Organizational Precarity

An Anthropological study of a Civil Society Organization in austerity-ridden Greece

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Για τη μητέρα μου και τον πατέρα μου που με στήριξαν όλα αυτά τα χρόνια και πίστεψαν σε εμένα και τα χαζά όνειρά μου.
Abstract

This study examines a Greek civil society organization, which is struggling to cope with the precarity caused by the environment of crisis. By looking into the austerity that prevails in Greece, I aim to discuss the connection between the Greek society and the organization, as both of them are struggling with the consequences of the crisis which brings them into a precarious position. The methods used during the fieldwork were mainly participant observation in the space of the organization, and interviews as well as informal conversations with the members and recipients of the Solidarity Association. By analyzing their discourses introduced in the thesis through ethnographic stories, I claim that the interplay between precarious labor and precarious life transforms the organization into a space of silence. I suggest that this deadening of life should not only be seen as an outcome of the long period of living under harsh conditions, but also as one of the factors which brings the organization into dissolution. By looking at the disintegration of the Solidarity Association, I discuss that its solidarian culture turns into a philanthropic one due to individualistic behaviors which I argue are one of the outcomes of people’s precarious living. This thesis focuses more on what precarity does rather on what it is and it should be seen as a contribution to the understanding of the influence that precarity has on an organization placed in the context of contemporary austerity-ridden Greece.

Keywords: austerity, precarity, solidarity, organizational anthropology, Greece
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Part 1

Introduction

It was for the Greek standards, an unexpectedly cold November day in 2018 as I was rushing through the city streets in order to make it on time for the assembly. The weather conditions made me wonder if the members of the Solidarity Association (a pseudonym) would find the will to join the monthly meeting. During the first assembly, organized over a period of almost five months, the environment in the civil society organization was agitated and you could cut the tension between the members and the recipients with a butter knife. “People are not participating and are not helping” Renata said and continued: “solidarity is about reciprocity; you take something and then you give something back”. Mathew who is the president of the organization added that solidarity is based also on participation. Renata nodded sadly and pointed out that the organization looks like a service provider, “we are like an NGO” she yelled. I remarked that people came and asked me if the organization is going to shut down… I did not know what to say…. Mathew quickly took the stance and argued that it is normal since they are not communicating anymore with the recipients and added: “how can you expect something in return when you do not have a connection with the others”? He stated that it would be a pity to terminate the organization’s function, considering that there are people who are still in need for food or medicine. He then turned to me and continued by saying that it is not easy to hold on to an organization especially one like this in which people are tired of the continuous trying and fighting to survive. For Mathew the general environment of uncertainty in the Greek society is affecting them and they have no strength to cope with it anymore…

The above vignette is an example of the struggles and the precarious living of a Greek civil society organization (Solidarity Association), situated in the municipality of Athens, which is fighting to keep running under the general environment of austerity that exists in the Greek society. The insecurity and instability created by the economic crisis in Greece and the inability of the state to provide social welfare to its citizen’s created a landscape of solidarity constituted by many autonomous grassroot organizations. The human tendency to organize is universal, from the state to families people are born into organizations, grow up in them, expand them and proceed to the creation of new ones. During the social and financial crisis in Greece, people’s propensity to gather and organize themselves into collectivities increased,
which illustrates the relationality between sociality and solidarity. Therefore, it becomes apparent why so many organizations sprung up like mushrooms.

Nevertheless, not all organizations can survive considering that they must adapt to the general societal environment, something that might be difficult in crisis-ridden countries like Greece. The organization that I studied is one of those organizations. It is getting worn down due to the emotional (feelings of anxiety, hopelessness, vulnerability, as well as individualism) and physical consequences of precarity that its members carry with them for a long period of time. As a result of the situation discussed above, the members and the recipients are getting more and more distanced from each other, prompting the solidarity feelings to fade away.

**Research objective and Relevance**

This thesis is based on a three months fieldwork in Greece, and should be seen in the context of the growing body of literature regarding organizational precarity in nonprofit organizations (see for example, Fanelli, Rudman & Aldrich 2017). My point of departure is the precarity within a nonprofit organization located in a small district in the municipality of Athens. I am specifically interested in the Greek austerity and its consequences on the organization’s function. Therefore, my aim is to explore how a Greek civil society organization is influenced by the general austerity that has prevailed for many years in Greece. More specifically, I want firstly to know why the organization was in the unstable and precarious position that I found it, and secondly, why has the organizational culture of solidarity been replaced by philanthropy.

The precarious living of the Greek citizens was a call for a social reconfiguration. People had to build new spaces where they would feel human again, where they would find, once again, their will to live. CSOs, NGOs and other associations brought people together in Greece (see for instance Rakopoulos 2013, Papadaki & Kalogeraki 2018), gave them voice as well as strength to continue coping. Nevertheless, considering that every organization is different and that they respond uniquely to a crisis due to their specific history and circumstances, not all of them are able to survive the long and dreadful period of austerity. By looking at the Solidarity Association I will examine how precarity created by the austerity is influencing the people working at the organization as well as the organization’s culture.
I want to underline that I am not focusing on the terminology of organizations (which I found to be quite chaotic). Instead I want to look upon the reason for the organizational disintegration. Hence, I have focused on the processes, and how the organization and consequently its people have changed over the years. In line with that, I followed Dorothea Hilhorst (2003), who has argued that instead of focusing on the terminologies of what a NGO, CSO or a grassroot organization is, it is more appropriate to look at the “processes of becoming” of an organization, of organizational change or its discontinuation. Likewise, Steven Sampson (2017) has pointed out that when studying NGOs we should look upon their life spans from a historical perspective, because the rise, the disappearance or the downfall of the organizations requires a wider contextualization. Furthermore, in organizational studies there are references to the organizational crisis (Lewis 2006) but, when it comes to the field of social anthropology there are few ethnographical researches depicting the relationship between societal precarity and organizations, especially when considering the Greek context. Thus, I hope that my thesis will influence other anthropologists to study the processes and changes occurring within organizations under periods of crisis.

**Outline of Thesis**

The thesis is divided into three parts. The first part consists of the introduction, background, theoretical framework and the methodological considerations in connection with my positionality in the field. The second part contains two chapters. The first chapter focuses on the precarious position of the organization and more specifically on its influence by the general environment of crisis and austerity in Greece. By using the theory of precarity in connection to the field of organizational anthropology, I discuss the connection between the two experiences of the crisis; the ‘outside’ and the ‘inside’ (of the organization), why and how precarity is created as well as what consequences it has on the individuals and by extension on the organization. I depict precarity by presenting my own thoughts and emotions gathered during fieldwork and through the life stories of the members who have been afflicted by austerity. The second chapter continues with the concept of precarity but now I am focusing on the impact that it has on the people at the organization in connection to its culture. Using concepts of organizational culture, and solidarity, I explore how the value of solidarity is disappearing leaving room for individualistic and philanthropic behaviors.
Finally, I argue that the members of the organization put themselves in a self-precarization state, considering that they are still working there regardless of difficulties that they experience in their lives and at the organization. They do so because they see their work as a labor of love. Lastly, in the third part I summarize and discuss the proceeding chapters as well as making some suggestions for further research and reflecting on the limitations of my own.

Background

Greece in Trouble

They fuck you up, your mum and dad.  
They may not mean to, but they do.  
They fill you with the faults they had  
And add some extra, just for you.  
But they were fucked up in their turn  
By fools in old-style hats and coats,  
Who half the time were sappy-sterne  
And half at one another’s throats.  
Man hands on misery to man.  
It deepens like a coastal shelf.  
Get out as early as you can,  
And don’t have any kids yourself.

Philip Larkin, -This Be the Verse-

This poem was introduced to me by a close friend when we were discussing about the ‘burning’ of Greece (the riots of 2011). He said that it captures all the emotions of the young Greek generation: frustration, anger, hopelessness for no change can be achieved with the politicians that govern us. Our parents he said lived a good life and we have just inherited poverty and debt. So there are two routes to follow, one is to stay here and fight but for an unknown and maybe miserable future, or leave the country for a chance to live and not just survive.

In 2010 Greece was found in a sovereign debt crisis followed by draconian austerity measures. The debt that was created by banks, companies and corporations in relation with the Greek politicians has been put on the shoulders of the citizens to be carried out and to be paid off. In order to deal with the financial agitation and a potential failure to pay, the country agreed to some relief programs with a €110 billion bailout loan under the close supervision of
the European Commission (EC), the European Central Bank (ECB) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). More specifically, the IMF had implemented in the past in Argentina and Ecuador the same harsh measures that if accepted they would dehumanize and impoverish people also in Greece. Nevertheless, the Greek politicians agreed on those measures.

Hence, the government implemented a series of serious austerity measurements as cuts in education, public health, in the salaries and pensions, followed by increases in taxes. Consequently, the living and working conditions deteriorated, and people found themselves in a position of poverty, misery, unemployment or temporary employment as well as uncertainty for the future. The debt which should be recognized as odious and illegitimate\(^1\) (and as such should be deleted) has created cruel effects to the Greek society. These consequences can be seen in the increase of numbers of deaths either because people do not to have access to primary services (hospitals or medicine) or due to suicides (Agathangelou 2018)\(^2\). In addition, more and more people suffer from homelessness and depression. As a result, young people are fleeing from the country (Papadaki & Kalogeraki 2018), for these precarities trigger the wish to escape.

Greece is considered to be a Southern European welfare state (Ferrera 1996), which means that there is little state intervention and high levels of clientelism. These make the families to play a significant role in the social protection in the country (Markoviti, M. & Molokotos-Liederman, L. 2017). However, with the economic crisis many parents and other relatives were unable to help their families. Considering that it is argued that during periods of crisis voluntary organizations take the place of the state (Pichler & Wallace 2007), I will claim that people in Greece rely on the so called third sector (civil society) to provide them with food, and shelter as the state and the families are not able to assist.

\(^1\) In order for a debt to be considered odious there should be three prerequisites: first a country’s government has to receive a loan without the acknowledgement and the approval of the people, second those loans were spent on non-beneficiary activities to the people, and lastly the lenders should be informed of this situation but chose to ignore it. Information gathered by the documentary directed by Chatzistefanou, A., Kitidi, K. with the title ‘Debtocracy’ (2011) [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8jOQxOf4MNI](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8jOQxOf4MNI).

\(^2\) For an explicit chronicle of the crisis see Douzinas 2013:10-15.
Organizational Background

My study is about a civil society organization in Athens and I carried out my fieldwork amongst this group. As I have argued above new forms of organizations such as NGOs or CSOs, have taken over the functions of the state as its national capacity is insufficient. A civil society organization is an umbrella term embracing organizations or associations as indigenous organizations, community based organizations, and activist groups. According to Salamon, Sokolowski, and List (2003) a CSO is based on the following three characteristics: the majority of its revenue should come from private contributors (instead of the state), it should have a different taxation, and a specific legal form. Particularly CSOs, not only give a helping hand to the state (and sometimes more than that, as in the case of Greece) so as to deliver its services to the public, but also work as ‘watchdogs’ checking if the government is actually doing the work it is supposed to.

Moreover, it is common in the Greek context for people who are part of CSOs to be against formal organizations since some NGOs are connected with negative meanings such as money grabbing or supporting a political party (see for instance Theodossopoulos 2016). More specifically, some of the main differences between NGOs and CSOs created by the members of the organization that I studied are: that NGOs’ recourses are drawn upon either from state funds or from EU funds, whereas in a CSO there are no grants, only voluntary contributions from either individuals or other organizations. What is more, an NGO has employees, while the occupation in a CSO is being made deliberately with no payment arranged. The money then that is received is not distributed to salaries but is used in order to pay for the electricity used, the water usage and for the rent.

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3 I am using their definition in order to help the reader have a basic idea of what a CSO and not to make a tautology. An organization’s definition is subjective and differs from country to country or from one group to another.

4 These differences were created for the reason that the people in the organization wanted to distant themselves from NGOs because they are connected with the concept of philanthropy.
What is the Solidarity Association doing?

The characteristics that Salamon, Sokolowski, and List (2003) listed above are important, but I will use the categorization of the CSO in an emic way. That being said, I shall focus on how its members perceive it. The Solidarity Association has been working since October of 2011. It was created from the need of the citizens of the town to cope with the consequences of the economic crisis and due to the need for solidarity, because as Mathew, one of my interlocutors told me, solidarity proved to be necessary. Civil society organizations perform a variety of functions such as service (providing food, clothes or healthcare), or community development (Salamon, Sokolowski and List 2003:23). In line with that, Mathew argued that their first move was to create an educational department. The members had noticed from the contact that they had with the (junior) high schools of the area that a lot of kids could not attend crammer schools and thus, they were not prepared for school. So, in 2011, 16 teachers volunteered by helping students from two schools with courses such as math, chemistry and physics. However, in 2018 the organization is left with only one teacher. The reason for this situation, as Renata (another interlocutor) claimed, is that there was no solidarity from the side of the student’s parents. Therefore, the organization would receive nothing in return from the families of the students.

A second department in the one of the ‘feeding’ (I translate it from the Greek word sitisi, Σίτιση) which was established in 2011 as three kids fainted in school due to the lack of food. I was involved in this department in 2015 and during my fieldwork in 2018/2019. At the beginning, some of the members and recipients were cooking, but later they became aware that they could not afford to pay the electricity bills, and for this reason in 2014 they resorted to the creation of ‘the bag’. The bag which is created mainly thanks to supermarket donations, helps 93 families to survive, as it consists of different types of pasta, legumes, tomato juice and (if there are kids) milk.

A third department which functioned from 2011 to 2015 is the department of civil rights. Lawyers would give legal advices to anyone in need, either in regards to housing auctions, or consulting migrants and refugees about their rights. Finally, in 2015 the organization grew with the creation of a social pharmacy. This type of pharmacy provides medication for free and has proved to be a great helping hand due to the high prices of the medicine. It receives

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5 For further information see the glossary.
drugs from donations and recently from an association from Bordeaux. Since I helped in its creation in 2015, it was difficult not to get involved again during my fieldwork. I must add that besides those departments the Solidarity Association is helping outside its space by distributing medicine to hospitals or to associations that help migrants and refugees. Moreover, the organization has been giving clothes and anything else that the members can gather to the homeless.

Who are they?

The Solidarity Association is constituted from different sections of membership such as, the volunteers, donors⁶, the members and the recipients. Here I want to clarify that I will be using the word members in an emic way; based on how the people of the organization call themselves. The members are in other words the leadership group but because they do not see themselves as leaders they chose to be called members.

In order for someone to be eligible to receive help, they need to provide official paper that they are unemployed as well as that they do not receive any income. But, in the case that they have a job, they must prove that their income it is too low to sustain them. When writing this thesis (2019) the organization is helping 93 families comprising around 270 people from the age of new-born kids to 80. The organization uses the Greek word sitizomenoi which means people that are receiving help, and this is the word that I will use in this thesis. Moreover, there are different nationalities receiving help from the organization such as, Greek, Albanians, Syrians, Afghans, Bulgarians, Rumanians and Armenians (mentioned from the majority to the minority).

More specifically, the members of the Solidarity Association are only 5 out of the 270 persons, and they are responsible for the financial and organizational issues. They have to organize the meetings, the organization’s money, how much and what food the recipients need, along with Christmas and Easter bazaars for raising money. In addition, they have the authority to remove recipients from participating in the commons activities (such as the meetings), if they do not contribute in any kind of way, or they reprimand them if they have

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⁶ The donors as I have said before, are individuals or other organizations that give money, food, clothes or anything else that is in need.
racist or any xenophobic ideologies\textsuperscript{7}. However, these recipients are not entirely removed from the organization, as they still are allowed to receive food and anything else they need. The member’s team consists of the president, the cashier, the coordinator, one person who is responsible for organizing the food collection and its distribution, and one responsible for the communicational part (being in contact with other organizations, hospitals and so on). Besides the president, the other four are elected recipients. This means that they receive food from the organization as the rest of the sitizomenoi, and they will work in their position for 2 to 3 years until the next elections.

\textbf{How do they operate?}

The resources of the organization are not given by the state or European Union, but they come from donations from supporters or sponsors (for example another organization or private person), and by inheritance. The donors tend to give money, pay the rent where the organization is placed, or some doctors give medicine and free healthcare tests. In the case of the organization’s dissolution, its resources have to go to other NGOs, CSOs or other organizations that follow the same policy and principle of distribution without benefit. Moreover, the Solidarity Association aims to create a network of social solidarity consisting of social services to citizens in Athens or Greece in general. Following the writings of Christina Garsten (2013:151), I would say that these networks form an “economy of connections”, in which “social connections and referrals are provided as gifts between trusted parties” (ibid, see also Mauss 1990). For example, an association called “Greek-French solidarity friendship” in Bordeaux provides pharmaceutical aid. Through networking the organization has the ability to obtain food from supermarkets or producers, pharmaceutical equipment and medicine, clothes, toys, and books.

\textsuperscript{7} Here I should add that the organization’s values surround the ideas of mutuality and reciprocity and the members believe in the value of equality.
Theoretical Framework

Precarity in anthropology has a broad perspective connected with many themes and subfields (i.e. from studies about precarious labor and precarious migrants, to identities, vulnerability and the lived experience). In this thesis, I take inspiration from the ongoing growing literature of precarity to explore its connection with the anthropology of organizations and perspectives of solidarity. In the following part, I present the concept of precarity as well as the field of organizational anthropology in a chronological order, followed by theories on solidarity used by the members of the organization. I contextualize those concepts in crisis-ridden Greece and more specifically in regards to the Solidarity Association.

Precarity

The concept of precarity emerged in the scholarly debate at the beginning of the 21st century as a way to grasp the unstable conditions of neoliberal labor, such as the temporariness of employment, as well as the emotional burden of uncertainty, anxiety and depression (Millar 2014:34). However, the idea of precarity has existed for much longer. Hence, it is important to point out to that precarity is not new considering that in the global South precarious living conditions have existed for quite some time (maybe with a different name). In the past the middle class or people highly educated would not get affected by it and would not believe that they might find themselves in a precarious position. Nonetheless, in our contemporary times, cultural workers and university staff are included in precarious employment relations.

Nowadays, the theory of precarity seems to be everywhere from studies regarding labor, migration, gender or environmental studies. Historically, precarity changed from a labor condition to an identity, and even to a form of human experience. From the vast literature I chose to discuss the concept’s voyage through Pierre Bourdieu (1998), Guy Standing (2011) Butler (2004) and Tsing (2015) and more recently Khosravi (2017).

So, if we want to observe the transformations of the notion, we must go back in time to one of the first references of the term, which was made in 1952 by Dorothy Day, a journalist, theologian and activist (see Millar 2017). She wrote an essay called “Poverty and Precarity” in which she depicts poverty through vignettes of precarity. She calls us to search for more
security instead of focusing on stopping precarity because according to her, we must strive for secure jobs and incomes to be able to denounce precarity.

During the late 1970s French sociologists started to work around the concept of precarity in relevance to poverty, but much of the current debate is influenced by the Euro Mayday mobilization in the 2000s (Millar 2017). Many of the earlier authors have related precarity to job insecurity during neo-liberal policies, introduced from the 1980s and onwards. Bourdieu’s (1998) writing on précarité has been important in the earlier discussion. He conceived precarity as the corrosion of secure jobs, employment, but above all of labor rights. In contrast, Guy Standing (2011) has argued that precarity is a class identity, called the precariat which is a combination of two words; proletariat and precarity. Standing offers two definitions of the term; the first concerns the precariat as a distinct socio-economic group, and the second draws upon Marx, “the precariat is a class-in the making, if not yet a class-for-itself” (Standing 2011:7). The class consists of people (insecure workers) all around the world who are working (most common is short-term jobs) and living precariously. It should be noted that Standing has been criticized for downplaying the large differences between people influenced by precarity (Millar 2017).

Both Bourdieu and Standing discuss precarity in connection with labor. Butler (2004) on the other hand, understands this concept as a condition of human life. She refers to the term of precariousness, as “a common human vulnerability, one that emerges with life itself” (2004:31). Vulnerability is about life itself (disease, death) and about sociality, meaning that humans are dependent on each other through social or financial relationships, and therefore they are vulnerable. Vulnerability is a condition of human life, but according to Butler (2004) it is not equally distributed.

Butler’s contribution towards precarity has created a path away from notions of labor which many others followed. For instance, Tsing defines precarity as “the condition of being vulnerable to others” (2015:20) and “life without the promise of stability” (2015:2). Writing on the youth in Iran, Shahram Khosravi (2017) discusses the bifurcation and paradoxes of the Iranian everyday life. He argues that “insecurity in the material condition leads to pathological symptoms that haunt multiple aspects of contemporary life” (2017:4). He claims that there is on the one hand precarity and hopelessness where people are waiting for some kind of change, but on the other there is hope and solidarity mediated through socialities.
In my thesis, I focus on precarity in reference to labor (socio-economic conditions) and as an ontological experience (anxiety, depression, individualism, isolation, insecurity and uncertainty), because “the relationship between precarious labor and precarious life” (Millar 2017:5) is influencing the members and recipients behavior. Furthermore, the organization has suffered by the elongated period of precarity. In order to explain this slow deaden of life, I utilize the concept of precarization introduced by Lorey (2010). Precarization is the process of becoming precarious and is closely related to biopolitics, however, I will use it so as to emphasize the extended period, the chronicity of precarious life. I utilize the concept in this way because during my fieldwork I came across a pattern followed by the members and the recipients. The long period of precarious living has resulted in physical and emotional deterioration, which creates a landscape of silence in the Solidarity Association.

**Solidarity**

The idea of solidarity flows throughout the whole thesis either in relation to precarity or in relation to the fading of the solidarian culture which brings to the surface actions of philanthropy. I will use the concept from an emic perspective, following the meanings that the recipients as well as the members of the Solidarity Association used. That being said, solidarity means reciprocity and mutual help. This concept is very important for the organization’s function, because they have created a solidarity economy based on it.

During my fieldwork it became obvious that for the members it is very important not to be thought of as philanthropists or charity providers. Therefore, we must understand the meanings of the concepts of solidarity and of philanthropy because in Greece they have been used to such an extent that they have lost their meaning.

The traditional form of volunteerism was based on one-sided help and on the ideas of altruism, which nowadays is difficult to be found in Greece, as it has been replaced by a new type caused by the institutionalization and professionalization of voluntary work. This ‘new’ voluntarism is connected to the concept of philanthropy. When considering the Greek society the notion of philanthropy is heavily charged with negative images of money grabbing and deals happening under the table, or putting it in few words, it is connected with some of the state’s practices (see for example Rozakou 2016a; Loukakis 2018).
The new version of volunteering work is being taught via seminars and therefore, it is considered to be a service. Some people working at philanthropic organizations provide their services not because of altruistic feelings but for the reason that at the end of the day they will receive a payment for that service. Similarly, some people volunteer in view of getting hired to work at the organization and not due to altruistic reasons. As a result, the ones in need are being seen as service receivers. This comes in juxtaposition with the way the solidarians from Solidarity Association see and treat the people they help. Solidarity for them is about reciprocity, equality and shared responsibility in comparison with philanthropy which follows a top-down power and creates the image of a powerless and vulnerable receiver (Rozakou 2016a). Solidarity is matched with reciprocity, whereas the concept of philanthropy requires a hierarchical structure. Hence, as solidarity bears political messages it aims to empower people, while philanthropy profits from this inequality. In line with that, philanthropy (or charity) for Oscar Wilde (2001:127) is “an aggravation of the difficulty”, as it does not focus on solving the issues, but just covers them epidermically.

Nevertheless, because the ideas of solidarity and philanthropy as I said earlier have been used a lot, the line separating these two paradigms is not always visible. This is why Theodossopoulos (2016:167) asks if “solidarity is another, more timely and politically nuanced version of philanthropy”, as he argues that solidarity and philanthropy can intertwine (e.g. the case of philanthropic solidarity).

Organizational Anthropology

Humans have the tendency to organize but what differs is how and why they do so. Everyone is born into an organization, from a family to the state people get educated and socialized in them as well as acquire new identities. Since organizations coordinate individuals’ actions into collective ones, people learn to work as a group and compete over resources. But what is an organization? For an organization to be considered as one it has to have at least two members and as Jacob Krause-Jensen writes (2013), this group of people should act in a coordinated way.

Social scientists have studied people in specific contexts, but anthropologists have been more interested in how groups come together, and in people’s experiences of their togetherness.
Anthropologists have been studying organizations since the beginning of the 20th century when the Hawthorne studies in 1920 discovered the “social organizations or social system” of the place. During the 1950s and 1960s the University of Manchester studied shop floors (the famous Manchester shop floor Studies) and more specifically the informal group structures via the method of participant observation (for more see Wright 1994). 1960s and 1970s brought a wind of change by studying hierarchies, and cultures of power. Nader (1974) invited anthropologists to ‘study up’, to get engaged with people in power as well as the privileged ones. From 1980 and onwards, anthropologists have been interested in organizational culture, ‘studying through’ as well as, ideology and language (Shore & Wright 1997).

Looking at the Hawthorne studies more explicitly, organizations can be divided into formal or informal systems as well as the environment (external of an organization). The formal system is consisted of the organizational structure and it regards hierarchies, job positions, rules and policies. The informal system is the relationship between the members. Lastly, the environment is the life outside the organization which is influencing it (Wright 1994). In this thesis, for the reason that I studied the phenomenon of precarity in the organization, I had to focus on the organization’s external environment, for precarity created by the austerity was influencing the formal and informal organizational systems.

Moreover, in the informal system we can find the organizational culture which regards the common values, beliefs and meanings that are used by the people in an organization. The interest for the concept of culture arose during the 1980 and has since then received a lot of attention in organizational theory (Pondy et all. 1983; Alvesson & Berg, 1992, Wright 1994). This study is concerned with the main culture of the organization (i.e. solidarity) in relation to the organizational behavior of the members and the recipients. By doing so, I assess and give meaning to their practices as well as explain the replacement of solidarity with philanthropy.

In conclusion, following Mark Schuller (2017), I studied the organization through the practices and relationships of the members and recipients, instead of focusing on the category wherein the Solidarity Association is placed. Therefore, I am not focusing on the terminology because I want to examine the organization as a dynamic entity. This is why I have focused

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8 We should not forget that anthropologists had some early experiences with organizations during colonialism (for more see Baba 2006).
on the human factor and the organizational environment as well as the alteration of the organizational culture.

**Methodological Considerations and Positionality**

The empirical field of this study is a civil society organization in Greece. As a starting point, researchers should consider which the best method to study an organization is because every organization is different. That being said, I implemented the technique of ‘hanging out’, or, alternatively put, ‘participant observation’ and even “shadowing” people (Czarniawska 2007). With shadowing I mean that I followed the organization’s members and recipients inside as well as outside of the building of the organization, in order to learn what they had to say without worrying about others listening to our conversations. Moreover, I used the method of studying ‘sideways’ (Hannerz 2006) which helped me to engage with the members and examine theirs along with my ideas and practices. This method does not only regard power relations but as Mauthner and Doucet (2003:420) argue: “situating ourselves socially and emotionally in relation to the respondents is an important part of reflexivity”. Indeed this led me to clarify my position as well as my role in the field. In addition, my data collection was composed from meetings (Sandler & Thedvall 2017), interviews and documents. As has been argued by Hull (2012:253), the documents “are not simply instruments of bureaucratic organizations, but rather are constitutive of bureaucratic rules, ideologies, knowledge, practices, subjectivities objects, outcomes, and even the organizations themselves”. Finally, I gathered some photos, taken from bazaars or spontaneous ones depicting the relationship between the members, because I found them to be helpful during my interviews or informal conversations in order to trigger the process of storytelling.

In the following sections, I will first explain how I gained entry to the organization and what difficulties I encountered. Then I will elaborate on participant observation as being my main ethnographic method, followed by a briefly presentation of my semi-structured interviews. Finally, I will critically discuss my ethnographic role in the field in relation to engaged anthropology and which ethical considerations I had to bear in mind.
**Entering the Field**

My entry to this organization was facilitated by my past experience as a volunteer in 2015. As I said earlier in the thesis, the economic crisis resulted in the increase of solidarity. For the reason that I was also a victim of the Greek austerity crisis, I felt the need to help others who were affected as well. The organization made me, and others, feel that we are not alone due to its sociality, and I took pleasure in seeing how the members were spreading the idea of solidarity inside and outside of the organization during a period when Greek citizens were alienated from each other and closing themselves off. Hence, my engagement with the Solidarity Association in 2018/19 was a result of my wish to show its importance during the difficult times of austerity.

During my fieldwork, I discovered that I had been misled regarding the organization’s function which led me to change entirely my research questions. This occurred either because the members lied or because my gatekeepers\(^9\) were themselves misled and wrong about the organization’s condition. When I was planning my fieldwork, I contacted the president and the coordinator of the organization to discuss what ideas and questions I wanted to research, and they were more than happy to have me once again there and help me conduct as they said a good research. We briefly discussed what I would do in the organization (which was mostly being a helping hand to the members) and I made clear that in comparison to the past now I would have a double role as a researcher and a volunteer. Our discussions went smooth and I could not wait to start.

Little did I know that none of our agreements would be actualized. During my fieldwork I found myself in a very difficult situation working mostly alone in the Solidarity Association and thus, having barely enough ethnographic material. Inasmuch those circumstances, I was constantly negotiating the objective of my study, since I was not prepared for what I faced. I had to reevaluate the aim even when I was worn down, and I doubted my ethnographic skills. I was confronted by a total new phenomenon, trying to navigate through the organization’s dismantle.

Nonetheless, thinking back to my experiences in the field, I had good and bad days. Some days I would either be alone at the organization having nothing to do, or I would gain some information that I would not know whether it was relevant to my queries, and there would be

\(^9\) Paraphrasing Hammersley and Atkinson (2003), gatekeepers are the ethnographer’s initial point of contact.
other days when I would go home with a good and interesting amount of data. Now, as I am arranging, analyzing and connecting my data to my study, I realize that the bad days that I had proved to be quite important. I became aware of the fact that taking some time distancing myself from the organization helped me to understand how all of the gathered material is intertwined. To conclude, I hope that I will be able to narrate the organization’s and people’s stories in this thesis, and guide the reader to appreciate how all of the different pieces of the puzzle are interconnected, and how they are relevant to this study.

*Participant Observation*

My material is mainly gathered by participant observation, which can be seen in me following the members and the recipients with my small notebook during the gatherings and distribution of food, or at the meetings. This method bears the sense of “being there”, which as Borneman and Hammoudi (2009) demonstrate, it is important due to the ability of the researcher to interact with people, and due to the acquisition of experiential knowledge. During the three months of my research I was working at the organization from Monday to Friday around four hours per day. During that time I was following the members’ orders on what I should do to contribute on collecting and distributing food and medicine. It was not always easy to gather information since I was often alone there, and when some members were there to help me they were too busy fighting with each other. Nevertheless, these moments of quiescence, loneliness and awkwardness (if I would find myself in the middle of a fight) are what gave me an insight on the organizational malfunctioning.

During the three gatherings that took place in the organization (2 meetings in which only the 5 members gathered and 1 assembly concerning both of the sub-groups), I was mostly observing unless I was asked for my opinion. By means of observation, I was able to see the frictions and struggles between the members, as well as the power relations between those two groups and the creation of their community. Schwartzman (1989:61–62) defines a meeting as:

> A gathering of three or more people who agree to assemble for a purpose ostensibly related to the functioning of an organization or group . . . A meeting is characterized by multiparty talk that is episodic in nature, and participants develop or use specific conventions for regulating this talk . . . The
meeting form frames the behavior that occurs within it as concerning the ‘business’ or ‘work’ of the group, or organization, or society.

Meetings are social forms which at the end produce the organization. The assemblies are the glue of the organization, creating the sociality where solidarity can step on. Those meetings were important contributions to my data because I came to the conclusion that there was no connection between the two sub-groups, and I noticed which people cared about the organization and their fellow recipients by being a part of the assemblies.

**Interviews**

My participant observation has been closely related to my interviews. Throughout its process I built rapport with my interlocutors and engaged into discussions which provided useful data for the conduction of semi-structured interviews.

During my interviews and informal conversations using pictures or triggering the process of storytelling (see Gabriel Yiannis 2000) to people was found to be very beneficial, for the reason that not all informants are suitable informants, but the questions we make define them. Sometimes I found myself trying to elicit from casual conversations why the organization was disintegrating. Some members were trying to bury the negative aspects that I would notice and try to change the questions into what I would do to make the organization better. Thus, I had to find a different way in order to bring to the surface the information needed. In the organization’s archive I found some old photos taken around 2014, from bazaars or just spontaneous ones (which were my favorites considering the fact that they depicted a true moment). When I showed to two of my interlocutors those pictures, they started to narrate how the crisis influenced them, why they went to the organization, and how the Solidarity Association was in the past. The pictures opened up a window to the past and helped me learn how the organization used to be, why it changed and why some people decided to leave, things that I would not know otherwise.

In total I conducted four semi-structured interviews. Before each one of them I asked my interlocutors whether they would feel comfortable if I used my recorder. At the end I recorded two out of four, and during the other two I was keeping notes because the interviewees did not feel at ease being recorded. These interviews were semi-structured in
view of the fact that I did not want dominate the interviews. On the contrary, I wished to allow the interviewees to discuss what they thought was important and be critical and self-reflective regarding the organization. I had prepared some main questions, but since the structure of the interviews was not strict, I also made spontaneous ones when the interlocutors would say something new and interesting.

All of them lasted from one to two hours. In addition, my interlocutors are either now, or used to be, members at the organization. I did not take interviews from the recipients or the donors because I found that it was easier for them and for me to gather information through our informal conversations. Furthermore, for the reason that I wanted to have a background of the environment before the current organizational crisis, I tried to get in contact with few ex-members of the organization. I did so because I wished to ask them some questions regarding their view of the Solidarity Association and the reasons for their leave. At the end only one of them agreed to talk to me. The rest either declined politely by saying that they did not want to “scratch old wounds” or they were more articulate by saying that they did not want to be referenced to this organization.

**Keeping a Balance**

The real voyage of discovery begins not with visiting new places but in seeing familiar landscapes with new eyes.

-Marcel Proust-

Anthropologists have been debating about which is the most appropriate way of engagement within the field for quite some years now. For instance, in “The Anthropologist and the Conservation NGO: Dilemmas of and Opportunities of engagement”, Amanda Woomer (2017) urges us to take a dive into the organizations that we study because for her we cannot just observe, we have to get involved with what the others are doing and try to make a change in the world. In contrast, Fassin (2011) recommends researchers to keep a space “on the threshold of the cave” of the critique. In other words, anthropologists should according to him keep a position inside and outside of an organization in order to have the ability to create a critical point of view.
During my fieldwork my attempts to do a good research while doing good exposed me to certain dilemmas regarding my positionality, commitment to the Solidarity Association and objectivity; dilemmas that have grappled engaged anthropologists for decades. Due to the fact that I am coming from Greece the ethnography gets transformed into one being done at-home (for instance see Narayan 1993). Mats Alvesson (2009) sees this type of ethnography as a constant trying to break out from the taken-for-grantedness of a framework, in contrast to conventional ethnography which is a try to enter, to break in and understand the native’s point of view. For this reason I was constantly trying to negotiate the information I received in order to maintain my ethnographic strangeness and not to take anything for granted.\(^{10}\)

The dual stance of zooming in and out was not easy to be achieved but I tried to follow as much as I could a reflexive pattern, which proved to be necessary considering the values that I shared with the people in the Solidarity Association. Building on the ideas of Marc Edelman, Jeffrey Juris (2008) suggests that the need to situate ourselves as authors within the research and writing process has a lot to do with the nature of fieldwork, particularly when studying social movements, organizations and social groups (Edelman 1999:6, cited in Jeffrey Juris 2008).

The purpose that I had in the organization was to help anywhere it was needed, I was their ‘wild card’. Sometimes I had to call the recipients to inform them that their bag was ready to be collected, let them know for an upcoming meeting, or organize the medicine in the pharmacy and stack the drugs in boxes. Other times I would arrange the clothes that we would gather as well as the food. Does it sound chaotic? Sometimes it was. Therefore, taking notes was complicate and not always a choice during my work; instead once I was in the bus, I would take out my notebook or diary and I would write down everything in peace.

Participating and at the same time observing is quite contradictory and not easy to do while I was working. Keeping a balance between being not totally an observant or not totally a participant was tricky. If I would overdo it with the rapport towards the organization I would not be able to critically observe, and if I would follow the path of being only an observer then my research would have limited data and no depth. Even though participant observation is the most common research method, the ethnographer has to be very careful using this technique since s/he should find a balance as being an insider and at the same time as an outsider.

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\(^{10}\) As Alvesson (2009:171) argued, while the challenge for the ethnographer is to avoid ‘going native’, the at-home ethnographer must make strong efforts to avoid staying native.
What is more, I found difficult not to get engaged with others during fieldwork. Martin O’Neil (2001) provides if I may say an extreme paradigm by describing researchers as parasites for their subjects because they think only of themselves and give nothing in return. I can see his point but I support Lofland’s argument (1971:98), for he argues for “the need for immediate reciprocities” which is:

The need for the researcher to make a contribution to the informal social network in order to be accepted and to be able to observe and record what people are doing.

The researcher has to make compromises and should decide which role(s) s/he will have. My research was also surrounded by those ethical dilemmas. I found challenging not to be engaged since I am close to some of the members of the organization due to the fact that I had provided my help in the past. In a field like the one I chose being ‘a fly on the wall’ is not manageable as well as wanted. I share with those people the same issues and ideologies.

Conclusively, considering my double role as an anthropologist and an activist, I chose to follow the organizational morality of participating when was needed. We should not forget that at the end of the day the role of an ethnographer is competing with other roles that we might have, the one of a citizen, an activist, or a friend. In my situation, I embraced this multifaceted dynamic and tried to be as much reflexive as possible because I believe that this is what makes ethnographies intriguing.

**Engaged Anthropology**

As I said in the previous section, I shared a lot with the people from the organization, from common experiences and emotions to ideologies (regarding solidarity and activism). Charles Hale defines “activist research” as: “a method through which we affirm a political alignment with an organized group of people in struggle and allow dialogue with them to shape each phase of the process” (Hale 2006:97). Furthermore, Hale (2006:100) points out that, activist anthropologists are faced with the issue of having two loyalties; one is their discipline, academic community and the other is the political struggle. Therefore, anthropologists are dichotomized between acting in situations of suffering and/or following a strictly academic role.
In her paper “The Primacy of the Ethical” (1995), Nancy Scheper-Hughes argues for a more dynamic anthropology in which anthropologists would become active participants and not “indifferent” observers. She then goes on and differentiates anthropologists as spectators and as witnesses, arguing that observation “is a passive act which positions the anthropologist above and outside human events in order to be neutral and objective” (1995:419). On the other hand, witnessing equips the researcher with an active voice and it positions him/her inside the human events as “a responsive, reflexive and morally committed being” (ibid). That being said, she advocates for a barefoot anthropology: “an anthropology-with-one’s-feet-on-the ground”, while still being theoretical just in this situation theory is embedded in action.

How could I not be engaged when I by myself have been afflicted by the economic crisis and the ignorance of the Greek state? Or how could I not get attached when I was listening and writing down the difficulties those people are facing? Under an academic scope, militant ethnography refers to the ethnographic research that is not only politically engaged but also collaborative, thus, it is able to break down the division between the researcher and the interlocutors. In this thesis, I utilized the concept of militant anthropology through using my interlocutors’ concepts (i.e. solidarity, or in relation to how they use the concepts of being a member and a recipient) and through letting their voices be heard as well as their stories speak for themselves. In that way my interlocutors became co-contributors to this study.

In conclusion, such a politically committed ethnography as the engaged, militant or activist one could lead not only to the contribution from the researcher towards the interlocutors but also to very interesting analyses, since then the researcher can grasp easier an organization’s or a movement’s dynamics as well as immerse in analytical discussions with his/her interlocutors which would not be possible without an engagement.
Ethics of Studying Organizations

Organizations as NGOs and CSOs are being thought by some as “untouchable” (Fassin 2011) by critiques, and they are placed into a moral zone and viewed for example as saviors (Redfield 2013). My critique towards the Solidarity Association does not pursue to hurt the organization or to show that I am not respecting my interlocutors, since I am analyzing the organization as any other actor or social site. Hence, following Erica Bornstein (2017:187), I want to clarify that I am not a “truth teller but an analyst of social life”. Furthermore, I am not pursuing any categorization between good and bad organization because I agree with Bornstein (2017:184) when she points out that organizations “operate in the gray area of real life where people do their best, face limitations and obstacles, and encounter unforeseen circumstances” under the scope of “doing good” (Fisher 1997).

A vital question in the field of anthropology is how an anthropologist can sustain the anthropological as well as personal ethics when it comes to the study of an organization. The anthropological discipline has set some guidelines in regards to loyalties that the researchers should follow in favor of their interlocutors. I tried to follow the ethical guidelines of the AAA through my fieldwork and more specifically the “Code of do no harm”, “Obtain Informed Consent and Necessary Permissions” and “Be Open and Honest Regarding Your Work”. Considering the above ethical codes, I will not use the official name of the organization, or of my interlocutors, as well as the town’s name in the municipality of Athens where the organization is placed. During my fieldwork I had some dilemmas regarding if I should document and then write about the incidents occurring behind closed doors, under the scope that this type of information could be unflattering for the organization. However, after talking to the members and the recipients about my dilemmas, they gave me their approval to write about the organizational crisis and about the conflicts that they had with each other with the opinion that this thesis could help them see the reasons behind this instability.

At this point and before the main chapters of the thesis unfold, I want to add few vital points. By referring to the Greek precariats seeing no future and having at the moment no strength to

11 https://www.americananthro.org/LearnAndTeach/Content.aspx?ItemNumber=22869&navItemNumber=652
try and bring change, I am not under any circumstances depicting them as victims, as I do not
deny their agency as well as their voice. In addition, I am not claiming that my conclusions
are definite and that they can be generalized to other organizations in Greece or globally. As
Anya Peterson Royce argues (1977: 36):

It is not the task of anthropology to seek connections where there might not be any, but that rather, we
should try to explain the particularities we have found for what they are.

Hence, my discussions and instances arising from the fieldwork should be considered only in
the context in which they are presented (i.e. the Solidarity Association).

Part 2

Chapter 1: Precarious Existence

It was my first working day at the organization and I was so excited to get started. My heart
was beating fast during the whole 45 minutes trip with the bus, and I could not stop planning
in my head what I would say, and how I would introduce myself to the recipients that would
come. I arrived there earlier so that I could clean the place a bit and arrange the food bags, for
when the recipients would come to be able to find them with more ease. I opened the main
door of the building and the sound of my footsteps broke the silence. I proceeded to the room
where I found the Solidarity Association in pure chaos. I was welcomed by rats and
cockroaches which were casually cruising around the medicine and food. Clothes were
thrown on the floor by people searching them, and water had destroyed a bunch of expensive
drugs due to a hole on the ceiling which was causing floods every time when it was raining
(see appendix figures 4,7,8).

During the three months of my ethnographic fieldwork the organization was malfunctioning.
The members were not able to work anymore, which resulted in me doing most of the tasks
and trying to keep the organization alive. For most of the time I was alone in the office, and
occasionally I felt useless when receivers would come to me asking for food and help. During
these occasions I had to use the same response, saying that I was just a volunteer following
the orders of other’s.
In this chapter I seek to answer to the question of why the organization was in an unstable and precarious position during the period when I conducted my fieldwork. In order to find answer(s) to this question, I will discuss two experiences of crisis. Firstly, I will elaborate on the societal crisis so as to place the reader in an environment of austerity. Then I will proceed to the organizational crisis by describing how the organization used to be in comparison to now, when the organization’s space has been transformed into a space of silence. By associating the two instances of crisis, I will discuss how the long period of austerity has influenced the members and the recipients, which in its turn has contributed to the creation and negotiation of precarity within the organization. In order to depict the above, I will base my analysis on ethnographic examples as I shall introduce some of my interlocutors and their lives, as well as my experiences and emotions in the field.

**Outside Crisis**

It was a morning in 2012 when I woke, brushed my teeth and sat in front of the TV to watch the news while drinking my coffee. I turned the TV on, and all the channels were broadcasting an incident that happened at Syntagma square; the square where the Greek parliament is situated. I thought that maybe someone had tried to enter to the parliament so as to show his or her frustration against the harsh austerity laws. But this was not the case. Instead, that morning a pensioner woke up, took the metro to Syntagma square, sent a goodbye message to his daughter and committed suicide in front of the parliament. They found a note in his pocket saying that he wanted to have a dignified end to his life, because he was on the verge of searching in the trash for food. This illustration shows the real side and consequences of the Greek crisis and its austerity as well as how many people chose to deal with it.

The austerity measures implemented by the Greek government influenced every aspect of people’s lives. By this I mean that during the crisis people felt like they lost their dignity, and their future. As Gramsci (1996) wrote: “the crisis consists precisely in the fact that the old is dying and the new cannot be born; in this interregnum a great variety of morbid symptoms appear”. In Greece one of these symptoms was the deafening sound of silence. Austerity increased individualism between people and thus isolation (Douzinas 2013). I remember that they did not share their hardships and did not want to socialize with their friends and family.
Silence is the sound of austerity and people are waiting for a change to lead them out from that precarious situation of the slow torturing of new economic measures and more poverty. The light in the “deadening of life” (Allison 2013:129) and the rupture of that silence was the rise of solidarity. Occupations, movements (as the one of Aganaktismenoi\textsuperscript{12} in 2011) and organizations brought people together.

Judith Butler (2012:168) argues that the ones afflicted by precarity can proceed on by making themselves ‘visible’ in order to reclaim their power. They want to show that they are still there. In her words:

> When the bodies of those deemed "disposable" assemble in public view, they are saying, "We have not slipped quietly into the shadows of public life; we have not become the glaring absence that structures your public”.

In the Greek context thousands of people wanted to be visible in order to show their politicians that they knew what was happening and that they should stop lying to them. They wanted to bring to an end that manipulation and reclaim back their dignity and life. I have to make clear that common people went on the streets (people that were not part of any political party), people with families, young and old. It was something that has never been seen again in the Greek context and there was even the thought that Greece could show to the rest of the countries how to fight against a corruptive and dysfunctional neoliberal capitalistic system (Douzinas 2013). People put aside their political views and united against their politicians who were accepting the cruel measures. I can recall how ecstatic I was to be part of the group at Syntagma square and go to protest with my family and friends. Everyone there had the same goal and there was a feeling of community between total strangers supporting each other.

Nevertheless, in 2010 Žižek visited some occupations in Greece and warned the citizens that after they finish having their ‘fun’ in the streets, they will once again lock themselves in their houses\textsuperscript{13}. Back then he was criticized, but in my opinion, we can now see that he was right. These uprisings ended and people got tired of having their ‘fun’. As Douzinas (2013:176) pointed out: “the resistances were a superficial response to the crisis… than a properly organized, realistic and efficient opposition claiming power”. Žižek at the occupation

\textsuperscript{12} The name comes from the Spanish movements Indignados which took place in Puerta del Sol, Madrid.

\textsuperscript{13}Douzinas (2013:176), and Radekk76, 2011, Žižek in Greece- Part-1, Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wvVRFZVvwK8.
likewise said that movements like the ones that appeared in Greece will be normalized and integrated into the neoliberal capitalistic system as people will get used to austerity and precarity. Thus, after all those movements, occupations and so on, and after the win of Syriza in the elections of 2015 nothing changed. New and more draconian measures were implemented, and people started to believe that there is no light at the end of this long and tormenting tunnel of austerity.

People feel like they are hitting a wall, as Greek politicians are actors on a stage (apparently in a tragicomic play), performing in front of the Greek audience, trying to convince them that everything is going to be fine as they will find a way to lead the country out of the austerity. This was expressed by Mathew in the following quote:

> From 2015 to now everything has faded to be honest as everything in this country… People tried to change by voting for the left party but unfortunately they found themselves being spectators in the same theatrical play. This weakened not only the solidarian associations in their political part but also a lot of political movements. So I think that there is a lot of frustration and disappointment. When there is a huge loss like that, there should be a time gap so that you could deal with it. You have to feel good inside so you then can help others. Also the lack of any hope politically makes it even worse, there is this thought that there cannot be any change…

> From my experience as a Greek citizen but also by looking at the members and the recipients of the organization, I have been witnessing that more and more people are losing their enthusiasm for a change and their hope for a better future. The reaction to austerity and precarity has given its place to the precarity habitus. By that I mean that when people live under precarious conditions for a long period of time, eventually they will embody and internalize those conditions, i.e. the instability, individualism, hopelessness and so on (see Bourdieu 1992). Therefore, if we look through the process of “slow death”¹⁴ (Berlant 2007) of the population that has been neglected for a long period of time, we may understand the tiredness of a continuous trying and fighting to survive within precarity. In other words, people do not live but they survive. The Greek society (and as an extent the organization) has transformed into a hopeless and quiet as Tsing (2015) writes “capitalistic ruin”.

¹⁴ I took the phrase of slow death from Lauren Berlant (2007). She used slow death referring to the physical wear down of workers, whereas, I use it to emphasize the process of precarization leading to physical and emotional deterioration.
Inside Crisis

Organizational crisis is an interruption from a previously normal state of functioning resulting in turmoil, instability, and a significant upheaval to a system.

-Gerard Lewis (1994)-

As I mentioned in the beginning of the chapter, the organization was not active, thus, I understand when the recipients thought that it closed since an organization’s actions are its evidence of existence. But in order to understand what has happened within the organization, we have to go back few years in time to see how it was functioning pre-crisis, because the organization was not like that in the past. The members were full of energy wanting to help as much as possible. They were opening the office every weekday for five and more hours, they were providing food two to three times per month, organizing events to gather money and assemblies so as to have a good communication with the recipients. I remember during the beginning of 2015 when I was helping to create the social pharmacy that the Solidarity Association was teeming with life. Every day in the afternoon the recipients would come to discuss with the members about their issues, how they were coping with the austerity measures and at the same time they were providing help whenever it was needed. Of course, we should not look at the past as a peaceful and fable period as there were conflicts between the members, but their appearance is considered to be quite normal in an organization. As Lewis (2006:18) writes about organizational crisis, he compares conflicts and frictions to blood pressures:

Conflicts and friction are an inextricable part of every organization: Metaphorically, it is the equivalent of cholesterol or blood pressure in the human body. Both of these conditions are normal and occur naturally. However, if one’s blood pressure or cholesterol rises above a certain level, it may portend vulnerability for some type of serious medical problem.

Nevertheless, the environment back then cannot be compared to the present situation, when the friction is so intense that many members had to resign from the organization. We should consider that it is very difficult for an unemployed person to run an organization as it involves a heavy weight to carry, and so, slowly things started to deteriorate as the conflicts multiplied.

Placing ourselves in the present, the president of the organization was not paying the rent for the space in which the Solidarity Association is housed or the electricity bills, and quite often
he would just disappear. What is more, the recipients would not come to help and would have no communication with the members unless they would be in need of something, and finally the members preferred to stay at home than working at the CSO.

From day one it was crystal clear that the Solidarity Association was in a precarious position. The organization was dirty, and the environment was not welcoming as it used to be. When I asked Renata why they have neglected the space so much she replied:

Why should the organization be clean since there is no one working here? There is no communication anymore between us (the members) and the recipients. We do not know who is working, if the organization opens every day at the specific times or not… Also the recipients are not willing to help and have an active part here. The majority cares only about themselves.

During my introductory day at the Solidarity Association only Renata and Helen were present to welcome me since the president was late “once again” as Renata angrily said. Both of them were complaining that he is never on time, if he actually appears at the end, and things were not getting done because he is not accountable. Renata was the one to guide me around, let me know who was responsible for what and explain to me my duties and more specifically what I should know in order to help also in the social pharmacy.

About an hour later the president (aka Mathew) came and he immediately started having an argument with Renata regarding the unpaid rent and electricity bills. It is expected that a small CSO would have problems with their resources and finding donors considering that they do not receive help from the state or the municipality, but I was caught out of guard. I did not expect that they had so significant financial issues and that they would discuss them in front of me. After the spirits calmed down Mathew turned to me and apologized for being late, he overslept because he had a rough night due to personal issues.

Most days it would be just me at the organization trying to bring it back to its old glories. Looking back at my fieldwork notes my frustration and disappointment were obvious:

Another day came during which I was alone once again. It is Renata’s day to work but she did not show up. I tried to reach her multiple times but she never responded to my calls. I called some recipients to come and pick up their food bags. I feel very upset and lonesome. I am getting tired of working here by myself, and I have gathered little material so far which stresses me out. My role here should be double and not just being a volunteer. They expect me to organize even the assemblies and

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15 Here I want to clarify that not all recipients were acting like that but a majority did so.
find ways to gather money. They are getting attached to me to do the almost everything. How can you distance yourself when you have no one to talk to? I had to make a decision of either not to help the organization and be there only if there are some members or to keep working at the CSO and keep my fingers crossed that some people will show up eventually.

I was trying to put the members back on their track, but they could not get over their psychological burden, the anxiety and depression was holding them back leading the organization to a crisis.

All of the incidents taken together should be placed into the societal context of the Greek austerity. The organizational external environment had an important role in this organizational crisis when taking into account that an organization is at risk to a crisis when it is “vulnerable from hostility and violence from outside” (Lewis 2006:17). Organizations should be seen as social sites, for they reflect what is happening in the society. Hence, as being a micro-society the Solidarity Association was also in some kind of a crisis. In order to understand this phenomenon, I saw the organization as an organism. I utilized this metaphor (see Wright 1994:18) to consider how the organization changed in order to survive within the constantly dynamic environment of the Greek austerity. As Morgan (1986:13) puts it:

For the use of metaphors implies a way of thinking and a way of seeing that pervade how we understand our world generally... We use metaphors whenever we attempt to understand one element of experience in terms of another... Many of our taken-for-granted ideas about organizations are metaphorical, even though we may not recognize them as such

It is important to mention in this context that every organization in Greece perceives the austerity differently depending on their size, their financial position and the human factor (from the individual influence to the collective friction)\textsuperscript{16}. The Solidarity Association was, and is facing, since I am still in contact with some of the members, a burnout effect that can be seen in the existence of conflicts and finally in the silence and emptiness of its space.

\textsuperscript{16} I do not seek to generalize my findings. Thus, as I have said before not every organization in Greece is in the same condition as the Solidarity Association, but every organization is influenced by the external environment in its own way and at a different extent.
Precarious Organization

Precariousness is a rallying cry for a thriving new world of interdependency and care that's not just private, but it is also an idiom for describing a loss of faith in a fantasy world to which generations have become accustomed

-Berlant (2012:168)-

Precarity in the neoliberal system is nothing new. The Greeks are following the rest of the Southern citizens and are as well normalizing precarity, normalizing feelings of insecurity, precarious labor\(^\text{17}\) and insecure living. As Isabell Lorey (2012:172) claims “precarity has become democratized”, as it does not affect anymore only the minorities, everyone shares it but at the same time this does not mean that they are equally sharing it.

Bourdieu (1998:3) has argued that the people being precarious are in such fear of losing their jobs that they cannot be easily mobilized and thus, cannot create a future. Maybe this was the case in the 1990s but in the contemporary society precarity does not surround only work but every aspect of living. Following Anne Allison in her book about Japan, precarity marks more than the loss of a job, it marks also the loss of a certain lifestyle, or an identity (2013:7). As Millar (2017) said the precarious labor and precarious life intertwine. Precarity, in the sense of insecurity and instability, starts at one place (i.e. job) and then gradually spreads to other parts of life. Here I want to emphasize the variable of time because my interlocutors pointed out more than once, that the long period of living precariously is what drained them emotionally and ultimately caused the burnout effect of the Solidarity Association.

Khosravi views precarity as “insecurity in the material condition (which) leads to pathological symptoms that haunt multiple aspects of contemporary life” (2017:4). This can be seen in what Renata and Mathew said during our talks; insecurity or instability at work, or losing a job leads to an insecure life, questioning if you can pay the rent, or your debt, if and when the bank will confiscate your house, and the most important of all, if you can provide for your family. But let me catch my breath here and present to you the stories of those two members whose experiences illustrate the interweaving in Millar’s argument of precariousness of work and life, and the consequences that their chronicity have on the

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\(^{17}\) Arne Kalleberg (2009:2) defines precarious work as “employment that is uncertain, unpredictable, and risky from the point of view of the worker”. 
organization. For to be able to understand the austerity and precarious life one must sense it, live it.

**The Story of Renata**

Renata is a fifty-nine year old unemployed woman from Greece. The crisis found her trying to provide for her and for her two young kids. She lost her job as a merchant and was forced to move close to her mother who volunteered to provide for Renata’s family. This lose as she sees it –not only of her job but of her personhood– drove her to depression as she was like the many other people who suffered by the austerity, unable to pay the rent, electricity, water or food. She was not even able to see herself in the future, and thus she developed suicidal thoughts. This is her story:

There is nothing more shameful than not to be able to provide for your kids... There would be times when we did not have heating in the house and my daughter would have to wear gloves and two socks in order to keep herself warm... The shame of not being capable of supporting my family was too much to handle. I was forced to close my store in the vegetable market, and I found myself being in debt. I did not expect the crisis, to be honest, my clients were giving me oversell checks and then they would disappear leaving me with air for money. Thus, at one point I did not have money to pay the rent, electricity and food which lead my daughter once to faint at school. I lost my identity; I was no longer the same person... Being around these people in the Solidarity Association was an eye opener to become an active citizen and a solidarian in order to help the rest of people afflicted by austerity. It is not only the food that I received but it was also our conversations. I felt as if I was taking my life into my own hands again. The politicians were deciding for us but with the organization which back then was also organizing marches against the austerity measures we were reacting; we were not being passive receivers of their decisions. The organization showed me that I was not alone, this is very crucial you know, from wanting to take away your life to becoming a solidarian and helping strangers is a long way but I did it thanks the people there.

The Solidarity Association provided her with food and a meaning to continue fight. The ones vulnerable to economic precarity are dealing with social uncertainty and “anxiety of incompleteness” (Appadurai 2006), for they do not know who they are and where they belong. Renata found other people that were in the same precarious position as she and she stopped feeling alone. This demonstrates the importance of togetherness among the people who shared the same difficulties due to the austerity measures. As Talal Asad notes regarding

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18 Following Butler (2009:25): “precarity is at once a material and a perceptual issue, since those whose lives are not “regarded” as potentially grievable, and hence valuable, are made to bear the burden of starvation, underemployment, legal disenfranchisement, and differential exposure to violence and death”. 

sociality formed in pain: “as a social relationship pain is more than an experience. It is part of what creates the conditions of action and experience” (2003:85). Renata became more and more active and found a reason to live; solidarity. This community managed to put her back on her feet but as she said this proved to be temporary.

In the beginning everyone was involved in the organization. We would provide food and spread the message of solidarity in order to have a strong bond. But slowly we have been worn down by the austerity you know... We see no future anymore, there are no politicians to help us, to change this, and we have got tired, I am tired of trying to live. This of course influences the organization; just think we have so many people here fighting with depression. They cannot help themselves how will they help others? We have been providing for others for how many years, for how long should we continue doing this? I have been searching for a steady job for many years and I can see nothing. There is nothing for me on the horizon and then I have to come here and listen to others’ problems. I am unemployed which means that I have time to be here but I am psychologically tired of this living. This is why I am not working at the organization as much as I used to anymore (Renata).

The story of Mathew

Mathew is a forty-year old unemployed man from Greece and has been living with his parents for around nine years. Once, he was a highly positioned insurance agent working for one of the strongest insurance companies in Greece. But the financial crisis arrived leading him to lose his job, his friends, his romantic relationship and finally, his house. Notwithstanding, he tried to cope and created with the help of others this organization to provide help to people who lived under much worse conditions. This is his story:

I lost a lot of friends due to the crisis, not only because I did not have the money to go out for instance for a coffee, but also because I did not want to leave my house, I did not want to see anyone. I felt ashamed for myself because I had to move in with my parents. From having my own house, I had to move in at my old bedroom and I felt like I hit rock bottom. Not only that but I could not provide somehow to my family, I could not share the rent of the house, the electricity bills or pay for our food. I was totally depending on my parents. So, because my life changed so drastically I also changed. What I mean by that is that the austerity changed who I am; I was not the same person as the one pre-crisis. I lost everything that I had created over a long period of time and with my own sweat. This is why I isolated myself, because I felt as if nobody could understand the difficulties that I was dealing with. By creating the organization I found people that I can call my friends. Sociality is important for people’s lives and this is why the organization is important. We created the Solidarity Association not only to
provide material services but also social help in the sense of people having a space to talk about their problems to others who experience the same difficulties.

It took strength to take care of others and carry their problems amongst with his and the organization’s. Nevertheless, his depression came in the way and therefore, he has not been able to maintain the organization as well as a healthy social life. There are days when he does not have the strength to get out of his house let alone having to maintain the Solidarity Association where he works without any remuneration. Like Renata, he has reached an end point, as austerity has become the normal condition in his life. He told me:

* * * *

In both of these stories we can see Khosravi’s argument in his book (2017:4). Material and financial insecurities as, if they will be able to pay the bills, provide food, if they will have electricity, or if they will finally find a job are interconnected with existential insecurities, for instance from if there is a point of staying alive, to if they will ever find a job, or if the situation in Greece will ever change. The long period of precarious living has changed their lives and identities. From active, determined, ambitious and self-aware people to passive, lifeless, lonely and emotional drained ones. As Lear (2006) writes: “it is not only a way of life that is lost but also one’s subjectivity: the ability to see, or know, oneself in the face of radical change”, and he continues with what he calls “ontological vulnerability”: “an existential precarity when the rules and regularities of a shared lifestyle no longer exist”. By losing their work stability, they lost who they were, they lost their social ties and their feelings of belonging. In such context we can understand the relationship between precarious work and precarious life, as “unstable work destabilizes daily living” (Allison 2012:349). These are common struggles of a Greek precariat who has been caught in the web of the informal economy which as Standing (2011) argues is by definition precarious.

The members admitted to be tired of the chronicity of instability, insecurity and hopelessness. They are tired of struggling and of not being able to exit from their precarious living. They
are emotionally drained because of the long resistance to austerity. The process of precarization and the slow violence of precarity led them to lose hope for a better future and their strength to keep going. To use the words of Nixon (2011:2) this can be seen as a slow form of violence. He argues:

By slow violence I mean a violence that occurs gradually and out of sight, a violence of delayed destruction that is dispersed across time and space, an attritional violence that is typically not viewed as violence at all. Violence is customarily conceived as an event or action that is immediate in time, explosive and spectacular in space, and as erupting into instant sensational visibility.

I borrow the concept of slow violence by Nixon in order to emphasize the democratization (Lorey 2012), normalization and habituation of precarity (see earlier in the chapter). For them there is not exit from precarity, there is no alternative but to live with it.

This enduring struggle to survive another day is what exhausts many members of the organization. Often, they have no will to go out of their house since the burden that they carry is so heavy and overwhelming that makes it difficult for them to act in any sort of way. As Renata said; “they are not able to take care of themselves, let alone others”. This is why the organization was deprived of human life. Nevertheless, there is an “exodus out of the paralysis of precarization” (Lorey 2012:173), as Butler (2009) connects precarity to social and political agency which in reality can be seen via all those organizations and associations in Greece. Indeed, precarity and solidarity can be seen as different sides of the same coin. Therefore, I turn to the cultural aspect of the organization.

Chapter 2: In Search for Solidarity

In this chapter I will start by discussing about the Solidarity Association and its organizational culture which followed the general environment of solidarity in Greece. Then, I will try to answer to my research question by exploring the reasons why the solidarity of the organization is looking more like philanthropy. I will conclude with the concept of self-precarization and labor of love. As I understood it, the members for the reason that are still working there besides their precarious position, they are entering into a self-precarization process in favor of a labor of love.
Resistance and solidarity are the outcomes of precarity. Bourdieu (1998) and Standing (2011) did not bring up how people in precarious positions would mobilize and have the potentiality for change. More specifically Standing in his book “A Precariat Charter” (2014), views the precariats as a dangerous class. By this he meant that there is the ability for a change but because they are dangerous, their alienation, anxiety and anger are standing in their way of actualizing it. They will be violent and they shall protest but nothing more\textsuperscript{19}. Only a well-organized political movement can bring change. Taking into consideration the above, it would be interesting to see how his ideas can follow contemporary paradigms, considering that there are many examples of unstable workers who dared to ask for better labor conditions and payment from Turkey\textsuperscript{20} to Greece.

Solidarity is not far from impossible, as Papataxiarchis advocated: “when ‘social cohesion’ is under threat in conditions of austerity, solidarity becomes a project, an ‘alternative horizon’ aimed at combating alienation and atomization” (2016:205). Furthermore, Butler argued that the ones afflicted by precarity will be brought together but maybe not in “some beautiful state of coexistence; it is not the same as social harmony” (2009:151). Nevertheless, solidarity is something that will be created during difficult times and in my opinion should be created.

\textit{Organizational Culture}

Geertz (1973) argued that the concept of culture was developed in order for humans to be distinguished from the animals. In comparison to nature and its predictability, the concept of culture could capture the human’s heterogeneity because as Morgan Gareth demonstrates (1986:112): “different groups of people have different ways of life”. For the reason that there is not a consensus regarding this concept’s meaning, it comes as no surprise that it has been expanded in a variety of subjects towards organizations and social groups. Nonetheless, a basic characteristic is that it creates a common identity and thus, a sense of belonging. When people come together they form and share same values, ideas and behaviors.

In the case of the Solidarity Association, the most important common culture was the ideology of solidarity. People united under the same values and views as they wanted to help

\textsuperscript{19} I find intriguing the fact that he sees protests as something negative, as a pathology.

each other. However, during a crisis if the organizational culture is not strong enough people can move towards individualistic behaviors. This is what happened to the organization. As I have observed and as the members told me, the majority of the recipients are not contributing to the organization and some of them will appear only when they are in need of something.

An illustration of the above can be seen during the monthly assembly that I attended in 2018, at which only 13 out of 270 recipients of the organization came. The members and the recipients gathered to discuss two occurred issues. The first was a financial one as it regarded their main two donors. Mathew informed us that one of the food donors died and the other one due to personal matters had to cut off a percent of his donations. Therefore, they would not be able to provide some type of meat for the Christmas celebration (as they used to do every year), as well as pay the rent. The second issue concerned the recipients and how the members did not feel that they were actually providing something to the organization. Mathew stated that if things were not going to change they would have to close the organization because the members have got tired of doing as he said “everything there”. Renata pointed out that it is sad to see that only so few people came to the assembly, as well as the small amount of recipients being active at the organization. For Renata, this shows that only few care enough about the Solidarity Association. Mathew added to what Renata said:

We need more people to come with us to the supermarkets, we need help to gather food, and we cannot provide to you if you do not help us. You have noticed I hope that the food bags contain less food and that we do not afford to create them more than once per month. In the past we would create two to three bags. We have to be active again and we have to gain the attention of the people in the neighborhood in order to get some food donations.

Silence followed their statements and just one of the recipients commented:

The members are helping us and we should also! We cannot keep expecting things from them and give nothing in return. We need to wake up and take things into our hands, we have to reconnect again and become the organization that used to be. The organization is very important, not only for the services that it provides but also because it brought us together and we should start supporting each other again.

The decrease of active participants at the Solidarity Association, and the argument at the assembly, demonstrate disintegration within the organization and the growth of individualistic behaviors among its people. Consequently, there was no longer a common understanding in regards to the values of the organization.
Garsten and Nyqvist (2013) paraphrased Marshall Sahlins by saying that we could see organizations as “dominant sites of cultural production” (Sahlins 1976:211, cited in Garsten & Nyqvist 2013:5). Therefore, organizations have the ability to nurture, shape, and distribute systems of meaning. In one of the organizational documents I found the missions of the solidarity association and I will proceed by quoting some of them. The organization aims at promoting solidarity and equality, advocating human rights, alleviating any form of racism and social exclusion, and supporting minorities and unemployed groups. Furthermore, the CSO promotes awareness for matters of social solidarity and pushes people to help each other. Finally, the organization has as a goal to actualize the care values of a solidarity economy. Solidarity is based on mutuality, and people depending on each other. These being said, the organization’s culture is based on the values of solidarity, reciprocity and equality. The Solidarity Association used to spread the value of solidarity inside and outside the organization but, as I will discuss in the following pages, unfortunately the cultivation of common values had come to an end.

When an organization’s culture becomes unstable, as is the case within the Solidarity Association, its collective identity, sociality and stability become precarious which then complicates the creation of cohesive actions (Lewis 2006), for instance going to the supermarkets or being a part of the assemblies. As we saw in the previous chapter; organizations are adaptive organisms existing within processes of exchange with their environment. Hence, the crisis in the Greek society overlaps with the crisis within the organization, and therefore, the long period of precarity contributed to the recipients’ isolation and atomization. However, an organization can function properly only when its members share the same values, ideologies or behaviors (Lewis 2006).

Mainly, the five members of the organization do not any longer share the same values of solidarity with the recipients, and therefore, they have to constantly remind the sitizomenoi of the appropriate behavior, the one of solidarity. But not all the recipients are alienated from the organization, and one of them is Peter. I met Peter one of the days when I was working at the Solidarity Association. He came with his newborn baby to pick up his food bag and to see for some clothes because he had no pants or shoes without holes in them. His story follows a same pattern as the ones that I shared in the previous chapter.

Peter is a forty-year old man from Greece who used to run an antique shop with his brother. He was earning a good amount of money which could be seen in his interest in traveling
around the world and wearing expensive clothes. The aftermath of the crisis found him with no store and addicted to drugs, since for him this was the only ‘exit’ to his depression. He felt that he hit rock bottom, as he was homeless and he overdosed a couple of times because he had nothing to live for. The organization gave him food, clothes, medicine, strength to get over his addiction and a safe space where he met his wife who is also a recipient there. When I asked him about his views in regards to the Solidarity Association and how he was feeling about its current condition he told me that he is terribly disappointed with how it is currently functioning. It breaks his heart to see it “falling apart” he underlined, and continued:

Nowadays I am going alone to the supermarkets to pick up food and to ask if some of the consumers would like to donate some. In the past we would be around 10 people collecting the food, now if we are lucky there will be 2-3. What are the other recipients doing? Why are they not coming? I feel like a fool collecting food for them when they do nothing for me. We are talking about solidarity you know not charity. You want charity go to the church then do not be here. (...) It is not easy to spend hours at the supermarkets looking for donations or carrying the food back here but I am doing it and I have a few months old baby to take care. Nevertheless, I am helping because they provided food and other things to me when I was in need. I want to do the same for the others. They help me and I help them. We have a lot and I mean a LOT of issues all of us with which we are fighting with, but I cannot just take the food and give nothing in return to the members or to the other recipients. It does not feel nice. I care about them. We are supposed to take care of each other. This is what solidarity is about.

Where did Solidarity go?

I don't believe in charity. I believe in solidarity. Charity is so vertical. It goes from the top to the bottom. Solidarity is horizontal. It respects the other person. I have a lot to learn from other people.

- Eduardo Galeano-

During one of the days when I was giving food bags to the recipients an old lady came and brought me a delicious piece of a pie. She apologized to me for not being able to contribute as she should and go to the supermarkets in order to gather food. Thus, as she said:

I can just cook so here you go I baked a pie and I know that you spend a lot of hours working here and as a grandma I have the tendency to feed the others. So thank you for what you are doing for us, and I hope you enjoy it.
I thanked her and I was deeply grateful because that day I had so much work to do that I had totally forgotten to eat something. On my way back home in the bus I opened my notebook and I just wrote “best day ever”. In contrast to the other recipients who just came to take their food and leave without wanting to talk to me, she came and helped as much as she could. This is what matters. It was not just a piece of pie, it was an acknowledgement that we are in this together and as Peter also said we should take care of each other.

Solidarity (and at some extent sociality considering that those two rely on each other) was an outcome of the precarious environment in Greece and a strategy to overcome it. As Rakopoulos (2016:144) argues: “specifically solidarity cannot be conceived outside the backdrop that austerity has carved, as it arises as an alternative horizon for people’s lifeworlds, while dictating immediate action”. As I have clarified in section of the theoretical background; I am using the concept of solidarity from an emic perspective. Their (recipients and members) view of the concept rests on values of reciprocal help, mutual aid, mutuality and horizontal democracy. That being said, there should be no power relations (as there are for instance at NGOs), as Helen told me:

Solidarity does not have to come from the State or some NGOs, because they are not solidarians, they are something else. The NGOs say that they are solidarians, some are but they are in a different position…. Solidarity has to be interacted with others. You cannot be a solidarian and have no interaction with others. (…) I think that solidarity is political action, and participation as well as mutual exchange. You give something you take something else back.

Thus, recapitulating what Helen told me; solidarity could be seen on the one hand, as mutual exchange, and, on the other, as highly political with the aim to change society. My interlocutors see solidarity as providing an antidote to the alienation and atomization incited by both neoliberalism, and the indifference of the Greek state (Herzfeld 1992, cited in Rakopoulos 2016:145). Precariats are disposable for the Greek society, as Renata told me: “the crisis and austerity dehumanized us while solidarity rehumanized people”.

The following way of thinking has also been adopted by leftists, anarchists as well as other social networks and movements. This is important because the term solidarity has been used by so many different subjects that it has become depoliticized. For instance, the Greek church, NGOs and even the state (Syriza established the ministry of solidarity) are some

21 The solidarians from the organization are not in favour of the church using the term solidarity because they believe that the church provides only charity. That being said, it wants the receivers to stay in this diminishing position so it can continue to provide material help. Moreover, during my fieldwork the members and some of
actors that have used it, instead of the word philanthropy or charity, in order to cover the outcomes of their actions (considering that solidarity and philanthropy have different aims and aftermaths). As I understood, the depoliticization is the reason behind why the solidarians of the organization do not want to be branded as philanthropists and charity providers (see also Theodossopoulos 2016).

There are two reasons for their rejections of philanthropy and charity. Firstly, because both philanthropy and charity arouse negative connotations mostly due to power relations as well as images of money grabbing, and deals happening under the table. Secondly, because they agree with Žižek (2010) who is critical of charity and he does so by referring to Oscar Wilde (2001:127) who argues that it is “an aggravation of the difficulty”. I would agree with them because philanthropy and charity are just a band aid covering the problem but not truly solving it.

I suggest that philanthropy has taken the place of solidarity within the Solidarity Association, as the recipients have adopted the role of a client. They are going to the organization only to receive their food or when they need medication from the social pharmacy. Several of my interlocutors like John, Renata and Mathew said that the relation between the recipients and members seems like a customer service, and according to them the organization could not function because of these behaviors and ideas.

Because we are talking about solidarity and not philanthropy as the church is doing, we have managed via the members’ actions (e.g. going to supermarkets) to gather food. Therefore you can see that without solidarity the ‘feeding’ would not be possible. Everyone has to do something if they want food, some have to go to the supermarkets and collect food, and others have to create the bags and so on. I have to be honest that for some people thinking in a solidarian way is something new and it is not always easy for them to follow. (Mathew)

Taking everything into consideration I cannot help but ask; is solidarity fading away or were mutuality and reciprocity never widespread as an ideology in Greece in the first place?22

the recipients criticized the church due to xenophobic ideologies that for instance the Bishop publicly stated against migrants, refugees and the LGBTQ community, something that goes against to what solidarity stands for. What is more, the church is involved with a lot of financial scandals, it does not pay taxes and as my interlocutors told me in regards to their philanthropic actions: “they do not care to help as they only care for their image and to attract new followers”. For more about the role that the Greek Orthodox church in relation to the welfare system see Markoviti, Margarita. and Molokotos-Liederman, Lina. 2017.

22 Kavoulakos, K., Gritzas, G. Movements and alternative spaces in Greece in an era of crisis: A new civil society. They make a point that solidarity and reciprocity is not the same. Nevertheless for the organization the one is part of the other.
During my fieldwork I came across two reasons for the replacement of the organization’s solidarian culture. The first argument concerns the lack of knowledge and political education, which the Greeks in general but more specifically the recipients do not have, in regards to a solidarian way of thinking. The second argumentation presents as a reason of the rise of philanthropic behaviors, the increase of isolation and individualism mostly from the recipients side.

Both Mathew and John said that some of the recipients are not solidarians because they were never taught so. The reason can be sought in the weak and atrophic Greek civil society which existed even before the event of the crisis (Sotiropoulos 2004). Huliaras (2014) created four categories regarding the causes of a weak civil society in Greece: (1) the rapid economic development of 1960s which was not accompanied by a social transformation, (2) the clientelistic relationships in the political system that caused the state to overshadow any movements towards a healthy civil society, (3) the role of the Church which receives more donations than NGOs do, and (4) the lack of civil education.

During my fieldwork I noticed that when I was talking to the members they would use the word solidarity, and they would call themselves solidarians, while the recipients seldom used the word when referring to themselves. When I asked some of the recipients if they considered themselves as solidarians the majority followed a common pattern and answered that they have never thought about it. Instead, they explained that they helped because they were asked to do so or because it was the right thing to do.

Thus, the solidarians in the organization carry the weight of helping others that do not give something in return. John an ex member of the organization during our interview said:

There is no education concerning mutual help and in an extent solidarity in Greece. People have learnt that the state should provide and take care of them, as if we have ever had a welfare state. So you see when we say to them that they should help others and they will help you, they do not want to act. They prefer to just receive, and this is where the charity and philanthropy come as you said. To be honest as you know I left the organization not only due to conflicts that I had with some members but also because I got tired. I found myself saying that it is ok if they do not think in a solidarian way as long as they feel obligated to help back. We had and as I learn the members still have to make them feel obliged in order to get something back from them. We were aiming in educating the recipients because the organization is not a charity like; hello yes here is your food yes bye. We wanted to actually spread

23 Following Burton R. Clark (1956:328) a reason of the diffusion of solidarity as value could be when “they are unacceptable to a ‘host’ population”.
the message of reciprocity, because the organization is not going to be active forever, but messages like these will be. And you know Greece needs the message of solidarity, because with just providing to others and them passively taking there will be no change. We do not want to cover epidermically the problem, I see that you are hungry here take food but I will not search deep into the root of the problem. This is what philanthropy does. It does not aim to change people’s lives, it keeps them into this power relation, and it needs them to be lower than the ones in power so it can still exist. We want them to have their power back, and we tried to give them power but, as I said they do not understand that we do so, of course as you said not all the recipients act like that but the majority does so.

Let me elaborate on what John said because I found it quite interesting. The gift economy and solidarity economy have a lot in common if we consider the act of reciprocity\textsuperscript{24}. Mauss (1990) argued that the exchange of gifts between groups leads to the creation and maintenance of human relationships. For Mauss the act of gifting is divided into three phases: (1) the giving, (2) the receiving (which cannot be refused), and (3) the reciprocation of the gift. These multiple obligations can also contribute in the reproduction of solidarity. In addition, he makes clear that solidarity should be something that people learn: “this is what tomorrow, in our so-called civilized world, classes and nations and individuals, also, must learn. This is one of the enduring secrets of their wisdom and solidarity” (1990: 82-83). As John said because people have no civil and political education, they are not aware of the advantages of solidarity in a society. Therefore, this could be why some recipients do not reciprocate the services they receive. They see them as a ‘pure gift’ or a ‘free gift’, which are closely connected with philanthropy. There is no mutuality, and according to Mauss (1990: vii): “a gift that does nothing to enhance solidarity is a contradiction”. Mutuality is very important in a society because humans depend on each other.

By connecting the concepts of solidarity and mutuality to the one of precariousness we can understand that people in societies are vulnerable without the help of others. Thus, considering that they are not aware of the existence of precariousness as John said due to the lack of proper education, they are not aware that they rely on each other for help. As Butler (2009:14-15) argues:

\textsuperscript{24} I should note that the theory of gift in regards to reciprocity has been criticized due to the fact that the recipient might not be able to return the gift back, for instance in the context of refugees and migrants and thus, s/he might feel indebted to the donor. But, solidarity when used properly can be seen as a “shifter” concept (Cabot 2013), and can even contribute to the eventual collapse of the gift taboo (Rozakou 2012, cited in Rakopoulos 2016:149). As long as there is horizontal democracy and no power relations, the recipients in the case of the Solidarity Association will not feel inferior. Then, we might see concept of reciprocity more positively.
Precariousness implies living socially, that is, the fact that one’s life is always in some sense in the hands of the other. . . . It is not that we are born and then later become precarious, but rather that precariousness is coextensive with birth itself (birth is, by definition, precarious), which means that it matters whether or not that infant survives, and that its survival is dependent on what we might call a social network of hands. . . . Precariousness implies living socially, that is, the fact that one’s life is always in some sense in the hands of the other. . . . It implies exposure both to those we know and to those we do not know; a dependency on people we know, and to those we do not know . . . these are not necessarily relations of love or even of care, but constitute obligations towards others, most of whom we cannot name and do not know, and who may or may not bear traits of familiarity to an established sense of who “we” are. . . .

Butler argues (2009: 19) that: “precarity opposes individuals, whereas precariousness brings them together, under a shared acknowledgement of the value of human life”. In line with that, the organization brought people together and helped them materially and psychologically to cope with austerity, but as I have claimed earlier in the thesis, the long period under precarity has driven them apart. Franco “Bifo” Berardi (2009) has called the ‘soul at work’: “when humans lose the ability, or opportunity, to be human— living under conditions too ragged to nourish enjoyment or compassion toward (or from) other humans— the soul slips into depression” (Berardi 2009, cited in Allison 2013:129). People do not socialize anymore because of the widespread isolation and individualism in the society, which pushes solidarity into non-existence. We can say that their behavior resembles the “politics of survival” from Marc Abélès (2010), where people care more about themselves and their survival than what he calls the “convivance” of a harmoniously coexistence with others. Since solidarity relies on sociality and mutuality, then we can see that it is getting lost when the members and sitizomenoi do not have any communication besides when they go to receive their bags. Solidarity is about creating bonds but then precarity is isolating them and tears those bonds apart. Paraphrasing Lorey (2011:1), the “striating” effects of precarity divide the two sub-groups instead of bringing them together. Precarity brings solitude, individualism and alienation from one’s self and towards the others, but as Allison (2013:155) remarked in her book: “this is the toll precarity has on peoples’ souls”.

Renata argued that she is still a solidarian but she is exhausted, something that I heard from others too. Nevertheless, their values cannot be lost considering what Renata told me:

The message of solidarity is very important because in a society people depend on others, the garbage collector depends on the baker to give him bread and the baker depends on the garbage collector to keep the city clean. That is reciprocity. Now at the organization the members depend on the recipients to help regarding collecting food or keeping the organization clean, or helping with electrical matters, and the recipients depend on the members to do the bureaucratic things to keep the organization working but also organizing them and create networks with supermarkets and other organizations as
well as private donors. We are equals as we also go to the supermarkets with the recipients. Nonetheless, some of the sitizomenoi have confused us as if we are a church, the only communication we have with them is when we call them to come and pick up their food. We have to actually threaten them that we will have to delete them from our recipient list if they do not contribute. (…) I know that I complain a lot but I cannot find the guts to withdraw from the organization, I still want to help…

**Labor of love and Self-precarization**

The organization has the department of social pharmacy which receives a respectful amount of medicine from a French association. So, the members decided that they and I should arrange which of them should be kept at the organization and then pack the rest to take them to some hospitals. However, at the end I ended up doing most of the work. In the figure (5) you can see the boxes that I was making. It took me two to three days to finish them, around 15 hours. A recipient that was coming to hang out with me so that I would not be totally alone even proposed to give me some money for the reason that I was dedicating so much time to receive at the end nothing from it. During those days I would return home and burst into tears as I was the only one doing this job. The members did not come at all during these days to help. My friends and family started asking me why I was doing the work of others, as my priority should be my M.A thesis and not working as a volunteer there. But I could not find myself being idle. I find the role that the organization plays to be too important not to be a part of it. I used to receive help from the organization when my family was in a difficult financial position. This is why I believe that I should reciprocate that help and provide for the ones in need, regardless of the difficulties that I encounter.

Drawing on semi-structured interviews and informal conversations with my interlocutors, I argue that the members and the recipients working/helping there are putting themselves into a self-precarization state. As I understood it, they do so for the reason that even though they are precariats they cannot abstain from a labor of love. As Allison beautifully argues: “stay with the present, precarious as it is, and face the pain but also the pleasures of working together in the mud” (2016:205). I claim that they keep working at the organization because they still want to help others despite the difficulties they are facing in their lives and at the organization. There is a pleasure-pain axis (McRobbie 2004: 132) that they are struggling to find a balance on; they are trying to cope with their own difficulties in life and at the same time help others, while they receive little help from them.
Precarization is the process of becoming precarious through unstable labor and living conditions (Lorey 2010), thence, self-precarization\(^\text{25}\) is the precarization by choice. Annelies Van Assche (2017) writes about self-precarization in regards to the creative professions. She argues that:

> Creative workers seem to be willing to sacrifice material benefits for the sake of immaterial ones such as artistic pleasure, temporal autonomy, a free work environment and opportunities for self-realization, as long as they have enough to survive (Van Assche 2017:239).

Therefore, the ones choosing to sacrifice economic and/or material benefits in favor of in my case labor of love fit in this category. With the term labor of love, I allude to the work that people do because they enjoy it and not due to profit. Particularly, in this thesis, I refer to labor of love in regards to solidarity. The laborers of love work at the third sector and more specifically in organizations like the Solidarity Association. They are offering their help because they are solidarians, but recently there is no reciprocity between the members and the recipients, which creates the effects of self-precarization. As Helen (one of the members) told me they could stop helping since they see no mutuality and just receive their food\(^\text{26}\), but instead they chose to work at that organization on account of their values. This argument can also be seen during my last conversation with Renata:

> Why I am still helping at the organization and not going to another one? I do not do it for the food that we provide. Mostly I stay for the social pharmacy. Due to the crisis and the austerity, there is a terrible lack of medicine. You know it and you have seen it. Hospitals are calling out for help as they do not have drugs, pharmaceutical equipment or even beds! In addition, the drugs cost too much for the people to be able to buy them. The crisis and its austerity create depression and autoimmune diseases. The recipients can find at the end of the day a plate with food from the church for instance, but there are not many who have access to some medicine. Nevertheless, I have been thinking for long time as you know to leave. What we are doing here is very important but considering that we are unemployed and some of us receive nothing in return (i.e. payment) makes it very difficult to stay. I have the value of solidarity but I feel stupid because I am doing all those things to help the others and then I see that they do not care to reciprocate it. I have not lost my values and beliefs but I have got tired… What we do here is of a great value but at what cost? I am working for how many hours and the sitizomenoi demand things, they do not act. They expect that somehow I will have their food ready and they do not know what issues I have in my life outside of the organization. I could be with my family right now but I chose to help those in need. They do not understand how much we have coped and fought to keep the

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\(^{26}\) I want to remind the reader that the members are also receiving food from the organization.
Solidarity Association. During one period my family would barely see me because I would be here working all day and then at night they would see me crying not only because of what traumatic things I heard from the people coming to the organization and wanting to share their issues, but also because I was trying so hard and I would see some members and recipients do the bare minimum. But you see I am still here, and the organization matters a lot to me. So, I guess I put myself in this position…

Part 3

Final Thoughts and Conclusion

The aim of the thesis is to explore how a Greek civil society organization is influenced by the general austerity that has prevailed for many years in Greece. In order to find answers I looked upon what was happening in the Greek society and connected it with the symptoms that I found in the organization. That being said, the members of the organization due to the long period of uncertainty, instability and insecurity do not have the strength to keep living and trying for a better future and thus, they have isolated themselves. Consequently, the Solidarity Association has lost its purpose of existence and it is disintegrating, because firstly its members are not able to act anymore and, secondly, its solidarian values are slowly being replaced by philanthropic behaviors. More specifically, solidarity which should be the organization’s main culture due to individualism and feelings of solitude, is giving its place to philanthropy.

As I have argued, the majority of Greeks are living in a constant stage of uncertainty. People do not know what the future will bring them and they have to live with this precarity. Tsing’s (2015) definition of precarity, as living under unstable conditions and thus being vulnerable, captures all the issues created by the contemporary capitalistic system which paraphrasing David Harvey (2009); it does not care about creating jobs but making money. Austerity is a common symptom of our time, hence, we should bear in mind that precarity has become a norm in the neoliberal system, not an exception. As Castel (2005) writes we are facing a “return of insecurity” which will continue to increase as precarity becomes a norm in more societies.

To recapitulate, precarity as a term was first adopted by activists in post-Fordist societies (Europe, Japan, and North America)27, but precarious living has been a reality for some

27 It is interesting to add that even in Fordist era there was insecurity, instability (for more see Kasmir 2018).
countries at the Global South since “always” as Millar (2018) argues, which then makes the concept less the exception than the a rule (Neilson & Rossiter 2008). It is a concept that has created various sub-terms as (self)-precarization, precariousness, and the precariat. It can describe financial conditions as well as existential and ontological issues (anxiety, depression, and hopelessness) created as I have mentioned in this paper by the unstable labor market. Therefore, as neoliberal capitalism creates instability and crisis in order to survive, jobs are lessening, and part-time jobs are blooming, leading to vulnerability and anxiety, depression, social isolation, and the inability to predict. But even though precarity is a powerful tool to depict all the above, the concept has been criticized for seeing vulnerability, instability and insecurity everywhere and thus, we should be careful for it might lose its analytical power and its acuity.

Although precarity as a concept and as a state of living is widely spread, as I have discussed it is not equal distributed and experienced. The relation between precarious labor and life depends on the location (this could be a geographic location or more specifically people’s social position on a location). For instance in contrast to my findings, Millar (2018) advocates that the catadores return to the dumps and to their precarious labor as a way to cope with their insecure life. In my case, precarious labor is what makes the members’ and the recipients’ lives insecure, which then results in isolation and individualism. It creates subjects who are at the mercy of marginality, anxiety, and paranoia (Molé 2010). In connection to Allison’s book (2013), the Greeks and the Japanese have a lot in common. Precarity marks for them the loss of not only their jobs and inasmuch their security, but also their personhood, for both precarious labor and precarious living cannot be separated, as precarity slips into other dimensions of life (Allison 2013:9). As Renata and Mathew argued with the loss of their job they lost much more, they lost who they were and a reason to live.

So, why the Solidarity Association is not functioning properly and why is solidarity being replaced? The answer to the first question can be found in the first chapter. There I argued that precarity is influencing the Greek society and then considering that organizations can be a depiction of their society, I proceeded looking upon the influence on the people in the Solidarity Association. The people working there were precarious (as they say in Italy, see Molé 2010) and cannot escape from precarization. It is not easy to manage their own insecurity and at the same time provide services to the recipients. The members are emotionally exhausted of constantly trying to fight and survive. As Allison (2013) writes:
In this uncertainty of time, where everyday efforts don’t align with a teleology of progressive betterment, living can be often just that. Not leading particularly anywhere, lives get lived nonetheless.

The long process of precarization is leading to physical and emotional deterioration. Noelle Molé argues that the Italian workers who have been subjected to “precarious-ization”, are in a zombie-like state of being (Molé 2012:39, cited in Khosravi 2017), they are not ‘fully’ alive, they are living a “bare life” (Agamben 1998). The “slow violence” (Nixon 2011) and “slow death” (Berlant 2007) caused by the long period of precarity have caused a burnout effect. This precarization is at the end the factor behind the organization’s precarious existence. Renata and Mathew argued that they have got tired of surviving instead of living and they have lost their hope for a better future. Nevertheless, they are trying to help the recipients while coping to find some stability at their lives because for them the value of solidarity is important.

Thus, in my second chapter, I tried to answer to the second question of why solidarity seemed to fade away and being replaced by philanthropic behaviors. In this section I discussed about the interweaving of precarity (in the sense of isolation and individualism) with solidarity and how the lack of civil and political education has assisted in philanthropy replacing the value of solidarity. In this thesis, I used the notion of solidarity as my interlocutors did so. That being said, solidarity means mutual help and reciprocity (I leave for now behind the political aspects that the notion carries). As I have claimed, in a society afflicted by austerity solidarity is a way for fighting it (Papataxiarchis 2016). As Butler (2009) stresses, it is of great importance for the precarious to come closer to each other, and understand their social relationship because then they will be able to help each other. Following what my interlocutors told me; the fact that they found others being in the same position as they were, helped them not only emotionally but also gave them strength to continue living. Nevertheless, Mathew and John advocated that because some of the recipients do not know the importance of mutuality and reciprocity the organization’s culture is falling apart, as well as the willingness of the rest of the people in the Solidarity Association to continue helping.

In this study I have argued that austerity influences peoples’ social lives as it creates a landscape of silence. It leads to precarity and more specifically to isolation and individualism and as Douzinas (2013) argues “neoliberal capitalism dreams about the existence of individuals and no collectivities”. Following Bourdieu (1998:3), neoliberalism is programmed to destroy collectivities. More individualism means less sociality and less
sociality means less solidarity. Therefore, paraphrasing Jørgensen (2016), there will be less political subjectivities going against the state’s austerity measures. During my fieldwork, I noticed that due to the austerity the sound of silence prevailed in the organization’s space. Some members and recipients had isolated themselves. The feelings of communality were decreasing, meaning that individualism and isolation dominated, and when alienation and atomization rise they turn solidarity into philanthropy. It should be noted that the members and the recipients who are solidarians have not lost their values, what is lost is the psychical and emotional ability to actualize this value. For now some of the members are still working at the organization even though they are putting themselves into a self-precarization condition but only time will tell for how long they will put their love for this labour above their precarization.

To reiterate, in this thesis I have given importance to the concept of solidarity because as I have argued precarity and solidarity rely on each other. The financial instability in combination with the precarious labor and uncertain future created and established by the Greek state brought to the surface feelings of solidarity which were fused into different types of socialities between the citizens. Solidarity and precarity are two sides of the same coin, as solidarity is a way to sustain life in the “capitalist ruins” (Tsing 2015). It can be seen as a response to austerity and as “a mechanism for envisioning future prospects for people’s lives” (Rakopoulos 2016:142). Therefore, following Khosravi’s argument, there is precarity, hopelessness, and waiting for some kind of change but there is also hope (actualized via the action of daydreaming) and solidarity, which are mediated through socialities, in other words, the creation of organizations.

Regardless the fact that I support the existence of solidarity initiatives I also have to offer a critical aspect of them. Despite all the positive outcomes that are associated with solidarity, we should not accept the idea of it without any criticism. As Papataxiarchis (2016:209) has argued “we should keep a safe distance from the romance of solidarity”. It is indeed preferred by the majority of the Greeks instead of philanthropy, but it also contains power relations as well as critical thoughts regarding if it is able to solve austerity or it just patches up the problem since it can naturalize austerity and its inequalities. What I mean by the latter is that when solidarity is used as a superficial response to austerity, it takes the attention away from the real issue and it depoliticizes the outcomes of the crisis. The fact that there are many arguments for and against those initiatives shows the complexity behind the concept and that
the crisis is a period of political cosmogony, because new and different meanings of solidarity were created. Thus, is solidarity an answer to austerity and its precarity or it hides under the carpet the issues? The answer to this could be a subject to be looked upon on another research.

Conclusion

While I was doing my fieldwork at the Solidarity Association from November 2018 to January 2019, I came close to unique and lovely people, shared intimate experiences and life stories, and experienced a variety of feelings due to the difficulties that I came across during my research. From the beginning of my fieldwork it became clear to me that my initial questions were not relevant. Consequently, I had to reform totally my topic in order for it to be relevant not only to the circumstances that I found, but also to what my informants thought of as important. This is why I ended up having limited ethnographic material.

Conducting fieldwork at this organization created a variety of emotions, from frustration and feelings of failure to excitement, empathy and admiration towards those people. Nonetheless, as I look back at them now I believe that this is what makes my paper genuine. While I feel that I have just scratched the surface of conceptualizing precarity and its consequences, due to the reasons that I stated before, I hope that at the end I managed to give to the reader a taste of what precarious living in Greece does to people and more specifically to the organization.

In this study I focused on what precarity does instead of what it is and I hope that it will contribute to its growing literature. I took as an example a civil society organization as well as the living experiences of people under austerity to expand further the theoretical framework of the concept in relation to organizations and to solidarity. Precarity is not new but I hope that I offered a toolbox for the upcoming researchers to understand more the contemporary period that we are living in and find new ways to look upon it.
Epilogue

The Courage of Hopelessness

Hope is an important factor in human life, as with hope people can see some kind of future and therefore act. “Hope is at once a poetry and a methodology for life in ontologically vulnerable time” (Allison 2016:116). A month after my fieldwork finished, I got in-touch with Renata to see how she, as well as the organization was doing. She told me that she had no hope anymore because nothing can or will change. Hope exists when they are possibilities and potentialities for a better future. She is still unemployed, and as she argued there is going to be no political change, for all the politicians are the same. Greece is still fighting with austerity and will continue to do so for more years to come, considering the amount of debt that it owes. She also informed me that things are even worse at the Solidarity Association. They are pressuring the president to quit, and they will go on elections to replace the current members. Notwithstanding those structural changes, she is quite negative regarding the results as she said: “none of us has strength to be active at the organization so how can I think that better days will come?”

Throughout the paper the overall emotions are pessimistic and discouraging due to the austerity and precarity ridden environment. But I do not want to leave the reader with only those feelings. It is true that most of the adults in Greece (considering also my interlocutors) feel hopeless but maybe the young generations can bring some light into that darkness. Maybe just as Khosravi (2017) advocates that the young Iranians daydream (which is a sign of hope) the young Greek ones do also. Furthermore, as Tsing (2015:6) argues “in a global state of precarity, we do not have choices other than looking for life in this ruin”. Tsing is unexpectedly praising precarity, for life in ruins is still life. I think that there is courage behind hopelessness as it shows that life still exists and goes on. She points out that the first thing that grew at Hiroshima’s destroyed environment was a mushroom. Maybe in Greece’s paradigm the mushroom is solidarity, and as long as it exists there is still hope.
Glossary

Sitizomenoi (in Greek Σιτιζόμενοι): In English the translation is ‘to be fed’.

Cram or Crammer Schools (in Greek Φροντιστήριο): Specialized schools that are helping students to pass their entry examinations to school or university.

Appendix

Figure 1: The space of the social pharmacy.

Figure 2: Outside of the solidarity association. In the picture are some of the members of the organization with the members of a French association which provides medicine to the social pharmacy.
Figure 3: One of the actions of the organization is to provide to hospitals, social clinics and pharmacies and occupations with medicine. In the picture the members of the organization gave to one occupation medical and pharmaceutical equipment.

Figure 4: The area where they were gathering clothes and a past residence of rats and cockroaches. Boxes and bags with men’s, women’s and kids clothing received from donors, where in the past where clothes lying on the floor reaching the height of the window.
Figure 6: Some of the food that they received from a Greek NGO. Chips for the kids, rise and pasta, which will be equally portioned to the recipients.

Figure 7: In the space of the social pharmacy the ceiling cracked which resulted at the destruction of the walls as well as the medicine. On the chair there is a pot that gathers the water coming from the ceiling. Some days during the winter the water was so much that we should wear boots.
Figure 8: An example of the destroyed medicine that they received from France, and they would have given to a hospital that was in need.

Figure 9: After the assembly the members invited me to eat with them at the organization and discuss how the assembly went.
Literature


Chatzistefanou, A., Kitidi, K. 2011, *Debtocracy*, Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8jOQvOf4MNI.


