



LIVEWHAT

Living with Hard Times

How Citizens React to Economic Crises and Their Social and Political Consequences

Working paper on definition and identification of crises

(Deliverable 1.2)

WP1: Defining, identifying, and measuring crises

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Introduction

This report relates to WP1, which aims to define, identify, and measure crises. The research investigates nine European countries: France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Poland, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom. The report provides a critical discussion of the literature, an operational definition of crisis that will allow us to identify specific features of the crisis in each country, and an initial list of indicators to be used for identifying and assessing the impact of the economic crisis across the nine countries. What do we mean by crisis? How can we define economic crises? What are their potential negative consequences on the citizenry? What is the extent of the crises in economic, social, and political terms in the nine countries included in the research? How did indicators develop over time in each country? Did the social and political attitudes of the citizenries of these countries change before and during the current economic crisis or remain stable? Did their family and social relations change or remain stable? These are some of the questions that the report seeks to answer.

The report is comprised of two parts. Part I is devoted to defining and assessing the economic crisis that has struck Europe since 2007. This part includes two chapters. Chapter 1, by Johannes Kiess, addresses the definition of crisis, reflects on its meanings, and reviews existing analyses in the literature. Here, a contrast between an economic understanding of crisis and a knowledge-sociological perspective is proposed, and an attempt made to provide a working definition of the concept of crisis to be used in the context of the LIVEWHAT project.

Chapter 2, by Mathilde Hofer and Maria Mexi, offers an empirical assessment of the crisis in the nine countries included in the project over the time period 2005-2014. The goal is to provide an overview of a set of indicators for identifying and assessing the impact of the economic crisis on a comparative basis. It includes a number of graphs showing the evolution of economic, social, policy-oriented and individual-level (subjective) indicators. More specifically, the data refers to four main aspects: (1) economic indicators of crisis; (2) policy responses to the crisis; (3) social consequences of the crisis; and (4) political attitudes and behaviors before and during the crisis.

Part II deals with how European citizens are facing the crisis. This part also includes two chapters. Chapter 3, by Marco Giugni and Jasmine Lorenzini, discusses the ways in which citizens react to economic crises and examines the social and political consequences of this from

a theoretical point of view. A number of hypotheses are suggested regarding citizens' reactions to economic crises which can be derived from the existing literature on this topic. The chapter distinguishes between works dealing with responses in the electoral arena (voting) and in the social movement arena (non-electoral forms of participation). In addition, it also deals with the impact of crises on citizens' opinions and attitudes, but considers these as intermediary variables that can explain the mechanisms linking economic crises and citizens' reactions. The hypotheses proposed are meant to stimulate empirical work on how citizens react to economic crises and their social and political consequences.

Chapter 4, by Maria Kousis and Maria Paschou, offers a comprehensive literature review on novel, collective and solidarity-oriented resilience in the EU following the 2007 economic crisis. Related studies center on innovative practices that developed during the crisis in Argentina and other Latin America regions, while more recent but fewer works focus on the exchange and co-operation practices of a solidarity-based economy in European regions. Rare however, are studies on novel, alternative, survival-oriented and defensive structures in times of crisis and which arise to meet urgent basic needs such as food, shelter, health and education for citizens. Furthermore, related studies on economically disempowered citizens of the middle classes, more vulnerable groups and gender are fewer and based on experiences from developing countries. This review focuses on the conceptual, theoretical and methodological underpinnings of the debate in order to sustain future research on the topic.

PART I: Defining and assessing the crisis

1. On the concept of crisis: definitions, meanings, and analyses

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Introduction

To investigate the European crisis and its causes, alongside examining the social and political consequences, requires a clear understanding of what is meant by the term ‘crisis’. Consulting a randomly chosen newspaper, crises seem to happen almost every day: there is a crisis in Sudan, in Syria, in the Ukraine, there is a crisis of the European social model, of social democracy, of political participation. Even one's favorite football team might be ‘in a crisis’ at some point of the season. What is meant by attributing these social situations as crises? What do the Euro-crisis and other crises have in common in terms of the structure of the respective social situations? Is crisis just some ‘difficult’ situation and for whom? Who says a situation is ‘difficult’? These questions are even more pressing for the Euro-crisis: this started as a financial crisis, became an economic recession and then developed into a state debt crisis centered on the Euro-zone. This crisis triggered further social crises in some countries and even political crises as governments and European Union bodies had serious difficulties solving the complex problems they faced. With the framing of the crisis, the attributed causes and consequences change, too, as well as responsibilities and accountabilities. Taking the concept of crisis for granted, it seems, falls short of understanding what is meant by an actor calling a situation a crisis and why the actor is doing it. The suggestion here is to adopt a concept of crisis that takes actors’ constructions of crisis into consideration.

This section begins by outlining the dominant sphere of crisis discourse, namely economic understandings of crisis (1). It then considers that while economic understandings of crisis, and maybe most dominantly Marxist crisis theory, have been important to social science discourses, these can be usefully used to contrast the proposed concept of crisis that takes actors' description of crisis from a knowledge-sociological perspective into account (2). In the third part, studies on the social construction of crisis are reviewed to give examples of how ideas, narratives and framing shape crises and how the proposed perspective may enlighten research targeting the social and political consequences of crisis (3). Finally, an attempt is

made to summarize the idea proposed here and give a working definition of (or at least a basis for reflection on) the concept of crisis for the context of the LIVEWHAT project.

The economic crisis as a focal point of thinking on crisis

The field of economics offers a rich literature on crisis. Marxist crisis theory is most prominent and has repeatedly sparked academic debates; however, most economists have at some point written on economic recessions, their causes and how to overcome them. There are three dominant economic traditions in the crisis literature which shall be discussed briefly here. On the one hand, neo-classical theory takes crisis as a distortion of the market *within* the system and seeks to re-establish equilibrium (Vobruba, 2012). On the other hand, Marxism understands crisis as an inevitable part of capitalist development, where overcoming the accumulating crisis tendencies *of* the system can only be achieved by overcoming the social system itself. Meanwhile, Keynesianism takes a more reformist stance on the inherent problems of capitalist development and seeks to change the economic system to overcome its negative excesses. This is not an all-embracing categorization. However, it does show that in economics, crises are a fighting ground for different traditions or schools of thought. What an economic crisis is about depends on the set of knowledge, i.e. the ideas, theoretical assumptions, etc. a school of thought is built on.

Before a sociological concept of crisis is developed in the second part and empirical studies are reviewed in the third part, this overview begins by presenting the (Neo-) Marxist tradition of crisis theory, which cannot be presented in detail here, but which offers the richest and most comprehensive approach to crisis and crisis theory. It then goes onto consider both neo-classical theories and Keynesianism. The starting point of Marx's own and most of Neo-Marxist crisis theory, “is the immediate purpose of capitalist production, surplus-value or rather profit”¹ (Heinrich, 2013, p. 26). This means that capitalist development, driven by the search of more profit, eventually leads to crisis. For Marx, crises are part of the capitalist system of accumulation and, since contradictions within the system increase as capitalism develops, crises are inevitable². However, Marx was aware of his own shortcomings regarding

¹ For many, the core of Marxist crisis theory is the ‘law of the tendency of the rate of profit to fall’, which is first not proven to be correct by Marx and second not at the center of Marx’s crisis theory (Heinrich, 2013). Marx’s understanding of crisis seems to have been more principal and less technical than this.

² It is not of concern here whether the crisis definitions or their underlying economic assumptions are “true” for they are used in the discourse anyways. Of course, from a Keynesian point of view, crises are also something

a thorough crisis theory and the difficulties ahead:

"The crisis of 1857–1858 [...] did not lead, economically or politically, to the shaking up of conditions that Marx had hoped for: the capitalist economy emerged strengthened from the crisis, and revolutionary movements did not arise anywhere. [...] After 1857–1858, Marx no longer argued in terms of a theory of final economic collapse, and he no longer made out a direct connection between crisis and revolution" (Heinrich, 2013, p. 17).

Nevertheless, the claim that capitalist society is unable to avoid these crises, and that therefore there is a need to overcome capitalism, is central to Marxist thinking. Accordingly, after Marx, Marxist crisis theory was later debated intensely, if only because of the steady recurrence of capitalist crises that shape world history since the 19th century. Capitalism after the crisis is always capitalism before the crisis, the next crisis is inevitable. This tendency to economic crisis assumed by Marxists has consequences for society as a whole. At the height of the neo-Marxist debate in the 1970s, many differing sub-theories emerged that contradicted each other sometimes fundamentally (see e.g. the debate in *Prokla*, issues 9(1) and 14(4)). The common ground in these debates was still the understanding of crisis as the “failure of the economic and political relations of production within capitalism. The crises we want to investigate are in detail those which emerge from within the system and its principals of functioning itself.” (Shaikh, 1978, p. 3). In a nutshell, economic growth limits capitalism’s capabilities to treat various economic, political and social problems (Offe, 1972, p. 17).

More specifically, following Jürgen Habermas, there are three interconnected spheres where crises in late capitalist societies appear: the economic sphere, the political system and the socio-cultural sphere. Since these spheres are mutually dependent, it: ...is a consequence of the fundamental contradiction of the capitalist system that, other factors being equal, either — the economic system does not produce the requisite quantity of consumable values, or; —the administrative system does not produce the requisite quantity of rational decisions, or; —the legitimation system does not provide the requisite quantity of generalized motivations, or; — the socio-cultural system does not generate the requisite quantity of action-motivating meaning. (Habermas, 1975, p. 49). Late capitalism thus is the period of capitalist history in

that happens, but they are manageable – which most Marxists would not even want as this diminishes the chances for radical change of the entire system.

which the contradiction between the growth of the productive forces and the outdated production relationships becomes explosive (Mandel, 1972). In (Neo-)Marxist thinking, crisis therefore includes an objectively detectable necessity that will eventually lead to the collapse of the capitalist mode of production (although, to add Marx own words, not before the productive forces are developed fully (Marx, 1971), that means not just with the next recession).

For Neo-Marxists today, what comes to its end in the recent crisis is transnationalism as a neoliberal variation of post-Fordism and with this crisis again, social tensions rise (Hirsch and Wissel, 2010). Accordingly, neo-Marxist and neo-Gramscian theorists see the Euro-crisis as a process of restructuring of capitalism that has not yet come to its end. “In other words, the European system of politico-economic regulation may transform itself in the face of world finance-, state debt- and euro-crisis and thus driven by the crisis dynamic of the finance dominated accumulation regime (cf. Demirovic and Sablowski, 2012) in the months to come with ever new reforms” (Bieling, 2013, p. 323, own translation). As Streeck argues, the recent crisis is only to be understood as the temporary peak of a development which started around 1975 and to which the crisis theories of that time started to build interpretative frames (Streeck, 2013). Streeck’s interpretation connects with the 1970s' crisis theories directly:

"The crisis of late capitalism needed to get attention also of those who had no interest in the collapse of late capitalism or its self-destruction. They too felt the tensions which had been described by crisis theory more or less accurately and reacted accordingly. Viewed from today, these reactions appear as a mid-term – but nonetheless over four decades – successful buying of time with money" (ibid., own translation).

For the Marxist perspectives, it is not only finance capitalism that is on the brink of collapse. Society also faces “multiple crises of the bourgeois societal formation and a great crisis of the capitalist mode of production” (Demirovic and Sablowski, 2012, p. 78). Particularly, regulation theory tries to incorporate the political side of economic crisis – including modes of decision making, political culture and questions of legitimacy (cf. Atzmüller et al., 2013). The crisis of 21st century capitalism comes from within society (Altvater, 2010) and most (neo-)Marxist accounts see the crisis as only a new form of the anyway existing contradictions of capitalist society, probably accompanied with new forms of land

appropriation and original accumulation (Backhouse et al., 2013).

Opposing the pessimistic Marxian and Neo-Marxist view, more optimistic perspectives understand crisis as a problem of insufficient regulation or management. Here, the crisis can be explained in economic and technical terms and so future crises can be prevented if the right steps are followed (Wolfson and Epstein, 2013). These reformist crisis interpretations often draw on Keynes and economists in the Keynesian tradition such as Minsky. Crisis, for Keynes, is the “the fact that the substitution of a downward for and upward tendency often takes place suddenly and violently, whereas there is, as a rule, no such sharp turning-point when an upward is substituted for a downward tendency” (Keynes, 2008, p. 195). Critical here is, firstly, the question of trust to ensure economic recovery. As a second point, to most reformist interpretations the problem of regulation is central. It is argued for example that “financial institutions have been under lower levels of market monitoring than non-financial corporations” (Dewatripont, 2012, p. 4) and certain elites benefited in a systemically ineffective way (Ramirez, 2012) – stricter regulation and control would solve the problem. Not only is it re-regulation but also reform of the current economic system as a whole that is key to solving the crisis from a reformist perspective. For example, a crisis is not an exceptional event, exogenous to economic development cycles, but rather it is a substantial element of structural dynamics. The term 'crisis' represents both the point at which a preceding equilibrium breaks up and the recession phase that follows. The term therefore implies separation, break, reasoning and decisions. (Bianchi and Labory, 2011, p. 12).

According to the authors, before the age of capitalism, a crisis was when there was a shortage of something. Within capitalist economies, crisis is “related to overproduction or more generally to the disequilibrium between demand and production.” (ibid., p. 13) The answer for the authors as for many Keynesian scholars alike is thus a new industrial policy strategy for Europe. Furthermore, there is also the crisis reading that sees austerity as the solution to state deficits, the main problem of the current crisis. This assessment builds mostly on neo-classical economics that place market equilibriums in the center of their arguments. Economists like Hans-Werner Sinn state that “[t]he unresolved problem underlying the financial crisis is the lack of competitiveness of the southern European countries and France” (Sinn, 2014, p. 1). Consequently, “the necessary rebalancing process of the Eurosystem will require a decade of austerity, stagnation and real devaluations in the deficit countries, coupled with an extended

period of inflation in the surplus countries. It can only be hoped that the European idea will survive this strain” (ibid., p. 12). Höhn et al. also argue that only with debt brakes established in all member countries can the crisis be solved (Höhn et al., 2013). Interestingly, two of the authors are working at PriceWaterhouseCoopers, one of the *Big Four* auditors. More moderate accounts still see the main problem as a lack of competition and praise the German success story which “is mainly due to a combination of structural labor market reforms and the absence of fiscal austerity” (Rinne and Zimmermann, 2013, p. 702) This chapter will return to the question of what to do about the crisis and what actors pose to this questions in the third section.

The youngest economic school of thought and maybe also the closest to social sciences is known as neo-institutionalism. Institutions here are understood as normative regimes (Mayntz, 2012), or simply the rules of the game (North, 1990). Crises from this perspective are shocks to the institutional order which question their existence and seem not to be manageable by the established mechanisms (Preunkert, 2012, p. 71seqq.). This pressure may lead to institutional adaption strategies. However, not nearly all crises result in institutional change. Whereas older (neo-) institutional accounts concentrated on institutional stability, in more recent literature institutional change became incorporated in the framework. Neo-institutional analysis thus provides tools to understand why, under what conditions and in what scope change of otherwise stable settings occurs as a result of crisis. Thelen and Streeck (2005), for example, distinguish five forms of institutional change in reaction to crisis situations (see also Preunkert, 2012), accordingly, institutional elements can be: gradually added (layering) or abandoned (drift), elements can be adjusted in their scope (conversion), dominant parts can be exchanged with more subaltern parts of the institutional set (displacement), and elements of the set can be removed (exhaustion).

Crises and institutional analysis may connect here to Marxist theory, and are mostly not exogenous to the system which they challenge, even if there may be a trigger outside the system itself (e.g. a natural disaster). What makes the crisis a crisis is the inner-institutional incapability to cope with endogenous developments or exogenous shocks. Furthermore, “[i]n contrast to an earthquake or tsunami, ‘the financial crisis of 2007/2008’ is an aggregate of many events; as single event it is a cognitive construction.” (Mayntz, 2012, p. 12). Thus, the complexity of full-scale crises in modern, highly differentiated societies and the various

possible variations of interpretation need to be considered for an in-depth understanding. The volume edited by Renate Mayntz offers an answer beyond the “opposition of vested interests, the banking industry and its wealthy lobby” that includes “the failure of the feared collapse of the real economy to materialize“ and the “general unwillingness to call into question the institutional underpinning of modern capitalist democracies” (2012, p. 25f). Furthermore:

"A radical change of the financial system would have involved uprooting the very institutions on which modern, capitalist democracies are built. Among other things it would have required restricting the general dependence on credit, a dependence intricately connected with the inherent future orientation not only of financial markets, but of Western civilization" (ibid., p. 26).

These interdependencies “made potential reformers shy away from the task” (ibid.). On the other hand, from a larger historical perspective, Keynesianism and anti-Keynesian monetarism (the post-WW II version of neo-classical economics) both emerged from a crisis (Hemerijck, 2009, p. 33). However, if “there ever existed a moment of extraordinary politics, it is quickly passing” (Eichengreen, 2009, p. 64). Still, because institutional changes are often incremental, their real magnitude may not be clear with little time having passed.

To summarize this first section, there seems little agreement about what crises are between economic concepts of crisis: all reported traditions see crises as ‘difficult’ situations but differ a great deal when unfolding what the difficulties are and whether they can be solved. (Neo-)Marxists understand crisis as a time when “the old is dying but the new cannot be born” (Gramsci 1971, p. 276): the (capitalist) system itself is broken and only overcoming the system solves the crisis. Neo-classicism interprets the crisis as a result of market distortion and calls for de-regulation to let the market work out a solution. Keynesianism, on the other hand, wants to keep the system as well but seeks better governance to prevent crises. Finally, neo-institutionalism takes a more descriptive stance as opposed to these prognostic framings. Crises are seen as ‘difficult’ situations that exert pressure on existing institutions. How these institutions then react to situations of crisis is an empirical question. The assessments of crisis in general and of the great recession since 2007 in particular differ widely in the field of economic theory, depending on schools of thought and more generally, on the speakers' position. This observation needs to be formed into a theoretical concept to understand crisis

from a knowledge-sociological perspective. This perspective takes actors' descriptions of crisis into account and opens up the possibility to include the actor's ideological positions into the reflexive assessment of crisis.

Re-assessing the concept of crisis

Crises ask to be solved. This remains the case for all types of crises: physical, psychical, social, economic or political. Solving a crisis implies a readjustment, improvement or even substitution of the physical, psychical or institutional sets that are projected as insufficient to resist the challenges of the crisis. Social scientists investigating crises³, however, should not adopt day-to-day, medical or economic models explaining or describing crises but rather should include actor's definitions of a crisis (Habermas, 1975; Preunkert, 2011; Replinger, 1999). Because crises are understood as decision situations and thus as 'windows of opportunity' to change existing institutional frameworks or singular policies, actors can be expected to raise differing interpretations of the respective crises. Actors' differing interpretations can be constructed intentionally with strategic motifs or unintentionally, based on the knowledge available to the respective actor. In this section, this knowledge-sociological or constructivist understanding of crisis is developed more thoroughly.

The word 'crisis' refers to a stable situation before an outbreak and the hope for a better and stable future situation. This gets combined with the already mentioned imperative to solve the crisis. Hence, 'crisis' is often used as another word to describe a turning point: this is what crisis indicates in medicine (e.g. febrile crisis) and also in economics (economic crisis, inflation crisis, etc.). The modern concept of crisis developed with modernity (Koselleck, 1982). In its modern usage, 'crisis' has an either-or meaning: each 'objective' crisis is a life-and-death issue with the answer indicating justice or injustice, healing or death, right or wrong (Koselleck, 1982). Jänicke further differentiates an optimistic (chance) from a pessimistic (danger for essential values) concept of crisis (Jänicke, 1973) and, accordingly, ad hoc definitions often refer to Chinese ideographs. The how-to literature is rich in captions such as: "In Chinese the word crisis consists of two ideographs: the one icon means danger and the other one chance" (Stoffels and Bernskötter, 2012, p. 95). The idea is that every

³ One might introduce a first general distinction here. In the following, only crisis referring to society as a whole are taken into account. This singles out individual and sectional crises of e.g. societal sub-systems and also crises metaphors referring to events that are short lived (Prisching, 1986, p. 22).

crisis offers a chance and one has the responsibility to take this chance. Within the social sciences, this reading is widespread, for example in the literature on critical junctures (Bermeo and Pontusson, 2012) In an encyclopedic definition of crisis the “identification of the origin of the event – whether external or internal for the decision makers”, the importance of “decision time” and the “importance of the values at stake” are highlighted (Robinson, 1972, p. 511). For the social sciences then, crises are usually “societal decision situations” (Vobruba, 1983, p. 9), which means their outcome is shared by or affects different actors. Actors have stakes in crisis situations.

Regardless of such definitions, the topos 'crisis' in public discourse points at radical change, the brink of catastrophe, revolution. In such situations, it is believed that only a radical turnaround, mostly connected to the necessity of collective action, can stop the catastrophe. The idea of 'we' always seems to appear in the event of crisis (Steil, 1993). There is no alternative to the identification with the 'us', besides betrayal, and each individual must bow to the collective effort to overcome the crisis. Every individual claim that cannot be included into the collective will hence become illegitimate. Thus, crisis and the remedy of its avoidance as well as questions of inclusion and exclusion are shaped in discourse.

Many metaphors work implicitly or explicitly with religious analogies that aim to establish identity and maintain order: apocalypses as well as crises include a *tabula rasa* logic. This reveals that both crises and apocalypses are not only interpretative frames but also contain substantial discursive power (Nagel et al., 2008). With its totalitarian or apocalyptic connotations, crisis always pressures for pro-active action or for the passive bearing of the consequences of the crisis. Both events are connected to the hope that somehow the crisis will be overcome, maybe with the intervention of some transcendental power (Nagel et al., 2008). Even if no transcendent power is addressed, fear and hope play a central role in the discursive functioning of crisis metaphors: “The sense of crisis and progress expectation occupy the projection of an open future with contrary affect positions” (Steil, 1993, p. 26).

In recent years, in the so-called Euro-crisis, the two ‘inevitable’ consequences of crisis reemerged in the discourse and are used by actors: returning stronger from the crisis or falling into the abyss. If an actor speaks of a crisis, he or she can assume that the audience understands the urgency of the message immediately. Everyone who speaks about a crisis

produces meaning of a specific social situation (and thus defines possible decisions). In other words: “Normality is called into question. Decisions are asked for. The more severe the crisis is, the more important the actor, the more important an adequate consciousness, the more valorized the theory which anticipates and diagnoses the crisis” (Ganßmann et al., 1987, p. 135, own translation).

Two levels of analysis are of interest when it comes to crises (e.g. Jänicke, 1973), the first being the level of concrete actors and their definitions of crisis: “We would not speak of a crisis [...] if it were only a matter of an objective process viewed from the outside, if the patient were not also subjectively involved in this process. The crisis cannot be separated from the viewpoint of the one who *is* undergoing it [...]” (Habermas, 1975, p. 1). Bohmann and Vobruba argue: “An historical situation becomes a crisis only on account of its being interpreted as a crisis by the actors in this situation. It follows that crises can only become the subject of social scientific analysis as in practice already interpreted facts” (Bohmann and Vobruba, 1992, p. 145). On the other level of potential analysis lies the systemic approach which emphasizes that “crises arise when the structure of a social system allows fewer possibilities for problem solving than are necessary to the continued existence of the system.” (Habermas, 1975, p. 2). Crisis is first and foremost “an objective force that deprives a subject of some part of his normal sovereignty. To conceive of a process as a crisis is tacitly to give it a normative meaning—the resolution of the crisis effects a liberation of the subject caught up in it.” (ibid., p. 1) In other words, not only does crisis pressure actors in that they are called to secure the survival of a given set of institutions: actors also make sense of, define and interpret crisis. Put together, a crisis has three characteristics: it poses more problems to an institution or a system than it can probably solve, secondly there is some sort of time pressure and third, actors must interpret this constellation as crisis and thus act along an implicit or explicit diagnosis of crisis (Vobruba, 2005). It is with the third characteristic that the knowledge-sociological perspective gains its importance.

The combination of the actor-centered and the institutional perspective has important consequences. If crises were ‘only’ institutional, a technocratic solution should be either possible or not, but if the possibility of a solution depends on actors' interpretations then the situation becomes more problematic. For social sciences, then, crises are “societal decision situations” (Vobruba, 1983, p. 9) where the outcome affects different actors. Since crises are

decision situations and the decisions affect different groups or actors, the question that arises is who is deciding and on what grounds? While a crisis government, following Carl Schmitt's *Ausnahmezustand* concept, gets its legitimacy from "certain situations of political, military, or economic emergency" (Bracher, 1972, p. 514) the problem lies in the following question: "Who is to be in charge of proclaiming the state of emergency, or the need for crisis government?" (ibid, p. 516). This is central to the question of crisis-definition because whoever defines the crisis also defines how to cope with it. How one defines the crisis depends on the available knowledge and the actor's strategic aims. This assessment, thus, includes both a constructivist assumption and a rational choice assumption.

The social construction of crisis: frames, narratives, and ideas of the financial crisis

How crisis metaphors work can be analyzed with different tools adopted and advanced in cultural studies (e.g. Lodge and Wegrich 2011) and especially discourse analysis⁴. Goffman's 'Frame Analysis' (Goffman, 1986) is predestined as an analytical framework here. It suggests to distinguish a signficatory, a diagnostic and a prognostic frame. Briefly: the signficatory frame describes the characteristics of a phenomenon (how severe is the crisis?); the diagnostic frame describes the causes and who is to blame; the prognostic frame eventually describes what and what not to do about the crisis to solve it. Snow et. al. (1986) have further developed this approach for research on social movements and emphasized the importance of frame alignment processes for actors to join in – be it participation in a group or the group's participation in the public discourse. For German trade unions and business organizations, Kiess showed, based on the organization's press releases, how their assessment of the crisis differs at all three levels of analysis according to their position, not between capital and labor but also between low-skill, low wage, domestic industries and high-skill, high-wage, export-oriented industries (Kiess, forthcoming). Lischinsky analyzed annual reports of economic actors and by examining the framing of the crisis can show how these actors "shape public perceptions of critical events by routinely emphasising the role of certain agents and stakeholders while ignoring others" (Lischinsky, 2011, p. 153).⁵

⁴ For examples of linguistic discourse analysis of the crisis 2007-2010 see the thematic issue 6 (2) of "Aptum. Zeitschrift für Sprachkritik und Sprachkultur" of 2010 which features articles on the media coverage of the crisis in Austria, Germany, the UK and Switzerland (Scharloth et al., 2010; Posch, 2010; Wengeler 2010; Ziem 2010; Koller and Farelly 2010).

⁵ In a study on general crisis communication strategies of German non-profit organizations, those responsible for press relations see the image of the organization, its stabilization, threats to central aims of the organization, and, to a lesser extent, the image of the sector represented, as well as the image of the organization's members all as

In the speech act theory (see Austin, 1975), the focus lies more with the technical characteristics of crisis framing. Nagel et. al. (2008) for example examine the usage of images, dramaturgic constructions and the rhetoric function of *speech acts* in apocalyptic rhetoric. In each of the approaches, all of this happens in the public sphere, of course, and is also mediated through the media. This is especially true for crises: we can hardly imagine a crisis without it being discussed in the news. A crisis without attention in the public sphere would hardly be understood as a crisis. Furthermore, the usage of the word ‘crisis’ calls on interpretational frames (e.g. Scharloth et al. 2010), including the notions discussed in section 2. Crises are in this sense always socially constructed.

How, then, can a certain understanding of crisis be constructed? Coleman uses Kenneth Burke's theory of dramatic action to picture how to “make a drama out of a crisis” (Coleman, 2013, p. 328). Societal actors act in scenes or within a setting. Moreover, “[T]he scene must be set – for scenes do not arrive with their own flavors or accounts of themselves. Turning a situation into a crisis entails a performative construction of meaning which relies not only upon words spoken, but tonal inflections, images, gestures and appeals to memory” (ibid., p. 330). The initial perception or thematization of a crisis is then already changing the interpretative frame: “To put it simply, one might say that what to do about a crisis is pragmatically inseparable from setting the crisis scene. The expressive resources and techniques employed in scene building are no different from those used in scene shifting” (ibid.). Thus, every actor “seeking to make a crisis ‘walk and talk’ draws upon a repertoire of postures, gestures, phrases and gazes that symbolically entextualise a sharable notion of a particular historical situation” (ibid., p. 334). Moffitt most recently argued, to give an example, that it is not only that crisis triggers populism, but that it can also be observed that populism triggers crisis while crises are framed and pictured by populists (Moffitt, 2014). He further proposes a model of populist ‘performance’ of a crisis which follows six stages: “1. Identify failure. 2. Elevate to the level of crisis by linking into a wider framework and adding a temporal dimension. 3. Frame ‘the people’ vs. those responsible for the crisis. 4. Use media to propagate performance. 5. Present simple solutions and strong leadership. 6 Continue to propagate crisis” (Moffitt, 2014, p. 10).

relevant for their crisis communication strategies (Schwarz and Pforr, 2010, p. 360).

Clearly, emphasizing 'the social construction of crisis' does not mean that there is no 'real' crisis. As Coleman clarifies,

"When I say that social crises, such as the financial meltdown of 2008, are performed, I do not mean to suggest that they are merely rhetorical constructions or ontological fictions. However, to say that a situation is real is not the same as saying that its reality is self-evident. The ways in which a situation is named, described, explained and historically positioned both shape its context and determine the plausibility of one contextual account over another" (Coleman, 2013, p. 330) .

To give one example, Davies has collected 38 theories on why the crisis happened, including national inequality levels, international inequality, laissez faire regulation, casino banking, rating agencies, inefficient markets, or simply greed (Davies, 2010). With each diagnosis and theory comes a narrative, an idea of who is to blame, and a strategy of how to solve the crisis. This means that "[...] there are no innocent descriptive presentations that should be taken just at face value: the shape of the political imagination is too important for this to be the case." (Thompson, 2009, p. 520).

As has been suggested in the introduction, the Euro-crisis 2007ff. was indeed changing over time. Based on a newspaper analysis, Kutter (2013) reconstructs different stages within the public debate: a pre-crisis, stable growth phase, followed by crisis developments at the financial markets and then a phase of panic, which eventually normalized. After normalization at the financial markets the crisis in the real economy and crisis of state budgets started which led to the ultimate stage of the crisis, namely the state debt crisis and Eurozone crisis (Kutter, 2013). The crisis has thus at least two phases: the financial market crisis from 2007 to 2009 and after 2009 the emergence of a state debt crisis – a change in narratives with consequences.

For the German context, Quiring et. al. report that the media pictured the crisis as being provoked by the economic actors who now suffer from it. Furthermore, these economic actors now profit from extensive state intervention, whereas the public and the political system have to carry the cost and risks of these interventions. They further add that public opinion mirrors media coverage (Quiring et al., 2013). Another influential frame or picture of the crisis is the 'Greek economic crisis'. As a trope, the Greek crisis "resonates across Europe as synonymous

with corruption, poor government, austerity, financial bailouts, civil unrest, and social turmoil” and it “transcends local and national borders” (Knight, 2013, p. 147). The externalization of the crisis plays an important role for example for the German case (Kieess, forthcoming) but also in the public discourse in Austria the crisis was externalized as a natural event or wartime event (Posch 2010).

Every policy in complex modern societies needs a narrative, i.e. scenarios and arguments “which underwrite and stabilize the assumptions for policymaking in situations that persist with many unknowns, a high degree of interdependence, and little, if any, agreement” (Roe, 1994, p. 34). This is also true for crisis policymaking. In early 2009, Thompson (2009) goes on, there were two academic and four popular frames in play being used to make sense of the crisis. The two academic frames were 'epochal change' and 'conjunctural rupture'. Even though Thomson does not go into detail about how these frames formed, it is clear that both readings implicate very different consequences. Epochal change may mean that the dominance of modern financial capitalism and neo-liberalism eventually comes to an end, whereas conjunctural rupture only calls for transitional interventions for a system that basically is still running. The 'popular' frames connect here, for example, with the attempt to ‘re-install a business-as-usual narrative as quickly as possible’.

For example: “This is being played out to suggest that the main task is to re-secure the stability of the financial system, stimulate the consumer boom once again (‘maintain aggregate demand’), re-capitalize the banks so that they can reestablish credit circulation and, hopefully, re-stimulate the housing market” (Thompson, 2009, p. 521). The prevalence and strength of the different frames and the question of whether individual actors can influence them plays a role in, for example, who is going to win upcoming elections. Narratives are also connected to the construction of legitimacy as a comparative project, assessing Germany and Greece is aiming to show based on public discourse analysis⁶. It is also argued in the literature that institutional frameworks matter, for example following categorizations like the varieties of capitalism approach: “Germany, the UK, and the United States are usually considered to be different in these ways, yet the analysis of the observed patterns across the three societies indicates that the same kind of reform arguments are dominant in all of them” (Lodge and Wegrich 2011, p. 726).

⁶ See <http://www.ggcrisi.info> for further information.

One general narrative seems to repeat in the context of the crisis since 2007 and is common to most studies: immediately after the outbreak of the crisis the dominant reading concentrated on what was called the ‘financial crisis’. Critique focused on the Anglo-American model of capitalism that had failed, while re-regulation, first and foremost of the financial markets, was identified as the most urgent task. Crisis framing also needs to reduce complexity. Quiring et. al.'s study (2013) concludes by emphasizing that the relatively narrow number of thematic frames they found is due to the need for status, resources, thematic connection and a sense for a cultural point of connection to establish them.

In this first phase of crisis interpretation, what was dominant almost from the beginning were economic readings of the crisis. This might seem trivial, but, as argued above, a knowledge-sociological account of crisis should try to elaborate what it means to speak of the crisis as an economic problem. In general, the question is, “[W]hat institutions, patterns of knowledge and expertise are include and excluded respectively?” (Kessler, 2013, p. 58, own translation) Kessler answers this question in two respects. First, there are three central assumptions in the discourse: “the conceptualization of uncertainty as risk; the replacement of epistemological with ontological contingency; and the efficient markets hypothesis” (ibid., p. 65). Secondly, since 2008 the Bank for International Settlements (BIS), the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and the Financial Stability Board all continuously repeat in their publications that the crisis lies in insufficient regulation of practices of financial actors – and not in the practices themselves (ibid., p. 61). If the practices themselves would have been the problem, the crisis immediately would have become political – in the sense that fundamental principles of modern capitalism would have been on the table. Based on a linguistic discourse analysis, Koller and Farelly argue that “the phenomenon that a crisis caused by the private financial sector could be re-interpreted as a crisis of public spending and state debt and which thus asks for measures to support the neoliberal order can be explained by looking at the semiotic and structural heritage of neoliberalism: This encompasses the dialectic of path-dependency and path-shaping, in the light of which interpretations of the crisis lead to the construction of system-conform answers” (2010, p. 191).

However, these were the crisis interpretations only after the first months of the crisis. Soon, at the end of 2009, most public and political attention shifted to the so called ‘state debt crisis’ or ‘Euro-crisis’. Bieling even argues that the re-focusing of the debate was “organized” by inter

alia “financial market actors, the European Commission, as well as the creditor and surplus member states, first and foremost Germany” (Bieling, 2013, p. 320 translation by JK; cf. Lehndorff, 2012). A similar accusation is made by Colin Hay: after initial irritation, the preferred economic policies of the British government are clearly austerity and deficit reduction following the now established reading of the crisis as a crisis of debt instead of a crisis of growth debate that Hay himself wants to establish as a response (Hay, 2013). This very different course of the crisis discourse, especially compared to the still Keynesian 1970s, was only possible, as Pontusson and Raess argue, because of the “political influence of sectorally based coalitions of firms and unionized workers demanding protection or compensation in the 1970s and the absence or weakness of such coalitions in 2008–2010”. This “crucial contrast can be seen, in part, as a result of deindustrialization, globalization, and the decline of organized labor since the early 1980s” (Pontusson and Raess, 2012, p. 15). In other words, the interests of actors and their ability to build coalitions seems to shape crisis reactions, not the ‘objective’ severity of a crisis.

In this process, emotions play a significant role, as Kushner and Kushner's analysis of the UK case shows. Although national debt numbers were relatively moderate until 2010 (lower national debt than the other G7 members Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan and the USA), government reaction moved towards austerity with comparisons to Greece and with the following story: “Our national debt is higher than it's ever been. Our deficit and debt interest payments are unmanageable. Our debt crisis was caused by the overspending of the previous governments. We are on the brink of bankruptcy.” (Kushner and Kushner, 2013, p. 8) The ability of this story “to gain traction with ordinary people, is rooted in fear, anxiety and the almost effortless way in which the personal is woven into the national” (ibid., p. 9). Stirring up fears of national financial apocalypse, the “glamour of the debt narrative had drowned out dissenting voices and had established a political consensus”, including 75% of the public and all three relevant parties (Labour, Conservatives, and Liberals) (ibid., p. 13).

Since the crisis is a window of opportunity for actors, the question arises why apparently not so much has changed. This question is reinforced by the observation that “significant demands for more oversight have not led to significantly more oversight” (Lodge and Wegrich, 2011 p. 730). Two studies try to explain the relative resilience of institutions, ideological frameworks and policy accounts through the crisis. De Ville and Orbie argue that

the trade discourse within the European Union “has been subtly adapted to the changing crisis environment: from defensive, over offensive-desirable and offensive-necessary towards necessary-but-not-sufficient at the time of writing”. This limited policy changes and also legitimized continuity in that policy field (De Ville and Orbie, 2014). Blyth argues that the passing of time and the lack of an alternative theoretical paradigm hindered institutional change, not least because the people who were in charge before the crisis were still in charge in and after the crisis and could hardly be expected to “turn around and tear it all down so easily, no matter the weight of the evidence” (2013, p. 208ff). Blyth concludes that “it is politics, not economics, and it is authority, not facts, that matter for both paradigm maintenance and change” (ibid., p. 10). In respect to theoretical paradigms, it seems clear that “[m]ainstream economics is the main ruler, and thus both pro-growth and no-growth can be considered alternative discourses trying to change the reproduction of meaning exercised in business as usual” (Urhammer and Røpke, 2013, p. 69).

In the beginning of this section it was already highlighted that speaking of crisis differs between the speaking actor's position and its intentions. Kiess (forthcoming) showed this for German trade unions and business organizations and Lischinsky (2011) for a set of economic actors respectively. Scharloth et. al. argue that in the Swiss case it is political parties that proclaim the crisis rather than the media (2010). Also, the left parties SP and Greens speak more often and earlier of the crisis than their counterparts SVP and FDP and also bring in topics adding to the economic crisis like food crisis (SP) and crisis of environment (Greens). By using metaphors, actors develop crisis scenarios that appear threatening and dramatic (Ziem 2010, p. 167). In the UK case it can be shown that the boulevard newspaper the *Daily Mail* was more eager to produce fears than quality newspapers like *The Guardian* or the *Financial Times* (Koller and Farrelly 2010). In summary, actors, their beliefs, strategic aims, and their power resources matter for every assessment of crisis because it is them who define what a crisis is about.

Conclusion: talking about crisis

Discussion of crises from a social science point of view should emphasize the framing of the crisis under investigation. A knowledge-sociological perspective offers this opportunity by focusing on actors' position of speech. This perspective, however, makes it difficult to differentiate between subjective and ‘objective’ definitions of crisis. As it was shown in the

first section, even in economics, where we might expect consensus on what a crisis is, there are significant differences between schools of thought. Maybe a recession can be measured 'objectively' if everyone agrees to define recession as the absence of growth or the decrease of GDP – but even this definition seems far from uncontested: is .5% growth a recession or still an acceptable rate? This depends on the expectations an actor has on what economic growth measured in GDP means for society. 'Objectively' measuring the crisis becomes impossible because 'crisis', even more so than recession or growth, always includes perceptions and diagnosis that are almost impossible to objectify. With each diagnosis and (economic) theory comes a narrative. Each narrative usually not only describes the significance of a crisis but also its causes and often who is to blame for the emergence of the crisis. Furthermore, narratives implicitly or explicitly include prognoses and suggestions for how to solve the crisis. Until this point, it is mostly belief systems that shape crises. These narratives, however, are used by actors and it can be assumed that they do so strategically. Besides the position of the actor speaking also its aims and power resources have to be taken into account. From this, a preliminary definition of crisis can be derived. Crises are 'difficult' situations implicating the need to take decisions. The difficulty of a situation, the urgency to take decisions and the causes and consequences of crises, however, are subject to actors' perceptions. There is no crisis other than the crisis actors speak about.

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2. Empirical assessment of the crisis: a cross-national and longitudinal overview

Mathilde Hofer (University of Geneva) and Maria Mexi (University of Geneva)

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to provide an overview of a set of indicators for identifying and assessing the impact of the 2007/2008 economic crisis on a comparative basis. The data presented spans the time period 2005-2014 and covers nine countries, namely France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Poland, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the UK. The information presented captures trends and as such is suited for cross-national and longitudinal analyses. More particularly, a set of graphs on the evolution of economic, social, policy-oriented and individual-level (subjective) indicators is presented along four categories:

1. Economic indicators of crisis, referring to:

- Gross Domestic Product (GDP)
- Gini
- Government deficit/surplus as a percentage of GDP
- Government debt
- Average annual wages

2. Policy responses to the crisis (i.e. changes in public expenditure and other policy measures taken in certain fields in response to the crisis):

- Taxes
- Social protection expenditure
- Pensions expenditure
- Public expenditure on unemployment benefit
- Public expenditure on health

3. Social consequences of the crisis, referring to:

- Unemployment
- Risk of poverty and social exclusion
- Tension between poor and rich people
- Economic strain
- Frequency of meeting with friends, relatives or colleagues

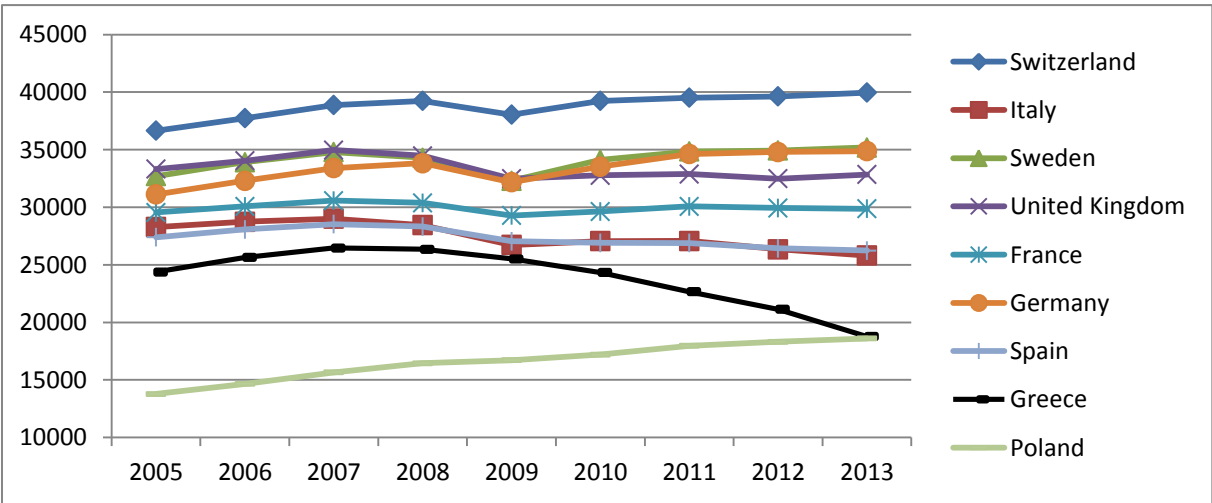
4. Political attitudes and behaviors before and during the crisis:

- Satisfaction with the way democracy works in country
- Satisfaction with present state of economy in country
- Trust in country's parliament
- Participation in lawful public demonstration last 12 months
- Assessment of the transparency of government policy

Economic indicators of crisis

The GDP of five countries, namely, Switzerland, Germany, Sweden and France, followed a downward trend in the 2008-2009 period and an upward trend the years afterwards up until 2013 (Figure 1). Greece's GDP declined drastically from the onset of the economic crisis, whereas Poland's GDP shows a steady increase from 2006 onwards. Spain's DGP declined during 2008-2009, and then increased slightly in 2010 and moderately declined in 2013. Similarly to the cases of Switzerland, Germany, Sweden, and France, the GDP in the UK declined in the period 2008-2009, and slightly increased in the following years with minor fluctuations. Italy's GDP reached its peak in 2007 and then followed a downward trend (with some fluctuations) until 2013 when it reached its lowest point since 2005. Overall, it seems that the economic crisis might have had a negative impact on the GDP of the following countries: the UK, Italy, Spain, and Greece.

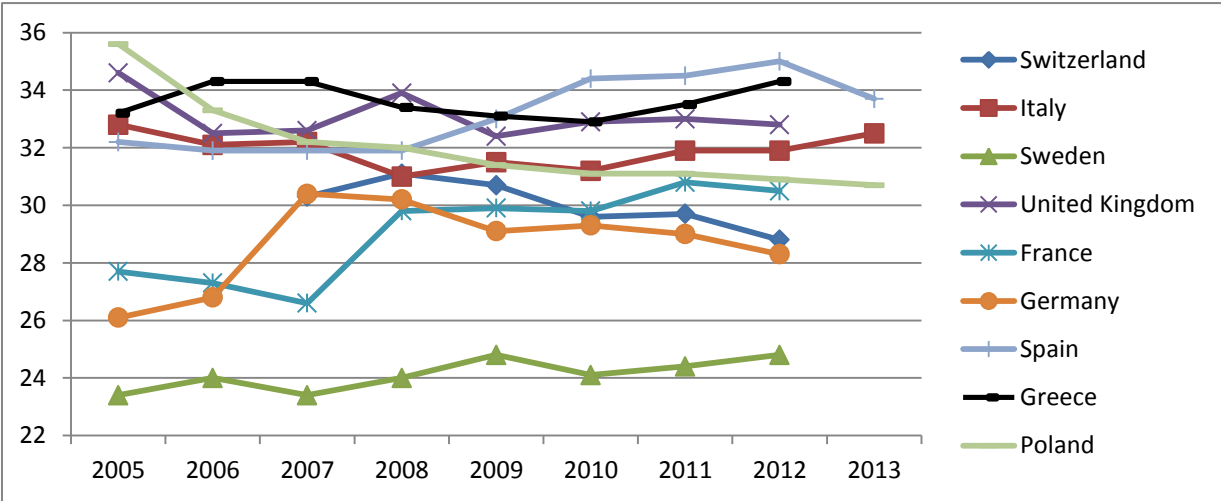
Figure 1: GDP per head, US dollars, current prices, current PPP



Source: OECD

According to the Gini coefficient, which measures the income distribution of a nation's residents, Poland has seen a big downward trend in the years before the economic crisis which also continued after 2008 (Figure 2). A downward trend can also be observed in Switzerland from 2008 onwards, in Germany from 2007-2012 (following a period of high increase during the years 2006-2007), in the UK from 2005-2006 (but which went up and reached its peak in 2008 before going down until 2013), in Italy from 2005-2008 (which started going up until 2013), and in France from 2005-2007 (which started rising over subsequent years). In Greece, the Gini coefficient decreased from 2007-2010 and started increasing one year after. In Spain, the Gini coefficient remained the same over 2005-2008 but showed a high increase four years afterwards, before starting to move downwards in 2013. Overall, the data shows that since the beginning of the economic crisis, the Gini coefficient has followed a continued downward trend in Poland, Switzerland, and Germany.

Figure 2: Gini coefficient of equivalised disposable income

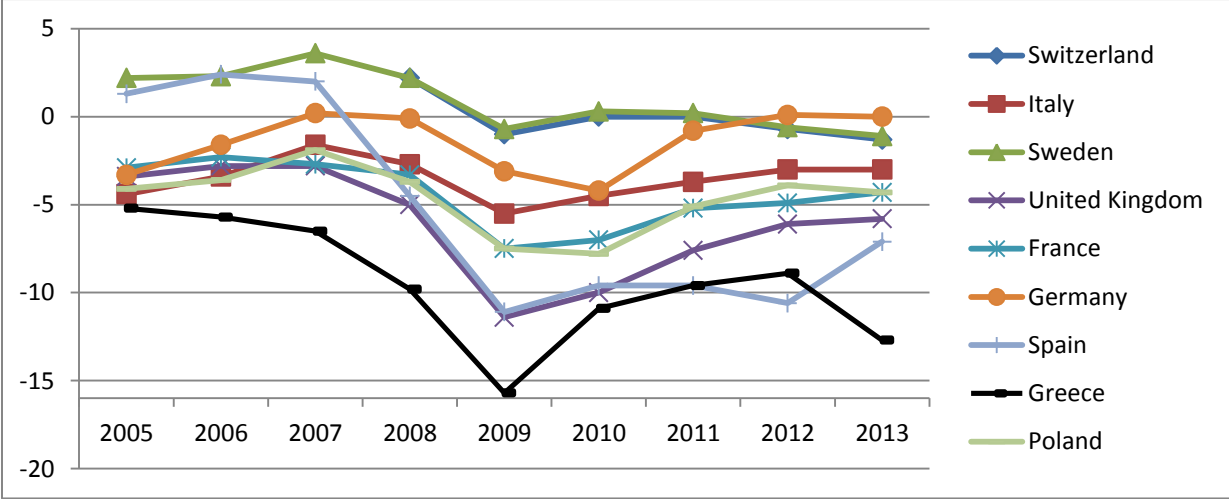


Source: SILC

Between 2005 and 2009, government deficit as a percentage of GDP increased sharply for several countries such as Greece, the UK, Spain, Sweden, France, Italy and Germany (Figure 3). Especially in the case of Spain, the deficit/surplus balance has *turned* sharply negative—that is, toward large and growing *deficits* from 2005 to 2009. The data shows that, similarly to Spain although at different degrees, the deficit/surplus balance has *turned* negative for Sweden between 2005-2009 and 2010-2013 and for Switzerland after the onset of the economic crisis and between 2011 and 2013. Since 2009, six countries have managed to

reduce their deficits following varying fluctuations namely, Spain, the UK, France, Poland, Italy and Germany.

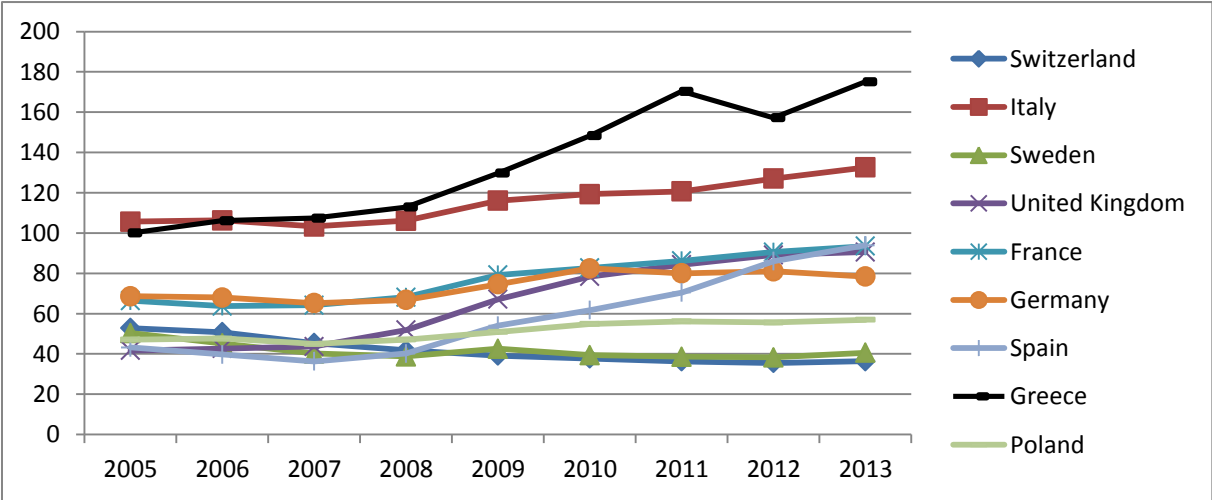
Figure 3: Government deficit/surplus as a percentage of GDP, general government financial balance, surplus (+) and deficit (-)



Source: OECD

In Italy, the UK, France, Germany, Spain, Greece and Poland the percentage of total central government debt as part of GDP increased since 2005 (Figure 4). This upward trend became more intense from 2008 onwards especially for Greece, but also for Italy, France, the UK and Spain. Government debt in Sweden and Switzerland underwent minor fluctuations during the period 2005-2013 following generally a downward trend.

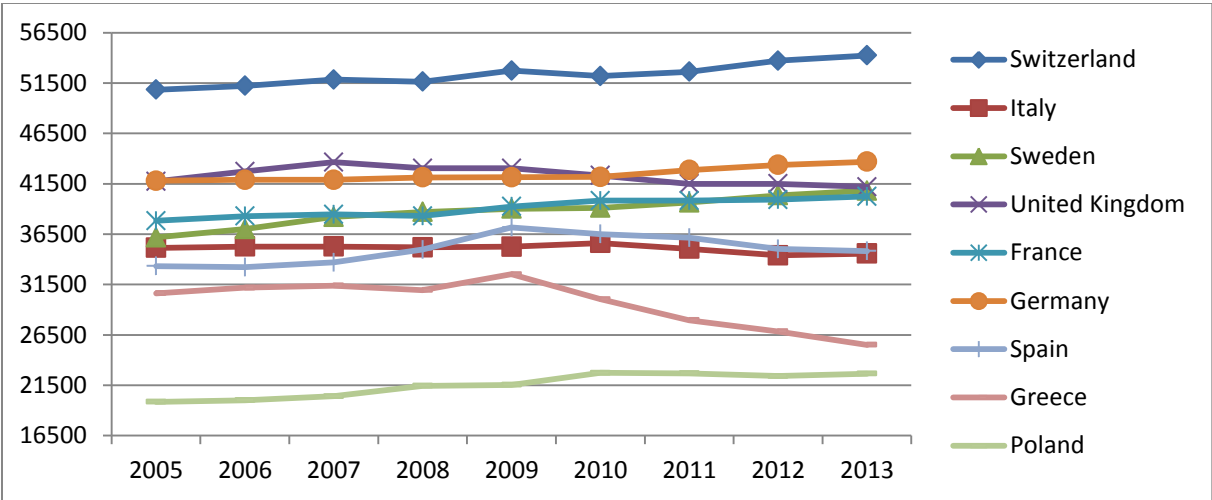
Figure 4: Percentage of total central government debt as part of GDP



Source: Eurostat

In terms of average annual wages, it seems that the economic crisis has had a negative impact for the UK and the Southern European countries (Figure 5). More particularly, average annual wages decreased though at varying degrees in Spain, Italy (there is a slight increase after 2012 that brings Italy to the same level as Spain) and especially in Greece, which follows a steep downward trend after 2009. Contrary to the above countries and during the same period, increases can be observed in Switzerland, Germany, Sweden, France (that comes reaches Sweden) and Poland that come closer to Greece.

Figure 5: Average annual wages (2013 USD PPPs and 2013 constant prices)

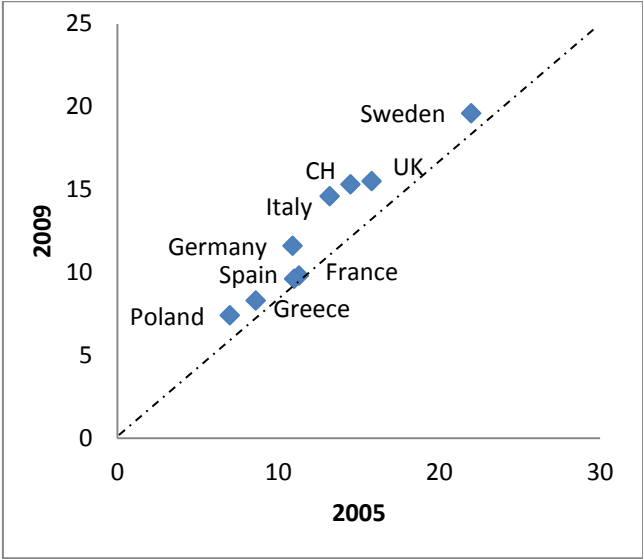


Source: OECD

Policy responses to the crisis

There was a change in current taxes on income and wealth as a percentage of GDP for several countries (Figure 6). In particular, between 2005 and 2009, taxes have increased especially in Switzerland, Italy, the UK, and Germany and – to a lesser extent – in Greece and Poland. No particular change can be detected in Spain and France.

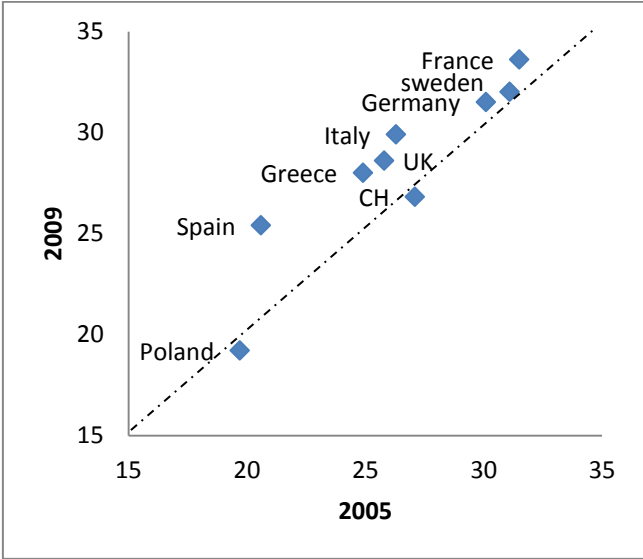
Figure 6: Current taxes on income, wealth as percentage of GDP



Note: the line shows 'No Change' Source: Eurostat

Public expenditure on social protection interventions as a percentage of GDP between 2005 and 2009 decreased in Switzerland and Poland but increased particularly in France, Italy, Spain, Greece, and the UK and to a lesser extent in Sweden (Figure 7). This acceleration may be driven by increases in unemployment expenditure (due to parallel increases in the unemployment rate), but also in health and disability as well as in old age and survivors expenditure, and to some extent by an increase in family, social exclusion and housing expenditure.

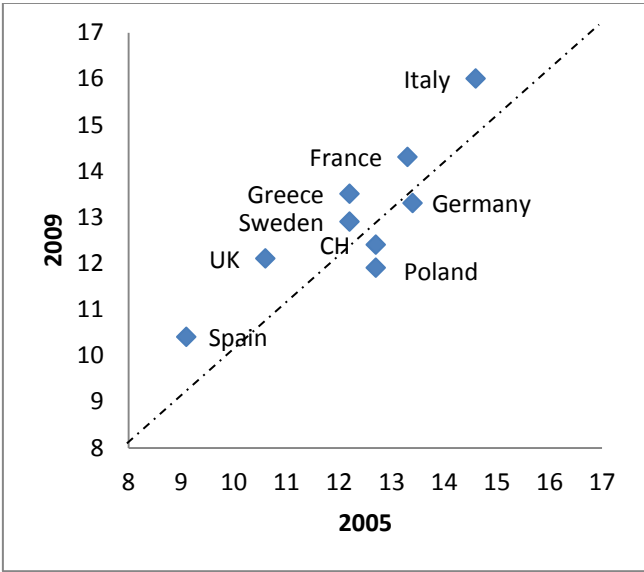
Figure 7: Public expenditure on social protection interventions as percentage of GDP



Note: the line shows 'No Change' Source: Eurostat

In terms of public expenditure on pensions as a percentage of GDP, there are two groups of countries: the 'leaders' and the 'laggers' (Figure 8). In the first group of countries, the 'leaders', we find France, Greece, Italy and the UK that generally show a sharp increase in pensions expenditure in the period 2005-2009, followed by Sweden. These increases may be related to the fact that the number of older workers claiming early retirement has grown and/or to demographic ageing. In the second group of countries we find Germany, Switzerland, and Poland that show decreases although at varying degrees.

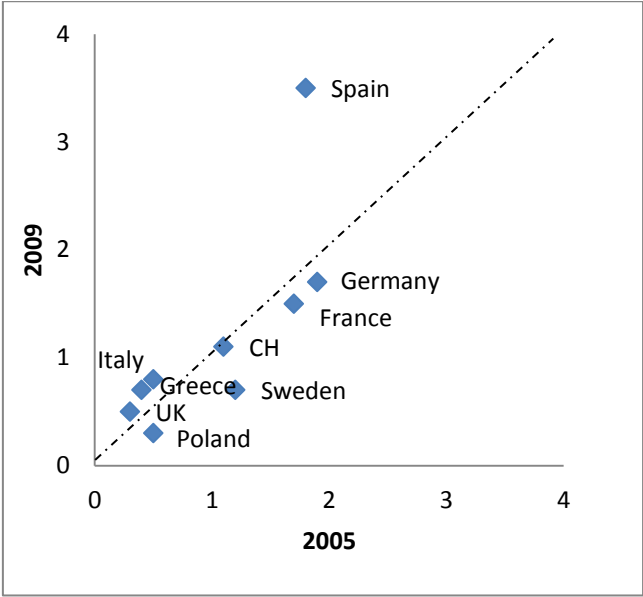
Figure 8: Public expenditure on pensions as percentage of GDP



Note: the line shows 'No Change' Source: Eurostat

The percentage of public expenditure on unemployment benefit as part of the GDP in 2005-2009 increased especially in Spain followed by Italy, Greece, and the UK (Figure 9). The increase in unemployment expenditure mainly reflected increases in the number of unemployed. At the same time, there was a short decrease in Sweden and to a lesser extent in France, Germany and Poland. No significant change can be detected in Switzerland.

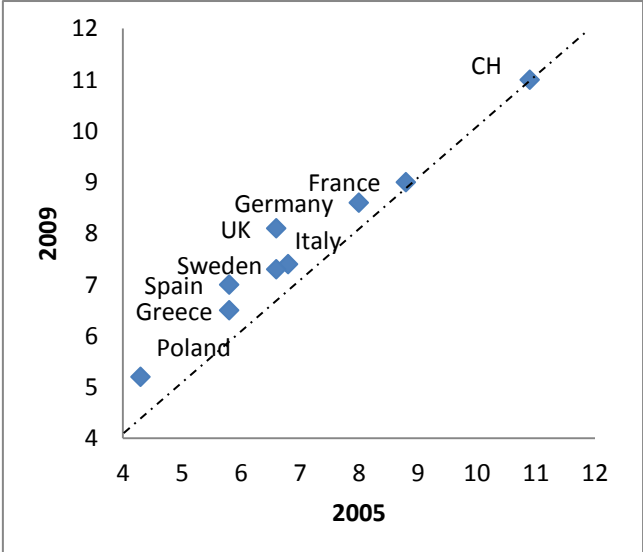
Figure 9: Percentage of public expenditure on unemployment benefit as part of GDP



Note: the line shows 'No Change'
 Source: OECD; data on Switzerland drawn from Swiss Statistics

Public expenditure on health between 2005 and 2009 increased in all countries except France and Switzerland (Figure 10). A strong increase – at varying degrees – has taken place in the UK and Spain. An increase – though to a lesser extent – can also be detected in Greece, Sweden, Germany and Poland, followed by Italy and France. No significant change can be detected in Switzerland.

Figure 10: Percentage of public expenditure on health as part of GDP

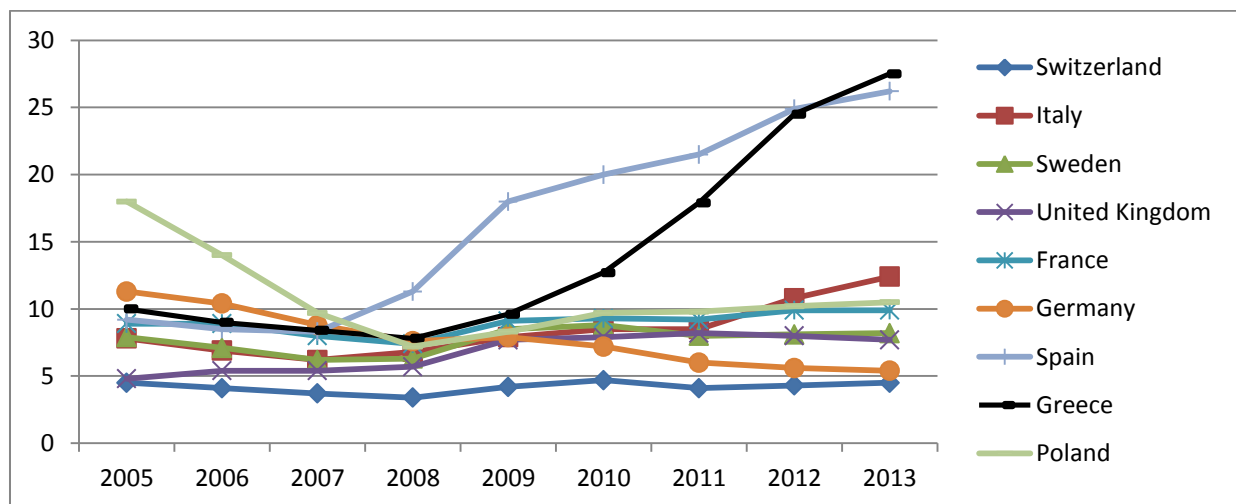


Note: the line shows 'No Change'
 Source: OECD; data on Switzerland drawn from Swiss Statistics

Social consequences of the crisis

The unemployment rate in two countries, namely Greece and Spain, highly increased since 2007 (Spain) and 2008 (Greece) (Figure 11). An upward trend – at varying degrees - can also be observed in Italy that is more intense during 2011-2013, as well as in Poland (following a high decrease during the period 2005-2008), France, the UK, Sweden and in Switzerland especially after 2008.

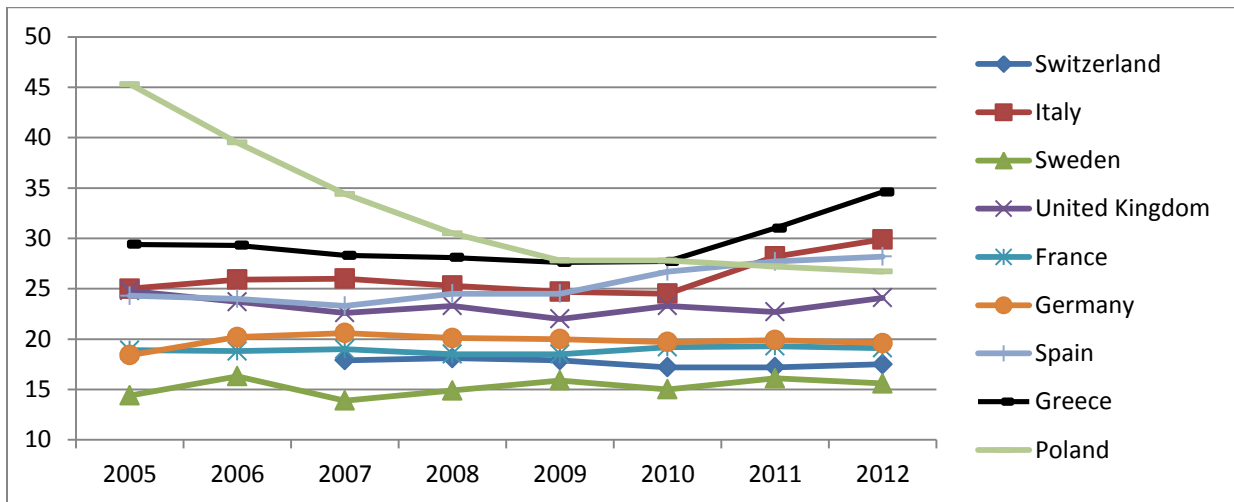
Figure 11: Percentage of unemployment rate – annual average



Source: Eurostat

In terms of the percentage of people who are at risk of poverty and social exclusion, there is a steep downward trend for Poland before and after the onset of the economic crisis and especially from 2005 to 2009 (Figure 12). At the same time, it seems that the economic crisis might have affected three countries in particular: Spain, Greece and Italy. The data shows that there is an upward trend for Spain from 2007 onwards and for Greece and Italy from 2010 onwards. In the case of Switzerland, the percentage of people who are at risk of poverty and social exclusion declined between 2008 and 2010, before it starts rising again up to a (relatively) 2007 level in 2012. In Germany, this percentage remains relatively stable (with small fluctuations) during 2006-2012. Between 2005 and 2012 there are fluctuations but not large changes in Sweden, France and the UK.

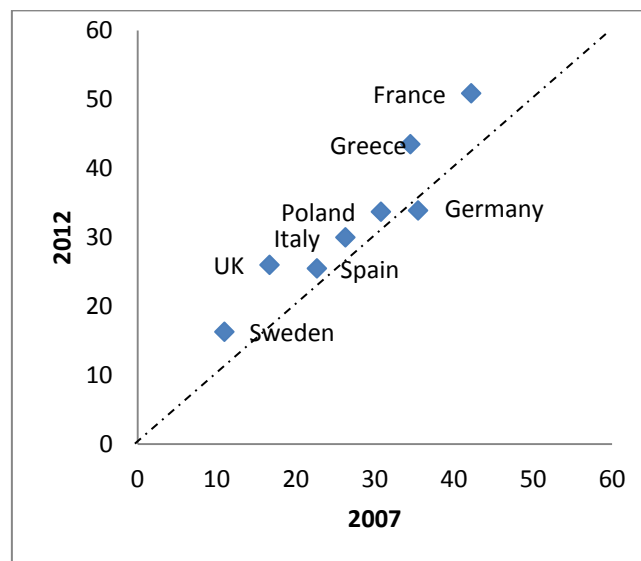
Figure 12: Percentage of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion



Source: Eurostat

Between 2007-2012, there was an increase in the percentage of respondents who answered that there is 'A lot of tension' in my country to the question concerning how much tension there is between poor and rich, particularly in France, Greece, the UK (Figure 13). Significant but not strong increases (as in the previous countries) can be detected in Sweden, Spain, Italy and Poland. In Germany, this percentage decreased.

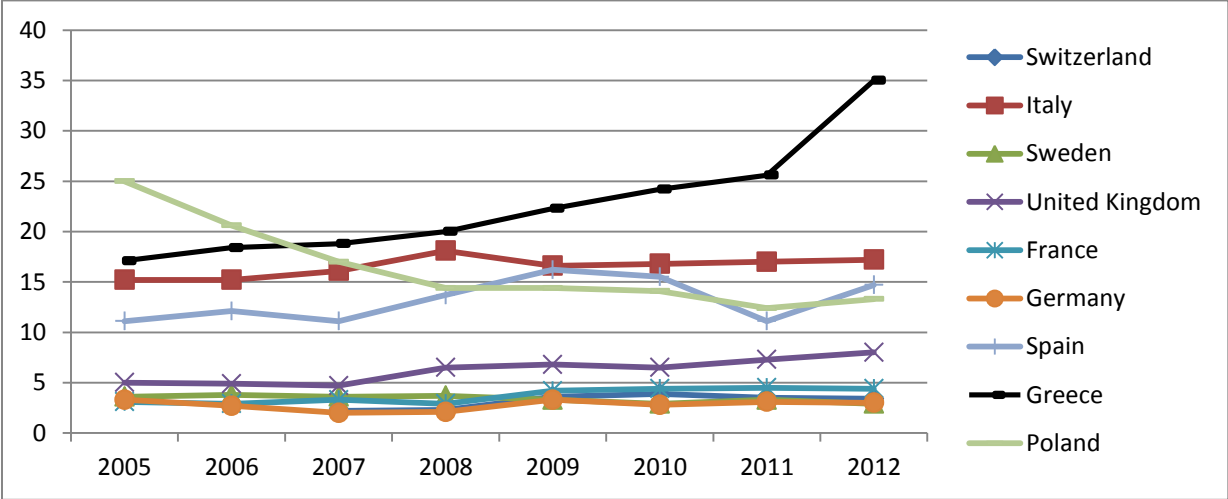
Figure 13: Tension between poor and rich people, percentage of respondents who answered there is 'A lot of tension' in my country



Source: Eurofound, Quality of Life

Economic strain in terms of the percentage of households making ends meet with great difficulty in Greece increased from 2005 to 2010, and accelerated upward especially between 2011 and 2012 (Figure 14). While Poland shows a downward trend throughout the period 2005 to 2012, a rising trend – at different degrees - can be detected for the UK after 2007, for Spain during 2007-2009 followed by a decrease in 2010 and a steep increase in 2011, and for Italy in the period 2007-2008 followed by a decrease one year after and slight increases between 2010 and 2012. Economic strain reached its peak in 2009 – displaying though lower percentages than Greece, Spain, Italy and Poland - for several countries such as Switzerland, France, Germany and Sweden.

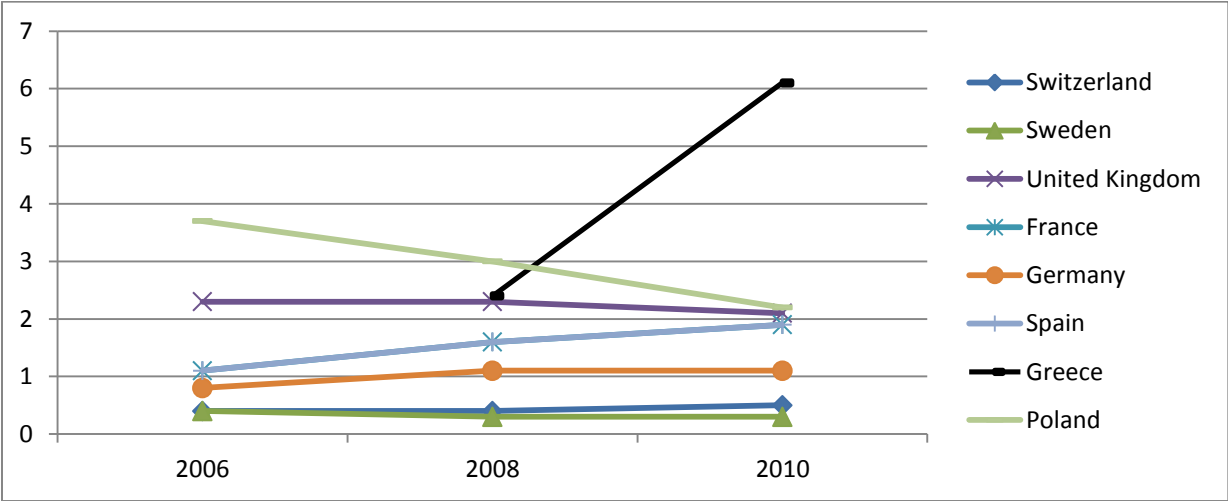
Figure 14: Economic strain, percentage of households making ends meet with great difficulty



Source: Eurostat

Concerning the percentage of people who answered 'Never' and 'Less than once a month' to the question of when they meet with friends, relatives or colleagues, there is a steep increase for Greece between 2008 and 2010 and a sharp decrease for Poland during 2006 to 2010 (Figure 15). This percentage - although it is very much below the levels for Greece and the UK - rises at varying degrees for Germany between 2006 and 2008 and for France and Switzerland between 2008 and 2010. There is a soft downward trend for Sweden between 2006 and 2010.

Figure 15: Meet with friends, relatives or colleagues, percentage of respondents who answered 'Never' and 'Less than once a month'

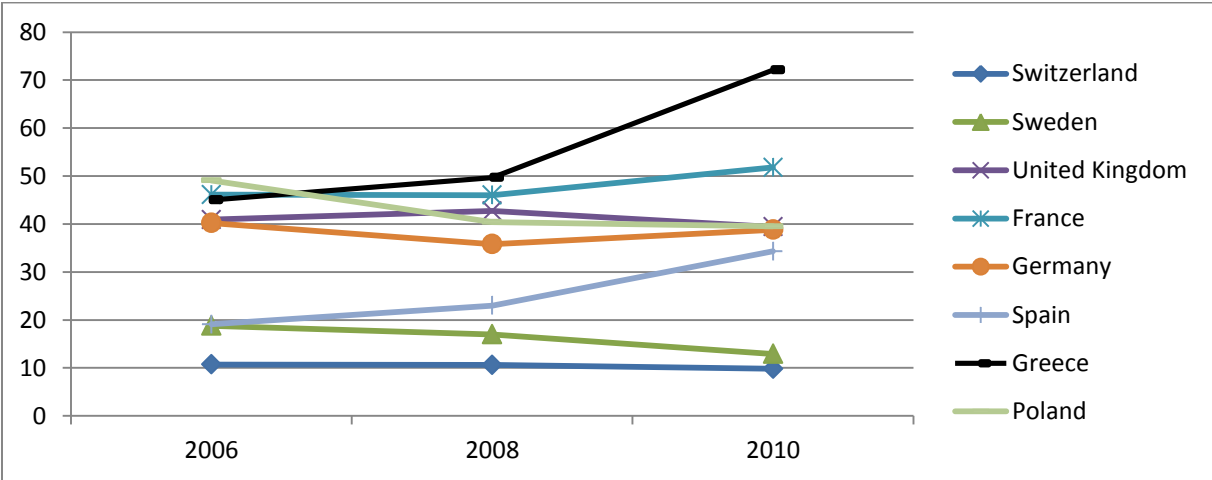


Source: European Social Survey

Political attitudes and behaviors before and during the crisis

In terms of the percentage of respondents who answered 'Extremely dissatisfied' to the question on how satisfied they are with the way democracy works in their country, the data shows a steep rising trend – although at different levels – for Greece, France, Germany and Spain between 2008 and 2010 (Figure 16). At the same time, this percentage declines – at varying degrees – in the UK and Sweden after 2008 and in Poland after 2006. No major changes can be detected for Switzerland between 2006 and 2010.

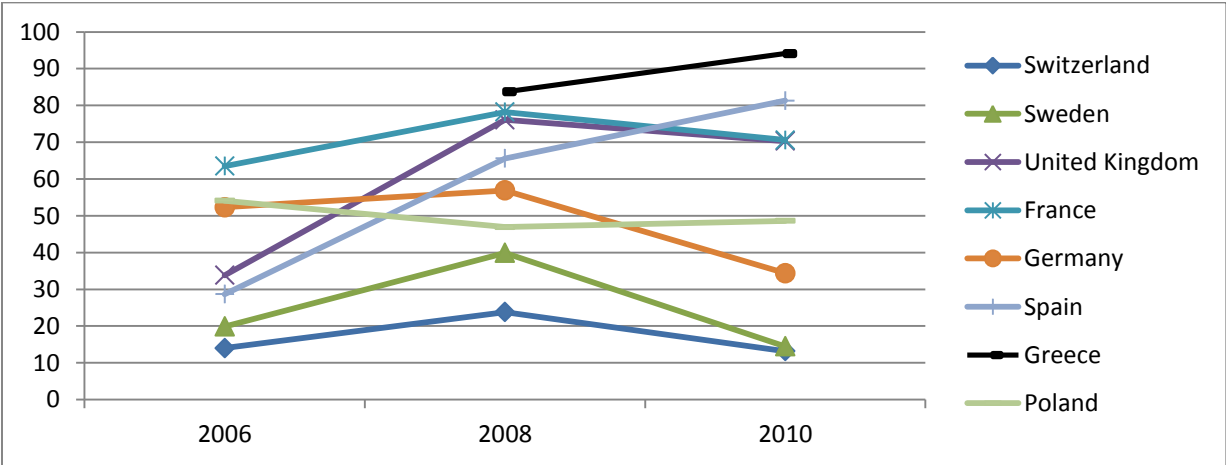
Figure 16: Satisfaction with the way democracy works in country, percentage of respondents, who stated 'Extremely dissatisfied'



Source: European Social Survey

With reference to the percentage of respondents who answered 'Extremely dissatisfied' to the question on how satisfied they are with the present state of the economy in their country, contrary to Poland there is a steep upward trend for Germany but especially for France, the UK, Spain, Sweden, and Switzerland between 2006-2008 (Figure 17). This upward trend becomes reversed for France, the UK, Germany, Sweden, and Switzerland over 2008 to 2010 that is, after the onset of the economic crisis, while it remains upward for Spain. At the same time, Greece shows a steep increase between 2008 and 2010.

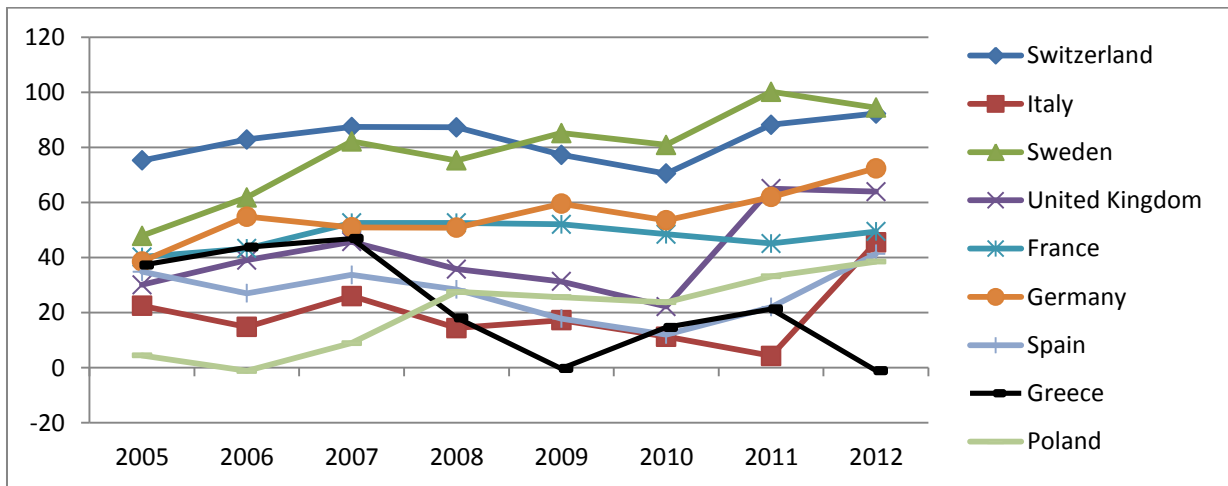
Figure 17: Satisfaction with present state of economy in country, percentage of respondents who stated 'Extremely dissatisfied'



Source: European Social Survey

With regard to the percentage of respondents who stated "the government does not often communicate its intentions successfully", for all the countries except Greece, this percentage has increased - at varying degrees and with some fluctuations - between 2005-2012 (figure 18). Immediately after the beginning of the economic crisis, and particularly between 2007-2010, steep decreases can be observed in Greece, the UK, and Spain. Between 2011-2012, there was a steady increase in Switzerland, Germany, the UK (there was a slight decrease between 2011-2012), Poland, Spain, and Italy.

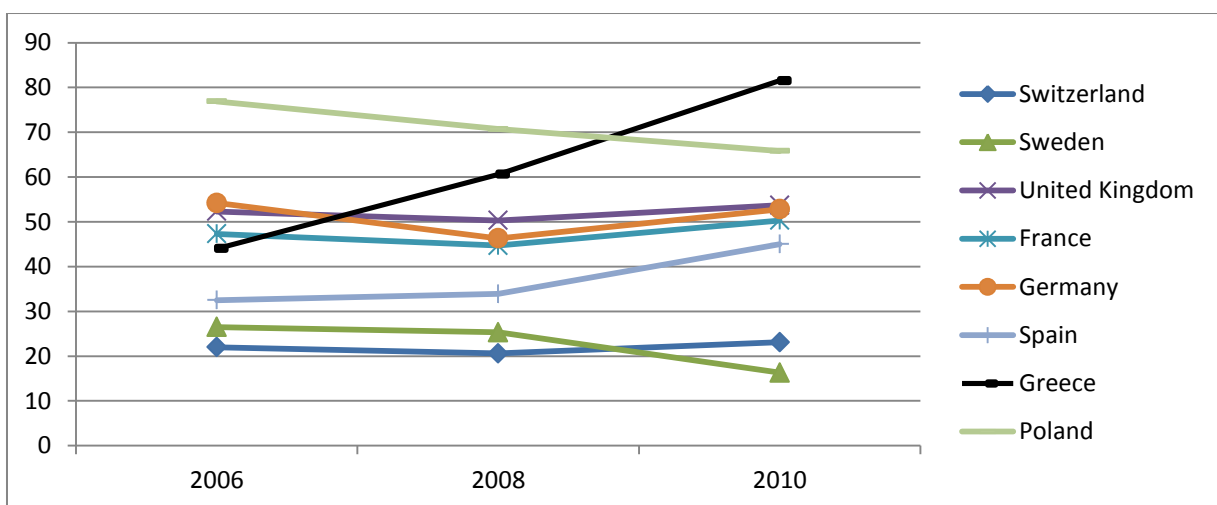
Figure 18: Assessment of the Transparency of Government Policy, percentage of respondents who stated "The government does not often communicate its intentions successfully"



Source: Democracy Barometer

In terms of the percentage of respondents who answered 'No trust at all' to the question on how much they trust their country's parliament there is a steady, steep upward trend for Greece between 2006-2010 (figure 19). This percentage also rises – although at varying degrees - for Germany, France, the UK, Spain, and Switzerland after the onset of the economic crisis. At the same time, a steep downward trend can be detected for Poland between 2006-2010 and for Sweden after 2008.

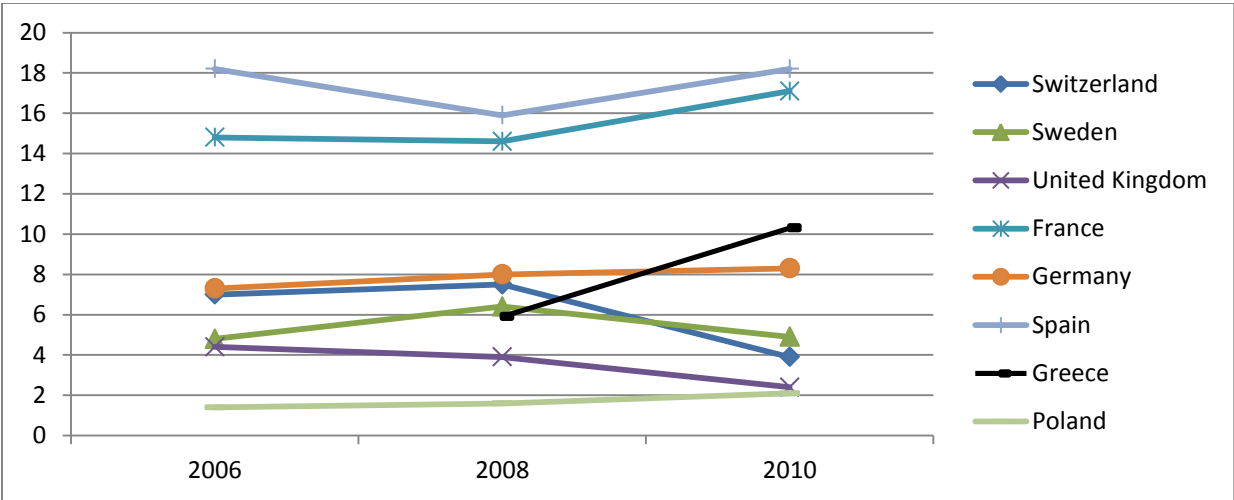
Figure 19: Trust in country parliament, percentage of respondents who stated 'No trust at all'



Source: European Social Survey

The percentage of respondents who answered 'Yes' to the question on whether they have participated in lawful public demonstration during the last 12 months increased sharply (at varying degrees) between 2008-2010 in France, Spain, and Greece (figure 20). A slight increase can also be detected for Germany after 2008, whereas Poland shows a steady upward trend between 2006-2010. At the same time, three countries – namely, Sweden, Switzerland, and the UK show at varying degrees a downward trend between 2008-2010. This downward trend is more pronounced for Switzerland and the UK.

Figure 20: Participation in lawful public demonstration last 12 months, percentage of respondents who answered 'Yes'



Source: European Social Survey

Conclusion

To recapitulate and to conclude: the data shows that the economic crisis has had a differential negative impact for all countries - having affected especially Greece, Spain, Italy but also the UK, and to a lesser extent France. Poland seems to have remained relatively untouched by the crisis. In the economic field, we have been able to find that the countries mostly affected are the UK, Italy, Spain, France, and Greece especially with regard to their performance vis-à-vis the GDP, government debt, and their average levels of annual wages. The data also reveals a negative effect for Sweden and Switzerland as to the deficit/surplus balance.

In the social field, the number of people who are unemployed and at risk of poverty and social exclusions has particularly increased in Greece, Spain, and Italy. Concurrently, the tension between poor and rich seems to have increased in all countries and particularly in France,

Greece, and the UK, but not in Germany. Next to these findings, economic strain has become more intense in the UK, Spain, Italy, and particularly in Greece. Interestingly after the onset of the economic crisis, economic strain increased and reached its peak in 2009 in Switzerland, France, Germany, and Sweden. Against this background, in the post-crisis period social ties with friends, relatives and colleagues have become strengthened in most countries (except Poland) and especially in Greece, to a lesser degree in the UK but also in Germany, France and Switzerland.

In the post-crisis period, policy responses in the area of public expenditure on social protection and pensions have become intensified especially in France, Italy, Spain, Greece, and the UK and to a lesser extent in Sweden. A contrasting picture has been observed in Germany, Switzerland, and Poland where public expenses have either decreased or remained the same. Moreover, public expenditure on health increased in all countries – especially in the UK and Spain - except France and Switzerland. The countries mostly hit by unemployment Spain, Italy, Greece, but also the UK have increased public expenditure on the unemployment benefit. Finally, taxes have increased especially in Switzerland, Italy, the UK, and Germany and - to a lesser extent - in Greece and Poland.

Concerning political attitudes and behaviors, after the beginning of the economic crisis dissatisfaction with the way democracy works has increased in Greece, France, Germany, Spain and declined in the UK, Sweden and Poland. Further on, people's trust on their country's parliament has decreased in Greece, Germany, France, the UK, Spain, and Switzerland, but not in Poland. Greece and Spain are also well above the other seven countries as to the number of persons that are dissatisfied with the present state of economy. At the same time, people in Greece and Spain believe that the transparency of government policy has improved contrary to Switzerland, Germany, the UK, Poland, Spain, and Italy. Lastly, it seems that the economic crisis has brought more people in the streets especially in Greece, France, and Spain but not in the UK and Switzerland.

PART II: Citizens' facing the crisis

3. Hypotheses on Citizens' Political Reactions to Economic Crises

Marco Giugni (University of Geneva) and Jasmine Lorenzini (European University Institute)

Introduction

European countries still struggle with the negative effects of the economic recessions towards the end of the 2000s, most notably: high levels of unemployment, a decrease in credit access, cuts in social services, changes in consumption patterns, alongside a grim outlook for future generations. As citizens experience these negative economic effects, attention has also been drawn to the potential political effects of the recession. One obvious possible negative effect of economic hardship is the decline of political participation and civic engagement. However, while the experience of economic difficulty can certainly be understood as draining resources from political participation, it may equally be suggested that difficult economic conditions can also generate grievances which people may seek to redress through political participation and protest. Economic crises may provide the political space and motivation necessary to mobilize those seeking to criticize perceived unjust patterns of wealth distribution in advanced capitalist democracies or to draw attention to the idea that not all sections of society bear the costs of economic crisis evenly.

However, the consequences of crises for citizens' resilience are not limited to the binary choice between retreating from public life and various forms of participation on one hand, and increasing political engagement and protest activities on the other. A range of possible responses are available. Citizens may actively choose alternate channels and strategies to make their voices heard. They may seek access to justice at various levels, from local to European and international, or participate in the associational life of their communities. Economic crises may also open up new opportunities for political parties – in particular, right-wing populist parties – which voters might perceive as providing attractive solutions to cope with the negative consequences of the crisis. More broadly, changing political attitudes and voting behaviors can be caused by economic hardship.

Certainly, citizens may – and do – react in a variety of ways to the experience of economic crisis, such as engaging in a wide repertoire of non-capitalist practices that involve citizens lowering their cost of living, connecting to other communities and assisting others. Alternative forms of resilience include the strengthening of social and family networks and community practices to foster solidarity, changing lifestyles towards more sustainable forms of consumption and production, developing new artistic expressions, and moving abroad for short or long durations (or on the contrary, reducing mobility). The focus of this chapter, however, lies with political reactions. We consider both responses in the electoral arena (i.e. through changing voting behavior and abstention) and in the social movement arena (i.e. through other forms of participation and retreat from it). In both arenas, it is possible to distinguish three main effects of economic crisis: mobilization, withdrawal, and no change. We will return to this three-fold distinction in the conclusion.

The paper has a two-fold purpose. First, we provide a review of recent work on citizens' reactions to economic crises and examine the social and political consequences. Second, based on the literature review, we suggest thirty hypotheses intended to encourage further research in this field. Some hypotheses have been tested in previous research, while others still need to be confronted with empirical evidence. However, even when hypotheses have been tested, we argue that further research is needed to validate, strengthen, or challenge existing findings, especially in the light of more recent developments.

The remainder of the chapter is divided into four main sections. In the next section we review work on electoral responses and formulate related hypotheses. Then we move on to non-electoral reactions and participation in social movements. The two parts are organized somewhat differently since they draw from different bodies of literature and theoretical traditions. However, both are geared towards reviewing previous research in order to propose hypotheses to be tested in future work. We conclude by summarizing the main areas addressed by the paper as well as a note about further research in this field.

Political parties and electoral behavior

In this section, we consider the effects of the 'Great Recession' of the early twenty-first century on electoral political participation. We discuss economic voting theory and cleavage

theory in relation to explanations of why citizens vote for either incumbents or challengers. We begin with a specific focus on voting for or against the incumbents in times of crisis. This discussion is mostly based on the economic voting literature. We address the related issues of economic grievances and blame attribution. Next, we discuss representation and responsibility in order to grasp the effects of social transformations, which may be accelerated by the crisis, and then examine their effects on political representation in line with cleavage theory. Lastly, we address the particular question of why citizens contribute to the populist right or vote for new political parties in times of crisis. Throughout the review, we occasionally focus on specific social groups or countries that can be seen as ideal-typical.

Economic voting

Economic voting literature suggests that citizens will punish incumbents in times of economic downturn because of their poor economic performances. More specifically, the theory of economic voting rests on the assumption that citizens assess and evaluate the state of the economy in order to decide whether to support or punish the incumbents at the poll (Lewis-Beck and Stegmaier, 2000; Duch and Stevenson, 2006). Recent studies also show that the effect of economic voting is stronger in times of crisis (Hernández and Kriesi, forthcoming; Singer, 2011). Thus, research on economic voting in times of crisis may provide evidence in favor or against economic voting (see Anderson, 2007 for a discussion on the lack of strong empirical evidence to support economic voting theory).

Research on the economic voting hypothesis has tested the effects of the Great Recession on electoral outcomes in different countries (Bellucci, 2012; Costa-Lobo and Lewis-Beck, 2012; Fraile and Lewis-Beck, 2012; Marsh and Mikhaylov, 2012; Scotto, 2012). Marsh and Mikhaylov (2012) have studied the Irish case, where one party dominated the electoral scene for decades but was being strongly punished at the polls in 2011. The authors show that the magnitude of vote loss for the incumbents cannot be attributed solely to economic voting. The economic predictors alone do not account for the loss of votes. They argue that the government repeatedly lost credibility due to important decisions it made: first, offering government guarantees for the banks, then suppressing free healthcare for the elderly and finally, withdrawing from the bond market. The authors show that it is these specific events

that drive the loss of votes, while only unemployment among the usual suspects also contributes to predict incumbents' punishment.

Nezi (2012) suggests that the intensity of economic change in Greece is central to understanding the Greek case. As he argues, "when the economy is at its worst the incumbent has no real chance of winning and should expect support only from its long-time loyal supporters" (Nezi, 2012: 504). He argues that substantial changes in the perception of the economy are required for the government to lose votes. This may be related to the salience of the economy, as suggested by Singer (2011). In times of crisis or dramatic economic changes within a country, the economy becomes the focus of attention for all citizens, not only those most affected by the economic changes or those who always prioritize economic concerns.

The literature on economic voting assumes that the economy is the determining factor influencing whether or not voters chose to punish the incumbent. However, a recent study questions the assumed centrality of the economy in determining vote choices (Singer, 2011). The author shows that the economy is an important issue, but not the only issue considered by voters when deciding whether to vote for the current government. The author proposes that not all voters at all time and in all places vote based on economic considerations. He suggests that the salience of the economy is not constant: it varies across individuals and context. The author finds that the most vulnerable citizens in economic terms pay more attention to the economy and that the economy is more important to the vote choice in less developed countries. Moreover, other issues such as war, terrorism, corruption, and moral questions may divert attention from the economy.

Additionally, not all economic issues are valence issues: some are positional or partisan issues (Lewis-Beck and Nadeau, 2011). This means that not all citizens punish incumbents in difficult economic times, since they may share the party's approach to solving economic problems. Some citizens may give their vote to the incumbent because they share the values or opinions reflected in how the incumbent proposes to handle economic 'problems', such as unemployment or inequality. For instance, Wright (2012) shows that, in the U.S., the Democrats 'own' the issue of unemployment. As a result, if the Democrats are in power and unemployment increases they are not punished since they are able to present themselves as being best able to solve this problem. Thus, voters choose them for their position on the issue

of unemployment and do not to punish them for the increased unemployment. More generally, we may expect partisanship and ideology to shape the way in which citizens perceive and evaluate the economy and economic performances (Weyland, 2003).

Economic grievances

The economic voting literature is often criticized for the absence of strong empirical evidence to support two of its fundamental assumptions, namely that voters base their electoral choice on how the economy is doing and that voters punish incumbents for bad economic performances (Bartels, 2014). Anderson (2007) points to the problematic assumptions underpinning the economic voting theory: first, that there is an objective economic situation and second, that voters have access to unbiased information in order to assess it. These assumptions do not consider the effect of the media in framing the economic news or the different abilities and motivations of citizens to inform themselves about the economy. Some have proposed to solve this problem by taking into account the personal experience of the economy (see Curtis, 2014 for a discussion of the rationale behind the focus on pocketbook effects). To date, scholarship has failed to find strong evidence for an impact of egocentric variables on voting: citizens do not use their personal experience of the economy to make their vote choice, but rather consider the overall state of the economy (Kinder and Kiewiet, 1979; Brody and Sniderman, 1977). Curtis (2014), in his study of support for the Prime Minister in Iceland, recently found that in times of crisis, egocentric factors may contribute to vote choice, but only among the more sophisticated voters. Furthermore, Duch and Sagarzazu (2014) show that, although economic evaluation shape vote choices among rich and poor voters, the poor are less likely to consider their own economic situation when making their vote choice. These two studies suggest that the less well-off and the less politically sophisticated citizens are also less likely to base their vote choices on personal economic grievances.

During the Great Recession, certain social groups, such as young people, the middle class, or the elderly were hit more strongly than others by the economic downturn. Thus, different social groups may hold specific grievances related to the crisis shaping their electoral preferences or reactions. Although research in this field is scarce, there are some valuable studies in particular on the Greek case. Greece is experiencing a long-lasting and deep economic crisis, coupled with drastic austerity measures, that has resulted in increasing

unemployment, poverty, but also pessimism about the future along with reduced mental and physical health (Angouri and Wodak, 2014; Roushas, 2014). In this context, the gap between citizens who bear the costs of the crisis and see no bright future on the one hand, and the optimism of the political class on the other, is a source of grievances *per se*. Furthermore, grievances related to high unemployment and rising poverty have been shown to be related to the rise of the radical right party in Greece (Roushas, 2014), while those facing financial difficulties were more likely to vote for the radical right party Golden Dawn (Vasilopoulou and Halikiopoulou, 2013).

Considering that social groups may hold different grievances and that the personal characteristics of voters affect the likelihood of voting based on economic considerations (Anderson, 2007), it is important to consider how political attitudes such as partisan attachment, political ideology, and political knowledge might mediate the effects of grievances effects on voting choices. Curtis (2014), for example, shows that pocketbook effects - one's personal financial situation - affected vote choices in Iceland, but only among the more sophisticated voters. Hence, electoral outcomes may differ significantly depending on the social groups most strongly affected by the crisis and their political characteristics. Future studies could address the effects of austerity measures by focusing on the reactions of civil servants, a social group directly affected by austerity measures due to plans to reduce state budget involving reducing public sector employment (Camfield, 2011; Dellepiane and Hardiman, 2012; Jordana, 2014). In addition, Johnston Conover and Feldman (1986) show that although the cognitive dimension of one's personal economic situation does not affect policy preferences, its emotional dimension – for instance anger or indignation – may foster political reactions and hence affect policy preferences. Some studies do consider the effects of emotion in the context of the Great Recession, in particular in countries most strongly hit by the crisis (Dinas and Rori, 2013). However, more research could tackle the intervening role of emotions in voting during the crisis.

In addition, other types of grievance may contribute to raising support for specific parties. Most notably, grievances associated with immigration and ethnic relations are associated with the rise of the radical right (Roushas, 2014). Moreover, grievances related to the corruption of the political elite played a central role in the electoral success of outsiders and the punishment of established political parties in the shadow of the Great Recession (Bordignon and

Ceccarini, 2013; Nezi, 2012). This would suggest that citizens' reactions to economic crises in the electoral arena are issue-based. Furthermore, the crisis spurs electoral participation depending on which issues gain salience in the midst of the crisis and which social groups have been most strongly hit.

Blame attribution

The contingency of the economic voting theory stems from the importance of individual characteristics which affect the perception of the economy and the framing of grievance, but also from the specific institutional design of a country, which facilitates or hinders the process of blame attribution (Anderson, 2007). Indeed, blame attribution plays a significant role in electoral behavior, more specifically with regard to re-electing incumbents. Blame is based on two components: perceived avoidable harm and perceived responsibility (Angouri and Wodak, 2014). Working on the electoral punishment of the incumbents, Kriesi (2014a) found that citizens tend to punish the incumbents more in majoritarian regimes where the attribution of responsibility is easier.

Similarly, analyzing the effects of fear and anger resulting from the crisis, Wagner (2013) suggests that the impact of emotional reactions may be stronger when citizens have a clearer sense of who bears responsibility. He shows that in Britain, citizens experienced either fear of the potential consequences of the crisis or anger at the actions that led to the crisis depending on whether or not they blamed someone for the crisis. Anger appears in relation to blame assignment only when citizens blame institutions that they perceive as being accountable to them and responsible for their welfare. In turn, anger results in punishing the incumbents. More specifically, the withdrawal of support for the incumbents by citizens angry about the economic situation is found amongst those who voted for the Labour Party in the last U.K. general elections. These findings are interesting because they illuminate potential mechanisms relating the financial crises to political behavior: blame attribution and emotions.

A further study of blame attribution, based on the analysis of participant observations in Wisconsin, also yields valuable insight into blame attribution's role in the analysis of citizens' reactions to economic crises in the electoral arena (Cramer, 2014). The author finds that in the small rural community studied, citizens blame the government, civil servants, and trade

unions for the crisis, but not the banks, financial sectors, and big corporations. The author argues that when making sense of the economic crisis, “causal stories are less a product of facts than of social categorizations and social identities” (2014: 92). The people she talked to about the crisis tended to blame civil servants in particular. Civil servants were perceived as lazy and inefficient workers paid by citizens' hard-earned money through taxes. They were seen as a part of the government yet failing to respond to citizens' demands and needs. Moreover, civil servants were perceived as being defended by greedy trade unions.

Citizens seek to punish their national governments for failing to avoid or handle the crisis, yet supra-national institutions may blur responsibilities and blame attribution. Costa-Lobo and Lewis-Beck (2012), for example, show that blaming national political actors is conditional on the perceived responsibility of the European Union. The more the E.U. is blamed for the crisis, the lower the effect of economic voting at the national level. Anderson and Hecht (2012) also show that when external actors or an external shock is seen as the cause of the crisis, the government will not be punished. However, when national actors seem to have lost the ability to act they are also punished for their powerlessness (Hernández and Kriesi, (forthcoming). A study conducted on the emergence of Golden Dawn in Greece relates the party's electoral success to the desire of citizens to punish the entire political system, since blame was not attributed to a single actor but rather to the system as a whole (Angouri and Wodak, 2014).

In summary, research on the role of blame assignment in the process of casting an economic vote to punish the incumbents for their economic policies highlights the importance of attributing clear responsibilities. However, since the crisis results from global trends in the economy and since economic policies are shaped at national and supra-national levels, citizens may not be able to attribute responsibilities and punish political actors who participated in the decision-making that resulted in the current crisis.

Representation, Responsiveness, and Responsibility

In reaction to the perceived misdeeds of the political parties in power, citizens may want to shift to the right or to the left, but depending on what is available may be dissatisfied with what they find. In particular, two trends reduce the attractiveness of established political

parties. First, political parties tend to converge towards the center. Second, parties appear to have lost power over supranational political institutions. In this section, we discuss these trends, highlighted by Katz and Mair (1995, 2009). We examine how they contribute to citizens' withdrawal from mainstream politics as part of longer-term trends, visible in declining party affiliation rates and party identification but also in increasing volatility across elections and the rise of the new political parties or the populist right, discussed below. Although these trends do not result from the Great Recession, they may be accelerated by the crisis (Hernández and Kriesi, forthcoming).

Katz and Mair (1995, 2009) define the process of ideological convergence. On the one hand, political parties are increasingly accountable to supranational political institutions, such as European political institutions, which make regulations to be implemented or complied with at the national level. This shift in the level of policy has increased the power of the executive over that of the legislative bodies, blurred the chain of responsibility, and reinforced the technocratic exercise of government to comply with supranational regulations. On the other hand, these supranational instances still lack popular support and largely fail to represent European citizens, as suggested by the low levels of electoral participation in European elections. Thus, national political parties and elected bodies are accountable to citizens and they (should) represent them at both national and supra-national levels. This results in political parties converging for the exercise of national and supranational responsibilities, alongside the diminished representation of citizens. Mainstream political parties no longer articulate citizens' demands and grievances, so new parties emerge to represent these demands and the Great Recession accelerated this process of transforming the political landscape (Hernández and Kriesi, forthcoming). In addition, Scharpf (2013) notes that during the Great Recession, European institutions which always lacked input legitimacy have also lost some of their output legitimacy. Moreover, the recession brought about strong dissatisfaction with governments and political parties' unresponsiveness, which in the most extreme cases resulted in political violence. Angouri and Wodak (2014: 553), for example, show how some citizens justify the use of violence related to the rise of the Golden Dawn in Greece with the claim that "governments in Europe [...] are not listening to their people".

The establishment of technocratic Prime Ministers in some European countries has also contributed to the decrease in the legitimacy of political actors. In 2011-12, Greece and Italy

were led by technocratic Prime Ministers appointed to overcome these countries' financial difficulties and to avoid a default of payment in the Eurozone (Verney and Bosco, 2013). Citizens did not elect these Prime Ministers; nonetheless, they were supported by the major political parties and by national leaders of other E.U. countries. Hence, the adoption of drastic austerity measures resulted in high citizen dissatisfaction and in protest voting (Verney and Bosco, 2013). In Italy, a large share of citizens turned away from the mainstream parties and supported a new contender, the *Movimento 5 Stelle* (Baldini, 2013), while in Greece citizens abstained from voting or voted for radical parties on the left (*Syriza*) and on the right (*Golden Dawn*) of the political spectrum (Dinas and Rori, 2013). The replacement of elected bodies with technocratic governments raises important questions related to citizens' role in the democratic process and in how citizens shape political answers to the economic crisis. Future research should analyze how citizens perceive such technocratic governments and how technocratic governments contribute to political learning, in particular, how they shape specific political attitudes such as political trust, satisfaction with democracy, and support for mainstream political parties and the European Union. Moreover, these effects may extend beyond Italy and Greece since the events described above received significant international media coverage.

Differences across social groups are also relevant in this respect. Studies on inequalities question the capacity of specific groups of citizens, in particular poor citizens who have fewer resources, to make their voices heard and to influence politics and in particular policy choices (Bartels, 2009; Jacobs and Skocpol, 2005). McCarty (2012), for example, shows that the financial crisis and the Great Recession have reinforced polarization in U.S. politics and that elected bodies have become (even) more prone to defend the interest of the more wealthy. Hence, the crisis may increase dissatisfaction with both the political elite and give rise to political cynicism, insomuch as it reinforces the perception that political actors are unresponsive to the demands, needs, and grievances of the majority of citizens and only defend the interests of the most powerful lobbies.

Shifting to the right or to the left?

A further important question concerning how citizens react to economic crises in the electoral arena, more specifically related to punishing the incumbent, is whether voters turn to the right or to the left of the political spectrum in times of crisis. In this regard, Bartels (2013, 2014)

argues that there is no ideological voting in times of crisis. In his view, parties from the right and from the left were equally punished during the Great Recession. However, Lindvall (2014) maintains that there are short-term and long-term effects of economic crises. Comparing the Great Depression and the Great Recession, he observes that voters tend to turn to the right at first, but in the mid- to long- run they tend to favor the left. More specifically, he suggests that in the early stages of a crisis the most vulnerable group suffers from the economic downturn and the core of the electorate feels less altruistic, hence turning to the right. However, as the effects of the crisis hit different constituencies they spread to middle class citizens, who turn to the left to ensure social protection for themselves. In addition, the fact that parties of the left 'own' certain issues such as unemployment also contributes to explaining why a left turn is expected (Wright, 2012).

A slight shift to the left is observed in the long-term but a stronger turn to the right is observed in the early stages of a crisis. Moreover, the process of Europeanization contributes to blurring the divisive left-right cleavage as mainstream parties, from both right and left, tend to be pro-European, while radical right and left parties tend to be anti-European (Halikiopoulou et al., 2012). Hence, it is difficult to conclude whether we should expect that the Great Recession results in a shift to the left to defend social rights and economic redistribution, since empirical evidences are weak and the shift only appears in the long-term (Lindvall, 2014), or will result in reducing the importance of ideological preferences (Bartels, 2014). Importantly, the crisis could also result in a shift to the right. This is not only in the short-term (Lindvall, 2014) but giving rise to long-term social transformations, resulting in demands for more national preference and protectionism to solve the current economic crisis and other social problems. We have not discussed the role of political parties defending these positions, such as populist parties from the radical right. Thus, in the next section we discuss in more detail how economic crises may contribute to the emergence or the success of right populist parties.

Radical right populism

Following cleavage theory, political parties represent existing divisions in the population. Most markedly, in the second half of the twentieth century, religion and class delineated cleavages in society that translated into the political realm through political parties (Bartolini and Mair, 1990). Yet, in the last decades some 'de-alignment' has been observed, giving rise

to the suggestion that a new structuring division has emerged which opposes the 'winners' and the 'losers' of globalization (Kriesi et al., 2012). Hernandez and Kriesi (forthcoming) show that this phenomenon is accelerated by the crisis in some Western European countries and also seen in the South of Europe. In Greece (Dinas and Rori, 2013; Vasilopoulou and Halikiopoulou, 2013), in Italy (Bordignon and Ceccarini, 2013), and in Spain (Chari, 2013; Martín and Urquizu-Sancho, 2012) citizens withdrew their support for the main political parties in the latest elections. Hence, Hernandez and Kriesi (forthcoming) argue that economic voting in some countries strongly hit by the crisis led to the collapse of the party system with the failure of all dominant parties, not only the incumbent, to attract votes. This loss of credibility and public support for the mainstream political parties led to the emergence of new challengers on the right and on the left, and to reinforcing existing radical right parties. Thus, the Great Recession resulted not only in the collapse of major parties – as voters punish the incumbent and turn away for the mainstream opposition – but also to the strengthening of smaller existing parties or the emergence of new parties.

The radical populist right has been gaining influence in Europe since the mid-1990s. In the shadow of the Great Recession some of the existing radical right populist parties have gained power, such as the Front National in France, while some others such as the Golden Dawn in Greece have emerged. However, the rise of radical right populist parties is related to the transformation of the party system and the reduced representative function of mainstream political parties. Thus, the emergence of the radical right is part of a long-term trend and is not due solely to the economic crisis, which may simply accelerate ongoing processes (Kriesi, 2014b; Mayer, 2014). Working class voters have decreasingly supported socialist parties as dissatisfaction with their policies has been growing, while structural changes resulting from the post-industrial transformation of the labor market has led to the demise of class-based identities (Mayer, 2014). Fear of downward mobility and increased intolerance towards immigrants has turned working class citizens away from the left and towards the populist right. Yet, this is most visible among those who lack a strong leftist ideology – the right-wing working class, those who associate with neither left nor right, those who are most politically disaffected – and among young people (Mayer, 2014). Berezin (2013) observes that voters are confronted with the inability of mainstream parties from the right and from the left to answer their demands for security in terms of employment, welfare protection, and cultural identities. Hence, populist parties seize the opportunity to mobilize on such issues. During the 2012

French presidential elections, for example, Marine Le Pen framed her discourse around economic issues and national preference, leading other political parties to admit she had identified the correct problems but had proposed the wrong solutions (Berezin, 2013). Thus, unaddressed fears related to social, economic, and cultural grievances drive support for the populist right from citizens who are most strongly hit by the economic crisis or who feel more threatened in losing their socio-economic status in times of crisis.

France and Greece are two cases in point, albeit with different modalities. In the French case, the radical right is set in a long-term trend of increased influence, whereas in the Greek case the emergence of Golden Dawn is more directly linked to the economic crisis and the related collapse of the two parties that have dominated the Greek political scene over recent decades. Although Golden Dawn has existed since the 1980s and been active in electoral politics since the early 1990s, the party obtained its first electoral breakthrough during the depth of the economic crisis that most severely hit Greece (Ellinas, 2013). Golden Dawn shares with other radical right populist parties a strong nationalism and an anti-immigration stance; it differs most notably in its use of political violence – racist attacks in the streets (Ellinas, 2013). Hence, the crisis may lead to political violence depending on the presence of organized groups ready to respond to citizens' grievances and to create turmoil on the streets. The Great Recession most strongly contributed to the rise of Golden Dawn in Greece by showing the economic incompetency of the dominant parties and their implications in the processes that led to the bailout of Greece. Furthermore, austerity measures stopped the clientelistic practices of political parties, which led to the loss of electoral support. The degree of citizens' dissatisfaction with both political elites and corruption practices was very high, leading to large protests in the street and to rising support for the populist radical right (Ellinas, 2013).

Concerning support for radical right populisms, we may thus expect the specific effects of the crisis to be related to the increased grievances of specific groups of citizens who remain unrepresented, and that these grievances will then be articulated by the populist right or in protest activities (Kriesi, 2014a, 2014b).

New political parties

The Great Recession has not only facilitated the electoral breakthrough of the populist right but also led to the emergence of new political parties. In Italy, for example, the convergence of the economic crisis and widespread and deeply-rooted dissatisfaction with the political elite created fertile grounds for the emergence of the populist *Movimento 5 Stelle*. This organization existed previously as an online activist network centered around its leader, former comedian Beppe Grillo, who also organized highly symbolic protest events in several Italian cities (Bordignon and Ceccarini, 2013). In 2009, the *Movimento 5 Stelle* became a contender in local elections in 2009 and obtained its first electoral success in 2010 at the local level. Since then, it has become the second largest parties in Italy. Citizens pertaining to the movement were, originally, highly educated youth living in cities and using the Internet more than average citizens, but as the movement won its first electoral success it drew closer to the average citizen (Bordignon and Ceccarini, 2013). Furthermore, followers of the *Movimento 5 Stelle* tend to be center-left, but they also face difficulties in situating themselves on the left-right axis as this pertains to old politics and, as the party grew, it attracted more voters from the center-right and protest voters taken from other parties, resulting in the party having now two main constituencies: one leftist and one rightist (Bordignon and Ceccarini, 2013). In addition, the party refuses to be positioned either on the right or on the left and holds an unconventional stance combining environmental protection, worker protection (but against trade unions), and anti-immigration positions, which makes it difficult to classify on the left-right axis. This corresponds to the broad trend related to a blurring of the left-right division and the increasing importance of the division between pro- and anti-European positions. Indeed, in Europe it appears that the radical right and left are converging on a number of issues: nationalism is shared by the radical right and left (Halikiopoulou et al., 2012) and the radical right embraces economic protectionism (Berezin, 2013; Halikiopoulou et al., 2012) and welfare chauvinism (de Koster et al., 2013). In addition, citizens who perceive cultural-ethnic threats, but also to some extent economic ethnic threats, are more likely to vote for the radical right (Lucassen and Lubbers, 2012). These trends may be reinforced by the economic crisis, although existing studies do not all consider the effect of the crisis on the economic positioning of the radical right.

During the 2011 regional election in Spain, citizens punished the incumbent (PSOE) and refused to some extent to support the main challengers (PP). The outcome of the election has

been interpreted as a punishment of the PSOE rather than as a success for the PP (Chari, 2013; Kennedy, 2012). In May 2011, *Bildu*, a regionalist party in the Basque Country, emerged as a political contender in the regional election (Barreiro and Sánchez-Cuenca, 2012). Additionally, in the general election of 2011 other new parties also gained political resonance in Spain: the UPyD, created in 2007 and led by a former PSOE MP; the *Compromiso Q* (or Equo), led by the former director of Greenpeace and the regional *Amaiur*, a Basque political party including former Batasuna members (see Martín and Urquiza-Sancho, 2012 for more on these parties). More recently, during the 2014 European election in Spain, the two main political parties received an 'electoral slap' when both the PSOE and the PP lost considerable vote share to smaller and emergent political parties. In particular, the newly created party *Podemos* attracted both citizens' votes and media attention.

The emergence of new political parties following the crisis in Southern European countries suggests that the crisis may result in a profound transformation of the political systems in some countries confronted with institutional crisis. However, it is too early to say whether citizens will continue to support these parties. In light of the existing research, we may expect that these parties will lose support as they participate actively in government (Corbetta and Vignati, 2013). In addition, support for new political parties is related to the fate of main contenders. Citizens may continue to support these new political parties if established political parties do not manage to bring their countries out of the recession.

Charismatic leadership

A further important dimension especially relating to populist parties is party leadership in general and the charisma of party leaders in particular. Kriesi and Pappas (forthcoming) define populism as a political strategy rather than focusing on populism's ideological dimension, and hence refer to the leader's charisma as a defining feature of populist parties. Populist parties present themselves as direct representatives of the people's will. Thus, studying the electoral success of Hugo Chavez in Venezuela, Weyland (2003: 825) stresses the importance of a charismatic leader in times of crisis: "people have particularly exalted hopes in prominent political leaders when facing severe crisis, whereas under more normal circumstances, expectations pinned on leaders – even those with good, promising track records – are quite moderate". We may thus expect charismatic leaders to become more influential in times of crisis and prolonged recession.

Charismatic leadership has been proved to play an important role in other contexts, for example in the case of Beppe Grillo and the *Movimento 5 Stelle*. The Italian leader presents himself as an outsider and a victim of the media system, which is seen as corrupt along with the political system and politicians, as a whistleblower denouncing the misdeeds of elected politicians and political parties, and as an indignant citizen fighting to be heard and represented (Bordignon and Ceccarini, 2013). He also is a constant and powerful presence in the movement since he owns the right to the image of the group and can exclude members who do not behave according to the rules of the party, which he has done in several occasions.

The growing popularity of a charismatic and powerful figure may be related to the crisis, since “[w]hen exogenous threats to the system occur, most people, independently of the ideological labels they espouse, are likely to retreat to ‘authority’, or, more colloquially put, pleas for law and order” (Berezin, 2009: 34). Thus, the Great Recession may increase the appeal of charismatic leaders who propose to solve economic and social problems through their own authority. Moreover, a radical right ideology can be characterized by a limited dedication to the rule of law, the division of power, and the defense of minorities' rights: an illiberal conception of democracy (Kriesi, 2014b).

The increased personalization of politics is a long-term trend in Europe. It is perhaps most visible in the Italian case with the highly prominent figure of Berlusconi over the last two decades, and in France with the 'omni-president' Sarkozy. However, a number of questions remain about how the Great Recession has contributed to this process. Future research should address how the combination of dormant political dissatisfaction and the economic downturn resulted in or accelerated trends related to the rise of both charismatic leaders and radical populist parties. In this context, the literature on personality and in particular on submission to authority provides important cues for hypotheses that could be tested in relation to the crisis (see Jost et al., 2003 for a literature review and meta-analysis). In addition, the literature on personality and politics also aids understanding how individual personalities relate to values in shaping vote choices (Caprara et al., 2006).

Summary of hypotheses on citizens' reactions to economic crises in the electoral arena

The review of the literature on citizens' electoral participation in times of crisis offers a broad spectrum of hypotheses related to economic grievances, blame assignment, representation, and also to the emergence of radical parties on the right and the left of the political spectrum. The main hypotheses can be summarized as follows below.

Hypotheses concerning economic grievances:

H_{EG1}: Citizens punish parties for economic downturn more strongly in times of crisis.

H_{EG2}: The dip in the economy must be substantial for economic voting to occur.

H_{EG3}: In times of crisis, citizens vote according to economic grievances rather than political ideology.

H_{EG4}: The social groups most strongly hit by the crisis are less likely to cast an economic vote.

Hypotheses concerning blame attribution:

H_{BA1}: Economic voting is more likely in times of crisis when citizens can identify who to blame, since they perceive that political parties could have done something else to manage the crisis, had a responsibility for the crisis, or are responsible for one's personal well-being.

H_{BA2}: Citizens do not punish the incumbents when they attribute the responsibility of the crisis to an external shock or to private interests.

Hypotheses concerning representation, responsiveness, and responsibility:

H_{RRR1}: In times of crisis, citizens punish political parties for submission to supra-national institutions and a lack of capacity to act on behalf of their countries' interests.

H_{RRR2}: In times of crisis, citizens punish political parties for long-lasting practices of corruption.

Hypotheses about shifting to the right or to the left of the political spectrum:

H_{RL1}: In the short-term of the economic crisis voters turn to the right, while in the long-term voters turn to the left.

H_{RL2}: The crisis accelerates the shift in votes from traditional parties to radical parties from either the right or the left.

Hypotheses concerning radical right populism:

H_{POP1}: In times of crisis, citizens are more likely to support political parties that hold an illiberal view of democracy.

H_{POP2}: Those most strongly hit by the crisis, as the ‘losers’ of globalization, will turn to the radical right or left.

H_{POP3}: The effect of the economic crises on the rise of the radical right (populism) depends on the context.

Hypotheses concerning new political parties:

H_{NNP1}: In times of crisis, citizens punish the perceived unresponsiveness of the main political parties by supporting new opponents or radical parties.

H_{NNP2} : In times of crisis, when main political parties are close to each other in the political spectrum and their respective positions cannot be distinguished from each other, citizens will vote for new opponents or radical parties.

Hypotheses concerning charismatic leadership:

H_{CL1}: In times of crisis, a charismatic leader attracts voters’ support because citizens seek authority and security.

Social movements and non-electoral participation

Reviewing work and advancing hypothesis for non-electoral participation is both easier and harder than for the electoral arena. It is easier insofar as the social movement literature begins from the assumption – implicitly or explicitly – that protest arises because people feel deprived in some way. It is harder precisely because this makes it more difficult to advance hypotheses that apply specifically to how citizens react in times of crises.

Students of social movements have explained the rise and fall of protest activities as a combination of three main factors: grievances, resources, and opportunities. Grievances refer to the level of discontent generated by social change or certain political decisions. Collective

behavior theories obviously stress this type of factor, disregarding the other two factors. Resources refer to the endogenous level of organization as well as the capacity to mobilize and allocate resources for collective action. Resource mobilization theory makes resources the dominant factor. Opportunities broadly refer to “options for collective action, with chances and risks attached to them, which depend on factors outside the mobilizing group” (Koopmans, 2004: 65).

These three factors can also be seen as succeeding each other in time: in order for collective action to occur (including protest activities carried out by social movements), a given social group first needs to be sufficiently aggrieved, then be able to gather and mobilize resources (material, human, symbolic, etc.), and finally to seize existing opportunities. Most importantly for our present purpose, we can use these three factors to suggest a number of hypotheses regarding the impact of economic crises on the social movement sector and on the propensity of citizens to engage in or withdraw from non-electoral forms of political participation.

Grievances

The simplest and most straightforward hypotheses are perhaps related to grievance theory. Long considered by students of social movements as misleading if not wrong, grievance (also known as collective behavior or breakdown) theories have regained some legitimacy in recent years (Buechler, 2004). Accusing rational-based approaches to collective action as having thrown the baby out with the bath water, *post-litteram* collective behavior scholars have stressed that grievances are at least a necessary – if not a sufficient – condition for collective action and protest activities to emerge.

Grievance theories assume that social movements form to the extent that people are discontented and subject to social stress (based on some relative deprivation). In terms of the impact of economic crises, this leads to a number of related hypotheses. Firstly, on a collective level, since economic crises are a major source of hardship and deprivation, one may in general expect protest to increase in times of crises and more general sustained recession, as opposed to periods of economic growth. Secondly, on an individual level, grievance theory leads to the prediction that those individuals who are most affected by the crisis are more likely to engage in protest activities. Thirdly, a related expectation,

somewhere between these two levels of analysis, is that those social groups most affected by the crisis are more likely to form social movements in response to the difficult economic conditions they experience. Thus, for example, migrants and the unemployed should be overrepresented in protests against the crisis, since they are particularly affected by it.

Yet, as the Occupy demonstrations suggest, economic crisis may provide the political space and motivation for the mobilization of those seeking to criticize perceived unjust patterns of wealth distribution in advanced capitalist democracies and to draw attention to the idea that not all sections of society bear the costs of economic crisis evenly. This can be most clearly seen in the rhetoric of the Occupy movement, which opposed what was perceived as the greedy, corrupt financial sector of 1% against the 99% of hard-working, law-abiding citizens. However, the Occupy movement has also been characterized in the media as being unrepresentative of the general population, with activists described as mostly drawn from the relatively secure, educated, liberal middle classes. It has been suggested that the real losers of the current economic crisis, those most hardly hit by the economic recession – the unemployed, for example – did not form part of this movement and stayed at home during the protests. Therefore, while economic crisis might have been the spur for political mobilization and the focus of the Occupy movement's rhetoric, it is questionable whether it is those people with the most serious grievances to redress who actually engage in protest action of this sort.

Resources

This leads us to discuss the role of resources. The shift from grievance-based to resource-based explanations represents a watershed in social movement theory. Proponents of the resource mobilization approach have stressed since the late 1960s that people engage in collective action and social movements not so much because they feel discontented but because they possess the resources to do so (Gamson, 1968; McCarthy and Zald, 1977). This makes discontent a necessary but insufficient condition for collective action. In the absence of resources, as well as opportunities, protest is not likely to be forthcoming. This leads to the general expectation that more resourceful individuals and social groups are more likely to engage in protests in times of crisis.

This raises the question of which resources are most helpful. Certain kinds of resource might prove particularly conducive to protest participation. Previous experience with political engagement is an important resource in this regard. Rüdig and Karyotis (2013), for example, have studied the causes of protest against austerity measures in Greece by means of survey data. They found that relative deprivation is a significant predictor of potential protest, but does not play any role in terms of who takes part in strikes or demonstrations. Previous protest participation is key when explaining actual participation. Thus, we may expect people who have previous experience with protest participation to be more likely to become involved in protest about economic crisis. More generally, the authors' study of mass opposition to austerity in Greece suggests that “different variables matter at different stages of the process: the drivers change as our focus shifts from explaining opposition to austerity to protest potential and, ultimately, actual protest participation” (Rüdig and Karyotis, 2013: 508). This resonates with Klanderman's (1988) distinction between consensus mobilization and action mobilization, whereby the factors explaining the former are not necessarily the same as the factors explaining the latter.

Previous experience with protest activities can be seen as providing civic skills favoring political participation. More generally, proponents of the resource model of political participation (Brady et al., 1995) pay special attention to three resources: time, money, and civic skills. Civic skills in particular are acquired in nonpolitical institutional settings such as the workplace, organizations, and churches. These resources, in turn, have a strong effect on political activity. A similar argument is advanced by proponents of the social capital approach (Putnam, 1993; Putnam, 2000), who argue that being previously embedded in voluntary associations provides social capital which, in turn, favors political participation, in addition to better government. This has been recently applied to underprivileged groups such as migrants (Morales and Pilati, 2011) and the unemployed (Lorenzini and Giugni, 2012) among others, for which such resources may be particularly important since these groups lack other kinds of resources for political mobilization. Thus, we may expect people who are strongly embedded in various kinds of (nonpolitical) organizations and voluntary associations to be more likely to engage in protest activities in times of crisis than those who are less well connected. This may be the case because being embedded in such organizations provides civic skills, social capital, or both.

In addition to previous experience with protest activities or organizational embeddedness, symbolic resources may also help establishing a relationship between economic crisis and recession on the one hand, and the emergence of protest during hard times on the other. In terms of scholarship on social movements, this type of resource has been stressed by framing theory. Framing is a fourth main explanatory factor part of the analytical tool of social movement scholars, in addition to grievances, resources, and opportunities. Framing “focuses attention on the signifying work or meaning construction engaged in by social-movement activists and participants and other parties (e.g. antagonists, elites, media, counter movements) relevant to the interests of social movements and the challenges they mount” (Snow, 2004: 384; see also Benford and Snow, 2000).

According to this view, in the absence of the construction of grievances and relative deprivation as social or political problems which can be redressed through political action – but also without the organizational structures, resources, and political opportunities necessary to mobilize and effect political change – the experience of economic hardship or other forms of disadvantage on their own are unlikely to lead to political participation. On this line of argument, the experience of economic recession and more specifically, the costs and pressures experienced by individuals suffering economic hardship and austerity, are more likely to push them to remove themselves from political engagement rather than mobilize them to political action. We may thus expect involvement in protest activities among those who are particularly affected by economic crises to be more likely when they are able to frame their situation as a social or political problem. This includes blame attribution, which we discussed above, and more generally identifying a source of injustice, which was shown in previous research to play a significant role in explaining protest behavior (Gamson et al., 1982).

Opportunities

Both the general public and the media often share a grievance explanation of protest, especially radical or violent forms of protest: people protest because they are unhappy and less well off than they used to be. In contrast, political opportunity theorists stress that grievances alone do not suffice and social movements need an opportunity to form and mobilize (Kriesi, 2004; Tarrow, 2011). This leads to the general hypothesis, paralleling the first we advanced for each of the other two main explanatory factors, that protest in times of crisis should be more likely if and when opportunities arise in the institutionalized political

arenas. Such opportunities may take the form of changing political alignments, the emergence of an institutional ally, or sudden expressions of repression on the part of the state (furthermore, a specific hypothesis could be advanced for each of these aspects).

Although scholars have stressed the input side – how open or closed the political system is, the configuration of political alignments, the state’s capacity and propensity for exerting repression – public policy can also be considered part of the political opportunity structure opening up of closing down options for collective action (Meyer, 2004). Recent works have argued that it is not so much the fact of experiencing the crises and their associated hard times that spurs protest, but the policies and measures enacted by political elites in relation to the crisis (Beissinger, 2014; Kriesi, 2014a). More generally, “*dramatic political reactions to the Great Recession were associated less with the direct economic repercussions of the crisis than with government initiative to cope with those repercussions*” (Bermeo and Bartels, 2014a: 4 emphasis in original). Thus, we may expect protest in times of crisis to be related to policy measures and in particular to austerity measures, in response to the crisis rather than to its effect on individual conditions.

Kriesi (2014a) advances a further hypothesis concerning the impact of the context. He maintains that protest addressing austerity measures is more likely to emerge when no other institutional channels are available. He refers in particular to the existence of direct democratic instruments, but the argument can be made more general by including other institutional and conventional channels of interest inter-mediation such as neo-corporatist arrangements and the possibility of acting through lobbying. Accordingly, we may expect contentious reactions to hardship to be stronger in contexts where no other institutional channels for expressing discontent are available.

The crucial role of context is also stressed by recent work, based on protest survey data, on participants in mass demonstrations within various European countries. For example, Ketelaars (forthcoming) shows that the instrumental motivations of anti-austerity participants depend on the political context in which these events are staged. The author finds in particular that depending on the political context, the participants’ expectation to be politically decisive increases, which in turn reinforces their instrumental motivations. This study suggests that we need to take into account the possible mediating effects of perceived political efficacy on the

relationship between government stance and instrumental motivations to participate in anti-austerity demonstrations.

In the same way that framing can be seen as a way to put to use symbolic resource, hence bridging grievance and resource mobilization theories and explanations, students of social movements have also stressed how collective action frames and political opportunities may interact (Diani, 1996; Gamson and Meyer, 1996). A recent example of work on this topic is provided by Cristancho (forthcoming) in his study of contentious responses to anti-austerity policy in Spain. The author shows the importance of social movements and unions in framing the crisis and emphasizing different dimensions of the conflict. Furthermore, his findings suggest a relevant role for parties in providing ideological cues for making sense of the crisis and the role of governments in austerity policy. This is because he finds that partisan attachments are related to accounts of blame for the crisis and are consequently a central factor in shaping individual understandings that can lead to choice between potential solutions. This would suggest the expectation that contentious reactions to the crisis are more likely when oppositional parties succeed in framing the crises in terms of the specific responsibilities of the government.

Who protests in times of crisis?

The various strands of scholarship on social movements discussed previously have traditionally focused on explaining why movements emerge and how they unfold, but have devoted less time and space to studying their 'content', that is, which kinds of movements emerge under which conditions and what their social composition is. Certainly, scholars have not remained silent in this regard. For example, from a macro-perspective, Kriesi et al. (1995) account for the relative weight of old and new social movements in terms of the strength of traditional as opposed to new cleavages. Similarly, from a micro-perspective, the discussion about the class-bases of social movements (Kriesi, 1989) and more specifically of the core constituency of the new social movements being created by 'middle class radicals' (Cotgrove and Duff, 1980) deals with movements' social composition. Also, many works in the political participation tradition examine the social composition of protest actions (Norris et al., 2005). Yet, explaining who protests has not been central for scholarly work in this field. That is why we treat separately this fourth and last aspect concerning how citizens' react to economic crises in the non-electoral arena.

European scholarship has distinguished between 'old' (i.e. labor) and 'new' (i.e. environmental peace, women's, etc.) movements. These two types of movement have often been contrasted in terms of their social bases, organizational forms, and value orientations. In particular, new social movement theory has stressed the novel characteristics of movements emerging in the late 1960s and early 1970s (Buechler, 1995; Pichardo, 1997). On this view, economic growth and wealth favors the emergence of movements stressing non-material issues such as environmental protection, collective identities, individual emancipation and based on post-materialist values (Inglehart, 1977). By contrast, periods of economic hardship would be associated with a resurgence of movements addressing materialistic needs such as economic redistribution. As a result, in times of crises one should observe a growth of old social movement and more specifically, of the labor movement.

Relating to the suggestion that people protest not so much in response to the difficult economic conditions created by the crisis, but rather to proposed government policies relates to it, a growing body of literature examines anti-austerity protests (Gamson and Sifry, 2013; Giugni and Grasso, forthcoming; Pickerill and Krinsky, 2012). These protests explicitly address governments' austerity measures in their claims. Students of social movements have recently begun to inquire about who takes part in these protests as well as about the socio-demographic characteristics (including the class basis) and the political values of participants in anti-austerity protests. The latter present a number of differences with participants in other types of movements. For example, a higher share of citizens with working class occupations or working class identity takes part in anti-austerity demonstrations (Hylmö and Wennerhag, forthcoming). Similarly, in terms of political values, anti-austerity movement participants are closer to new social movement participants concerning the economic left-right dimension, while being different from both old and new movement participants concerning the social authoritarian-libertarian dimension (Giugni and Grasso, 2013). However, these works generally tend to conclude that anti-austerity protesters are not fundamentally different from the core constituency of the new social movements. In particular, Hylmo and Wennerhag (forthcoming) conclude that the recent wave of anti-austerity protests in Europe has brought the lower classes to the streets and these protests still attract mainly the well-educated middle class. We may therefore expect that economic crises do not bring into the streets fundamentally different constituencies than during periods of economic growth.

Summary of hypotheses on citizens' reactions to economic crises in the non-electoral arena

In summary, we may advance the following hypotheses concerning citizens' reactions to economic crises in the non-electoral arena.

Grievance-based hypotheses:

H_{G1}: Protest increases in times of economic crisis and recession.

H_{G2}: People who are most affected by the crisis are more likely to engage in protest activities.

H_{G3}: Social groups that are most affected by the crisis are more likely to form social movements in response to the difficult economic conditions.

Resource-based hypotheses:

H_{R1}: More resourceful individuals and social groups are more likely to engage in protest during times of crisis.

H_{R2}: People who have previous experience with protest participation should be more likely to become involved in protest about economic crisis.

H_{R3}: People who are strongly embedded in various kinds of (nonpolitical) organizations and voluntary associations are more likely to engage in protest activities in times of crisis than those who are less well connected.

H_{R4}: Involvement in protest activities among those who are particularly affected by economic crises is more likely when these people are able to frame their situation as a social or political problem.

Opportunity-based hypothesis:

H_{O1}: Protest in times of crisis is more likely if and when opportunities arise in the institutionalized political arenas.

H_{O2}: Protest in times of crisis is related to policy measures in response to the crisis rather than to its effect on individual conditions.

H_{O3}: Contentious reaction to hardship is stronger in contexts where no other institutional channels for expressing discontent are available.

H_{O4}: The relationship between government stance and participation in anti-austerity demonstrations is mediated by the perception of political efficacy.

H_{O5}: Contentious reactions to the crisis are more likely when oppositional parties succeed in framing the crises in terms of specific responsibilities of the government.

Hypotheses concerning who protests in times of crisis:

H_{WP1}: Protest by old social movements, more specifically by the labor movement, increases in times of crisis.

H_{WP2}: Economic crises do not bring into the streets fundamentally different constituencies compared to periods of economic growth.

Conclusion

In this chapter we have reviewed research on electoral and non-electoral political participation with the aim of offering a research agenda for the study of citizens' political reactions to the Great Recession. We discussed how scholars have studied current trends in citizens' political participation and we identified thirty hypotheses addressing citizens' political reactions in the shadow of the Great Recession. At the most general level, these hypotheses cover three types of reactions (or no reaction): the political mobilization of citizens, citizens' withdrawal from politics, and the absence of reaction. In conclusion, we summarize expectations according to these three types of reaction.

The mobilization hypothesis is based on the assumption that grievances are expected to lead to political mobilization. More specifically, grievances can foster protest activities and, to some extent, also electoral mobilization. However, resources play a key role in determining who among those hit by the crisis will engage politically. Research has shown that those citizens most vulnerable to economic downturns are also less sophisticated politically and less likely to cast an economic vote (Curtis, 2014; Duch and Sagarzazu, 2014) or to take to the street to express their grievances (Hylmö and Wennerhag, forthcoming; Rüdig and Karyotis, 2013). Moreover, the context plays an important role in this respect since the countries have been hit to different degrees by the crisis and economic downturn needs to be substantial in order to result in massive electoral punishment of incumbents or in a profound restructuring of the political system through the rise of new political parties representing specific social groups (Hernández and Kriesi, forthcoming; Nezi, 2012). The extent that mainstream parties are punished electorally depends on prior governing and economic trends as well as on prior

dissatisfaction with the political system. In addition, civil society organizations mediate the extent to which citizens feel represented and capable of expressing their dissatisfaction. The extent to which trade unions have adapted to the post-industrial labor market and developed new tools to represent the interests and defend the rights of atypical workers also contributes to explaining the political mobilization of citizens in times of crisis. Moreover, new social movements fighting for inclusiveness, equality, and ecological sustainability may be less attractive in times of crisis, unless they are able to mobilize their core constituencies on economic issues rather than focusing on cultural issues.

Fewer studies have worked on the withdrawal hypothesis. The electoral consequences of the crisis have mostly been analyzed in terms of economic voting, punishing the incumbents, and in terms of protest voting, voting for challengers from the radical right or left as well as for new parties. Yet, it may be that the crisis increased dissatisfaction with political elites and, in turn, led to political abstention instead of driving political engagement. The same applies to protest activities: in times of crisis citizens may become more apathetic. Citizens may withdraw in order to focus on solving personal economic problems or address collective economic problems through other means than protest activities. Since new social movements tend to focus on cultural issues, the resurgence of economic issues as central lines of dissatisfaction among citizens may either be an opportunity to mobilize or it may result in a reduced capacity to mobilize citizens due to a lower salience of the issues around which they usually mobilize. In addition, the rise in alternative forms of action and solidarity in countries most strongly hit by the crisis attests to the growing demands for self-help groups and alternative venues to enact solidarity practices. However, it remains to be ascertained whether they also result in growing protest activities or in withdrawal from them in favor of some alternative forms of social and political engagement.

The hypothesis that economic crises do not produce any change in citizens' political engagement leads to the expectation that citizens continue to vote to the extent and in the same way as they did prior to the crisis, while citizens who either abstained or protested also continue to do so as they did before. In this case, the crisis would not be a trigger of specific political reactions by ordinary citizens. Indeed, recent research shows that, on the whole, citizens did not react to the Great Recession as much as expected (Bermeo and Bartels, 2014b). Moreover, some have argued that radicalization, in terms of support for radical right

parties, is part of a long-term trend that may or may not be strengthened by the crisis (Hernández and Kriesi, forthcoming; Mayer, 2014). More generally, in studying the consequences of economic crises it is important to distinguish between their short-term and long-term effects (Lindvall, 2014). So far, research has focused on the short-term consequences as the crisis and its effects are still unfolding. However, future research should aim to distinguish between short-term and long-term effects. This holds in particular to the emergence of new political parties and new forms of protest as these may be immediate but ephemeral responses to the crisis.

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4. Theoretical and methodological considerations about alternative forms of resilience in times of crises

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Introduction

Public responses to economic and political threats, as seen in the recent crisis, vary. In this chapter we concentrate on those public responses manifested in alternative forms of economic and noneconomic activities by citizens confronting hard economic times and falling rights, especially since the global financial crisis of 2008.

This crisis has impacted heavily on millions of EU and US citizens due to increases in unemployment, a decrease in credit access, cuts in social provisions, changes in consumption practices and gloomy prospects for the future of citizens' children. These austerity impacts have led to transformations in citizens' practices (from adapted to alternative), which allow their future survival (Conill, Castells, Cardenas and Servon 2012).

World-wide and increasingly, citizens have responded to economic threats posed by the economic crisis of 2008 by engaging in alternative economic and noneconomic activities meeting basic and increasing needs linked to food, shelter, health, childcare and education, which are no longer covered by the respective social policies. These alternative public actions and initiatives of resilience include: solidarity-based exchanges and networks, cooperative structures, barter clubs and networks, credit unions, ethical banks, time banks, alternative social currency, citizens' self-help groups, presumption practices, social enterprises, and others.

Related studies keep a limited focus on alternative structures, which arise to meet urgent basic needs such as food (e.g. Lambie-Mumford, 2012; Sonnino and Griggs-Trevarthen, 2012; Phillips, 2012), shelter (e.g. Kaika, 2012), health (e.g. Stuckler and McKee, 2011; Phua, 2011) and education for citizens (Conill et al. 2012), but especially for vulnerable groups such as children, immigrants and the elderly who are need support to face the crisis. Furthermore, as seen in the solidarity-bases works, studies on more vulnerable groups and gender are fewer and based on experiences from developing countries (e.g. Pearson and Sweetman, 2011).

Such studies tend to center on national or regional spaces. They focus on innovative practices (e.g. clubes de trueque) which sprang up during economic crises in Argentina and other regions of the global south, but also of the global north before and after the crisis of 2008. These include the decade long SOL social currency project promoting solidarity economy in France; regional currency support by NGOs in Germany aiming to support local economies; the flourishing of local currencies and barter networks in austerity stricken Greece and Spain; the alternative cashless production and exchange systems Local Exchange Trading Systems (LETS) in the UK; and ethical banks promoting ethical commitment, ideology and principles. These alternative forms of resilience are reflected in the strengthening of social networks and community practices to foster solidarity in the face of crises, change of lifestyles towards more sustainable forms of consumption and production, the development of new artistic expressions and moving abroad for short or long durations (or on the contrary, reducing mobility).

Alternative forms of resilience (AFR) depict the changing interactions between publics and policies, especially since the 2008 crisis. At the same time they carve out a new type of politics through the creation of bottom-up participatory initiatives promoting a ‘solidarity economy’, as seen in countries confronting crises in the past. These new expressions of engagement, in a wide repertoire of practices by citizens - which are non-capitalist/ related and outside of established markets - facilitate their survival through reciprocity and networking with other communities facing similar problems. More importantly however, these alternative forms of resilience simultaneously foster and facilitate a new form of political engagement/participation aimed to strengthen open, democratic forms of governance. They may stem from social movements, labour unions, or other associative structures.

The chapter offers a preliminary review of the related literature, focused on the conceptual, theoretical and methodological approaches applied, with emphasis placed on the more recent works since the 2008 crisis. Its ultimate aim is to identify major politically oriented features and aspects within a political process perspective that could guide the future research on alternative forms of resilience under the LIVEWHAT project.

Alternative Forms of Resilience in a Solidarity Economy: a historical-political and policy perspective

A rich literature⁷, in French, Spanish and English, has been developing on the ‘social economy’, ‘human economy’, ‘third sector’ and ‘solidarity economy’ - herein called solidarity economy⁸, given its pluriactive character in the current crisis⁹. All terms refer to the wide repertoire of non-capitalist/non-mainstream and alternative economic practices which are usually initiated worldwide by citizens groups and networks in their attempt to confront and survive hard economic times. Mostly focused on social and economic justice issues (e.g. Salamon and Ahheier, 1995; Laville, 2010; Allard and Matthaëi, 2008), this literature has paid limited attention to political concerns (e.g. North, 2007; Ould Ahmed, 2014).

The historical-political context

In a brief but lucid and articulate historical presentation a couple of years before the onset of the current economic crisis, Moulaert and Ailenei (2005) trace these alternative practices as far back as their ancient Egyptian, Greek and Roman roots (citing Defourny and Develtere, 1997; Demoustier, 2001). The authors elected nevertheless to concentrate on the period since the medieval era given the rich associative life of Europe, but also in Byzantium, the Muslim countries, India, Africa and America (Moulaert and Ailenei, 2005). They propose that, "...each epoch has its own socioeconomic conditions bringing subsequent opportunities and challenges to the lien solidaire (solidarity bond) which it produced when the economic growth engine starts to stutter, formal distribution mechanisms begin to fail and new social forces develop and give rise to alternative institutions and mechanisms of solidarity and redistribution as a means of addressing the failures of the institutions of the socioeconomic movements to guarantee solidarity among economic agents" (Moulaert and Ailenei, 2005:2038).

Thus, reflecting a concern comparable to that of political opportunities and threats by political process scholars studying social movements, Moulaert and Ailenei (2005) offer a promising historically-based perspective for the study of the solidarity economy, pointing to the

⁷ See journals such as *Revue internationale de l'économie sociale (RECMA)* founded in 1921 - <http://www.recma.org/>

⁸Term used by one of the oldest such movements in Latin America, coined by Chilean professor of philosophy Luis Razeto (Ould Ahmed, 2014)

⁹ As was the case after the Latin American economic crisis in the late nineties.

importance of structural economic threats. They argue that waves of ‘*économie sociale*’ and solidarity practices have emerged and re-emerged, especially since the industrial revolution/19th century, in reaction to economic threats, exploitative relations and poverty faced by considerable segments of populations. The associations, co-operatives and other alternative/social economy structures that arose across Europe and were subsequently institutionalized at the closing of the 19th/start of 20th century were simultaneously influenced by eighteenth and nineteenth century utopian socialism, Christian socialism, and the liberal movement – reflecting also the importance of cultural factors (Defourny and Develtere, 1997).

Three generations of social economy structures have been linked to the three large pre-WWII crises (Bouchard et al., 2000 in Moulaert and Ailenei, 2005). The first generation refers to “those of the 1840s-1850s transition from the old regulation (via craftsmen corporations) to competitive regulation, leading to mutual support organisations (*mutuelles*) as a form of resistance of craftsmen workers”. The second generation is comprised “of the agricultural co-operatives and the saving cooperatives that rose in reaction to the crisis (1873–95) of the extensive regime of accumulation with heavy investments in agriculture and natural resources”. The third generation sprang “from the economic collapse of 1929–32 and was mostly a product of the crisis in competitive regulation. The consumption cooperatives for food and housing supported workers and unemployed people, allowing them to secure goods and services at prices they could afford” (Moulaert and Ailenei, 2000:2041).

The post-war period witnessed new reactions, this time to the crisis of the mass-production system, from the 1970s alternative movement incorporating the rise of co-operative and ecological actions and the ‘small is beautiful’ local development schemes, offering alternatives to state services and encouraging social bond strengthening within communities. In the 1980s and 1990s high unemployment, public finance crisis and decreasing welfare state provisions facilitated the creation of alternative structures such as *entreprises d’insertion* and worker-owned cooperatives and reactions against neo-liberal and individualistic ideology (Lipietz, 2003; Bouchard et. al., 2000 in Moulaert and Ailenei 2000).

The social and solidary economy movements of the post-war period which first flourished especially in France and Latin America, spread to the UK, the US, Africa and Asia, while developing strong links and networks between them – e.g. with the British human economy

movement – but not yet with the US ones (Ould Ahmed, 2014). Scientific networks have been established especially in francophone, South American and African regions¹⁰ and international conferences and forums have been organized worldwide¹¹.

The policy context

AFR's relationship to state policies has been twofold. On one hand, and more importantly, state policies have been a major determining factor influencing the creation of AFRs, as major economic threats to populations (Almeida, 2007). This is manifested either through the imposition of harsh austerity policies, or through the dismantling/withdrawal – gradual or sudden – of social policies supporting economic and social rights.

On the other hand, and to a more limited extent, upon inception or once they are established, AFRs seek to or have exerted an influence on state/supra-state policies. Such public policy objectives of alternative practices are becoming more visible. In Brazil, a National Secretariat for Solidarity Economy was established under the Ministry of Labor and Employment, inspired by the thousands of 'barter clubs' (*clubes de trueque*) that were created in Argentina as a strategy to cope with the crisis (Primavera, 2010).

Recent calls by activists of the British movement (Hart et al., 2010) point to the need to strengthen alliances of grassroots groups in order to harness not only voluntary reciprocity but public policy, while *Alliance 21* takes a more developmental path, stressing the need for measuring and assessing SSE activities, being politically recognized, establish an international lobby at UNDP, and pressuring national and international authorities such as UNO, WTO, towards policies of intervention that incorporate SSE as integral part of sustainable development (Fraisie et al., in Ould Ahmed, 2014).

The relationship between SSE and EU policies has been of particular concern to a group of SSE works (e.g. Defourny and Nyssens, 2010; Alix, 1993; Alix, 2012; European Parliament, 2011)

¹⁰ Such as: EMES Emergence des Entreprises Sociales en Europe, RILESS (Red de Investigadores Latinoamericanos de Economia Social y Solidaria), CRISES (Centre de Recherche sur les Innovations Sociales in Quebec), PSES3 (Pôle de Socio-économie Solidaire) and REMESS (Réseau Marocain d'Économie Sociale et Solidaire), (Ould Ahmed 2014:2-3)

¹¹ Including: Globalisation of Solidarity (Lima, 1997 and Québec, 2001); which became the RIPESS (Réseau Intercontinental de Promotion de l'Économie Sociale et Solidaire) (Dakar, 2005, Luxembourg 2009); the World Social Forum, Brazil 2001–2003, India 2004, Kenya 2007, and other cities; and FBES (Forum Brésilien de l'Économie Solidaire), active in most Brazilian cities (Laville et. al., 2005 in Ould Ahmed, 2014:2-3).

given the 1990s' EC acknowledgement of social economy as a sector and a specific form of governance based on cooperation as defined by a network of people (Alix, 2013). Such initiatives have trickled down to the country level, as seen in the 2011 Spanish Law on Social Economy and EU's Small Business Act (Julia and Chaves, 2012) and the recent social economy initiatives in Greece (Nasioulas, 2012).

However, despite recent calls for the importance of SSE and a plural economic system since the 2008 economic crisis (Stiglitz, 2009), it is argued that EU law approaches SSE and the third sector as market failures. There appear to be no specific EU legal frameworks for multi-stakeholder initiatives, for public or collective management and proprietorship, or for the hybridization of resources within the same organization (Alix, 2012). Scientific activists therefore propose a renewal of the SSE perspective through a 'Commons approach' following Ostrom (2010) (Alix, 2012).

Based on the above, very limited knowledge exists from secondary and theoretical works on the political character of alternative socio-economic practices, including the profile, frames and aims of the participants and alternative organizational structures, the collaborations and links to informal networks, formal institutions and associations as well as to social movement organizations. The lack of such studies is especially prominent on AFRs during the current crisis.

Empirical Studies on AFR

Empirical studies on alternative forms of resilience to economic hardship include a great variety of forms of action, locus and geographical coverage. Despite methodological variation, most studies adopt an exploratory approach in order to describe, understand or generalize trends on collective action, community solidarity, reciprocity, citizenship and agency issues, or their intersections.

There is a plethora of actions which have attracted scholars' interest: solidarity bartering (Fernández, 2009), Local Exchange Trading Schemes – LETS- (Granger et. al., 2010), local currencies (North, 2013; Seyfang and Longhurst, 2013; Schroeder, 2013; Sahakian, 2014), ethical banks (Cowton, 2006; San-Jose et al., 2011; Tischer, 2013; Cornee and Szafarz, 2013),

local market cooperatives (Phillips, 2012), cooperatives for the supply of social services, e.g. in health and education (Costa et. al., 2012), alternative forms of production (Corrado, 2010), critical consumption (Fonte, 2013), spontaneous actions of resistance and reclaim (Dalakoglou, 2012) and the reproduction of cultural knowledge via oral and artistic expression (Barkin, 2012; Lamont et al., 2013).

Interestingly, while some studies concentrate on one specified form of action or sector type, others do not. Representing examples of the first case, Corrado (2010) examines the peasant seed networks of alternative agro-food systems, while Fonte (2013) studies consumer networks which support buying products directly from producers on ethical and solidarity grounds. As regards the second case, Barkin (2012) studies local community cooperative structures across various sectors, from food production and energy to ecotourism and handicrafts; Sotiropoulou (2012) examines alternative currencies together with exchange networks, free bazaars and several *sui generis* schemes of solidarity action; and Papadaki (2014) reviews all different forms of social support and solidarity under the economic crisis in a single locality – Chania, Crete, Greece.

In addition, there seems to be a connection between the type of action and the environments where they are taking place. Actions which are developed in rural environments address issues of resource management and agricultural production (Barkin, 2012; Corrado, 2010). Actions undertaken in urban environments are bound to the socio-spatial dynamics of the city, thus involving actions of reclaim (Dalakoglou, 2012) or consumption behaviours (Fonte, 2013).

One can observe a wide spectrum of methodological approaches being used in the study of alternative forms of collective action. Barkin (2012) adopts an ethnographic approach on traditional and preservation techniques, while interviewing techniques among the participants of solidarity networks and alternative collectivities are more popular among scholars (Fonte, 2013; Lamont, 2013; North, 2013).

Case studies based on descriptive or historiographic methodologies are also found, such as: Corrado's research on Réseau Semences Paysannes' agro-food association (2010) in France; Phillips' study of the food cooperative in the City Market in Burlington (2012); Granger et al.'s (2010) study on the Totnes LETS scheme (the 'Acorn') in a small market town in Devon, UK; and Sahakian's (2014) case studies on complementary currencies in Argentina, Japan and

Switzerland. Last but not least, there is Primavera's (2010) review of social currencies and barter networks with a global perspective.

Among the quantitative approaches, media analysis – i.e. action focused content analysis of the press – has been used in a recent study in Greece (Papadaki, 2014), while of particular interest are studies with a comparative perspective, such as Costa et. al.'s (2012) evaluation of the efficiency and profitability of social cooperatives among Italian regions by adopting principal component analysis to economic and financial indexes, or North's (2013) comparison of different contexts of alternative currencies' adoption at the supranational level – i.e. in Germany, UK and the USA. On the other side, a multi-method approach seems to be appropriate for cases in which the forms of action under study vary in a degree that necessitates a combination of fieldwork research and secondary data analysis. Examples here are Sotiropoulou's (2012) study which combines qualitative and quantitative techniques (interviews, survey, participant observation, text analysis) in order to classify small scale alternative production and consumption patterns; Petropoulou's (2013) study, which combines interviews with blog and website analysis to identify networks and collectivities which contribute in materializing a solidarity-cooperative economy; and a study by Seyfang and Longhurst (2013), which draws on documentary analysis and key informant interviews among academics and practitioners in their international scoping study of community currencies.

A broad geographical coverage characterizes the academic interest on alternative forms of resilience, especially in communities exposed to intense economic hardship. The South American economic crisis of 2002/late nineties triggered interest in studying Argentina (Fernández, 2009; Primavera, 2010) and Brazil (Lamont et al., 2013), while the recent global economic crisis urged scholars to study countries of Southern Europe, such as Italy (Costa et al., 2012, Fonte, 2013), Spain (Conill et al., 2012) and Greece (Dalakoglou, 2012; Sotiropoulou, 2012; Pautz and Kominou, 2013; Petropoulou, 2013; Papadaki 2014).

Nevertheless, alternative forms of collective action and solidarity networks are not always directly related to the impacts of economic crises but also to alternatives to existing economic practices. There are a number of studies which focus on the social strategies of building community bonds, local knowledge systems and new networks of social interaction. Barkin (2012) studies collective capacities, illustrating how inherited cultural knowledge promotes

community well-being and the protection of ecosystems, thus delineating an alternative path of sustainable local development. Corrado (2010) focuses on the emergence of new relationships among producers, consumers, and organizations with the aim of re-qualifying food as a common good instead of a commodity, while Lamont et al. (2013) observe how cultural repertoires contribute in bolstering collective identity.

Most studies following the 2008 economic crisis however, link alternative forms of resilience to crises' frameworks, thus placing the enhancement of local economy at the forefront. Hence, Costa et al.'s (2012) study on regional social cooperatives focuses on their role in terms of economic and financial performance. San-Jose et al. (2009, 2011) focus on the differentiation between ethical banks and the rest of credit institutions by developing a four-concepts index, which they call the Radical Affinity Index. North (2013) examines different scenarios of creating localized economies and Phillips (2012) looks at the potential of achieving economic self-sufficiency via cooperative development. In an anti-neoliberal vein, Conill et al. (2012) witness major dissatisfaction with capitalism and its trappings and trace a wide repertoire of non-capitalist economic practices based on altruism, non-monetary exchange and cooperation.

Other post-2008 studies connect alternative forms of resilience with the politics of the crisis, i.e. with issues of public resistance to austerity and collective tactics of recovery, without however offering the related systematic empirical data. Such studies record the influx of human resources into projects of alternative actions of public reclaim at the grassroots level such guerrilla gardening initiatives (Dalakoglou and Vradis, 2011) or more aggressive forms of actions such as collective supermarkets' expropriation as a symbolic means of wealth redistribution (Pautz and Kominou, 2013).

Conceptual and theoretical approaches to the study of Alternative Forms of Resilience

Alternative forms of resilience are nonmainstream/capitalist economic and noneconomic practices through which citizens build community resilience when confronted with hard economic times through austerity policies, decreasing social welfare policies and threatened economic and social rights. More specifically, the paradigm of comprehensive alternative economy or free, constructed (not inherited), democratic (not philanthropic/charity) solidarity (Laville, 2006:609-610 in Ould Ahmed), is based on six main criteria:

1. Non-economic concerns of economic practices (related to the environment, health, and other social justice and welfare issues)
2. Rejection of competitive individualism of capitalist societies
3. Promotion of self-management of production
4. Economic empowerment of the excluded/disadvantaged groups
5. Political and economic equality
6. Freedom of choice in solidarity action participation

(Ould Ahmed, 2014:5)

Moving to the concept of ‘resilience’, this has been defined “as the capacity to rebound from adversity strengthened and more resourceful. It is an active process of endurance, self-righting, and growth in response to crisis and challenge...resilience is forged through openness to experiences and interdependence with others” (Walsh, 2006:4-5)¹². In the past few years following the crisis however, studies have moved beyond the level of the individual and the family to that of collective resilience aimed to confront the failing social policies and social rights, to foster participatory democracy and collaboration, and to develop empowerment, common purpose and collective wisdom (Murray and Zautra, 2012). Works have also shifted their focus from developing regions to developed regions.

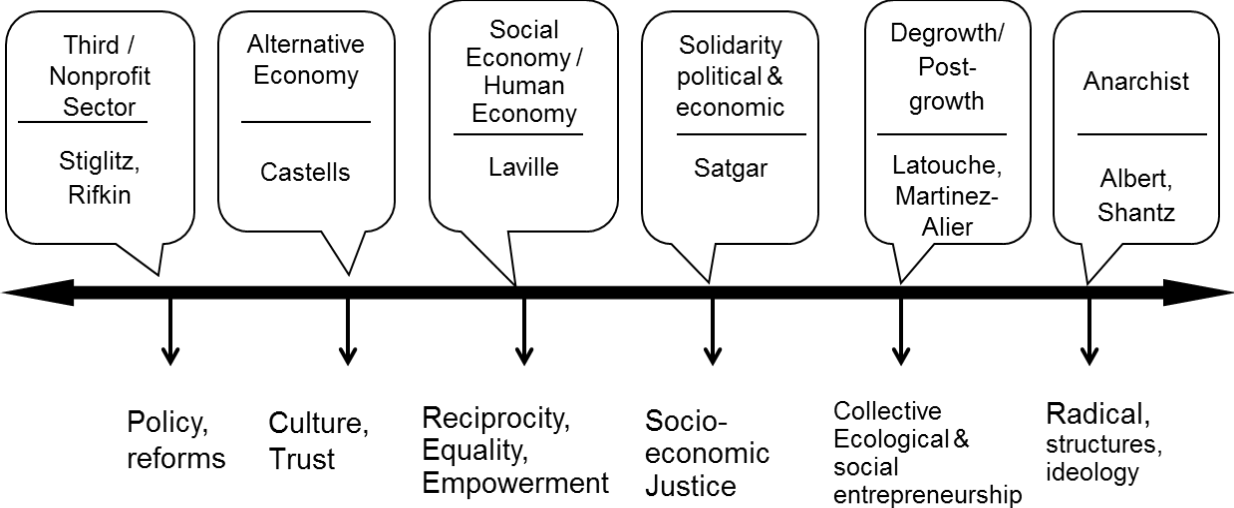
Recent studies on crisis and resilience focus on groups and communities, regions or countries, pointing out: ways in which collaborative processes can lead to resilience through building trust and interdependence (Goldstein, 2012); the critical role of relatives, friends and mutual solidarity groups in 17 developing nations (Heltberg, Hossain, Reva and Turk, 2012); the importance of manufacturing employment in shaping regional resilience (Davies, 2011); the resilience of engagement and participation in UK poor disadvantaged communities (Hancock, Mooney and Neal, 2012). Critical works on the concept of resilience and its use in policy and academic fields note, on the basis of research in the UK, that it shifts responsibility away from

¹² Most studies on resilience focus on children, youth and families (Ungar, 2012), and the effects of crisis on children (Walsh, 2006). “ ‘Family resilience’ refers to coping and adaptational processes in the family as a functional unit” (Walsh, 2006:15).

the public sphere, while highlighting people’s ability to ‘bounce back’ and downplaying the related costs (e.g. Harrison, 2012).

A variety of conceptual and theoretical approaches have been engaged in understanding and interpreting these alternative forms of resilience which have been revived under the recent crisis. They range from a more reformist to radical ones, as seen in a preliminary categorization scheme below.

Figure 1. Theoretical approaches to the study of AFR: from reformist to radical



The term ‘third sector’ was especially promoted by Rifkin in the mid-nineties, referring to all non-public and non-profit oriented activities. This has been also supported by Stiglitz (2009), following the recent crisis. The Anglo-American conception, which places emphasis on the voluntary and non-statutory sector differs from that of continental Europe and Latin America which also includes co-operative and mutual support organizations (Moulaert and Ailenei, 2005; Ould Ahmed 2014).

Culture shapes the economy, argue Castells, Caraca and Cardoso (2012) and thus trust - build in networks by social support and personal contact - is vital for engaging in alternative economic practices (Conill, Castells, Cardenas and Servon 2012). These alternative economic activities are based on different values concerning the meaning of everyday life and they are one of four

different layers of the economy following the US and EU crisis. According to Castells (2013) alternative economic activities, "...are economic practices but without the for-profit motive - such as barter networks; social currencies; co-operatives; self-management; agricultural networks; helping each other simply in terms of wanting to be together; networks of providing services for free to others in the expectation that someone will also provide to you. All this exists and it's expanding throughout the world" (Castells, 2012: 2-3).

Vaillancourt (2009) adopts a different culture-oriented approach, which can also be understood as a reflexive modernity approach, arguing that social economy can contribute to the democratization of the state and public policy through the processes of co-production and co-construction. Favouring a 'solidarity-based' model in the context of an open-governance state, the author finds that in the case of housing policy in Canada and Quebec, social economy initiatives produced social innovations that improved the related public policy.

By contrast, the term 'économie sociale' was first used in 1830 by the French economist Charles Dunoyer and promoted by French sociologist Frederic Le Play in 1856. The term 'économie solidaire' is used by continental Europeans and Latin Americans to refer to a new generation of more innovative social economy practices with a plurality of activities valuing cooperation and reciprocity. Yet, European and South American approaches are both distinct and complementary to each other (Ould Ahmed 2014:3-4).

Departing from the above views, 'degrowth/décroissance' has been predominantly a 21st century initiative towards an alternative economy pursued on a voluntarily basis, confronting dominant economic paradigms, with a variety of action strategies including building alternatives outside of mainstream economic institutions, especially at the grassroots level (Demaria et al., 2013). One such example is Italy's Reti de Economic Solidale (Solidarity Economy Networks) of more than twenty Solidarity Economy districts with hundreds of small enterprises focused on socio-ecological objectives (Demaria et al., 2013).

The concept of 'post-growth' promoted by Joan Martinez-Allier, Georgio Kallis, Matthias Schmelzer, Alexis Passadakis, Tazio Müller, Serge Latouche and the New Economic Forum, places emphasis on people and the planet over capitalism (Kunze and Becker, 2014). According

to this approach there is an emerging new form of ecological and social entrepreneurship in Western Europe, that of the collective ownership of renewable energy production. One such example is that of the cooperative Som Energia established recently by Girona University of Catalonia staff and students (Kunze and Becker 2014).

Through neo-Gramscian lenses Satgar, (2007) views cooperatives and the cooperative economy as an alternative to the neoliberal model of primitive accumulation. The role of solidarity cooperatives is placed in an historical context, while the cooperatives' potential to challenge the structural dominance of capital is highlighted. The challenge on this approach is how to advance counter hegemonic politics in the expected global struggle aimed to defend and protect solidarity- and people-centered cooperatives.

Finally, the solidarity economy and its relationship to anarchism has been the focus of more recent works. The link between anarchist ideology and the values of solidarity, diversity, equity, and self-management is pointed out for an alternative participatory economy (Albert, 2013). Alternative agro-food networks, are also inspired by critical, anarchist, and ecological thinking Corrado (2010). Anarchists are involved in popular social movements, neighborhood committees, or rank-and-file union organizing (Shantz, 2013). Green anarchists have largely supported the British LETS system for adopting an alternative economy lifestyle (North, 2007:92). Anarchist thought has also influenced the squatting phenomenon as a practice of alternative economic and socio-spatial relations (Cattaneo and Gavalda, 2010:582). Finally, the tactic of collective expropriation as an action of resistance towards crisis' policies is an anarchist expression with connotations of redistribution and state power derogation (Pautz and Kominou, 2013).

Based on the above, very limited knowledge exists from secondary and theoretical works on the political character of alternative socio-economic practices, including the profile, frames and aims of the participants and alternative organizational structures, the collaborations and links to informal networks, formal institutions and associations as well as to social movement organizations. The lack of such studies is especially prominent on AFRs during the current crisis.

Towards a Political Perspective on AFR, through a Social Movements View

Collective action has been a topic of research, focused mainly on citizen resistance and contentious acts. Nevertheless, given contextual, organizational and framing features of AFR collective initiatives during hard economic times, it is worth exploring the applicability of a social movements approach to the study of the political character of AFRs. Such works are rare and most recent (Forno and Graziano, 2014). More specifically, studies have pointed out the non-institutionalized nature of effective and durable AFR, its dependence on the primacy of the principle of acting democratically, as well as its need to construct a politics of action (e.g. Ould Ahmed, 2014:7).

At the same time, active participants tend to have experience in community and militant practice in associations and trade unions. Furthermore, individual initiatives are products of pre-existing initiatives, with memories and experiences of past mobilizing struggles. SSE (social and solidarity economy) is a political project, whose politics have to be elaborated more effectively (Ould Ahmed, 2014:8).

Although economic factors had been a sustained issue for scholars of collective citizens' reactions in Latin America and India (Uba 2005; Almeida 2007, 2010), these factors were neglected in the collective action literature of the North during the past two decades, and only recently returned in social movement discussions (Kousis and Tilly, 2005; Goodwin and Hetland, 2009; Kousis, 2014; Kriesi, 2014). Economic change and variation affect collective action in one or two ways, either by shaping responses to political threats and opportunities or by constituting themselves significant threats and opportunities (Kousis and Tilly, 2005:7).

Most students of social movements define opportunities either as 'signals' to social or political actors to mobilize (Tarrow 1996:54), or as the probability that social protest actions will lead to success in achieving the desired outcome (Goldstone and Tilly 2001:182). In the latter form, threats are not the exact opposite of opportunities but they are divided into two components: (1) a general threat – an exposure to a set of harms; and (2) a collective action threat – the cost a social group must incur if it gets active or that it expects to suffer if it remains inactive (Goldstone and Tilly 2001:183, Kousis and Tilly 2005:3).

The 2008 financial crisis in the US, and the spiralling banking sector and sovereign debt crises, marked a new fifth phase of contention in a Transnational Political and Economic Arena with power holders, such as the troika – EC, ECB, IMF – and older global financial institutions, now lucidly recognized in the western world as critical players (Kousis, 2014). Austerity policies and Troika Memoranda have severe impacts for middle and working class populations, especially in the weakly integrated peripheral countries of the Eurozone (Lapavitsas et al., 2010; Kousis 2014, Kousis and Kanellopoulos, 2014).

Austerity policies have been considered as political threats: “taking away existing rights, goods and safety” (Almeida 2010: 305-6) which lead to defensive citizen reactions. According to Almeida (2007, 2010), economic crises give rise to three types of threat to populations: state repression; erosion in fundamental political and economic rights; and state-attributed economic problems.

Since 2011, the new fifth phase of citizen reactions involves larger segments of populations. Many studies have focused on the new multi-level contention which surfaced across urban, regional, national and transnational spaces (Beissinger and Sasse, 2012; Kriesi, 2014; Kousis, 2014). However very limited attention has been given to the alternative citizen initiatives through solidarity related practices that flourished to confront the deep impacts of austerity policies and Troika Memoranda.

Conclusion

Alternative forms of resilience (AFRs) arise as citizen-created initiatives to the mainstream capitalist economy, or during hard economic times marked by austerity policies, the weakening of social policies, as well as the depletion of labor and social welfare rights. AFRs constitute collective responses to economic and political threats in the form of alternative economic and noneconomic practices, from barter networks and time banks to Rolling Jubilee. They mirror a multi-faceted and complex social phenomenon with cultural, economic and political dimensions, which can be addressed through a multi-methods approach as well as a social movements perspective.

The literature review presented above however, shows only a limited number of studies, at the local or national level, on the processes through which citizens have responded to counter the debilitating impacts of recent economic crisis with socio-economic justice oriented practices. The lack of systematic cross-national research is especially visible when it comes to the study of the political dimensions of AFR, in terms of policies affecting them or policies which are influenced by them.

Based on a partial convergence between innovative citizens' reactions (AFR) and citizens' collective resistance, this chapter proposes the adoption of elements from social movements' theoretical and methodological approaches to the study of AFR, especially the political process approach. This would enable future research – in the context of the LIVEWHAT project – to offer a systematic and comprehensive examination of the economic and political opportunities and threats, as well as frames, resources and organizational structures of AFR across different national settings. Under this perspective, the impacts of austerity policies on AFR, but also the ways in which AFR may influence policies, will be studied systematically.

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