μπορούσα να φανταστώ όταν υπέβαλα την ερευνητική μου πρόταση. Και δημιούργησε προκλήσεις σε μένα ως ερευνήτρια, όπως κάθε ερευνητικό αντικείμενο θα έπρεπε να δημιουργήσει. Έτσι, δεν μπορώ να παραπονεθώ για τη δυσκολία, αλλά είμαι πραγματικά ευγνώμων γι’ αυτή.

2.5. Τελικές επισημάνσεις

Δεν υπάρχουν ασφαλή συμπεράσματα από την έρευνα αυτή, εκτός από ένα: υπάρχει τεράστια δουλειά που πρέπει να γίνει, προκειμένου να αποκτήσουμε καλύτερη εικόνα και πιο ακριβείς πληροφορίες σχετικά με το αντικείμενο της έρευνας. Αυτό σημαίνει ότι έχουμε μερικά συμπεράσματα ή πρώτα ευρήματα που

μπορούν να οδηγήσουν κάποιον σε καλύτερη έρευνα ή ακόμη και να εξετάσει καλύτερα αυτή τη διατριβή και να βρει τα λάθη και τις ελλείψεις της ώστε να καταστήσει το επόμενο ερευνητικό έργο μια πολύ καλύτερη δουλειά. Στην πραγματικότητα, έχω την αίσθηση ότι αν υπήρχε μια πιθανότητα να κάνω καλή έρευνα για το θέμα αυτό, αυτό θα είναι δυνατό μόνο μετά από αυτή την διατριβή.

Επιπλέον, ελπίζω ότι, εν τω μεταξύ, πολλοί άλλοι ερευνητές και ειδικοί θα ενδιαφέρονται να συμμετάσχουν σε αυτήν την περιπέτεια και να εργαστούν στο ίδιο πεδίο. Αυτό είναι απαραίτητο όχι μόνο επειδή το αντικείμενο είναι τεράστιο και μόνο μια κοινότητα ερευνητών θα μπορεί να μελετήσει πραγματικά όλη αυτή η δραστηριότητα και να διερευνήσει τις διάφορες πτυχές της που αυτό το ερευνητικό πρόγραμμα ήταν αδύνατο να εξετάσει. Αλλά και επειδή όλοι χρειαζόμαστε συναδελφική κριτική, διαφωνία και ανταλλαγή ιδεών, δεδομένου ότι, όπως έγραψε ο John Maynard Keynes στη Γενική Θεωρία του (1936) «Είναι εκπληκτικό τί ανόητα πράγματα μπορεί κανείς να πιστέψει προσωρινά, αν κάποιος σκέφτεται πάρα πολύ καιρό μόνος του, ιδίως στην οικονομική επιστήμη".