



LIVEWHAT

Living with Hard Times

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

Integrated report on alternative forms of resilience in times of crises (Deliverable: 6.4)

WP6: Alternative forms of resilience in times of crises

Workpackage Leader and Institution: UoC

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Executive Summary



The aim of Work Package 6 is to map and analyze alternative and collective forms of resilience in times of crisis, such as citizens' initiatives and networks of cooperation amongst civil society actors (informal groups, NGOs, church, or local government actors) created at the intersection of private and public spaces to respond to those citizens' rights and needs threatened by the crisis.

The nine teams of the consortium studied alternative forms of resilience through a more refined unit of analysis developed specifically to accommodate the needs of WP6: the Alternative Action Organization (AAO), i.e. groups or organizations (formal/informal) engaging in strategic alternative/solidarity actions in the public sphere which are not operated or exclusively supported by mainstream economic and political organizations (i.e. corporate, state, or EU related agencies). AAOs aim at providing citizens/people alternative ways of enduring day-to-day difficulties and challenges, usually in difficult economic times.

The work was carried out in three phases, each contributing with different types of new data to the study of alternative forms of resilience. Phase 1 involved mapping, coding and analyzing 4,297 random AAOs, using selected online media sources, mostly websites. Phase 2 was devoted to conducting an online survey inviting representatives with the Phase 1 sample. The responses of the 563 AAO representatives are analyzed, offering new evidence by the organizations themselves. Phase 3 provides an analysis of qualitative personal interviews with initiators and participants of 167 AAOs. The products of the three-phase research resulting from the application of different methodological traditions provide a rich set of fresh, systematic and comparative data, offering new findings on an understudied research topic.

More specifically, the goal of Phase 1 was to offer new data on alternative forms of resilience. A new method was developed for Phase 1, which was also used for the subsequent Phases 2 and 3, that of Alternative Action Organization Analysis (AAOA). Sample selection and the development of a coding tool rested on protest event analysis (Tilly 1978). We explored, tested and finally choose digital activists' own media, 46,550 hubs-retrieved websites of AAOs, with the assistance of search engine specialists. From these we randomized and selected, according to our criteria, a total of 4,297 websites, approximately 500 for each of the nine countries.

A new coding instrument based on AOA was created, tested and used for coding. It offers a portrayal of the major socio-economic and cultural characteristics of the involved groups, their solidarity practices,

networks and supporters, their actions, their aims and values concerning citizens' rights and needs, the forms of resilience they promote, and their resources. Following a series of pretesting and training, the nine teams coded the 4,297 AAOs based on Alternative Action Organization Analysis.

Our data show that Alternative/Resilience initiatives tend to vary across the nine European countries. For example, countries harder hit by the crisis illustrate higher peaks in newly created AAOs. This is an expected finding, given the impacts of drastic austerity policies which had heavily impacted on their populations. Looking at their starting year, two clear patterns can be identified. Countries more affected by the crisis show high peaks in the crisis period - almost half or more than half of the AAOs in Spain, Greece, France, Italy, and Poland. AAOs in the countries not significantly affected by the crisis are relatively older and more institutionalized, since most of them were founded in the 80s and 90s – with a noticeable rise in Germany in the late nineties.

The types of AAOs depict three diverse European trends: a 'South European' trend marked by informal/protest groups' and a 'non-South European' trend dominated by NGOs and a mix of both centered on Social Economy. Greece, Italy, France and Spain show the highest frequencies of informal and protest groups, and lower frequencies of NGOs, social economy groups, and church and charity organizations. The second 'non-South European' pattern involves Sweden, Poland and Germany of highest frequencies for NGOs, followed by church and charities. Switzerland, the UK but also Spain show the highest frequency of Social Economy AAOs.

Three different patterns are revealed when centering on the new AAOs engaging in urgent needs activities. More AAOs covering urgent needs were created in the countries most severely hit by the crisis – Greece and Spain – since 2008. Fewer were created in France while fewest were started in the rest of the countries.

An examination of AAO values by starting year does not reveal huge differences before and after crisis, apart from the humanitarian-philanthropic values category, which is mostly visible in AAOs created prior to the economic crisis. AAOs founded prior to the economic crisis also depict a higher frequency of values related with rights-based ethics (e.g. equality, civil rights, human rights, social justice, peace and safety) and economic issues (such as economic prosperity, accountability, professionalism). By contrast, AAOs created after the economic crisis show the highest frequency of empowerment and participation values as well as diversity and sustainability values. Considerably lower in frequency, but also created in the crisis period, are community and order AAOs (embracing values such as security and stability, nationalism/national belonging, social equilibrium, social cohesion, preserving existing local communities, and tradition).

Our data also shed light on the beneficiaries or participants who benefit from the solidarity activities of the AAOs, i.e. those who do or do not actively engage in the organization – participants as well as non-participants such as activists in cooperatives, grassroots initiatives, self-help groups, or refugees. The most outstanding beneficiary group for almost half of the AAOs is the ‘general public and every interested person’, an unexpected finding that reflects unmet needs for a wider beneficiary group during hard economic times. The next three most prominent groups, mentioned by about one fourth of all AAOs, are ‘children, youth and students’ the ‘poor or marginalized people and communities’, including the homeless and the imprisoned and local communities. This finding is also noteworthy, reflecting again the unmet needs of its young people, a more vulnerable segment of the population.

Lower in frequency are citizen-consumers/small enterprises, the disabled/health vulnerable, families and the uninsured/unemployed or precarious workers and immigrants/refugees, respectively. New labor conditions and refugee crises are two issues that concern European AAOs, thus approximately 15% have as beneficiaries the precarious, the uninsured workers or the unemployed people, and the refugees and migrants. About one tenth of the beneficiaries are elderly/pensioners, women, while even lower in frequency are minorities and hate-crime victims.

Focusing at the country level of types of beneficiary, very different patterns are revealed. Three of the nine countries, (Greece, Poland and Sweden) show very high frequencies on more than several types of beneficiary/participant groups. Children, youth, students are most prominent as beneficiaries in about half of the Swedish and Polish AAOs, moderately frequent in about one third of the Greek and Swiss AAOs, and less frequent in the other countries. Immigrants or refugee beneficiaries are more frequent - one third of AAOs - in Sweden and Greece, less frequent in Germany and least so in the remaining countries.

Families, however, are a more prominent beneficiary group, since they are most frequent in more countries – about one fourth of AAOs – in Poland, Switzerland, Sweden, and Greece, and less so in the other countries. Similarly, substantial is the prominence of citizen-consumers/small enterprises in five countries, France, Switzerland, Italy, Greece and Poland, while these groups have less prominence in the remaining four countries, with the lowest frequency in Sweden.

When examining the solidarity orientation of the AAOs across different types of AAOs interesting findings are visible. Moving from the bottom-up to the top-down solidarity approaches, the role of informal and protest groups is progressively and steadily subsiding, while that of charities and NGOs is progressively increasing. More specifically, a mutual-help orientation is clearly driven to a large extent by informal and protest groups in almost half of the AAOs. In the ‘support others’ approach, practicing support/assistance to others, NGOs take the leading position in almost half of the cases, while charities are also prevalent in about one quarter. These trends follow in similar patterns for the ‘distribution of goods’ approach,

portraying a stronger (as expected) prevalence of charities and a slightly decreased yet leading role of NGOs.

Moving to Phase 2, the goal was to conduct an online survey with AAO representatives in order to explore AAOs' mechanisms, tactics and links of the involved actors, the ways in which they address citizens' rights through the promotion of alternative forms of resilience for citizens confronting crises, and the different types of resources required to sustain them in order to address citizens' rights.

A survey questionnaire was developed to address key issues. The online survey with AAO representatives was conducted in the nine European countries of the project. The survey's sample (approximately 500 AAOs per country) was drawn from Phase 1 of WP6. The response rates, albeit low, are the norm in organizational surveys of this type: Germany: 10.9%, UK: 5.2%, Greece: 16.2%, Switzerland: 17.1%, France: 12.4%, Poland: 10.3%, Italy: 12.4%, Spain: 10.8%, Sweden: 15.6%.

Based on the main findings of the online survey, most of the AAOs that responded are relatively newly established, specifically in South European countries. Across all countries, the most prevalent types of action include providing services, networking and organizing cultural events. Supplementary actions primarily involve participating in social media and dissemination of information about key problems.

More than half of indirect actions include contacting local officials and supporting petitions. AAOs' collaborative activities are mainly joint activities and sharing information/research/counselling, whereas most prevalent partners involve associations/charities/NGOs and local governments. Lack of funding and lack of support from governments are the most frequent constraints that AAOs face when trying to achieve their goals.

Since 2010, i.e. in the context of the recent crisis, most AAOs report an increased demand for networking and providing non-material support. Moreover, increase is reported mainly in conducting AAOs' main activities, collaborations, concerning the number of beneficiaries and participation in social media. Most importantly however, most AAOs report a decrease in state funding. Since 2010, when material resources are scarcer, AAOs' actions are primarily supported by the growing number of citizens as well as their collaborative activities that aim to help the increasing number of beneficiaries. Since 2010, AAOs' actions take place via mechanisms and tactics that address citizens' rights through participation in policy and decision-making procedures as well as protests.

Phase 3 aimed to provide a more in depth perspective on the AAOs, through qualitative interviews with their representatives, in order to understand how the actors involved in AAOs define and create alternative paths to help citizens confront hard economic times. The nine teams conducted 20 interviews per country

(exempting Germany and Sweden with 21, Poland with 19, the UK with 13 and Switzerland with 13 interviews).

Sampling was carried out by each country team following guidelines on the two recommended dimensions: formal vs. informal AAOs and policy advocacy vs. service orientated AAOs. Each national team followed a unique combination of methods to select and approach its sample, given the different national contexts. They used quota samples based on the categories formed with the introduction of the two dimensions, random sampling from the list of WP6.1, sending mass invitations, case selection based on AAOs prominence in selected fields or based on personal contacts or through snowballing – according to the special traits of the target population at the national level, as indicated by the two previous stages of WP6. The aim was to achieve a sample which is balanced according to the aforementioned criteria. AAOs national distribution, action type and beneficiary types and the political leaning of organizations are criteria which were further considered by national teams.

The qualitative interviews focused on: AAOs' mission and political aims; the effects of the economic crisis; their initiatives and projects; their relationship with government and other organizations; their beneficiaries and participants; their outcomes and best practices.

The qualitative analysis of the interviews across the nine countries reveals that AAO activities relate to basic needs, empowerment, advocacy and alternative economy. Drawing on our interviews, AAOs' initiatives and projects form the following broad categories of action types based on their main objectives: services aiming at basic needs' satisfaction: food, shelter, clothing and goods' delivery, health services; empowerment services: educational services (tutorials, language and arts classes), consultancy/advisory (legal, financial, socio-psychological), cultural events (art fests, workshops, libraries), locality initiatives (community centers, neighborhood assemblies, self-managed spaces); political advocacy: lobbying, protest, campaigns, petitions; social and alternative economy ventures: social cooperatives, work collectives, alternative currencies, time banks, fair trade business and other social enterprises, consumer-producer networks, consumer associations, as well as barter clubs.

The resilience strategies of AAOs, which have been affected by unstable funding in the recent period, are visible in their inventive, innovative and alternative strategies, as well as in experimentation and context adaptability practices. With the exception of the UK and Poland, most AAOs view their action as being genuinely political. Concurrently, AAOs tend to be critical towards state policies: this tendency intensifies according to the degree of the crisis' impact. AAOs remain vigilant and very close to their beneficiaries, carefully observing social needs. Their "alternativeness" and resilience lies in the fact that they remain loyal to their mission and values and are very flexible. Their resources (funds and participation) are very unstable, so they must be inventive in the design and organization of their action.

AAOs usually adopt a critical standpoint towards state policies; they challenge the dominant system and market values. A tendency towards depoliticization is also noticed, which reflects the paying less attention to the system rather than resignation. The economic crisis seems to magnify the disposition of AAOs to confront governments and pursue social change, particularly in countries which are intensely affected by the crisis, such as Greece and Italy.

Formal AAOs are more likely to cooperate with the government compared to informal ones because they base their activity on public funding. This may pose restrictions on AAOs' perceived independence. Informal organizations abstain from public money and from any relationship with the government in order to preserve their autonomy or because their ideological standpoint suggests a confrontational approach. This is often observed in Greece, Italy, Spain and Germany and rarely in Sweden, where cooperation with political institutions seems to be the rule. Noticeably, Swedish AAO representatives report that state and municipal institutions seek occasionally help from the civil society organizations, which does not occur in South European countries.

Networking and collaborations amongst AAOs are vital for AAOs to co-organize actions and public events as well as for knowledge exchange. Collaborations, networking and the establishment of associative spaces are mentioned when respondents referred to the successes of their organization. Networking is reported to help organizations to be relatively resistant to problems emerging from political conflicts.

The crisis broadened the scope and intensified the activity of AAOs. The crisis is usually seen by AAOs' representatives as an opportunity for experimentation and broadening of their activity. In Italy, it is noticed that social turbulence due to the crisis is providing opportunities to politicize the country's economic struggles and express them through radical initiatives. In countries less heavily affected by the economic crisis, there is still an increase of social demand for the supportive action of solidarity groups and alternative economy, due to unemployment and social anxiety. In Germany, the crisis is motivating society towards a value shift but also encourages solidarity towards those – individuals, groups as well as whole nations – who are most seriously affected by it.

Organizations which aim at the satisfaction of basic needs (food, housing, health) are affected most by the crisis. The crisis brought about an impoverishment of the middle class, leaving people unable to cover their everyday needs, from children being unable to buy their food in school, to families being unable to pay for electricity. All these provide incentives to AAOs to develop innovative projects tailored to the needs of their beneficiaries and participants. Furthermore, the crisis harmed AAOs by reducing their funds and by making commitment on participation unstable.

1. Alternative forms of resilience in times of crisis, an Alternative Action Organization Perspective



1.1 Objectives

The financial crisis of 2007 and subsequent austerity policies had considerable impact on millions of EU citizens due to increases in unemployment, cuts in social provisions, decrease in credit access, changes in consuming practices and dim prospects for the future of children (LIVEWHAT 2014a; LIVEWHAT 2014b). Such austerity impacts have led to transformations in collective responses by citizens in how to meet their everyday needs and address life strategy concerns. Especially visible are non-mainstream economic and non-economic practices including solidarity actions, political consumerism, alternative finance (e.g. crowd funding, food banks), collective purchasing groups, local market cooperatives, citizens' self-help groups, occupations, self-management, free legal advice, free medical services and others (Kousis, Giugni and Lahusen, 2016).

The aim of Work Package 6 is to analyse these alternative forms of resilience in times of crisis, which are organized collectively as citizens' initiatives and networks of cooperation amongst civil society actors (NGOs, church, or local government actors), in order to recommend innovative and related policy tools. Alternative forms of resilience are created at the intersection of the private and public spaces to respond to citizens' rights and needs threatened by the crisis.

These alternative forms of resilience include barter networks, food banks, free medical services, soup kitchens, new cooperatives, as well as free legal advice. They are especially visible during the past few years owing to the strong impact of the economic crisis on the middle class and vulnerable groups following drastic cuts in social services and heavy losses in income and jobs.

The work package identifies a wide range of alternative forms of resilience across nine European countries and, from a multicultural perspective, it considers transformations that impact on citizen rights, lifestyles, consumption patterns, artistic expressions, and community practices. The study focuses especially on what these initiatives tell us about the impacts of crises on families, women, children, minorities, the elderly, and other vulnerable groups and communities.

Beneficiary 8 (UOC) coordinates WP6, which includes the mapping, preparation of the guidelines, the codebook and the questionnaire, the coordination of roundtables and deliberations, as well as writing and

editing the integrated report. All Participants of the nine teams contribute in the data collection and analysis of their own country for WP6. The milestones of WP6 include the phase 1 Codebook and the phase 2 Guidelines for the qualitative interviews.

Written by Beneficiary 8 (UOC), the final integrated report at hand (D6.4¹ submitted in month 36, November) summarizes the main findings of this work package. It incorporates the main findings from the website analysis, the online survey as well as the national reports on the qualitative interviews provided by the other beneficiaries. It offers a comparative assessment of alternative action organizations as alternative forms of resilience in times of crisis based on work carried out by the nine teams of the consortium.

1.2 The context: policy changes after the 2007 economic crisis

Especially visible since the industrial revolution, waves of *economie sociale* and solidarity practices have emerged and re-emerged in reaction to economic threats, exploitative relations and poverty faced by considerable segments of populations and in the absence of related policies from the state (Moulaert and Ailenei 2005). In more recent periods, as in the case of Latin America or East Asia in the late nineties, neo-liberal austerity state policies have been a major determining factor, leading to the creation of alternative action organizations by citizen groups confronting hard economic times and economic threats (Almeida, 2007). The imposition of harsh austerity policies and the gradual or sudden withdrawal of social policies supporting economic and social rights created the conditions within which alternatives flourished (Primavera 2010). Alternative action organizations constitute citizen-created alternatives which have risen in different regions worldwide, as alternative economic but also noneconomic practices, usually during hard economic times marked by austerity policies, the weakening of social policies, or the depletion of labor and social welfare rights (Kousis and Paschou 2014).

Austerity-driven reforms aim to decrease government budgets which have been applied to a different degree across the nine LIVEWHAT project countries (Norman, Uba and Temple 2015). These reforms have been moderate in Germany, Switzerland and Sweden, more severe in Poland and the UK, but most drastic in Italy, Spain, and to a larger scale, in Greece. Norman, Uba and Temple (2015) point out that social security safety nets have been increasingly eroding while at the same time, precarity and flexicurity have been continuously increasing, especially for youth, across these countries. This combination they argue is likely to lead to working poverty, with working citizens in a daily struggle of survival, without support from state policies, i.e. conditions which according to some scholars (Moulaert and Ailenei 2005; Almeida, 2007;

¹ <http://www.livewhat.unige.ch/?p=452>

Primavera 2010) may facilitate the rise of alternative action organizations (Kousis, Kalogeraki and Mexi 2015).

More specifically, the findings of LIVEWHAT research (2014a and 2014b) illustrate that there have been significant changes in the four examined fields of labor, health, tax, and social policies; nevertheless, cross-country differences are very large. In spite of the differences, two common trends are visible in the crisis period. First, a predominant trend across all nine countries is that the reforms enacted have aimed to ease workers' protection. Whereas some countries – notably Germany, Sweden and to a limited extent Poland and Italy – diverge slightly from this path in responding to the crisis by reintroducing some services for the unemployed, the predominant and pervasive development indicates a movement away from a rights-based understanding of labor market relations, to one where competitiveness and growth are achieved by narrowing the distribution of such rights (LIVEWHAT 2014a and 2014b; Kousis, Kalogeraki and Mexi 2015).

Second, the loosening of workers' protection that has been initiated and its possible effects on citizens can be understood in the light of changing social, health, and education support structures. Italy experienced severe cuts of more than 90% in the social funds financing services provided by local administrations to vulnerable groups. In Greece, the system of housing benefits for workers was abolished, whereas in the United Kingdom, a rescue-scheme for home-owners was adopted in 2008, without including any help for tenants. Also, housing benefits have decreased since 2013, while reforms were made curtailing the ability for single parents to receive income support. In the field of health and social protection, significant changes have occurred with regard to the right to receive healthcare services and sickness benefits. (LIVEWHAT 2014a and 2014b; Kousis, Kalogeraki and Mexi 2015).

Overall, based on main findings of LIVEWHAT's WP2, austerity-driven policy reforms, of varying degrees across the nine European countries, appear as potential structural factors that may influence or act as opportunities for the creation of alternative action organizations.

1.3 Collective and alternative forms of resilience

European collective citizen responses such as alternative (non)economic solidarity practices, have attracted less attention in the media, and received limited scholarly attention, especially since the recent economic crisis (Kousis and Paschou 2014). Thriving during hard economic times in different historical periods (Defourny and Develtere 1997), with or without the support of social movement groups, generations of these alternative collective initiatives enabled citizens to meet basic needs (Mouleart and Ailenei 2005; Moulaert et al 2013) not supported by the state. Such initiatives have recently been called alternative forms of resilience (LIVEWHAT, WP6).

The integrated report centres on these alternative forms of resilience, as collective initiatives of alternative action organizations (AAOs) (Kousis, Kalogeraki and Mexi 2015). They are formal or informal organizations, citizen initiatives, producer-consumer networks, time banks, cooperatives, NGOs, social movements – as well as volunteer organizations, and others. They usually operate without the support of mainstream economic and political organizations (i.e. corporate or state related agencies), or in hybrid form. They may, however, include local government or church organizations offering alternative supporting actions, especially during hard economic times. Their strategic actions in the public sphere aim to provide citizens/people with alternative ways of enduring day-to-day difficulties and challenges in hard economic times, which relate to urgent needs (housing, food, health, clothing), the economy, energy and the environment, alternative consumption/lifestyles/food sovereignty, communications, self-organized spaces, culture and others (Kousis, Giugni and Lahusen 2016; Giugni and Kousis, 2016).

Resilience is a contested concept, as reflected in the numerous studies and approaches which refer to it (Kousis, Kalogeraki and Mexi 2015). According to Chandler (2013:1) it is “a central concept informing policy frameworks dealing with political, developmental, social, economic, security and environmental problems in ways that clearly transcend traditional disciplinary boundaries”. By contrast, critics such as Evans and Reid (2015:154) see “the resilience doctrine [as] a new form of political nihilism that forces us to accept the inevitability of the liberal politics of catastrophe”.

Approaches to resilience vary. Focused at the individual level, some proponents of neoliberal governmentality ‘resilience’ (Joseph 2013) emphasize individual responsibility for one’s own well-being in a world beyond our control and heightened self-awareness, reflexivity, adaptability and preparedness. They support the idea of the neoliberal subject as autonomous and responsible.

Centred at the collective level, other scholars adhere to a critical resilience perspective focused on community and the encouragement of collective citizen practices (Juntunen and Hyvonen 2014). Critical resilience scholars of this path focus on collective actions leading to empowerment and collective goals (Wickes, Zahnow and Mazerolle 2010, Murray and Zautra 2012, Berkes and Ross 2013) in developed regions facing hard economic times, following the 2007-09 global crisis. Proponents of critical/collective resilience such as Juntunen and Hyvonen (2014) stress the importance of social and organizational resources in revitalizing collective citizen practices, while others like D’Alisa, Forno and Maurano (2015) also point to the central role of solidarity groups.

As alternative forms of resilience expand in the face of hard economic times across global regions, there is a need for systematic, comparative empirical evidence. The approach developed in WP6 is informed by the rich literature that has been developing on the inter-linkages between alternative forms of resilience

reflected in ‘Social Economy’, the ‘third sector’, ‘degrowth’, and ‘Solidarity Economy’, most of which however depends on qualitative and local case studies of previous periods (see Kousis and Paschou, 2014).

The theoretically diverse works on alternative forms of resilience reflect the different perspectives on resilience which we aim at capturing in our systematic empirical investigation. The different approaches undertaken by scholars – sometimes interchangeably – refer to a broad range of organizations that are distinguished from the state or public sector and from conventional for-profit entrepreneurship and economy by two core features. First, they have explicit economic and social (and often environmental) objectives. Second, they involve varying forms of co-operative, associative and solidarity relations. They may include, for example, cooperatives, mutual associations, NGOs engaged in income generating activities, women’s self-help groups, community forestry and other organizations, associations of informal sector workers, social enterprise and fair trade organizations and networks.

The varieties of approach to studying alternative forms of resilience, from more reformist to more radical approaches, illustrate different orientations to resilience. Leaning more towards an individual-oriented resilience, the *third sector approach*, places more emphasis on the role of the individual volunteer in third sector associations (Skinner 2014, Bryant and Pozdeev 2014).

More emphasis is placed at the collective level and networks by the other approaches on alternative forms of resilience. Moulaert et al (2010, 2013) center on social innovation, empowerment and governance issues, in relation to covering social needs and fostering open governance systems. Similarly, Vaillancourt (2009) adopts a reflexive modernity approach, seeing social economy as a contributor to the democratization of the state and public policy through co-production and co-construction promoting open governance. Castells, Caraca and Cardoso (2012) focus on the decisive role of culture, trust and networks in creating “*alternative economic practices*” (Conill, Castells, Cardenas and Servon 2012: 210, 222-229), defined in a similar manner, as non-profit, non-mainstream economic initiatives organized by social networks.

A more critical collective resilience approach is reflected in the following groups of studies. Solidarity Economy and Social Economy approaches (sometimes labelled as SSE) highlight the plethora of bottom-up alternative initiatives and practices based on cooperation and reciprocity and stressing of *lien social*, not involving profits (Moulaert and Ailenei 2005). The Sustainable Community Movement Organizations (SCMOs) approach points to the importance of AAOs in empowering consumers and producer networks on a smaller scale to confront hard economic times and the link to social movements (e.g. Forno and Graziano 2014, D’Alisa, Forno and Maurano 2015).

Reflecting an especially critical/collective resilience orientation, ‘degrowth/*decroissance*’ and ‘post-growth’ approaches, focus on building alternatives outside of mainstream economic institutions, especially

at the grassroots level (e.g. Demaria et al 2013, D’Alisa, Forno and Maurano 2015, D’Alisa, Demaria and Kallis, 2014). The more radical, anarchist approach relates solidarity, diversity and equity values, with self-management anarchist ideology (e.g. Albert 2013, Corrado 2010).

The integrated report offers main findings on the varieties of alternative forms of resilience studied as Alternative Action Organizations in the nine countries through the application of three different methods. Each of the three phases described below centers on a different method and offers three distinct data sets, based on Action Organization Analysis, an online survey and qualitative interviews. Offered in the corresponding three parts of the integrated report, their main findings shed light on the varieties of alternative action organizations, and the different solidarity approaches through which these collective responses to hard economic times reflect different approaches to resilience.

1.4 The three phases of WP6: tasks and accomplishments

Following the main objectives of WP6, the work has been carried out in three phases (as depicted in the three parts of this report), centring on Alternative Action Organizations as alternative forms of resilience, studied however with very distinct methodologies as depicted in the three corresponding parts of this integrated report. Given the demands of the new methodological approach developed specifically for the needs of the first phase and the subsequent work intensity of the related tasks, the work described below began in the fall of 2014, prior to its starting month (19 June 2015) and extended beyond its ending month (30 May 2016), to November 2016. A WP6 Task Force was set up at the November 2014 consortium meeting, under the leadership of UoC, to facilitate the process in each of the three phases.

The **first phase (Part I)** involved the mapping and analysis of alternative forms of resilience using selected online media sources, mainly websites in each of the countries included in the project (Chapters 2 and 3). Sampling and data retrieval were developed using a new method created to code alternative action cases: *Action Organization Analysis* (Kousis, Giugni and Lahusen 2016).

During **the second phase (Part II)**, an online survey was organized and operated by UoC, based on the random sample of 500 AAOs (Chapters 4 and 5).

The **third phase (Part III)** was devoted to qualitative personal interviews with approximately 20 initiators and participants involved in such alternative action organizations in the nine countries (Chapters 6 to 15). Finally, the Integrated report (D6.4²), Task 6.11, was submitted in November 2016 (month 36, instead of month 30).

² <http://www.livewhat.unige.ch/?p=452>

1.4.1 Phase 1: Website-based analysis of Alternative Action Organizations

Phase 1 of WP6 lays the foundations for phases 2 and 3. Therefore, task efforts peaked across the nine teams and led to the development of a new methodological approach to the study of alternative forms of resilience as collective action organizations: Action Organization Analysis. Under the coordination of UoC, and following the needs of WP6, the nine teams engaged in all component parts of phase 1, from the creation and development of the codebook, to the identification and selection of sources, and finally to the sampling, training, pretesting, reliability-testing and coding of Alternative Action Organizations (AAOs) using and simultaneously refining the newly created method, as seen in Chapter 2. The main findings, which are provided in Chapter 3, portray features of the online media outlets used by the AAOs, their major spatial and organizational characteristics, their activities and beneficiaries or participants, their aims and solidarity orientation as well as their supplementary actions and value frames.

During the first phase, the nine teams engaged in the creation of the codebook, the identification and selection of sources, as well as the sampling, pretesting, training and coding of alternative action organizations in the newly created Action Organization Analysis, following the needs of WP6. The main findings (see Chapter 3) portray the major socio-economic and cultural characteristics of the involved groups and organizations, their actions and practices, citizens' rights and needs, the forms of resilience promoted, and their resources.

The preparation of the codebook for the analysis of alternative action organizations (Task 6.1) began earlier but also lasted beyond months 19-21, due to the necessary steps that were taken towards the creation of a comprehensive coding instrument using AAO websites from nine different countries. The codebook offers: instructions concerning defining, locating, and coding of alternative action cases and a considerable number of variables referring to socio-economic and cultural characteristics of the initiating groups, their networks, resources, supporters, actions and practices, the forms of resilience promoted, their beneficiaries and participants as well as their aims and values, vis-à-vis citizens' rights and needs. Beneficiary 8 (UOC) was responsible for the preparation of the codebook (D6.1, MS10³).

Task 6.2 was the most important task of phase 1, and subsequently of phase 2, since source selection and pre-tests are of vital importance for the coding of AAOs as well as the resulting data analysis. The conventional sources (five national newspapers) were tested and found unfit to cover AAOs reflecting alternative forms of resilience. This consequently led the consortium, under UoC leadership, to explore, test and finally choose hubs-retrieved online media sources/websites of AAOs with the assistance of IT experts. That is why this task was initiated in the fall of 2014, took longer than two months (20-21), being

³ <http://www.livewhat.unige.ch/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/Deliverable-6.1.pdf>

finalized several months later. The newly developed method was carried out and continuously tested across the nine countries in a step by step process (see chapter 2). This new approach provided the best possible coverage of 500 random AAOs for the 2007-2016 period per country. The codebook has been pretested using multiple sets of AAO websites. A two-day coders' training workshop at UOC, two e-sessions on coders' training, and two different reliability tests were done before the codebook was finalized and coding began.

The coding of AAOs, Task 6.3, was carried out using an online coding tool, centrally administered by UoC, for a duration close to that planned (months 22-24), albeit later, for the reasons explained above. The unit of analysis on which coding was based, is the 'Alternative Action Organization', a collective body/unit which organizes collective events carrying out alternatives to dominant socio-economic and cultural practices with visible beneficiaries and claims' on their economic and social wellbeing – including basic needs, health, lifestyles, as depicted through the AAO website/online sources. These practices usually take the form of solidarity-based exchanges and cooperative structures such as barter clubs and networks, credit unions, ethical banks, time banks, alternative social currency, cooperatives, citizen's self-help groups, solidarity networks covering urgent/basic needs, and social enterprises. Most variables were standardized in numerical form through a variety of categories contained in the codebook (see chapter 2).

The analysis of AAOs (Task 6.4) lasted as planned, one month, albeit later than month 25, due to the demands of Task 6.2. The AAO data is analysed using conventional statistical tools. Descriptive analyses is first done on major variables such as the Types and Starting Year of the AAOs, their Forms of Resilience/Activities, their Values, Aims and Proposed Routes to achieving goals, Networks, Resources, Supporters/Partners, Supplementary Actions, Beneficiaries and Participants, and Solidarity Approaches of AAOs. Explanatory analysis follows, showing the ways in which selected variables impact on each other.

1.4.2 Phase 2: Online survey with Alternative Action Organization Representatives

The second phase was also delayed due to the extended source selection period. Thus, although Task 6.5, the preparation of the questionnaire for the online survey was scheduled for months 21-23, it was finalized a few months later. This task consists of preparing the questionnaire for the online survey with input from all teams. The questionnaire offers detailed information concerning the mechanisms, tactics, and links of the involved actors, the ways in which they are addressing citizens' rights through the promotion of alternative forms of resilience for citizens confronting crises, and the different types of resources required

to sustain them in order to address citizens' rights. Beneficiary 8 (UOC) was responsible for the preparation of the online questionnaire (D6.2, MS11⁴).

Task 6.6, the online survey was centrally designed and administered by UOC for all nine countries, targeting all the groups and networks identified through the alternative action case analysis, with a few months delay, as it was planned to take place during months 24-26. The questionnaire was translated by the national teams in their home language. It was first pretested and constructed as an online survey instrument. Invitations were sent to the representatives of all 500 randomly chosen and cleaned AAOs of phase 1, in each of the nine countries; the aim is to enrich the WP6 data set with coded and survey data on the same AAOs.

The analysis of the online survey data, Task 6.7, scheduled to take place in month 27, was also subsequently moved to a later month. The online survey data has been analyzed through traditional statistical methods (for example, cross-tabulations and regressions). As seen in Chapter 5, it consists of two types of analysis. Firstly, descriptive analyses on key variables of interest provide a picture of alternative forms of resilience in times of crisis and how this picture varies across the nine countries. Second, explanatory analyses show how these variables influence each other.

1.4.3 Phase 3: Qualitative Interviews with Alternative Action Organization Representatives and Activists

The third phase of the WP6 focuses on qualitative interviews with representatives or activists of AAOs, which were selected from the random sample of phase 1 or were identified outside of the sample, but keeping to the same criteria of selection.

Task 6.8, the preparation of the guidelines for the qualitative interviews, scheduled for months 22-23, was similarly delayed for a few months due to the ongoing work of phases 1 and 2. Nevertheless, the work was carried out according to the objectives. The guidelines which were prepared with input by all nine teams, and the related instructions by UOC and members of the WP6 task force, defined the key interviewees, the number of interviews for each alternative structure, and the content of the interviews. Approximately 20 qualitative personal interviews were carried out in each country with representatives/initiators or activists in alternative practices using a targeted purposive sample of AAOs with solidarity activities including those covering urgent needs for food, shelter, health, mental health, childcare, education, and action on social enterprises. The purposive sample consists of representatives/initiators/activists from selected community settings, and when possible, those involving families, women, children, minorities, the elderly, and other

⁴ <http://www.livewhat.unige.ch/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/Deliverable-6.2.pdf>

vulnerable groups. Beneficiary 8 (UOC) was responsible for the preparation of the questionnaire (D6.3, MS12⁵).

Most of the personal, qualitative interviews, Task 6.9, were carried out a few months later than the planned period (months 24-27). The interviews with representatives/initiators or activists in approximately 20 selected AAOs per country, were done according to the guidelines defined in the previous task. Each beneficiary conducted the interviews in their own country.

Task 6.10, qualitative content analysis on the interviews, scheduled for month 27, was carried out a few months later. The analyses presented in the main findings (Chapter 6) and the nine national reports (Chapters 7 to 15) highlight the effects of crises on a wide range of groups, including families, women, children, minorities, the elderly, and other beneficiary or participating groups.

⁵ <http://www.livewhat.unige.ch/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/Deliverable-6.3.pdf>

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PART 1: Alternative Action Organization Analysis

2. Alternative Action Organization Analysis: Introduction and the Method



Aiming towards a comprehensive and systematic study of AAOs, and building on previous work that focused on protest event (Tilly 1978), protest case (Kousis 1999) and political claims analysis (Koopmans and Statham 1999), current research within the LIVEWHAT project applies a new approach: Alternative Action Organization Analysis (AAOA). The unit of analysis is the alternative initiative/organization, a specific formal or informal group of initiators/organizers who act in the public sphere. In the initial design, inspired by Tilly's protest event analysis, the prospective unit of analysis was the 'alternative action case/formation', constituted by 'collective events in which three or more persons or group/s outside of the government organize and/or carry out alternatives to dominant economic forms with visible claims' on their economic and social well-being – including basic needs, health, and lifestyles (Kousis 1998, Kousis and Paschou 2014). Their actions are framed as cases of solidarity-based exchanges and cooperative structures, such as barter clubs and networks, credit unions, ethical banks, time banks, alternative social currency, cooperatives, citizens self-help groups, solidarity networks covering urgent/basic human needs, and social enterprises (LIVEWHAT WP6 Codebook, 2016).

Alternative forms of resilience emerge from Alternative Action Organizations (AAOs), which include formal or informal organizations, citizen initiatives, producer-consumer networks, time banks, cooperatives, unions, NGOs and volunteer organizations which may have been created or are especially active since the 2007 global financial crisis. These types of organizations tend to surface especially during hard economic times (Moulaert and Ailenei 2005). Some, however, tend to sustain their activities for beneficiary or participating groups in most countries for long periods of time, and therefore may be also visible in countries which were not affected significantly by the current crises (Kousis, Giugni and Lahusen 2016).

The Alternative Action Organizations fostering alternative forms of resilience tend to operate without the support of mainstream economic and political organizations, such as corporate or state related agencies, and to a lesser extent, in hybrid forms. Local government or church organizations may also be included, since they offer solidarity actions, especially during hard economic times. These direct action organizations with visible claims and strategies in the public sphere aim to provide citizens/people alternative ways of enduring day-to-day difficulties and challenges under hard economic times, which relate to urgent needs

(housing, food, health, clothing), the economy, energy and the environment, alternative consumption/lifestyles/food sovereignty, communications, self-organized spaces, culture, and others (Kousis, Giugni and Lahusen 2016).

The sections that follow outline the demanding tasks of locating, identifying, and producing a comparative, cross-national primary data set that allows for the monitoring and analysing of alternative forms of resilience through the systematic study of Alternative Action Organizations in nine European countries.

2.1 Source Exploration, Selection and Sampling

The most important task of phase 1 subsequently of phase 2, was Task 6.2. Source selection is of vital importance for the cleaning and coding of the random sample of AAOs, the related online survey as well as the data analyses. It involves exploring, identifying, ranking, cleaning and randomizing potential sources in order to choose those closest to the information needed to study alternative forms of resilience.

2.1.1 Exploring media sources

The most challenging and demanding task of WP6 was a source selection that would offer the best possible coverage of alternative forms of resilience. This led to very early preparation before the starting period of the WP. That is why this task was started in month 11, took longer than two months (20-21) and was finalized several months later. Two parallel sources were explored since late fall of 2014, newspapers as well as online directories of websites of organizations focusing on alternative forms of resilience.

Newspapers, the conventional sources used in protest event analysis, protest case and political claims analysis was the first source explored for this task. The five major national newspapers of each country were tested as potential sources under WP3, ‘Examining collective responses to crises in the public domain through the analysis of political claims’. More specifically, the following actor of claims (SACTOR1) were entered in the WP3 Codebook⁶ (p.16): ‘citizens’ initiatives of reclaim’ (74); ‘other civil society organizations (76); and ‘people/citizens’-includes reference to local citizens (81). Furthermore, the following ‘form of action’ categories were added in the variable FORM of the WP3 Codebook (p.25):

Alternative forms of resilience (80)

81 ‘barter networks and swap bazaars’

82 ‘education and creative actions’ (incl. time banks)

83 ‘food banks, social supermarkets and soup kitchens’

84 ‘credit unions, ethical banks and currency initiatives’

⁶ <http://www.livewhat.unige.ch/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/Deliverable-3.1.pdf>

- 85 'social medicine and assistance to vulnerable groups'
- 86 'advisory, consultation, psychological support'
- 87 'humanitarian and voluntary architecture, construction and shelter provision'
- 88 'self-managed community actions'
- 89 'other actions of resilience'

This exploration proved unsuccessful in covering practices and organizations portraying alternative forms of resilience. Following their WP3 analyses, which all teams presented in month 17 at the consortium meeting in Rethymno, they reported that they either identified no claims or very rare ones – i.e. less than 15 claims of alternative forms of resilience (i.e. actors with codes 74, 76 and 81, or forms with the above codes) in their national data sets of 1,000 random political claims using five national newspapers. This was mainly due to the extremely limited or absent coverage of alternative forms of resilience in mainstream newspapers, across all nine countries.

This was not an unexpected finding. These results were foreseen and therefore preparations on online sources were simultaneously explored by the UoC leading team following the decisions of the LIVEWHAT consortium meeting of November 2014, nine months prior to the starting month of the WP; the contribution of the Spanish team⁷ in encouraging this approach was notable. Google search was used to retrieve AAOs in all countries. The second exploration was carried out using Greece as a pilot case. The UoC team searched for the related online sources, communicated and collaborated with a search engine specialist at ICS-FORTH⁸ from February to April 2015 in identifying, locating and pilot-testing a new source selection procedure on hubs-retrieved websites of AAOs. The results of the pilot case were very promising, offering a pool of approximately 3,500 potential AAOs for Greece using only one hub-website. Thus, the new approach promised to assure the best possible coverage of 500 random AAOs for the 2007-2016 period per country.

These results were presented at the consortium's meeting of April 2015 in Rethymno, Crete where it was decided that all teams identify and provide hub-websites, following the instructions of the UoC team. In addition to offering a highly more comprehensive coverage compared to national or local newspapers, it provides 'non-mediated' sources of the organizers themselves, with a more extensive coverage of nonmetropolitan areas. Furthermore, these sources will offer a strong foundation for the sampling of phases 2 of the online survey and phase 3 of the qualitative interviews, as well as for the construction of the Wikisite deliverable.

⁷ Camilo Cristancho's encouragement and advice is gratefully acknowledged.

⁸ http://www.ics.forth.gr/isl/index_main.php?l=e&c=521

This innovative source selection approach was carried out and continuously checked across the nine countries in a step by step process, as described below.

2.1.2 Instructions on Hub-website identification, selection and ranking

Following the April 2015 consortium meeting, a few months before the WP's starting month, the UoC team sent instructions on how to identify and collect the hub websites. According to the instructions, each national team was responsible for locating, evaluating and ranking the highly related hub (national level) or/and sub-hub websites (in the local language) using the related literature, or through an internet search. The teams used the same or similar keywords translated from English in the home language. The following sources were suggested as examples for identifying potential national hubs:

<http://www.ripess.org/about-us/continental-members/?lang=en#europe>

http://www.socioeco.org/bdf_thesaurus-geo_en.html

http://en.solecopedia.org/index.php?title=Main_Page

http://aloe.socioeco.org/index_en.html

Possible country specific hub-website options were also provided as examples for following teams' input. For example, on Greece, Italy, Sweden and Germany, respectively see:

<http://www.enallaktikos.gr/kg15el>

<http://www.economiasolidale.net/>

<http://www.volontarbyran.org/for-organisationer/>

<http://www.solidarische-oekonomie.de/>

The teams were asked to make sure that their central sources were updated and operating. In identifying the types of hub, they were instructed to use the following categories that were developed on the following types of organizations and types of alternative actions (in the draft Codebook of April 2014), based on the literature, collaborative preparation among the teams and the pilot testing. Some teams identified other AAOs by crawling the web from the organizations listed in their hubs/directories.

Type of Organization which established and runs website (ORGTP1-3)

Citizens' grassroots initiatives; 'Solidarity' initiatives; Social justice groups; Neighborhood Assemblies; Barter Clubs; Anti-authoritarian/anarchist groups; Antifascism - Antiracism; Indignados/protest camps/movement of the squares/piazzas;

Alternative Media initiatives

Unions; Cooperatives; Labor organizations; Professional associations (e.g. Doctors); Other work related organizations
NGOs (by type of sector, including environmental); Volunteer Associations (e.g. Red Cross)

Social economy enterprises; Producer Organizations; Cultural clubs/Artists; Sports organizations
Alternative Banks/Community Banks/Credit Unions; Time Banks; Other

Group-specific organizations and groups ('women's organizations', 'migrants and minority organizations',
'unemployed organizations', 'disabled organizations', 'youth organizations'
'Other group-specific organizations')

State Organizations; Local Authorities/Municipalities, Regional Authorities, 'welfare/social security agencies'; 'state executive agencies policy sectors

EU agencies [by sector]; Other supranational agencies [by sector]

University, Research Center/Institute

Church

Non-profit civil partnership

Political Parties

Types of Alternative/Solidarity Activities (ACTTYP1-5)

1. Urgent Needs [housing, food, clothing]

Shelter, Food (e.g. Soup Kitchens), Social Grocery, Social Medicine/Health/Mental Health, Clothes, Education, self-help actions, barter/local exchange trading systems/swap bazaars, Local assemblies of the anti-eviction movement, Anti direct/indirect taxation/"won't pay" movement, Animal rights, Pro immigrant actions, Pro GBLT actions, Human rights, Free legal/consulting services, Other

2. Energy and the environment

Community gardens (urban/rural), Energy cooperatives, Protection of the environment/wild life, Waste or recycling related actions, Alternative transportation/carpooling, Other

3. Civic media and communications

Software/data exchange, Other

4. Economy

Exchange Services/Products (e.g. Time Banks), Financial support/Social finance (e.g. Alternative Banks), Alternative coin, Services provision (e.g. Social enterprises/co-operatives)
Product provision (e.g. Social enterprises/co-operatives), Agro-tourism, Boycott/buycott, Other

5. Alternative consumption/Food sovereignty

Consumer cooperatives, Community sustained agriculture, Community food networks, Slow food, Fair trade, De-growth groups, Other

6. Self-organized spaces

Civic and autonomous management of spaces (e.g. occupations of buildings, urban abandoned slots, buildings and facilities), Other

7. Art and Culture

Sports, Theater/Music actions, Festivals

8. Mediation

9. Provision of Assistance in accessing state structures (health, employment, social services related)

10. Other

Based on these instructions, the nine teams submitted a wide range and a considerable number of hubs but also sub-hubs on specific regions or specific types of alternative activities. Aiming for comparable sources across the nine countries, further instructions were provided, while simultaneously taking into consideration the limitations in terms of time, funding and person months.

Thus, the teams were asked to go through their selected hubs/sub-hubs and assure that final hubs/sub-hubs selection for each team is carried out according to two basic criteria: a) that compared to alternatives, the hub/sub-hubs selected and ranked are better, in terms of inclusiveness (in terms of national coverage), diversity (of alternative activities) and number of related websites and, b) that they cover, as much as possible, the types of action we use in the draft codebook, i.e.:

1. Urgent needs
2. Energy and environment
3. Civic media and communications
4. Economy
5. Alternative consumption
6. Self-organised spaces
7. Art and culture
8. Mediation
9. Provision of Assistance in accessing state structures

Consequently, the nine teams provided the final, ranked hub/sub-hubs, following the ‘cleaning’ of their original selections across the above nine action fields, that reflected those best representing alternative actions in their own country. Ranking was done according to inclusiveness, diversity and the number of related websites in the hubs/sub-hubs. The subcategories across fields (i.e. housing, food, social medicine, education, etc. in ‘urgent needs’) were used to make the internet search easier. The teams also provided an accompanying description explaining and justifying their final selection and ranking procedure in terms of process, steps and logic.

2.1.3 Website retrieval from hubs and preview of the ‘population’

In a series of trilateral communications between each team, the ICS engineers and the UoC coordinating team, the teams took steps to ensure that the hubs selected do show up among the first results of a google search, but also not to exclude some sub-hubs which relate to actions not mentioned by other more inclusive hubs/ sub-hubs already identified. Following these, the final selections were send to the ICS engineers for the retrieval of the ‘population’ of websites of potential AAOs, by the end of May 2015.

Given non-existent similar approaches in the literature, it was not easy to estimate the work load involved under the new source selection approach. The ICS search-engine specialists therefore suggested adopting a step-by-step procedure of prioritized sub/hubs and thereby estimating how to proceed after the retrieval of the first step hubs/sub-hubs. Second and third step procedures can follow within the time limit to cover as many of the prioritized sub/hubs as possible.

Based on the above, the teams were instructed to allocate the cleaned ranked hubs/sub-hubs into a three-step selection process to be used by the engineers, whereby comparability decreases as one moves from Step I selection to Step II and Step III:

STEP I: Top National level hubs (GR, SE, DE, FR, SP, IT) / sub-hubs (PL, CH, UK)

The first step aims to offer national coverage; it provides the most inclusive top ranked, multiple-action-types' national hubs, and if they are not available (PL, CH, UK), a cross-type of top ranked sub-hubs, as well as brief lists of specific websites. Sufficient/Adequate comparability.

STEP II: 1st or 2nd rank "action-type" sub-hubs (most inclusive: SP, FR)

The second set includes hubs and sub-hubs with priority given to sub-hubs covering multiple action-types, if available, at the national level. Lower comparability.

STEP III: subsequent ranked sub-hubs by region/locality or/and action type

The third set includes all remaining ranked hubs and sub-hubs and independent websites covering either the regional/local level or action-type/s. Lowest comparability.

The engineers started to work with the first set (Step I) for each country and they successively were able to cover all three step hubs/sub-hubs within the set time period.

Below follows the final selection of national hubs/sub-hubs (and only to a very limited extent on individual websites in the case of Italy, Poland, Sweden, Switzerland, and the UK) analysed by the engineers, in collaboration with each team (Marketakis et al, UoC-FORTH deliverable, 6-8-2015).

For **France** thirteen hubs/subhubs were identified.

Number of Hubs/Sub-hubs	13
Number of individual websites	0

The French hubs/sub-hubs from which the 'population' list of retrieved websites was produced by the engineers are the following (Marketakis et al. 2015:33-43)

- [1]. <https://www.colibris-lemouvement.org/colibris>
- [2]. <http://colibris.ning.com/groups>
- [3]. <http://mouves.org/>
- [4]. <http://www.portail-solidarite.org/domaines/economie-sociale-et-solidaire>
- [5]. <http://www.lelabo-ess.org/>
- [6]. <https://www.francebarter.coop/>

- [7]. <http://www.unaf.fr/spip.php?rubrique30>
- [8]. <http://www.reseau-ama.org/>
- [9]. <http://www.acrimed.org/>
- [10] <http://www.institut-economie-circulaire.fr/>
- [11] <http://www.artisansdumonde.org/boutiques-commerce-equitable.html>
- [12] <http://cnlii.org/>
- [13] <http://heterotopies.overblog.com/cartographie>

For Germany, eleven hubs/subhubs were identified.

Number of Hubs/Sub-hubs	11
Number of individual websites	0

The German hubs/sub-hubs from which the ‘population’ list of retrieved websites was produced by the engineers are the following (Marketakis et al. 2015:24-33)

- [1]. <http://www.solidarische-oekonomie.de>
- [2]. <http://www.mondamo.de/linklist>
- [3]. <http://www.friedenskooperative.de/netzwerk/links-hr.htm>
- [4]. <http://www.tauschringportal.de>
- [5]. <http://www.umsonstladen.de>
- [6]. <http://www.syndikat.org/de/links/>
- [7]. http://konsumpf.de/?page_id=39
- [8]. <http://www.tafel.de/die-tafeln/tafel-suche/adressenliste.html>
- [9]. <http://www.arbeitslosenverband.org/mitgliedsverbaende/index.html>
- [10] <http://medibueros.m-bient.com/standorte.html>
- [11] <http://www.evangelische-obdachlosenhilfe.de/index.php/mitglieder.html>

For Greece, four hubs/subhubs were identified.

Number of Hubs/Sub-hubs	4
Number of individual websites	0

The Greek hubs/sub-hubs from (and individual websites) which the ‘population’ list of retrieved websites was produced by the engineers are the following (Marketakis et al. 2015:18-21)

- [1]. <http://www.enallaktikos.gr>

- [2]. <http://www.solidarity4all.gr>
- [3]. <http://omikronproject.gr>
- [4]. <http://www.boroume.gr>

For Italy, seven hubs/subhubs and forty-two individual websites were identified.

Number of Hubs/Sub-hubs	7
Number of individual websites	42

The Italian hubs/sub-hubs (and individual websites) from which the ‘population’ list of retrieved websites was produced by the engineers are the following (Marketakis et al. 2015:65-73)

- [1]. <http://www.economiasolidale.net>
- [2]. <http://www.retegas.org/>
- [3]. <http://www.retecosol.org/>
- [4]. <http://www.tempomat.it/>
- [5]. <http://www.abitarenellacrisi.org>
- [6]. <http://www.coworkingproject.com>
- [7]. <http://www.coworkingfor.com/>
- [8]. <http://www.associazionenazionalebdt.it/>
- [9]. <http://www.altromercato.it/it>
- [10]. <https://romattiva.wordpress.com/centrisocialiroma/>
- [11]. <http://www.bilancidigiustizia.it/>
- [12]. <http://www.cooperazione.net/>
- [13]. <http://www.punk4free.org/concerti/elenco-locali-e-centri-sociali.html>
- [14]. <http://cipsi.it/>
- [15]. <http://www.noprofit.org/>

For Poland, eight hubs/subhubs and twenty-seven individual websites were identified.

Number of Hubs/Sub-hubs	8
Number of individual websites	27

The Polish hubs/sub-hubs (and individual websites) from which the ‘population’ list of retrieved websites was produced by the engineers are the following (Marketakis et al. 2015:51-56)

- [1]. <http://www.ekonomiaspoleczna.pl/>

- [2]. http://bazy.ngo.pl/search/wyniki.asp?wyniki=1&szukanie=zaawans1&kryt_typ_instyt_multi=74&baza=13
- [3]. http://bazy.ngo.pl/search/wyniki.asp?wyniki=1&szukanie=zaawans1&kryt_typ_instyt_multi=83&baza=64
- [4]. http://bazy.ngo.pl/search/wyniki.asp?wyniki=1&szukanie=zaawans1&kryt_typ_instyt_multi=114&baza=105
- [5]. http://bazy.ngo.pl/search/wyniki.asp?wyniki=1&szukanie=zaawans1&kryt_typ_instyt_multi=89&baza=78
- [6]. <http://inkubatory.pl/mapa-inkubatorow/>
- [7]. <http://www.ffl.org.pl/pl/czlonkowie>
- [8]. <https://kolektywnie.wordpress.com/category/kooperatywy-spozywcze/>
- [9]. http://bazy.ngo.pl/search/wyniki.asp?wyniki=1&kryt_nazwa=&kryt_miasto=&kryt_woj=&kryt_pola=12&kryt_typ_instyt_multi=17&baza=1&szukanie=zaawans1
- [10]. http://bazy.ngo.pl/search/wyniki.asp?wyniki=1&kryt_nazwa=&kryt_miasto=&kryt_kraj=&kryt_ekk=8&szukanie=ekk
- [11]. http://bazy.ngo.pl/search/wyniki.asp?wyniki=1&kryt_nazwa=&kryt_miasto=&kryt_woj=&kryt_pola=24&kryt_typ_instyt_multi=17&baza=1&szukanie=zaawans1

For Spain, ten hubs/subhubs were identified.

Number of Hubs/Sub-hubs	10
Number of individual websites	0

The Spanish hubs/sub-hubs from which the ‘population’ list of retrieved websites was produced by the engineers are the following (Marketakis et al. 2015:43-51)

- [1]. <http://15mpedia.org/wiki/>
- [2]. <http://www.economiasolidaria.org/entidades>
- [3]. <http://www.mecambio.net/>
- [4]. <http://bdtonline.org>
- [5]. <http://www.redautogestion.com/directorio-autogestion>
- [6]. www.todoporlapraxis.es/?cat=1
- [7]. http://ludus.org.es/es/projects?province_id=31
- [8]. <http://www.nodo50.org/puzlea/ocupacion.htm>
- [9]. <http://auditoriaciudadana.net/>
- [10] <http://www.hispacoop.es/home>

For Sweden, two hubs/subhubs and seventeen individual websites were identified.

Number of Hubs/Sub-hubs	2
Number of individual websites	17

The Swedish hubs/sub-hubs (and individual websites) from which the ‘population’ list of retrieved websites was produced by the engineers are the following (Marketakis et al. 2015:22-24)

- [1]. www.volontarbyran.org/for-organisationer/
- [2]. <http://vuxnabarn.nu/forum/stodgrupper-f56/sjalvhalpsgrupper-och-samtalsgrupper-sverige-t4488.html>

For Switzerland, ten hubs/subhubs and nine individual websites were identified.

Number of Hubs/Sub-hubs	10
Number of individual websites	9

The Swiss hubs/sub-hubs (and individual websites) from which the ‘population’ list of retrieved websites was produced by the engineers are the following (Marketakis et al. 2015:56-65)

- [1]. <http://www.observatoire-esspace.eu/>
- [2]. <http://www.sel-suisse.ch/>
- [3]. <http://www.acpch.ch/liens/>
- [4]. <http://www.decroissance-bern.ch/index.php>
- [5]. <https://radar.squat.net/en>
- [6]. <http://www.wbg-schweiz.ch/mitglieder.html>
- [7]. <http://www.apres-ge.ch>
- [8]. <http://www.lets.ch/links.php>
- [9]. <http://www.loconomie.ch>
- [10]. <http://www.ueca.ch>

For the UK, fifteen hubs/subhubs and five individual websites were identified.

Number of Hubs/Sub-hubs	15
Number of individual websites	5

The UK hubs/sub-hubs and individual websites from which the ‘population’ list of retrieved websites was produced by the engineers are the following (Marketakis et al. 2015:73-84)

- [1]. <http://www.homelessuk.org/search/searchService.asp?ds=1>
- [2]. <http://www.self-help.org.uk/search/>
- [3]. <http://locality.org.uk/members/>
- [4]. <http://www.dtascot.org.uk/content/directory-of-members/directory>
- [5]. <http://www.dtawales.org.uk/by-name/>
- [6]. <http://www.uk.coop/directory/all>
- [7]. <http://buysocialdirectory.org.uk/directory>
- [8]. <http://www.mygreendirectory.info/listing/location/united-kingdom>
- [9]. <http://www.letslinkuk.net/regions/uk-map.htm>
- [10]. <http://www.communityshops.coop/shops>
- [11]. <http://animalrightsuk.org/localanimalrightsgroups.html>
- [12]. <http://www.transitionnetwork.org/initiatives/by-number>
- [13]. <http://www.globaljustice.org.uk/contact-local-group>
- [14]. <http://www.ethicalconsumer.org/boycotts/boycottlist.aspx>
- [15]. http://www.stonewall.org.uk/at_home/whats_in_my_area/default.asp

Based on the analysis of the above hubs/subhubs and where needed, on individual websites, as well as a series of bilateral communications between each team and the engineers, refining and improving the search results, the ICS team: a) extracted selected information on organizations and groups from the hubs and stored them for further analysis, b) merged the produced lists in one, removing double entries and c) downloaded the online contents of the organizations (Marketakis et al, UoC-FORTH deliverable, 6-8-2015). This process led to the production of one Excel file for each country that offered the merged list of organizations. This Excel ‘All-list’ was used to construct the clean, random sample of approximately 500 AAOs in each country.

Table 2.1 offers a summary showing the number of retrieved websites extracted from the above hubs/subhubs, as well as the information extracted for each website, across the following fields, as requested (Title of the organization; URL(-s) of the website of the organization; Contact information that usually contain the address, the city and region, phone and fax numbers as well as the ZIP code; Short description of the organization; e-mail address(-es); Date: it could be creation date, last update date, active since date, etc.)

Table 2.1 Number of hubs-retrieved websites and related fields, per country

Country	Number of Entries	Title	URL	Contact Info	Description	e-mail	Date
France	2,285	✓(2,285)	✓(1,381)	✓(1,691)	✓(1,581)	✓(448)	✓(927)
Germany	2,505	✓(2,494)	✓(1,936)	✓(1,993)	✓(350)	✓(1,285)	✓(474)
Greece	3,656	✓(3,656)	✓(3,038)	✓(3,480)	✓(748)	✓(814)	
Italy	3,411	✓(3,409)	✓(1,748)	✓(3,098)	✓(1,477)	✓(2,789)	✓(2,042)
Poland	4,669	✓(4,669)	✓(2,553)	✓(4,655)	✓(59)	✓(3,165)	✓(4,576)
Spain	2,025	✓(1,982)	✓(1,279)	✓(1,134)	✓(558)	✓(1,096)	✓(534)
Sweden	2,001	✓(1,953)	✓(1,752)	✓(1,943)	✓(1,908)	✓(1,837)	✓(18)
Switzerland	1,368	✓(1,364)	✓(904)	✓(1,165)	✓(162)	✓(938)	
UK	24,630	✓(24,630)	✓(15,990)	✓(23,777)	✓(13,566)	✓(5,679)	✓(506)
Total	46,550						

Source: Marketakis et al, UoC-FORTH deliverable, 6-8-2015

Aiming to insure that the websites retrieved through the hubs approach by the engineers had, a) satisfactory geographical distributions across each country, and b) adequate coverage of the wide variety of alternative activities⁹, one extra step was taken, in the form of a *preview*, before cleaning and randomizing the lists. Given the time limitations this was done using only the automatically retrieved fields in Table 2.1.

The preview on the geographical distribution showed sufficient national distributions of hubs-retrieved uncleaned organization, as illustrated in the ArcGIS maps of the links offered in Table 2.2. These are based on the available, automatically retrieved zip codes for 8 out of the 9 countries¹⁰. This preview allows us to assume adequate geographical spreads across the countries, even though for all countries, a portion of websites is missing due to the lack of available zip-codes in the retrieved fields. In the case of the UK, where a map preview is not provided due to the difficulties related to its different zip code system and the enormous/immense number of UK websites (24,630), there is enough information on the contact details that allows us to assume an adequate national distribution.

Table 2.2 Links to zip-code based maps of hub-retrieved websites with ‘population’ of uncleaned, nonrandomized AAOs to be used for sampling

Country	Zip-code based Map Link	No of websites with zip codes
FR	http://arcg.is/1KjODw5	808
CH	http://arcg.is/1gpuDf6	883
GER	http://arcg.is/1VFEUDY	1,725

⁹ As previously defined according to the draft codebook.

¹⁰ Map construction was carried out by Angelos Loukakis (UoC team) according to the available zip codes of the websites for eight of the nine national lists.

GR	http://arcg.is/1GqgEKK	2,867
IT	http://arcg.is/1PBnNhR	2,396
PL	http://arcg.is/1DkTgyf	2,439
SE	http://arcg.is/1GowMfJ	1,350
SP	http://arcg.is/1HNf8pY	599

Source: LIVEWHAT, Work Package 6

The information above illustrates that the organizations in the nine countries tend to spread according to the distribution of the population, while covering both urban and rural spaces. By illustrating the scale and existence of alternative actions across national regions, the preview confirms that the retrieved Excel lists offer a ‘population’ from which the teams can clean and draw their national random samples new systematic.

The second preview step was also taken to insure adequate coverage of the wide variety of alternative activities that the extracted websites provided. Using the brief descriptions as well as the names of the organizations from the automatically retrieved fields, the frequencies of the extracted information shows sufficient coverage of the main fields in all countries, as previously defined according to the draft codebook.

Overall, these preview findings show that the selected hubs-retrieved websites are sound and reliable sources that can be considered as a form of a ‘population’ or national general sample, with fairly good national distributions of all our sets of websites. This allows the teams to use them for cleaning their random sample of websites.

2.1.4 Cleaning and randomizing the sample from the ‘population’

Given that the organizations traced in the retrieved websites did not necessarily meet all of our specific criteria of selection, while at the same time they were too numerous to analyse in the time period of WP6, the consortium decided to monitor, clean and analyse a random sample of 500 organisations and groups per country, in a systematic manner. The 500 random and cleaned AAO websites will be coded according to the criteria of selection, based on the aims of the WP.

Random samples were selected from the final Excel ‘all-lists’ of each country’s AAO websites using the following process: a list of random numbers was generated and associated to the websites of each country list, following a procedure similar to WP3 – except that the websites were ranked in alphabetical order – instead of chronological, as in the case of newspaper articles. This was done with a random number generator, such as the one offered by Excel. By selecting the respective option in the file containing the final list of websites, a list of random numbers was generated in Excel, whereby each

number is associated with a website. Then, the entries were reordered according to the list of random numbers, so that the websites became randomly ordered.

The 500 randomly chosen AAOs to be coded were selected only if they were active at any time within the period of the recent global economic crisis (i.e. at least between 2007 and 2016). Included in the sample were organizations/networks/groups similar to the ‘Type of Organization’ ORGTP (see Codebook), that engaged in alternative practices like those in ‘Types of Solidarity Activities’ ACTTYP (see Codebook). To be included in the sample, they also had to operate in the country under study: i.e. have offices or carry out solidarity activities in the home country of each LIVEWHAT team. Alternative actions by other national/transnational actors that took place in the home country were also coded. Excluded from the sample are, 1) state (central)-related organizations as sole organizers of alternative action, 2) EU-related organizations as sole organizers of alternative action and, 3) Corporate-related organizations as sole organizers of alternative action [e.g. corporate social responsibility action].

Thereafter, coding began from the first AAO website of this newly reordered list until the quota of 500 cleaned websites was completed.

2.2 The Codebook

The new coding tool which was developed specifically for the needs of the first phase of WP6 is inspired by coding tools used in the well know method of protest event analysis and its variants, protest case and political claims analysis. Preparations of the forty page codebook for the analysis of alternative action organizations (Task 6.1) began much earlier than the months scheduled for this task. Furthermore, the preparations lasted longer than the anticipated beyond months 19-21, since once the websites were available from the engineers multiple pretests of the codebook were carried out in order to standardize and insure that it could be applied effectively across a wide variety of AAOs in nine different national settings. The codebook offers instructions concerning defining, locating, and coding of AAOs and a considerable number of variables referring to: socio-economic and cultural characteristics of the initiating groups, their networks, resources, supporters, actions and practices, the forms of resilience promoted, their beneficiaries and participants as well as their aims and values, in reference to citizens’ rights and needs. Beneficiary 8 (UOC) was responsible for the preparation of the codebook (D6.1, MS10¹¹).

A preliminary first list of the main variables to be used in the codebook was presented in the November 2014 LIVEWHAT consortium meeting nine months prior to the starting month of the WP. The first

¹¹ <http://www.livewhat.unige.ch/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/Deliverable-6.1.pdf>

draft version of the codebook was circulated (in English) a few months prior to the beginning of the WP by the UoC team, at the April 2015 project meeting in Crete (Task 6.3), where it was commented upon by all teams.

A series of systematic pretests, reliability testing and coders' training workshop and sessions were organized by the UoC team and carried out with different samples of English language websites with the participation of the coders from all nine teams. These led to the development and refinement of the codebook's categories so as to grasp the widely diverse AAO types, its activities and all its other features. The final version of the codebook was sent to the teams in February 11, 2016.

The Codebook consists of five sets of variables, preceded by an introductory part that defines the unit of analysis, i.e. the AAO, offers basic information of how they are located and sampled, provides basic instructions on criteria of inclusion and exclusion and a summary of general coding rules.

The profile of the online media sources of the AAO is coded in the first group of variables, based on the information provided by its website, including its online media outlets (Facebook, blog, Twitter, hub), their updates, its territorial characteristics, contact details (address, contact details and country), language/s used, starting year of the media outlet (using archive.org), structural features of the website (e.g. action calendars, finances, legal/other reports).

The organizational profile of the AAO is coded with the second group of variables. These include detailed codes on the network/umbrella spatial features of the AAO, applying Diani's (2003: 6) definition, of networks as sets of nodes linked by some form of relationship, and delimited by some specific criteria; nodes may consist of groups, organizations, and other entities. The starting year and month of the AAO itself (not its website), as well as structural features (ranging from more formal to more informal features) of the AAO are coded. Detailed codes are provided for: the type of group specific organization which established and runs media outlet and the primary type of AAO.

Solidarity activities and beneficiaries/ participants are coded using the third group of variables. Ten major categories of specified activities are coded, each of which has several sub-activities. They include: basic/urgent needs [e.g. housing, food, health, clothing]; economy; energy and the environment; alternative consumption/food sovereignty/alternative lifestyles; civic media & communications; self-organized spaces; culture; and, interest group representation [advice to state bodies and lobbying], as well as activities related to preventing hate crime (on e.g. migrant/refugees, disabled); activities related to stop human trafficking (e.g. migrant children, women). The spatial dimension of most/ all the solidarity activities is coded in detail, from the local to the global level in several codes (including global level). Thirty-three codes are used to code the types of beneficiaries/participants of the solidarity

activities. Eight codes allow the coding of the immigrant/refugee beneficiaries residence. The primary beneficiary group, as well as the residence spatial level of the beneficiaries, are coded.

The aim and solidarity orientation of the AAO are coded with the fourth group of variables. Detailed codes are provided for: the aim/goal/ethos of the organization; AAO's proposed route to achieve its aim; the type of solidarity orientation; its calls and invitees; its partners (number and type); and the names of all partner organizations and related links.

Supplementary actions and the value frames of the AAO are coded with the fifth group of variables. Supplementary action-forms or public events of the AAO include: verbal/written statements; dissemination/promotional actions/public reports; 'parliamentary debate/intervention'/political pressure other than lobbying'; court route (litigation)/ legal procedures followed by informal or formal citizens initiatives/NGOs to reach their goals (local, national or international); protest actions (conventional/soft protest actions, demonstrative protest actions, boycott/buycott, strikes, occupation of public buildings, squares, such as 15M, indignados, occupy), including the spatial level of action; a brief description of the organization (Who does What, for Whom, Where?).

The final part of the fifth group of variables, the 'value frames' variables, are used to code the framing of alternative/solidarity actions undertaken overall by an organization, i.e. the values upon which these actions draw in order to take their fundamental meaning. Value frames may be latent or manifest within the organization's websites' textual information. Most of the time they can easily be traced in the front/main page of AAO's website or under the sections home/ who we are/ mission/ about. The value codes are organized into six groups, each containing more specific values: humanitarian/philanthropic (civic virtues I), rights-based ethics (civic virtues II), empowerment and participation (post-materialist I), diversity and sustainability (post-materialist II), economic virtues (materialist I), community and order (materialist II).

2.3 Pretesting and Coding

The coding of AAOs, Task 6.3, was carried out using an online coding tool for a duration close to the planned one of three months (months 22-24), albeit later, for the reasons explained above. The unit of analysis on which coding was based, is the 'alternative action organization, a collective body/unit, which organizes collective events carrying out alternatives to dominant socio-economic and cultural practices with visible beneficiaries and claims' on their economic and social wellbeing – including basic needs, health, lifestyles, as depicted through the AAO website/online sources'. Most variables were standardized in numerical form through a variety of categories contained in the codebook (see 2.2 above).

The codebook was improved in a series of drafts based on consecutive rounds of pilot tests, coders' training sessions and reliability tests. A two-day Coders Training Workshop was organized 17-18 of September 2015 at the University of Crete in Rethymno, aiming to develop a common understanding of the codebook and the coding process and thereby increase reliability among coders across nine teams. All national teams participated in the workshop and in the common coding exercises using English-language websites for the full two days of the workshop. The different parts of the codebook were discussed and the UoC team provided instructions on how to code the related variables. A google spreadsheet was subsequently set up and used by coders for any questions and comments they came across on the coding procedures, on the coding tool as well as on codebook itself. Bilateral communication between the UoC team and each team also took place via emails and when needed, skype calls, for issues related to coding or technical ones on the coding tool.

The data were entered online using a limesurvey tool which was created, centrally administered and supported by the UoC team.¹² The tool was tested and improved based on comments from the series of trial/pilot tests carried out with the participation of the coders in all nine teams. Once the codebook was finalized, so was the online coding tool, in early February 2016.

The first reliability pre-test was carried out 19-26 October 2015 using a selection of English language websites to be coded with the latest version of the codebook. Due to low 'krippendorff alpha' reliability scores, two coders' teleconference sessions were organized on the 21st and the 26th of January 2016. Using an improved version of the codebook, these coders' sessions proved very useful and effective since they facilitated discussions and communication between the coders and the UoC leading team on all the issues identified in the first reliability results and solutions to address them. The analysis of the results presented in the sessions helped the coders understand the errors they made, while it also helped to refine and improve parts of the codebook which needed further clarifications and instructions.

Following the two productive teleconference sessions with the coders of all nine teams, the second reliability test took place 1-3 of February 2016. It was based on two websites which were coded by all 16 coders remotely and individually from 26-29 January 2016. The reliability is calculated on five different Groups of variables: Profile of Online Media Outlets, Alternative Action Organization Profile, Activities B Beneficiaries, Aim and Solidarity, and Supplementary Action & Frame. High reliability scores were achieved on the basic media structure variables. Coders' answers match more than 78% on the organization profile Group variables. The coders provided the same answers in more than 80% of the total cases on the actions and beneficiaries variables, except for three variables (where reliability

¹² Specifically by Nikos Kapelonis.

reaches from 56-66%). For the Aim and Solidarity variables the coders code in the same way at least in 80% of the variables. Finally, on the reliability of Supplementary Action & Frame variables, there were no major differences in the answers between the coders. These results illustrate satisfactory inter-coder reliability.

Based on the aforementioned positive reliability results, coding started with the final Codebook and the related coding instructions. The nine teams coded from month 27 (early February 2016) to month 32 (late July 2016) a total of 4,297 cases, about 500 in each country – with only one minor deviation of 333.

2.4 References

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3. Alternative Action Organization Analysis: Main Findings at the aggregate and national level



The sections that follow provide the main findings of the first phase of WP6 in an aggregate as well as a comparative, cross-national perspective. They are based on a random sample of 4,297 AAOs (approximately 500 in each countries¹³), which was produced through Action Organization Analysis (AOA) of AAO websites – see Chapter 2. First, descriptive analysis offers a profile of the AAOs, focused on core features including their activities, values frames and goals, beneficiaries/participants and partners. Second, an explanatory analysis focuses on causal mechanisms and the ways in which main variables of the data set impact on each other. Both sets of analyses are based on a selection of core variables which are further analyzed in academic dissemination products.

3.1 Descriptive Analysis: Resilient Activities, Aims, Beneficiaries and Partners

The subsequent descriptive analysis on the data across nine European countries provides evidence in response to nine core questions addressed in the aim of WP6: Who are the AFRs/AAOs? What forms of resilient activities do they engage in? What are their values frames, aims and proposed routes to achieve their goals? What their network affiliation is? What types of resources have they access to? What types of Supporters or Partners they work with? What supplementary actions they organize or participate in? Who are the Beneficiaries or Participants of their activities? What are their Solidarity approaches?

3.1.1 Who are the Alternative Action Organizations?

Figure 3.1 illustrates the main types of Alternative Action Organizations that organize and carry out alternative action/resilient practices across the nine European countries, using the aggregate random sample (N=4,297). The two types of highest frequency are NGOs (31.9%) and Informal and protest groups (25.9%) such as people's initiatives, neighborhood assemblies, protest groups and information platforms. These are followed in frequency by social economy enterprises (16.5%), as well as charities and church (15.2%). Much lower in frequency are unions/associations and municipalities/regions (4.3% and 1.8% respectively) as organizers of resilient activities.

¹³ With one minor deviation of 333 in the case of Switzerland.

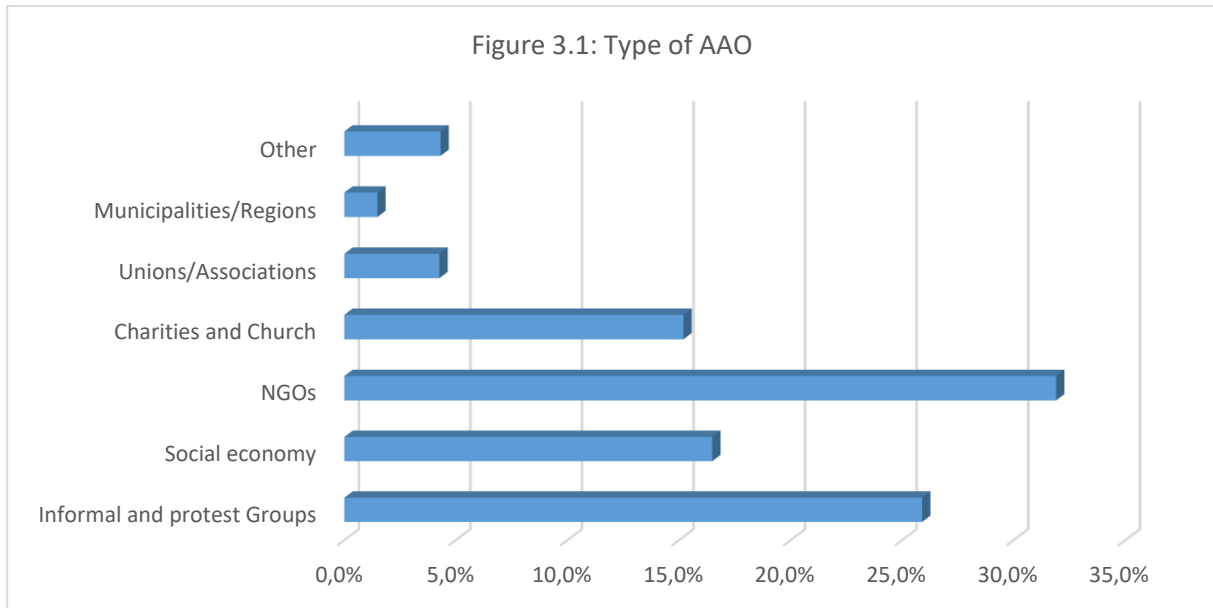
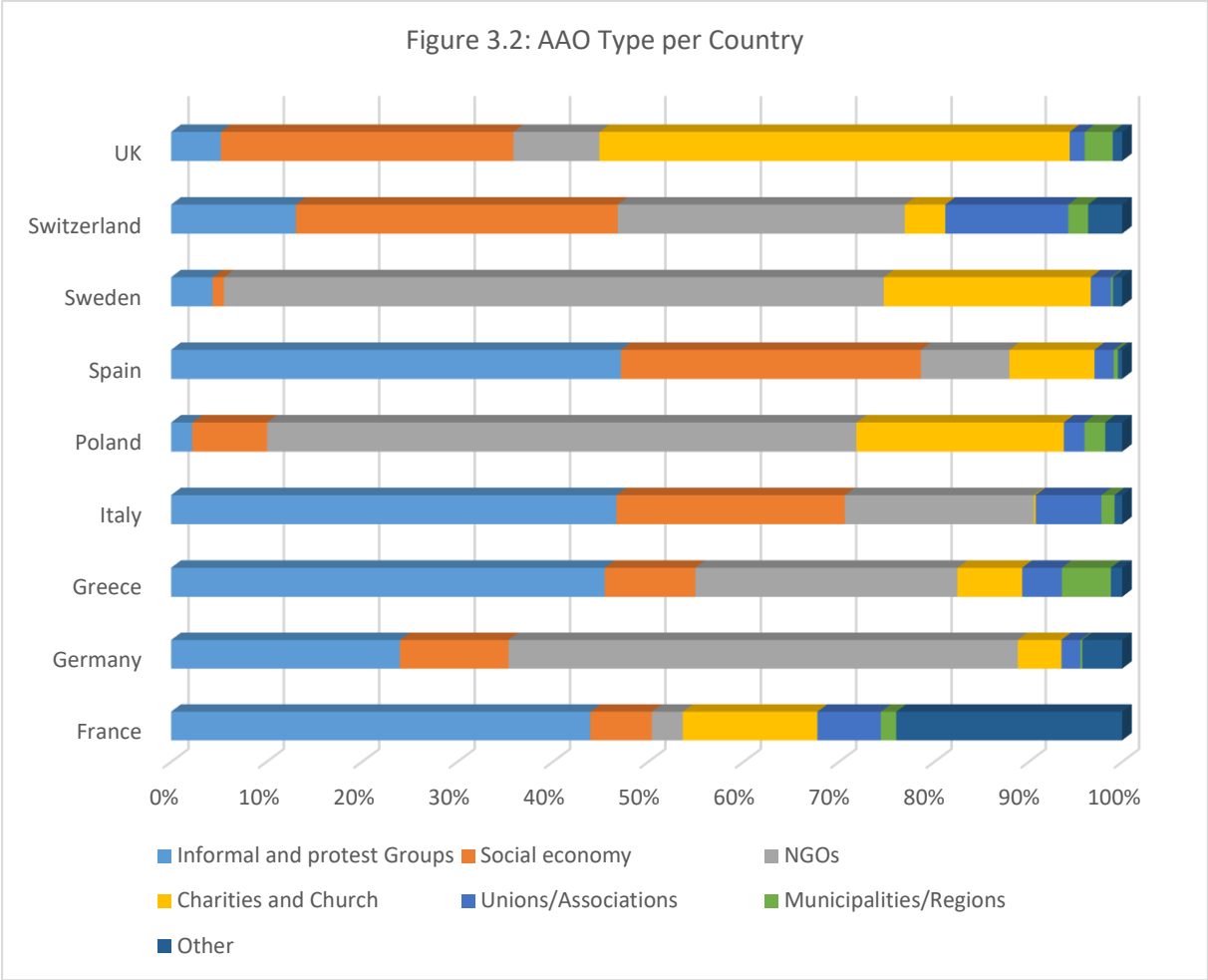


Figure 3.2 depicts the main types of Alternative Action Organization for each of the nine countries¹⁴. Two clear patterns and two individual cases can be identified. The first, ‘South European’ pattern, representing Greece, Italy, France and Spain, encompasses the *highest frequencies of informal and protest groups* (from 44-47%), followed by lower frequencies of NGOs (3-27%) and social economy groups (6.5-31%), and church and charity organizations (0.2-14%).

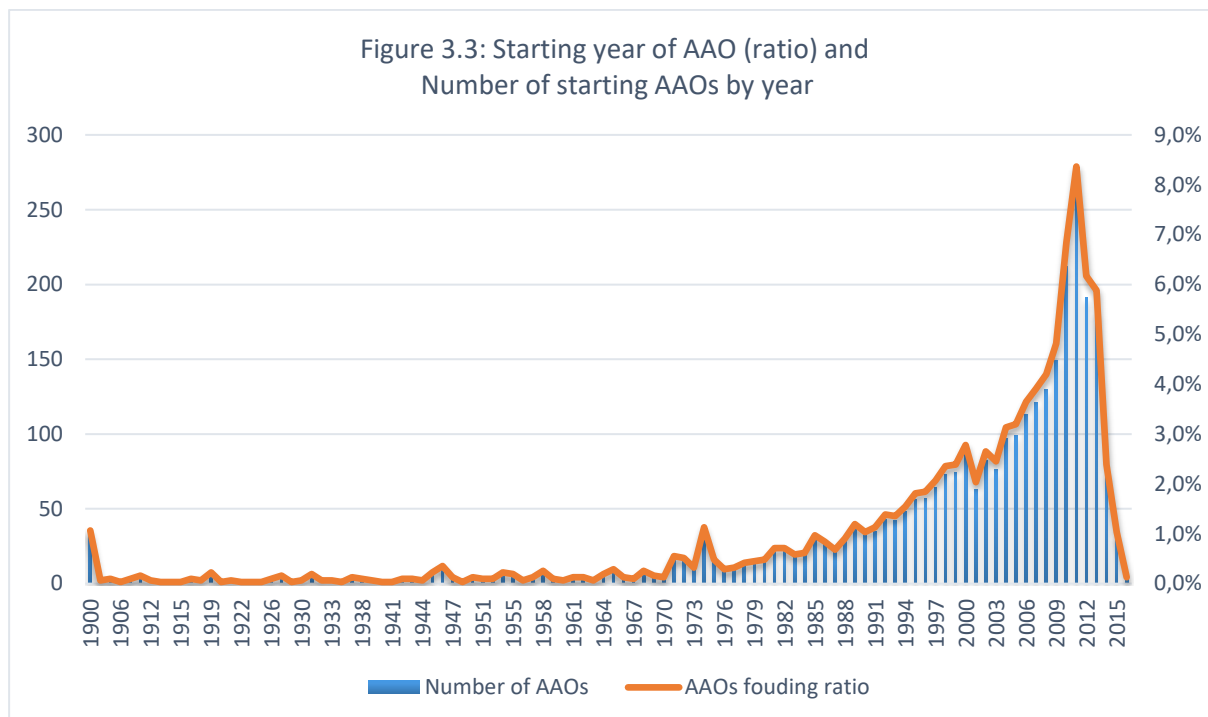
The second ‘non-South European’ pattern, involving Sweden, Poland and Germany, portrays the *highest frequencies of NGOs* (69-53.5%), followed by church and charities in Poland and Sweden (22% in both) but only 4.7% in Germany. The two countries (also non-South EU) that do not follow the above patterns of prevalent organizational types are Switzerland and the UK. The highest frequency of *Social Economy* (33.7%) AAOs is seen in Switzerland, followed by NGOs (30.1%), the informal/protest groups and Unions and Associations (13.1% in both). By contrast, *Charities and Church* hold highest frequency in the UK (49.5%), followed by social economy (30.7%) and very low frequencies on the remaining types of AAOs.

¹⁴ Total N for each country is: FR (496), DE (492), GR (495), IT (497), PL (497), SP (439), SE (506), CH (329), UK (499).



The founding year of the AAOs is shown in the two timelines below, using country ratios¹⁵ for comparative purposes. Figure 3.3 depicting the ratio of the AAOs' starting year at the aggregate level, (Total N= 3,096), shows that overall Alternative Actions Organizations make their appearance as far back as the early 1900s, with noticeable presence immediately after WWII, and since the mid-60s. Increasing waves appear in the 70s, escalating progressively and steadily after the mid-80s, but especially since the late nineties, mounting the highest peak during the crisis period. Thus, the 2008 global financial crisis appears to trigger the creation of new AAOs, as the founding ratio peaks from 2008 to 2013 (more than 5% every year), with subsequent decreases in 2014-15. Thus, the overall growth in the nine countries as a whole seems to react in quite sensitive ways to the developments of the period, and the urgency of the various crises and accelerating economic downturns affecting EU countries.

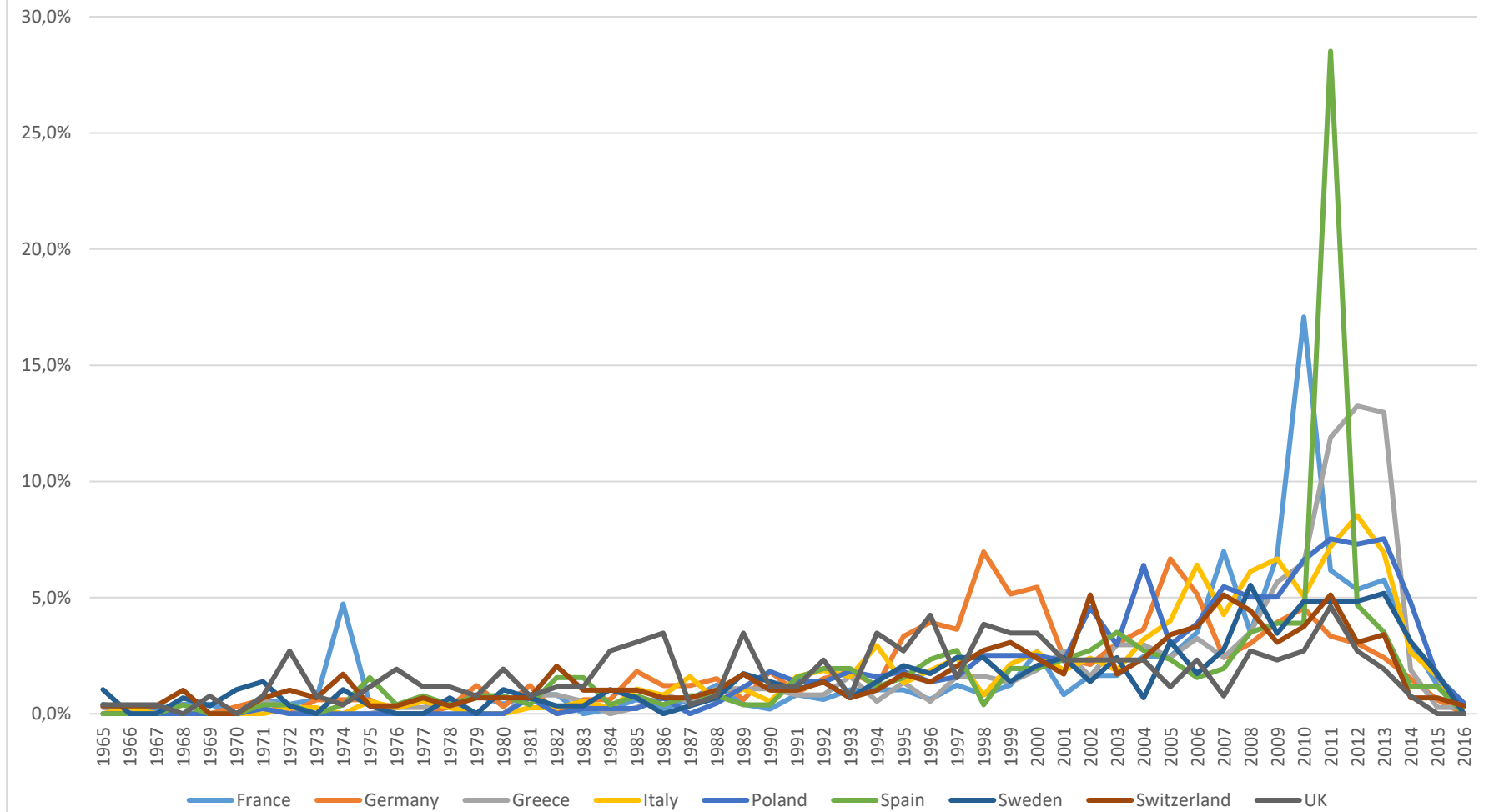
¹⁵ Ratio = number of country's AAOs/year divided by country's total number of AAOs (1965-2016)



The rather smooth, escalating, composite peak however changes when we disaggregate at the country level, in Figure 3.4. At first glance, two clear patterns can be identified. One pattern is that of countries highly affected by the crisis, i.e. Spain and Greece, but also Italy and France at the threshold of the crisis, and Poland in which the starting-year ratio peaks during the crisis years. More specifically, the creation of almost half or more than half of the AAOs in Spain (50.4%), Greece (56.2%), France (49%), Italy (44.8%), and Poland (45.9%) occurred from 2008 to 2015.

By contrast, the countries which were not as affected by the crisis, witnessed the formation of fewer AAOs during 2008-15, i.e. Sweden (33.6%), Switzerland (24.6%), Germany (22.4%) and the UK (17.8%). Compared therefore to the former, AAOs in the latter countries are relatively older and more institutionalized, as most of them were founded in the 80s and 90s – with a noticeable peak in Germany in the late nineties.

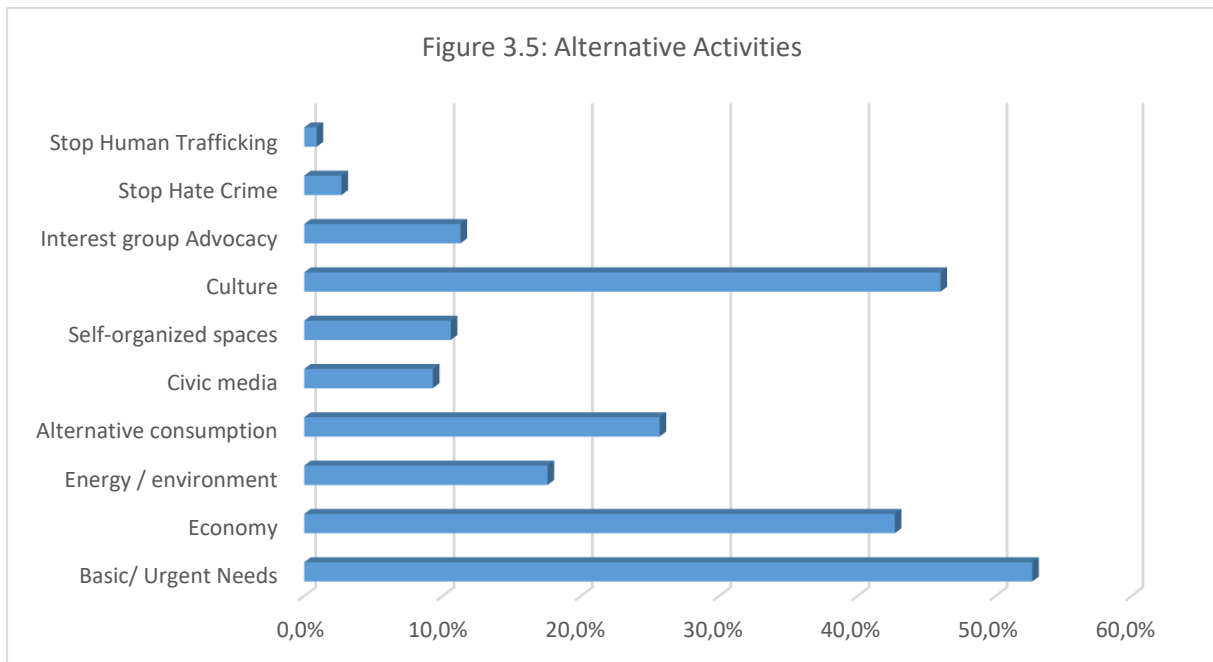
Figure 3.4: AAOs founding ratio per country from 1965



3.1.2 The Activities of AAOs

A wide variety of alternative to the mainstream activities are a major focus of our analysis, since it is through these collective resilience initiatives and practices that AAOs help citizens confront hard economic times and everyday difficulties. This section centers on these solidarity activities of the AAOs at the aggregate and cross-national level, while it also presents in detail the sub-activities of the most vital/fundamental ones, i.e. those related to Urgent and Basic Needs.

Figure 3.5 (Total N= 4,297) illustrates ten main types of alternative/solidarity activities at the aggregate level, documenting basic/urgent needs as the most prominent in frequency main activity (52.7%), followed by ‘culture’ (46%) and economy (42.6%) related activities. Urgent needs related activities include the provision of food, shelter, medical services, clothing, free legal advice, emergency support to groups in need (e.g. women, children, refugees), and anti-eviction initiatives (see figure 3.6). Culture alternative activities include those related to art, theater, cinema, music actions, festivals, concerts, social hangouts, sports and educational activities for public awareness. Finally, economy-related activities consist of alternative coins, barter clubs, financial support, products and service provision on low prices, fundraising activities, second hand shops and bazaars. Less frequent at the aggregate level, are alternative consumption (25.7%) activities such as producer-consumer actions, community gardens, boycotts and buycotts, and energy and environmental actions (17.6%), for example those related with the protection of the environment, animal rights, renewable energy/climate change and waste management. Interest group advocacy, self-organized spaces, and civic media follow with lower albeit similar frequencies (11.3%, 10.6%, and 9.3% respectively). Finally, activities related to stopping hate crime (2.7%) and human trafficking (0.9%) are the lowest in frequency.



Even more revealing, however, is the cross-national comparison of alternative solidarity activities. Table 3.1 offers frequencies within each of the main activities. Focusing on the Urgent Needs actions, Sweden, Germany, Poland, Greece and the UK show very high frequencies (76.8 - 61%), while Italy and France show the lowest (22 - 21%). Comparing within Culture related activities, Poland, Greece, Sweden, Spain and Italy have higher frequencies (75.5-50.4%) in relation to Switzerland, the UK, France and Germany (39.3 – 15.9%). A cross-national comparison on Economy related activities used by AAOs reveals that they are most prominent in Switzerland (67.3%), Spain (63.2%), France (58.2%) and Poland (54.2%) of moderate frequency in Greece (40.4%), Sweden (30.6%) the UK (27.6%), and Germany (24.5%), while they are lowest in Italy (8%).

Furthermore, looking within alternative consumption activities, these are most prevalent in Italy and France (56% and 53.6% respectively), moderately so in Spain, Switzerland and Greece (32.7 – 20.8%), while lowest in Germany and the UK (15.7-10.6%). Moving to energy/environment related activities, highest frequencies are held by Switzerland, France, Poland and Greece (33.9 – 22.8%), and lower by the rest of the countries (14.5 – 2.9%). When it comes to civic media actions and activities in self organized spaces, Switzerland holds the highest frequencies in both (27.3% and 24.6% accordingly), while Italy in second place (20.2%) for self-organized spaces and Greece is in second place (14.4%) for civic media. Noteworthy within the interest group advocacy activity, are the leading positions of Poland (25.7%) and Sweden (24.8%) compared to the considerably lower in the rest of the countries.

Table 3.1: Type of alternative activities organized by AAOs per Country*

Alternative Activities	FR	GER	GR	IT	POL	SP	SE	CH	UK	Total
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
	(N)	(N)	(N)	(N)	(N)	(N)	(N)	(N)	(N)	(N)
Basic/ Urgent Needs	21.0	66.3	63.0	22.0	63.7	37.7	76.8	39.3	61.0	50.7
	(105)	(330)	(315)	(110)	(317)	(173)	(391)	(131)	(305)	(2,177)
Economy	58.2	24.5	40.4	8.0	54.2	63.2	30.6	67.3	27.6	42.7
	(291)	(122)	(202)	(140)	(270)	(290)	(156)	(224)	(138)	(1,833)
Energy/ environment	25.6	14.5	22.8	9.4	25.3	17.6	2.9	33.9	11.8	17.6
	(128)	(73)	(114)	(47)	(126)	(81)	(15)	(113)	(59)	(756)
Alternative consumption	53.6	15.7	20.8	56.0	9.2	32.7	4.5	30.3	10.6	25.7
	(268)	(78)	(104)	(282)	(46)	(150)	(23)	(101)	(53)	(1,105)
Civic media	10.8	3.6	14.4	6.8	4.6	11.5	5.5	27.3	5.4	9.3
	(54)	(18)	(72)	(34)	(23)	(53)	(28)	(91)	(27)	(400)
Self-organized spaces	6.6	11.8	9.6	20.2	7.2	9.2	2.0	24.6	7.6	10.6
	(33)	(59)	(48)	(101)	(36)	(42)	(10)	(88)	(38)	(455)
Culture	19.4	15.9	74.4	50.4	75.5	54.5	57.2	39.3	26.0	46.8
	(97)	(79)	(372)	(252)	(376)	(250)	(291)	(131)	(130)	(1,978)
Interest group Advocacy	3.8	8.8	2.4	0.8	25.7	5.9	24.8	13.5	15.8	11.3
	(19)	(44)	(12)	(4)	(128)	(27)	(126)	(45)	(79)	(484)
Stop Hate Crime	0.4	3.0	5.8%	0.6	3.6	0.2	6.1	1.2	2.4	2.3
	(2)	(15)	(29)	(3)	(18)	(1)	(31)	(4)	(12)	(115)
Stop Human Trafficking	0.6	1.0	1.4	0.6	1.0	0.0	0.8	1.8	1.0	0.9
	(3)	(5)	(7)	(3)	(5)	(0)	(4)	(6)	(5)	(38)
N	(500)	(498)	(500)	(500)	(498)	(459)	(509)	(333)	(500)	(4,297)

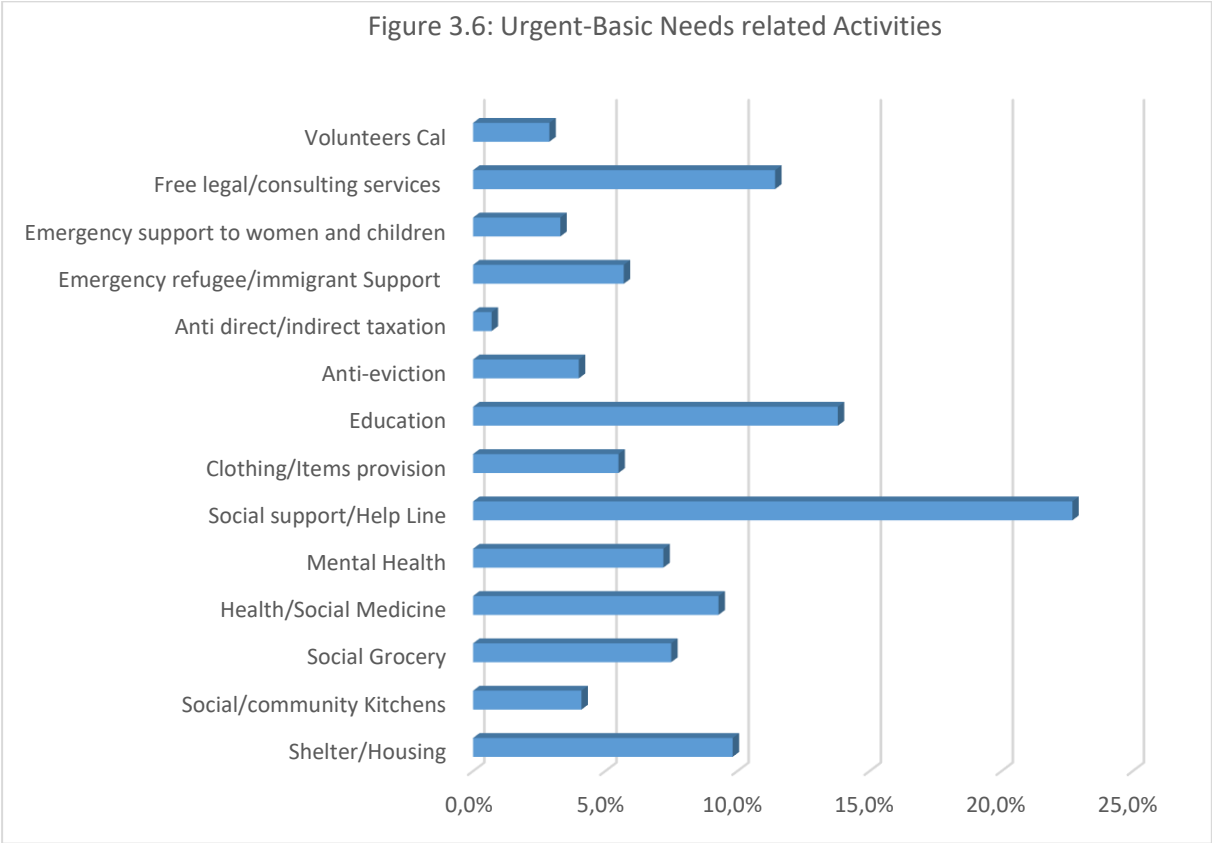
* Note: Alternative activities are coded as dichotomous (yes/no variables) and therefore percentages do not sum to 100. Coding multiple categories was applied since most of the AAOs engage in a variety of activities. Percentages are calculated based on the count of cases within each (country) category divided by the total number of AAOs of the country.

An examination of the specific actions within urgent/basic needs activities, as shown in Figure 3.6 (Total N=2,177), reveals that the most common ones are: social support or help line¹⁶ (22.7%), educational¹⁷

¹⁶ Social support/Help Line/Aid/Live chat/Assistance Social support/Mentoring/Care/Advice/ “helping hand” to beneficiaries, non-state related (e.g. companionship, emotional, finance to parents, abused women, elderly, etc.).

¹⁷ Such as language lessons for migrants/refugees, tutorials for students in need.

(13.8%), shelter/housing¹⁸ (9.8%), free legal and consulting services¹⁹ (11.4%), health/social medicine²⁰ (9.3%), social grocery²¹ (7.5%) and mental health²² (7.2%) related actions. Lower in frequency are clothing/items provision (5.5%), social/community kitchens (4.1%), anti-eviction actions (4.0%, mostly in Spain), and emergency refugee support actions (5.7%).



More importantly, however, the cross-national analysis in Table 3.2 sheds light on key similarities and difference between the countries concerning their specific actions within the main activity of Urgent/Basic Needs. When it comes to shelter and housing related actions, the UK, Switzerland, Sweden, Greece and Germany hold the highest frequencies (17 - 11.2%), while France, Poland, Spain and Italy show the lowest (5.4 – 2.6%). Mental health services are highest in Poland (15.7%), the UK (13.6%), Greece (10.6%) and Sweden (8.3%), but lower in the other countries. Social Support/Help

¹⁸ Shelter/Housing/Accommodation/Rent/Camps/hosting in homes.

¹⁹ Provision of Mediation/ Advocacy/Free legal/consulting services to beneficiaries to access state services/agencies (e.g. on human-legal rights or in accessing state structures such as health, employment, social services related, etc.); usually provided by formal organizations.

²⁰ Provision of free health services and medicine.

²¹ Free or low cost food and home related products

²² Provision of free mental health services.

lines are most prominent in Sweden (62.3%) and UK (44.4%), moderately so in Poland, Greece and Switzerland (20.5, 19.8 and 17.5%) and least frequent in the remaining four countries. Free legal advice and consulting service actions are most prevalent in Poland (30.3%), less so in Sweden (16.9%), the UK (12.2%) and Greece (10.2%), and lowest elsewhere. In addition, Sweden and Poland have the highest frequencies in educational activities (29.5 and 25.3%). It is noteworthy that Germany alone has the highest frequency in social grocery actions (42.8%), Spain leads in anti-eviction actions (18.3%) while Sweden leads in emergency support to women (6.7%); comparatively, all other countries, feature very low frequencies in the respective actions.

Furthermore, our data bring to surface five specific actions, in all of which Greece holds the highest frequency compared (and with considerable distance) to the other countries: clothing/items provision: health/social (free) medicine, social community kitchens, emergency refugee/migrant support and actions against direct and indirect taxation (24.4%, 21.6%, 11.2%, 18.2% and 5.2% respectively). These reflect the intensity of the impacts of the financial crisis, the related dramatic decline in the standards of living for a considerable part of the Greek population, as well as impacts of the recent refugee crisis in Greece.

Table 3.2: Type of Urgent – Basic Needs alternative activities organized by AAOs per Country*

Urgent Needs Activities	FR	GER	GR	IT	POL	SP	SE	CH	UK	Total
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
	(N)	(N)	(N)	(N)	(N)	(N)	(N)	(N)	(N)	(N)
Shelter/Housing	2.6	11.2	12.8	4.6	5.2	5.4	15.3	15.6	17.0	9.8
	(13)	(56)	(64)	(23)	(26)	(25)	(78)	(52)	(85)	(422)
Social/community Kitchens	0.0	4.0	11.2	1.4	5.4	3.7	6.3	1.5	2.2	4.1
	(0)	(20)	(56)	(7)	(27)	(17)	(32)	(5)	(11)	(175)
Social Grocery	1.2	42.8	6.8	0.2	5.2	2.8	2.0	2.4	2.2	7.5
	(6)	(213)	(34)	(1)	(26)	(13)	(10)	(8)	(11)	(322)
Health/Social Medicine	7.4	4.6	21.6	2.6	16.3	3.5	3.7	5.7	16.6	9.3
	(37)	(23)	(108)	(13)	(81)	(16)	(19)	(19)	(83)	(399)
Mental Health	2.0	4.8	10.6	1.8	15.7	2.4	8.3	3.9	13.6	7.2
	(10)	(24)	(53)	(9)	(78)	(11)	(42)	(13)	(68)	(308)
Social support/Help Line	9.0	7.6	19.8	9.4	20.5	10.9	62.3	17.1	44.4	22.7
	(45)	(38)	(99)	(47)	(102)	(50)	(317)	(57)	(222)	(977)
Clothing/Items provision	0.6	4.4	24.4	0.6	5.8	2.4	6.9	0.9	2.0	5.5
	(3)	(22)	(122)	(3)	(29)	(11)	(35)	(3)	(10)	(238)
Education	9.0	5.4	13.0	10.6	25.3	10.0	29.5	9.3	10.0	13.8
	(45)	(27)	(65)	(53)	(126)	(46)	(150)	(31)	(50)	(593)
Anti-eviction	0.0	1.8	4.6	4.4	0.6	18.3	0.0	9.0	0.0	4.0

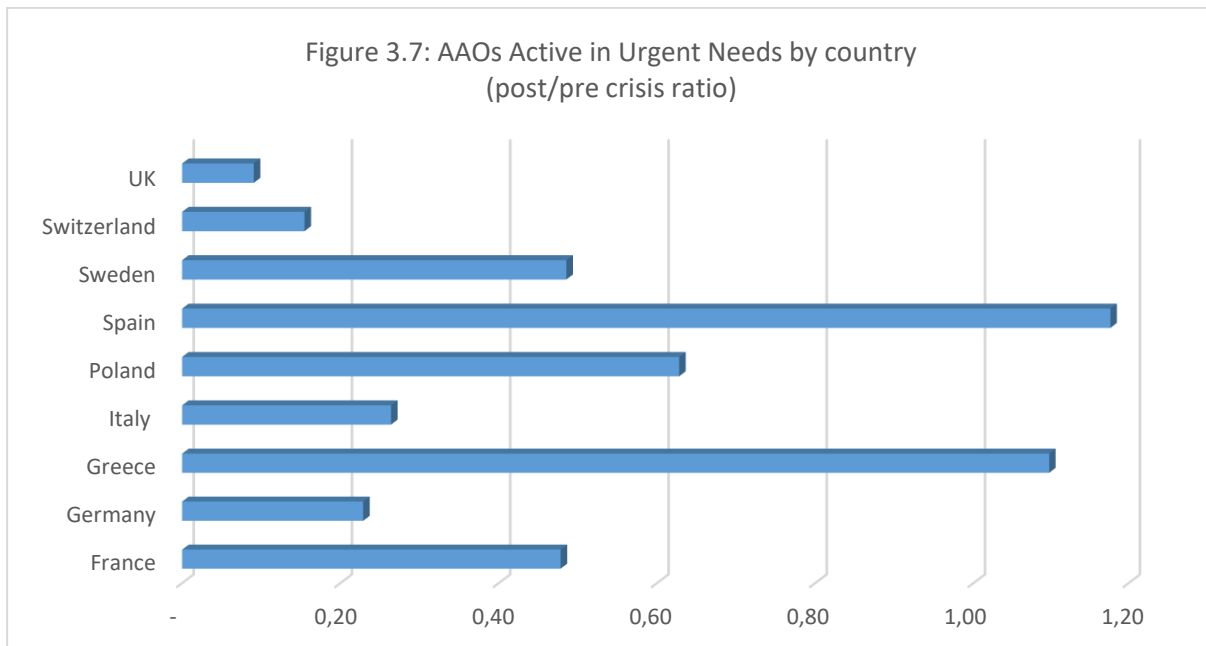
	(0)	(9)	(23)	(22)	(3)	(84)	(0)	(30)	(0)	(171)
Anti-taxation, direct/indirect	0.0	0.0	5.2	0.2	0.0	0.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.7
	(0)	(0)	(26)	(1)	(0)	(4)	(0)	(0)	(0)	(31)
Emergency refugee/immigrant Support	1.0	5.4	18.2	2.8	3.4	2.2	11.2	2.1	3.4	5.7
	(5)	(27)	(91)	(14)	(17)	(10)	(57)	(7)	(17)	(245)
Emergency support to women and children	1.4	1.4	4.6	3.4	4.6	0.7	6.7	1.8	4.4	3.3
	(7)	(7)	(23)	(17)	(23)	(3)	(34)	(6)	(22)	(142)
Free legal/consulting services	6.2	3.8	10.2	4.6	30.3	9.6	16.9	7.5	12.2	11.4
	(31)	(19)	(51)	(23)	(151)	(44)	(86)	(25)	(61)	(491)
Volunteers Call	1.0	0.4	1.2	2.0	11.8	1.3	2.6	2.1	3.2	2.9
	(5)	(2)	(6)	(10)	(59)	(6)	(13)	(7)	(16)	(124)
N	(105)	(330)	(315)	(110)	(317)	(173)	(391)	(131)	(305)	(2,177)

* Note: Alternative activities are coded as dichotomous (yes/no variables) and therefore percentages do not sum to 100. Coding multiple categories was allowed since most of the AAOs engage in a variety of activities. Percentages are calculated based on the count of cases within each (country) category divided by the total number of AAOs of the country.

The effects of the crisis on the creation of AAOs engaging in Urgent needs activities is seen in Figure 3.7, depicting the starting period of the AAOs before and after 2008, using post-crisis/pre-crisis ratios; three different patterns are revealed. The first pattern of the highest ratios is seen in the ratios of Greece (1.1 (39.4/35.9)) and Spain (1.2), i.e. in the countries most affected by the crisis; more AAOs covering urgent needs were created there after 2008.

The second pattern of moderate ratios shows France (0.5) and Poland (0.6) as countries with moderate numbers of organizations²³ founded after the crisis, yet these AAOs are fewer than those founded prior to the crisis. The third pattern is that of the rest of the countries, with the lowest ratios (0.3-0.1) whose vast majority of AAOs active in Urgent Needs were usually founded long before the economic crisis.

²³ Even though they have moderate ratios, these were not presented for Sweden or the UK since they had the highest frequency of unknown starting year (43.7% and 48.2% respectively)



3.1.3 Values, Aims and Routes of achieving goals

Based on information coded from their websites, this section describes selected features of the value frames and aims of the AAOs as well as the routes they adopt to reach them. The top three main values reveal a dynamic and diverse orientation of civil society organizations as drivers of alternative activities responding to hard economic times. Figure 3.8 (Total N= 4,297) shows that the most prominent main values, embraced by almost half (45%) of the AAOs, are empowerment and participation, encompassing community building/empowerment, freedom and emancipation, self-reliance and participatory democracy. Humanitarian/philanthropic values, are the second most frequent main values. They include solidarity and altruism, truthfulness, honesty and sincerity, trust, and dignity. Within this category, Solidarity and altruism stand out as the most frequently mentioned (27.4%). The third and fourth in frequency main values are rights-based ethics values, such as political equality, civil rights and liberties, human rights, social justice, and diversity and sustainability that include ecology, environment/energy, sustainability, animal rights and intergenerational justice. They are mentioned by 28.6% and 26.4% of all AAOs respectively.

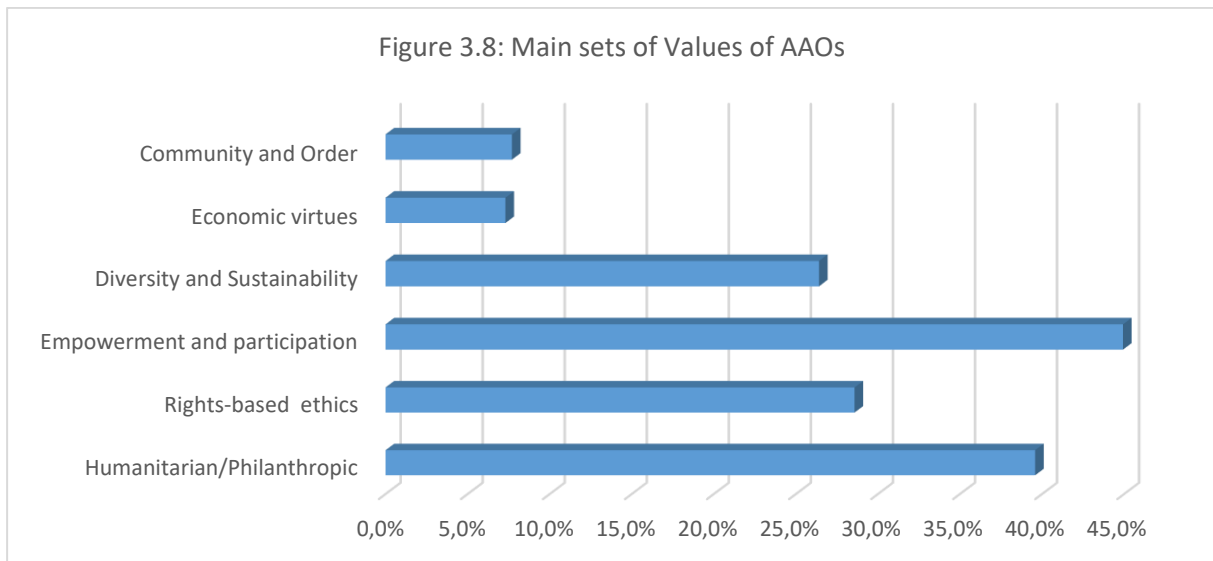
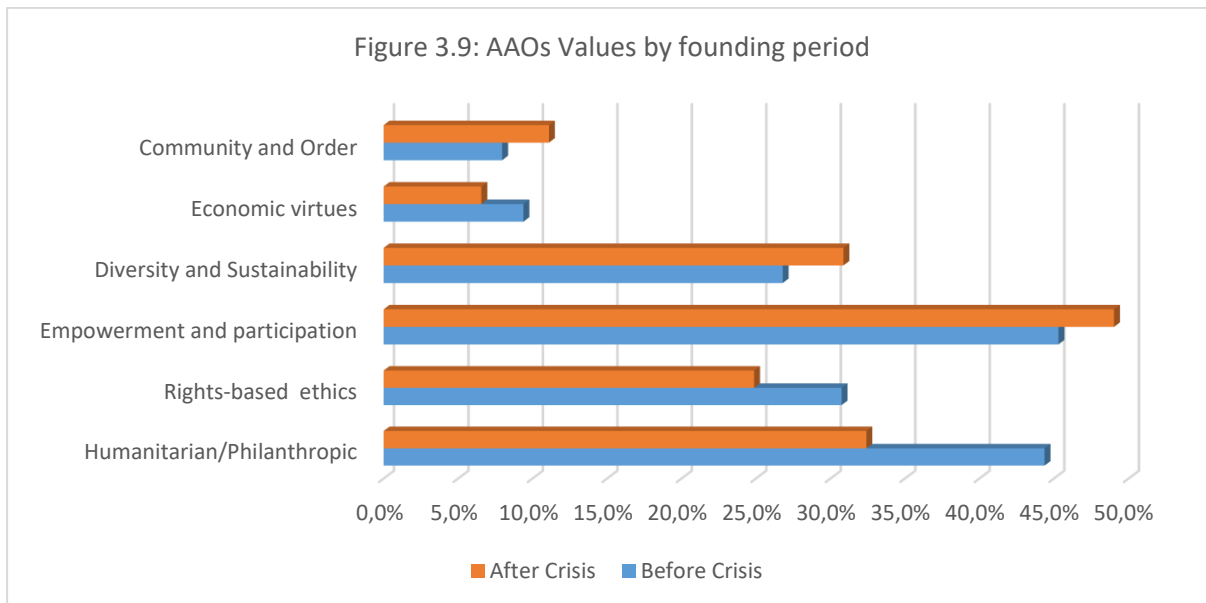


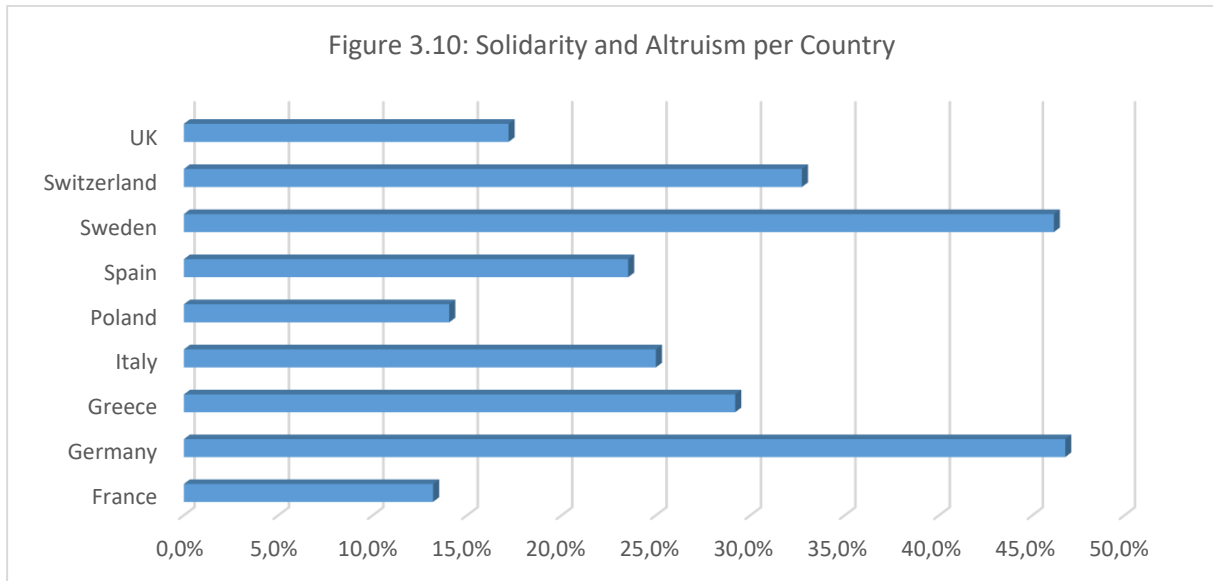
Figure 3.9 depicts similarities and differences between AAOs created before and after the crisis²⁴, based on the starting year of the AAOs. In general, there are no huge differences among the two cohorts of AAO, apart from the humanitarian philanthropic values category, which is used mostly by AAOs created prior to the economic crisis (approximately 45%). On the one hand, AAOs which were founded prior to the economic crisis depict a higher frequency of values related with rights-based ethics (e.g. equality, civil rights, human rights, social justice, peace & safety) and economic issues (such as economic prosperity, accountability, professionalism). On the other hand, AAOs created after the economic crisis show the highest frequency of empowerment and participation values as well as diversity and sustainability values. Considerably lower in frequency (7.7%), but also created in the crisis period, are community and order AAOs (embracing values such as security and stability, nationalism/national belonging, tradition, social equilibrium, social cohesion, preserving existing (local) communities, tradition).

²⁴ Total N before crisis = 1,821, Total N after crisis = 1,234



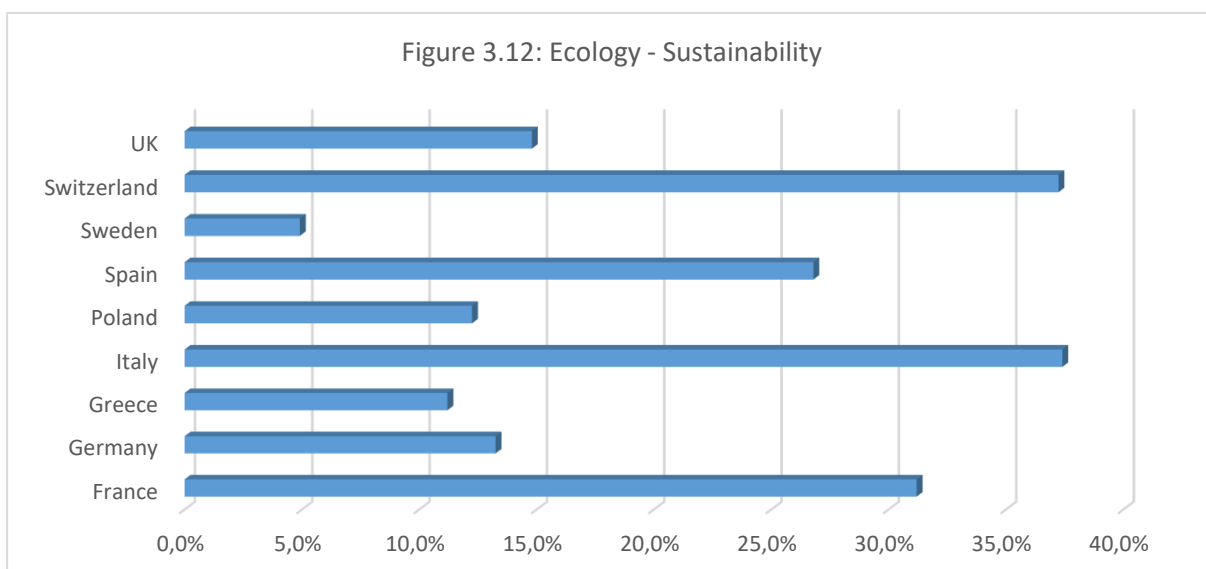
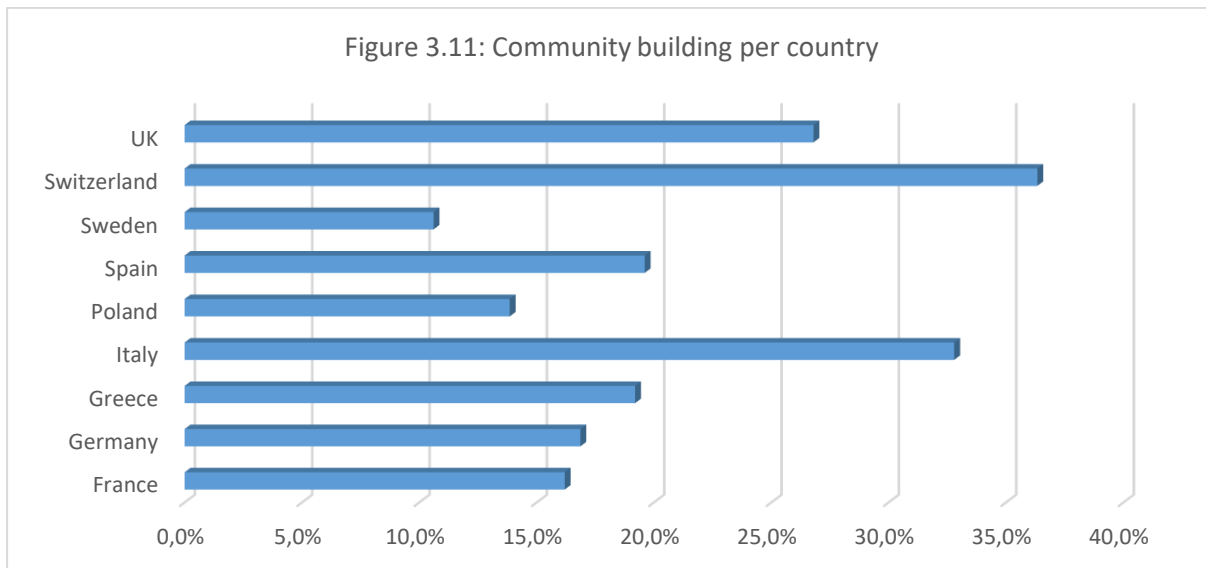
A cross-country comparison of the four highest frequency top values within each category²⁵ at the aggregate level across all the main values seen in Figures 3.8 and 3.9, is shown in Figures 3.10-3.14, where differences and similarities are highlighted. For instance, although ‘solidarity and altruism’ as a value captures the highest (first) frequency (Total N=1,178) among all ‘top-values’ at the aggregate level (27.4%), interesting differences are found at the cross-national level, in Figure 3.10. Germany and Sweden show the top two frequencies (approximately 45% in both), followed by Switzerland and Greece. France and Poland show the lowest frequencies (less than 15% in both). Further analysis is required to address the causes of such differences.

²⁵ For each AAO, coders could code up to three values that were clearly mentioned on the website, using a common list of value categories offered in the Codebook; entries across the different Groups of main value types could be used.



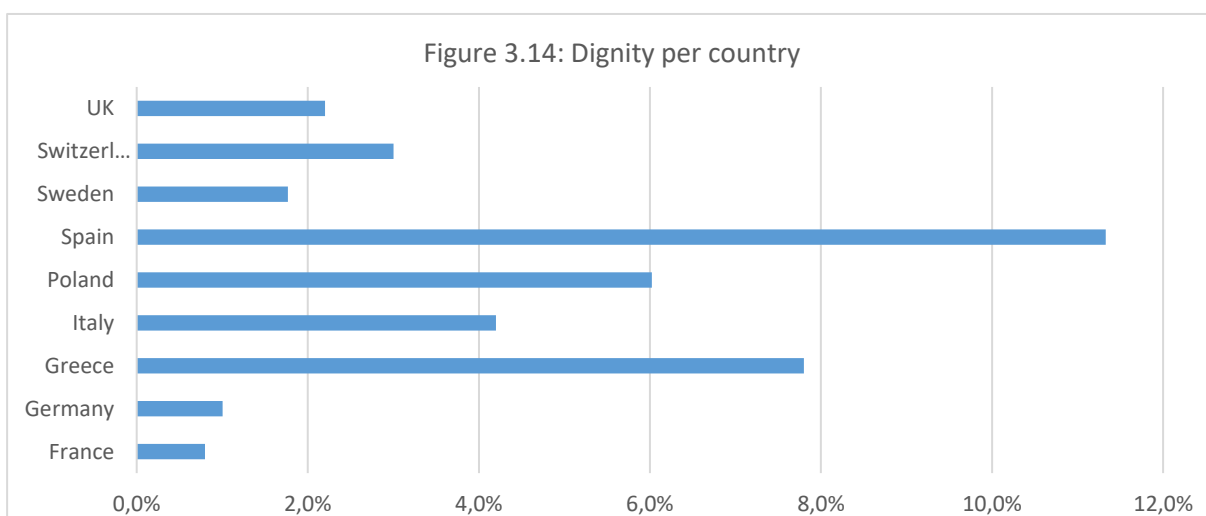
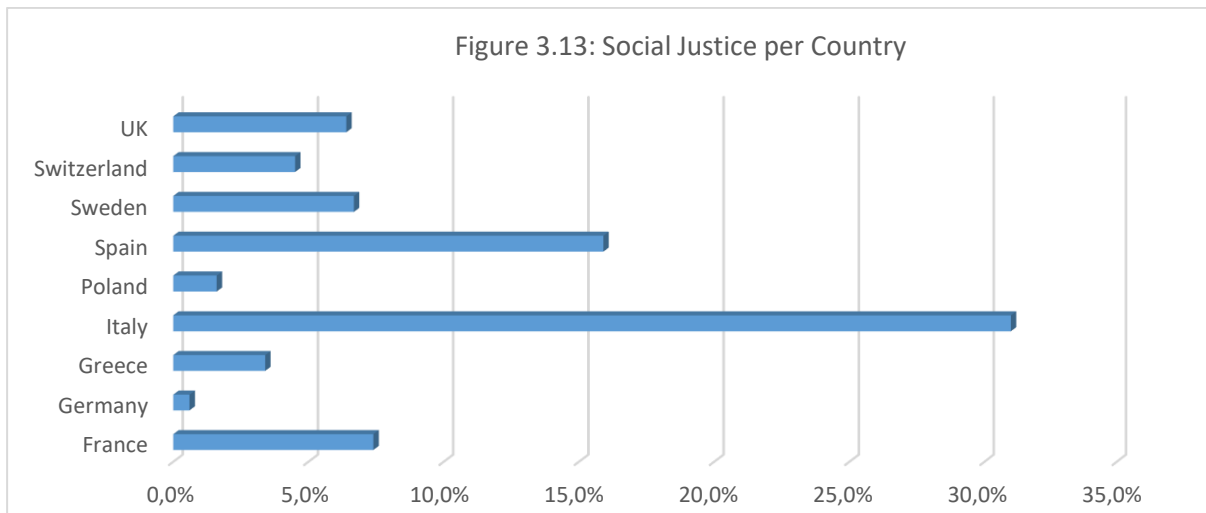
The picture changes for the second in frequency sub-value (20.8%) at the aggregate level, ‘community building/empowerment’ - “where people grow, make and do things for each other”, as seen in Figure 3.11 (Total N= 893), illustrating cross-country differences. This value is most frequent in Swiss (36.3%), Italian (33.2%) and UK (26.8%) AAOs, while it is least frequent in Swedish (10.6%) and Polish (13.9%) AAOs.

Figure 3.12 (Total N=872) illustrates cross-national differences on the third, ‘ecology-environment-sustainability’ value, which is most mentioned among Swiss (37.2%), Italian (37.4%) and French (31.2%) AAOs, and least frequent in Swedish (4.9%) ones.



Focusing on the fourth most frequent sub-value (8.7%) at the aggregate level, social justice, Figure 3.13 (Total N=374) illustrates that it is mostly mentioned by Italian and Spanish AAOs (31% and 15.9% respectively), while least so by Polish (1.6%) and German (0.6%) AAOs.

One value which stands out as received considerable attention in public discussions during the recent period of hard economic times in Europe and beyond is that of dignity. Although it is not among the top frequency values, only reaching 4.2% at the aggregate level, the cross-national analysis in Figure 3.14 (Total N=181) offers interesting findings. Dignity is most frequent in Spain (11.3%) and Greece (7.8%), while it is least frequent in Sweden (1.8%) and Germany (1.0%), thus reflecting the deep impacts of the crisis on these two South European countries.



The aims and goals of the AAOs at the aggregate level are illustrated in Figure 3.15 (Total N= 4,297), mostly in three visible patterns. First, the three top-frequency aims of the AAOs are: the promotion of alternative economic practices (32.2%), the promotion and achievement of social change (31.0%) and the promotion of positive/individual change (29.4%).

Second, the next two prominent aims are reduction of poverty and exclusion (27.6%) and promotion of health, education and welfare (26.6%).

Third, of lower frequencies but important in about one fifth of the AAOs (ranging from 22.8%-19.4%) are the aims of promoting collective identities-community empowerment, combating discrimination, promoting sustainable development, promoting self-determination - self empowerment and promoting democratic practices. It is noteworthy that the promotion of dignity, albeit the lowest in frequency (6.6%), appears as the goal of AAOs, and not only as a value.

Figure 3.15: Aim/Goal of the AAOs

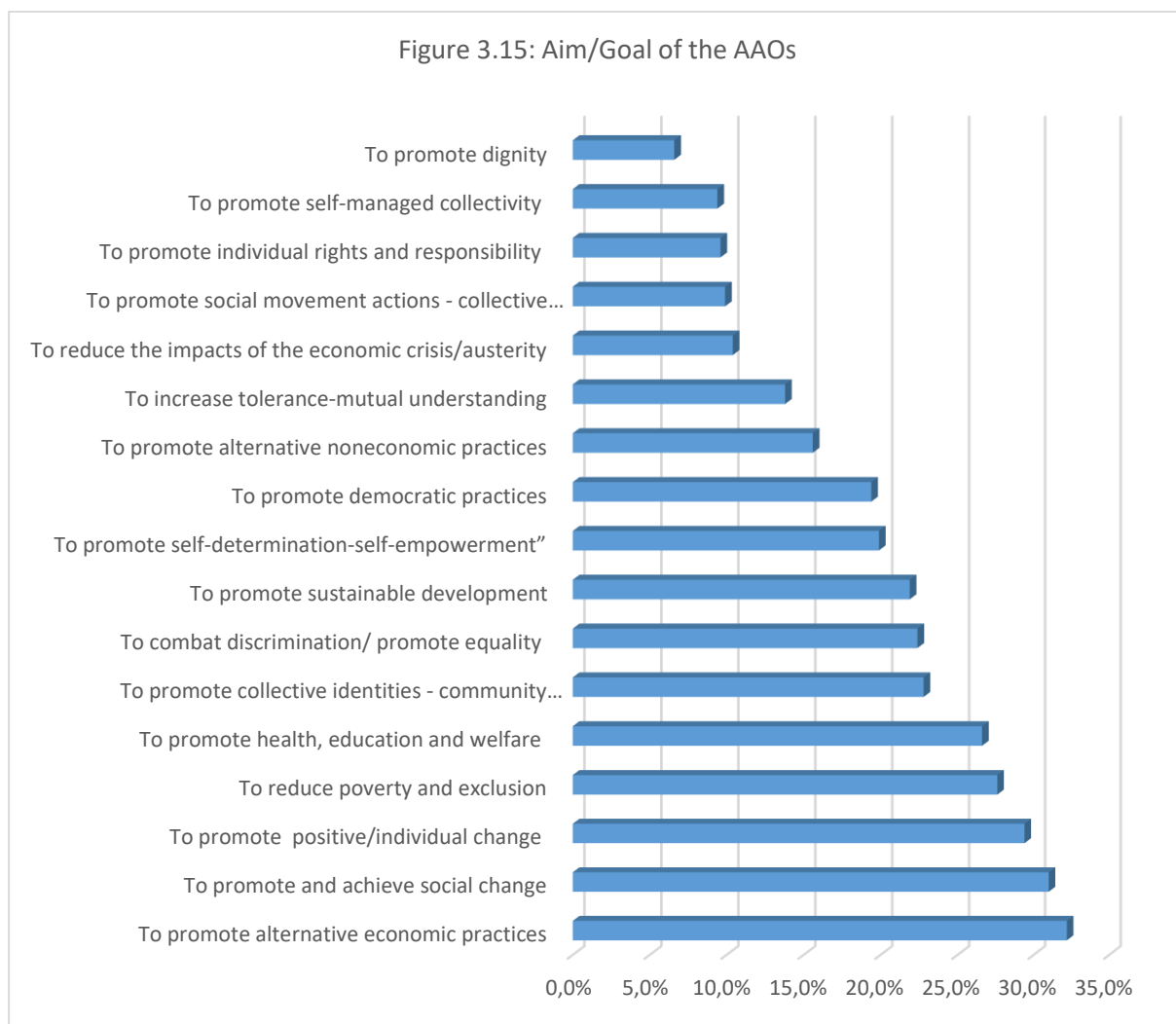


Table 3.3 illustrates similarities and differences within each type of AAO aim, across the nine countries. One interesting finding is that Swedish AAOs score the top frequency in eight types of aim; Swiss, French and Spanish on three, two and two types of aim respectively; while Greek and Polish AAOs hold top frequency only in one type of aim: Greek ones on reducing the impacts of the economic crisis and Polish ones on promoting democratic practices.

More specifically, aiming to reduce the impacts of the economic crisis is most prominent in Greece (28.4%) and Germany (25.1%), less so in Spain (17.2%) and Switzerland (15.0%) and lowest in the other countries (4.0 in Italy to 0.4% in the UK). Reducing poverty and exclusion are most frequent AAO goals in Sweden (47.2%), Germany (41.4%) and Poland (41.2%), considerably frequent in Switzerland (31.2%), the UK (29.2%) and Spain (23.1%) and least frequent in the rest of the countries. Combating discrimination/promoting equality of participation is highest in Sweden (38.5%), the UK (36.0%) and Poland (33.1%), less frequent in Switzerland (27.9%) and Greece (24.8%) and lowest in France (8.2%) and Italy (5.6%).

Increasing tolerance/mutual understanding is most prominent aim in Sweden (35.8%) and Switzerland (24.9%), considerably lower in Poland, the UK, Greece, France and Germany (from 18.7 to 9.8%) and lowest in Spain (3.3%) and Italy (2.2%).

Promoting alternative economic practices is the aim most prominent in France (64.6%), Italy (60.4%) and Switzerland (54.7%) followed with lower frequencies in Spain (38.6%) and lowest in the rest.

Promoting and achieving social change at the collective/societal level reaches highest frequencies in Spain (48.4%) and Sweden (47.3%), lower in Poland (39.6%), Switzerland (31.5%), Greece (30.4%), the UK (27.8%), and France (27%) and lowest in the other countries.

The promotion and achievement of positive/individual change is an AAO goal of highest frequency in Sweden (64.4%), the UK (48.0%) and Switzerland (42.0) and lower in the other countries. The goal of sustainable development is highest in France (50.4%), lower in Switzerland (34.2%) and Italy (33.4%) and lowest in the remaining countries.

The aim of promoting health, education and welfare is highest in Sweden (47.0%), the UK (45%), Poland (36.3%) and Greece (29.6%) and lower in the other countries. Promoting alternative noneconomic practices, lifestyles and values is highest in Switzerland (32.4%), lower in Greece (22.2%) and lowest in the other countries.

Promoting dignity is most prominent in Sweden (18.1%) and Greece (9.8%), but lower in the rest of the countries. Promoting individual rights and responsibility is most frequent in Sweden (20.6%) and Poland (18.7%), but lower in the other countries. Promoting self-determination, self-initiative, self-representation and self-empowerment reaches top frequencies in Sweden (40.5%), Switzerland (36.6%) and Poland (34.3%), yet lower in the remaining ones, and lowest in Italy (4.2%).

The aim of promoting democratic practices, the defense of rights, and the improvement of public space is most frequent in Poland (39.2%), Spain (30.5%) and Switzerland (29.4%), lower in Greece (20.6%) and Sweden (21%) and lowest in the others – reaching least frequency in Germany (5.6%).

Promoting collective identities and community responsibility/empowerment is highest in Switzerland (39%), Italy (30.4%), and Sweden (28.7%), lower in the UK (23.6%), Greece (25%) and Poland (21.7%) and lowest in the remaining countries. The aim of promoting self-managed collectivity is met most often in Switzerland (24.9%), less so in Italy (17.4%), Greece (11%) and France (10.6%) and least so in the other countries – lowest in the UK (1.6%).

Finally, promoting social movement actions and collective identities is of top frequency in Spain (29.6%), of lower frequency in Italy (16.8%), Switzerland (15%) and Greece (14%) and lowest in the rest of the countries – least so in Germany (2.2%).

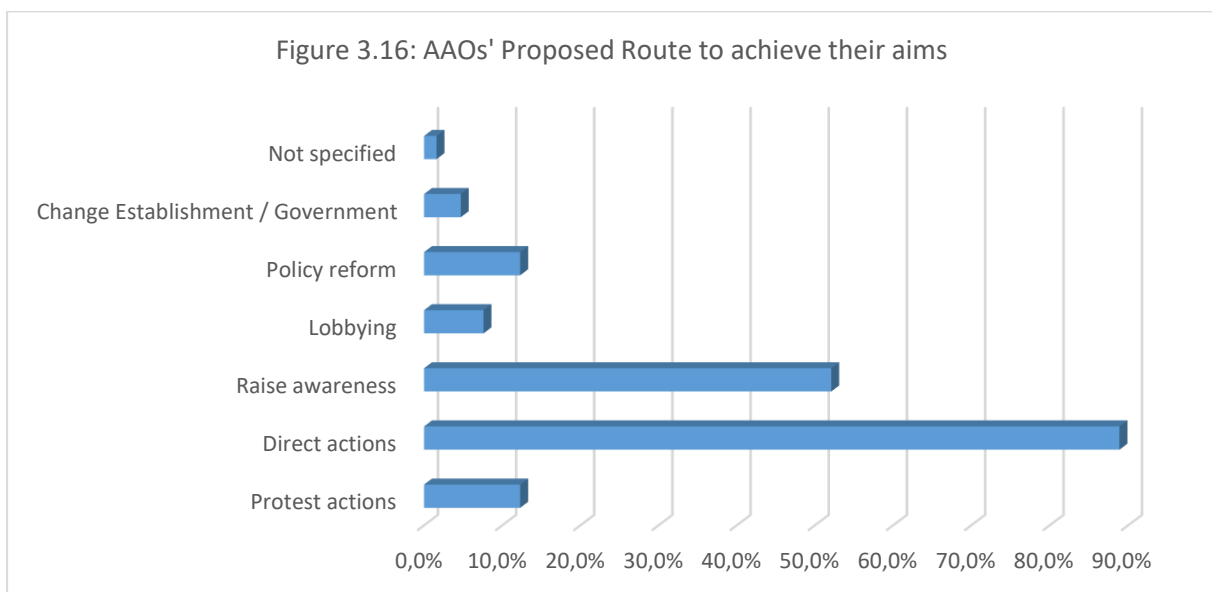
Table 3.3: Aims of the AAOs per Country*

Aim of the AAO	FR	GER	GR	IT	POL	SP	SE	CH	UK	Total
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
	(N)	(N)	(N)	(N)	(N)	(N)	(N)	(N)	(N)	(N)
To reduce the impacts of the economic crisis/austerity	3.6 (18)	25.1 (125)	28.4 (142)	4.0 (20)	1.8 (9)	17.2 (79)	0.4 (2)	15.0 (50)	0.4 (2)	10.4 (447)
To reduce poverty and exclusion	9.6 (48)	41.4 (206)	14.2 (71)	11.6 (58)	41.2 (205)	23.1 (106)	47.2 (240)	31.2 (104)	29.2 (146)	27.6 (1,184)
To combat discrimination/promote equality	8.2 (41)	11.0 (55)	24.8 (124)	5.6 (28)	33.1 (165)	17.6 (81)	38.5 (196)	27.9 (93)	36.0 (180)	22.4 (963)
To increase tolerance-mutual understanding	10.0 (50)	9.8 (49)	11.0 (55)	2.2 (11)	18.7 (93)	3.3 (15)	35.8 (182)	24.9 (83)	11.4 (57)	13.8 (595)
To promote alternative economic practices	64.6 (323)	24.3 (121)	15.8 (79)	60.4 (302)	16.7 (83)	38.6 (177)	8.4 (43)	54.7 (182)	14.8 (74)	32.2 (1,384)
To promote and achieve social change	27.0 (135)	11.0 (55)	30.4 (152)	16.8 (84)	39.6 (197)	48.4 (222)	47.3 (241)	31.5 (105)	27.8 (139)	31.0 (1,330)
To promote positive/individual change	20.0 (100)	15.3 (76)	21.8 (109)	5.8 (29)	37.3 (186)	10.7 (49)	64.4 (328)	42.0 (140)	48.0 (240)	29.3 (1,257)
To promote sustainable development	50.4 (252)	12.4 (62)	12.0 (60)	33.4 (167)	25.7 (128)	15.7 (72)	6.9 (35)	34.2 (114)	10.2 (51)	21.9 (941)
To promote health, education and welfare	20.8 (104)	7.4 (37)	29.6 (148)	18.2 (91)	36.3 (181)	9.2 (42)	47.0 (239)	23.1 (77)	45.0 (225)	26.6 (1,144)
To promote alternative noneconomic practices	12.6 (63)	11.2 (56)	22.2 (111)	16.6 (83)	14.9 (74)	15.0 (69)	9.6 (49)	32.4 (108)	11.8 (59)	15.6 (672)
To promote dignity	1.8 (9)	0.4 (2)	9.8 (49)	6.2 (31)	7.6 (38)	7.0 (32)	18.1 (92)	6.9 (23)	1.2 (6)	6.6 (282)
To promote individual rights and responsibility	8.4 (42)	2.4 (12)	6.6 (33)	4.2 (21)	18.7 (93)	5.7 (26)	20.6 (105)	12.6 (42)	7.8 (39)	9.6 (413)
To promote self-determination-self-empowerment*	14.6 (73)	6.0 (30)	9.6 (48)	4.2 (21)	34.3 (171)	24.0 (110)	40.5 (206)	36.6 (122)	14.4 (72)	19.9 (853)
To promote democratic practices	10.0 (50)	5.6 (28)	20.6 (103)	14.8 (74)	39.2 (195)	30.5 (140)	21.0 (107)	29.4 (98)	7.8 (39)	19.4 (834)
To promote collective identities - community empowerment	16.6 (83)	13.7 (68)	25.0 (125)	30.4 (152)	21.7 (108)	10.9 (50)	28.7 (146)	39.0 (130)	23.6 (118)	22.8 (980)
To promote self-managed collectivity	10.6 (53)	7.8 (39)	11.0 (55)	17.4 (87)	7.4 (37)	2.6 (12)	5.5 (28)	24.9 (83)	1.6 (8)	9.4 (402)

To promote social movement actions - collective identities	2.4 (12)	2.2 (11)	14.0 (70)	16.8 (84)	3.0 (15)	29.6 (136)	2.2 (11)	15.0 (50)	7.0 (35)	9.9 (424)
N	(500)	(498)	(500)	(500)	(498)	(459)	(509)	(333)	(500)	(4,297)

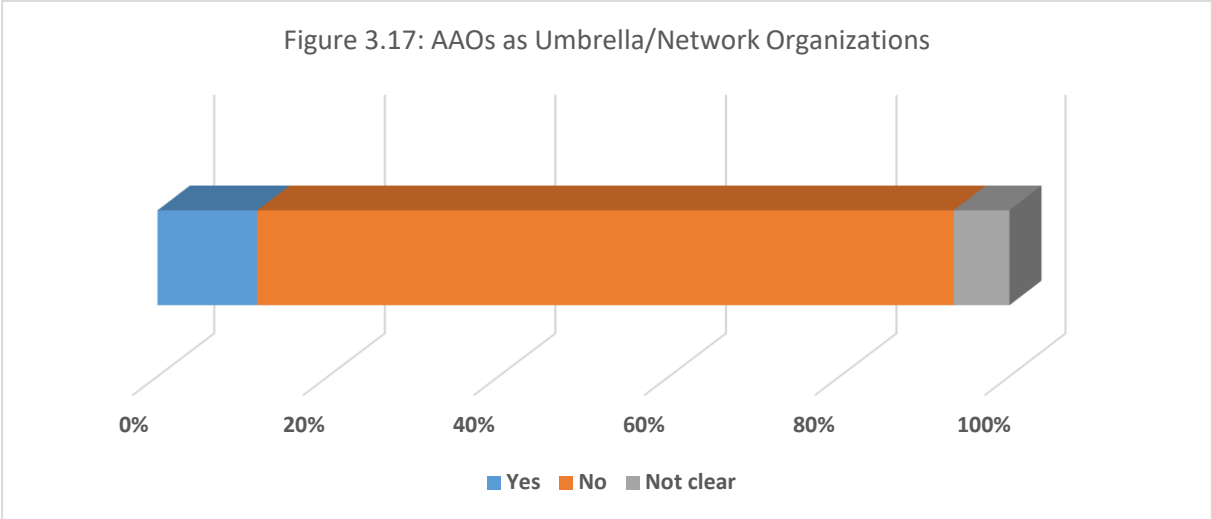
* Note: Alternative activities are coded as dichotomous (yes/no variables) and therefore percentages do not sum to 100. Coding multiple categories was allowed since most of the AAOs engage in a variety of activities. Percentages are calculated based on the count of cases within each (country) category divided by the total number of AAOs of the country.

The route through which the AAOs achieve their goals is illustrated at the aggregate level in Figure 3.16 (Total N=4,297). The great majority of the AAOs (88.9%) opt for direct, non-protest, solidarity activities to reach their aims. Raising awareness is the next most prevalent route, chosen by more than half of all AAOs (52.1%). Considerably less frequent are the routes of policy reform (12.3%) and protest actions (12.3%) as strategies of achieving their goals. The lowest frequency routes are those of lobbying (7.6%) and changing the government or the establishment (4.7%).

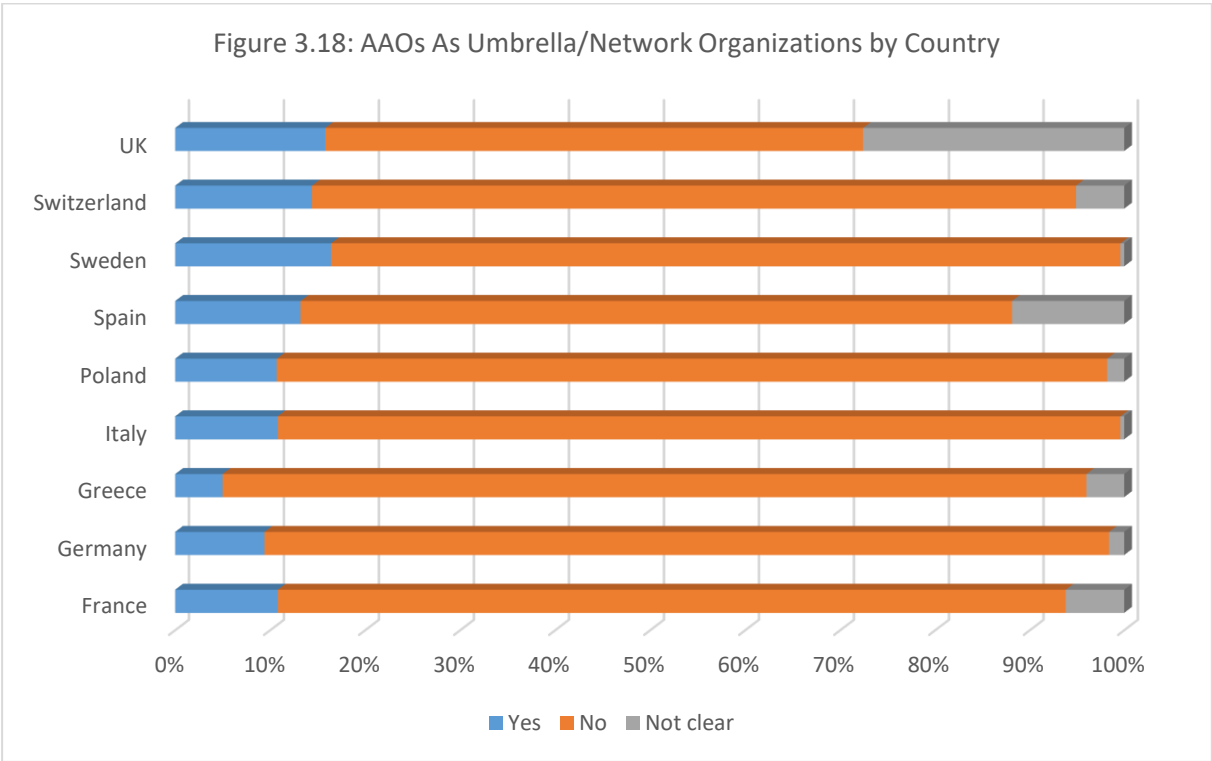


3.1.4 Networks

Figure 3.17 (Total N=4,290) illustrates at the aggregate level, whether the AAOs under study are Umbrella or Network organizations. In the vast majority (82%), the AAOs are not umbrellas. Only one out of ten organizations are umbrellas. Network features were not identifiable for a small portion (7%) of the AAOs.

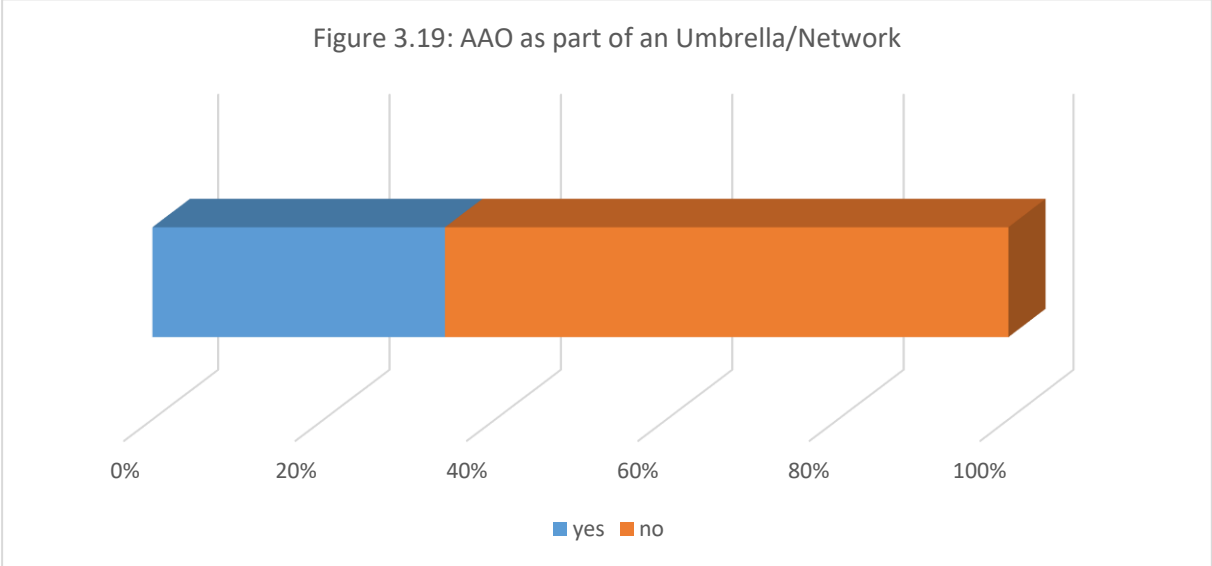


Looking at the cross-national level²⁶ in Figure 3.18, the situation remains the same. Umbrella-AAOs are more frequent in Sweden (16.4%), Switzerland (14.4%) and the UK (15.8%, where however the frequency of unknowns is the highest). Umbrella-AAOs are less frequent in the other countries, especially Greece (5%).



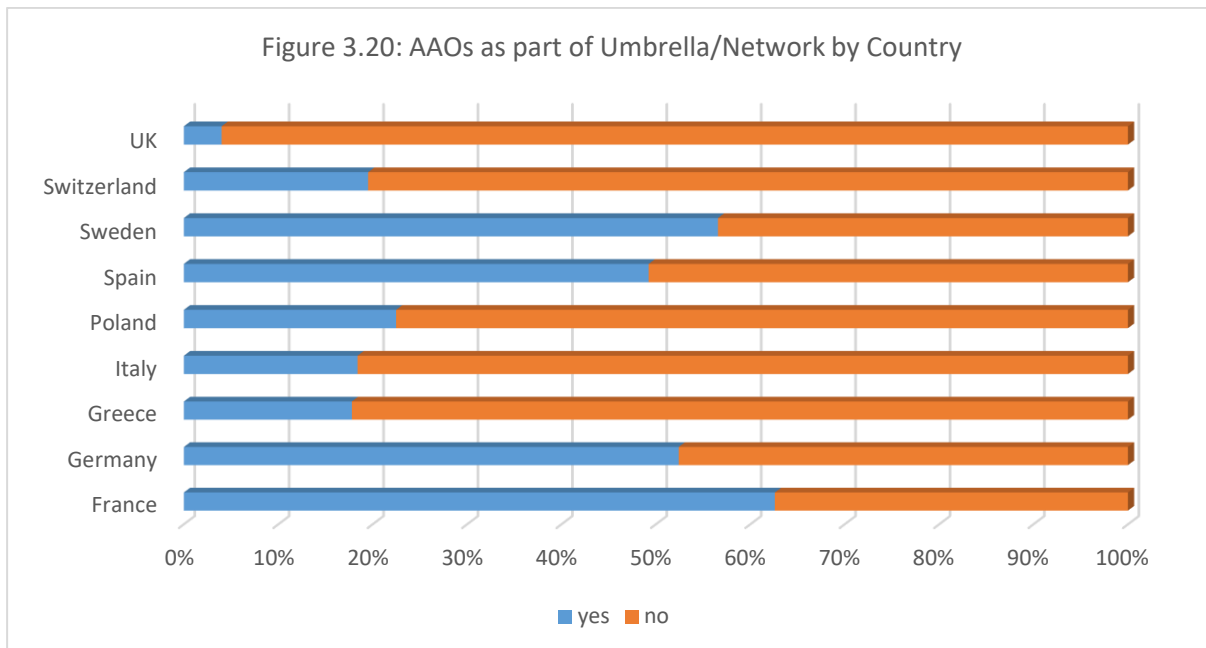
²⁶ Total N for each country is: FR (496), DE (492), GR (495), IT (497), PL (497), SP (439), SE (506), CH (329), UK (499)

Figure 3.19 (Total N=4,297) illustrates at the aggregate level, whether or not the AAO *is part* of an umbrella or a network. Following the previous pattern, here too the majority of the AAOs (65.9%) are not part of a higher-level umbrella organization or network. Only about one third of the AAOs (34.1%) belong to an umbrella organization.



Focusing on the cross-country comparison²⁷ of belonging or not to a network, three patterns can be identified in Figure 3.20. First, there is a group of countries, namely, the UK, Greece, Italy, Switzerland and Poland where AAOs are not likely to belong to umbrella/network organizations - with the UK being the most notable case (96% not part of an umbrella). By contrast, in France and Sweden, more than half of AAOs are likely to belong to umbrella/network organizations (62.6% and 56.6% respectively). In between these two patterns are Germany and Spain, with equal frequencies of belonging and not belonging to umbrella/network organizations (52.4% and 49.2%).

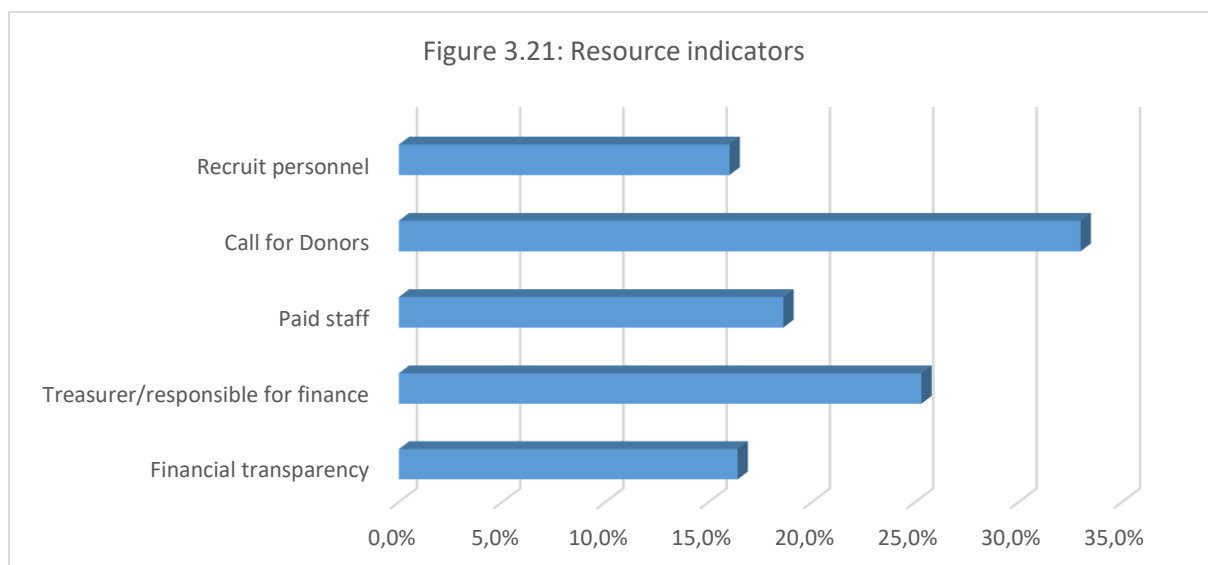
²⁷ Total N for each country is: FR (496), DE (492), GR (495), IT (497), PL (497), SP (439), SE (506), CH (329), UK (499)



3.1.5 Resources

Information on the resources of AAOs has been coded based on the material available on AAO websites. Figure 3.21 (Total N=4,297) provides a selected set of available resource-proxies aiming to shed light on the resources which are important to AAOs at the aggregate level. The data show that donations appear to be the most prevalent resource-proxy, as reflected by the calls to donors in one third of AAO websites (33%). The importance of financial resource management is also similarly reflected in the next most prominent proxy, the existence of a treasurer/responsible for finance or accounting, found in one fourth of AAOs (25.3%). It is also mirrored in the material on finances and financial transparency that are available in the AAO websites (16.4%), such as financial reports, financial statements and annual budgets.

Human/staff resources follow in importance as AAO resources, since about one fifth of AAOs have paid-staff (18.6%) while a similar portion 16% have calls on recruiting personnel through their websites.



Turning to a cross-country comparison, Table 3.4 illustrates that the previously presented resource-proxies are significantly linked to the more formal AAOs, which tend to be found in a sub-set of the nine countries. The more formal and professional (e.g. NGOs, charities) AAOs tend to offer more information about their resources, in view also of their accountability towards their supporters and donors; this also implies that they may have more resources to maintain and update their websites.

Thus, calls for donations are highest in Germany (50.8%), Sweden (50.5%), Poland (49.8%) and the UK (42.4%); financial transparency is mostly provided by Polish and Swiss AAOs (42% and 31.8% respectively), while treasurers/finance-responsible members are more frequently found in Swiss and Swedish (48.6% and 39.7% respectively). Human resource management-proxies are similarly higher in countries with more institutionalized AAOs. Paid staff are more prevalent in Sweden (52.5%), Switzerland (36.6%) and the UK (30.8%), while call for personnel recruitment are prominent in Switzerland (44.4%), the UK (26.4%), Poland (23.5%) and Sweden (23.2%).

Table 3.4: Resource Indicators of the AAOs per Country*

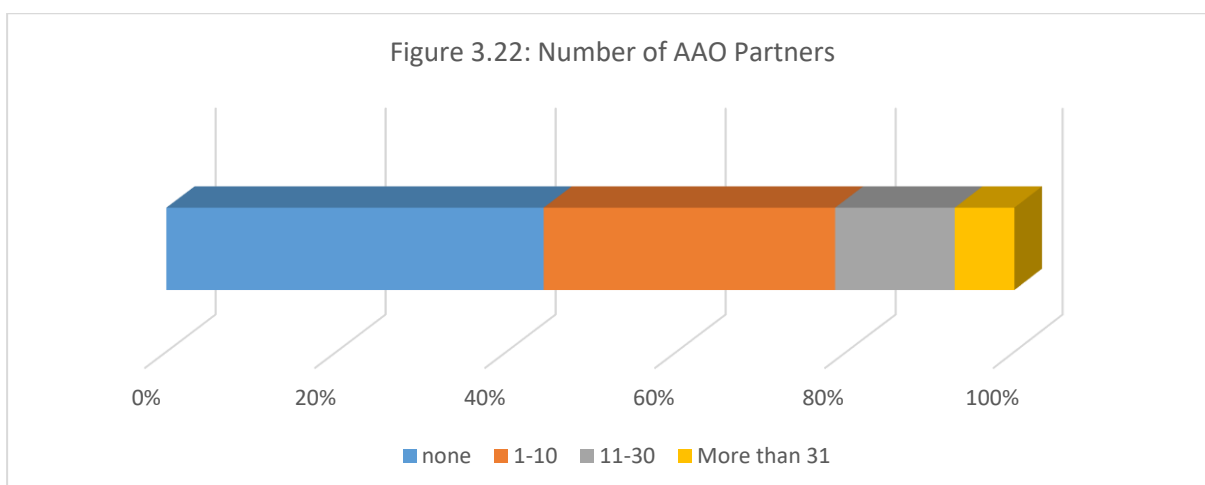
Resources Indicators	FR	GER	GR	IT	POL	SP	SE	CH	UK	Total
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
	(N)	(N)	(N)	(N)	(N)	(N)	(N)	(N)	(N)	(N)
Finances/ financial transparency	9.6	7.4	7.8	7.2	42.0	13.1	18.5	31.8	15.0	16.4
	(48)	(37)	(39)	(36)	(209)	(60)	(94)	(106)	(75)	(704)
Treasurer/ responsible for finance or accounting	32.2	25.7	13.8	6.6	29.3	11.8	39.7	48.6	26.0	25.3
	(161)	(128)	(69)	(33)	(146)	(54)	(202)	(162)	(130)	(1,085)
Paid staff	13.4	8.4	7.2	5.8	12.4	4.6	52.5	36.6	30.8	18.6
	(67)	(42)	(36)	(29)	(62)	(21)	(267)	(122)	(154)	(800)
Call for Donors	14.6	50.8	23.2	13.2	49.8	13.9	50.5	38.7	42.4	33.0

	(73)	(253)	(116)	(66)	(248)	(64)	(257)	(129)	(212)	(1,418)
Call for Recruitment of personnel	13.6	4.2	7.4	1.4	23.5	8.7	23.2	44.4	26.4	16.0
	(68)	(21)	(37)	(7)	(117)	(40)	(118)	(148)	(132)	(688)
N	(500)	(498)	(500)	(500)	(498)	(459)	(509)	(333)	(500)	(4,297)

* Note: Alternative activities are coded as dichotomous (yes/no variables) and therefore percentages do not sum to 100. Coding multiple categories was allowed since most of the AAOs engage in a variety of activities. Percentages are calculated based on the count of cases within each (country) category divided by the total number of AAOs of the country.

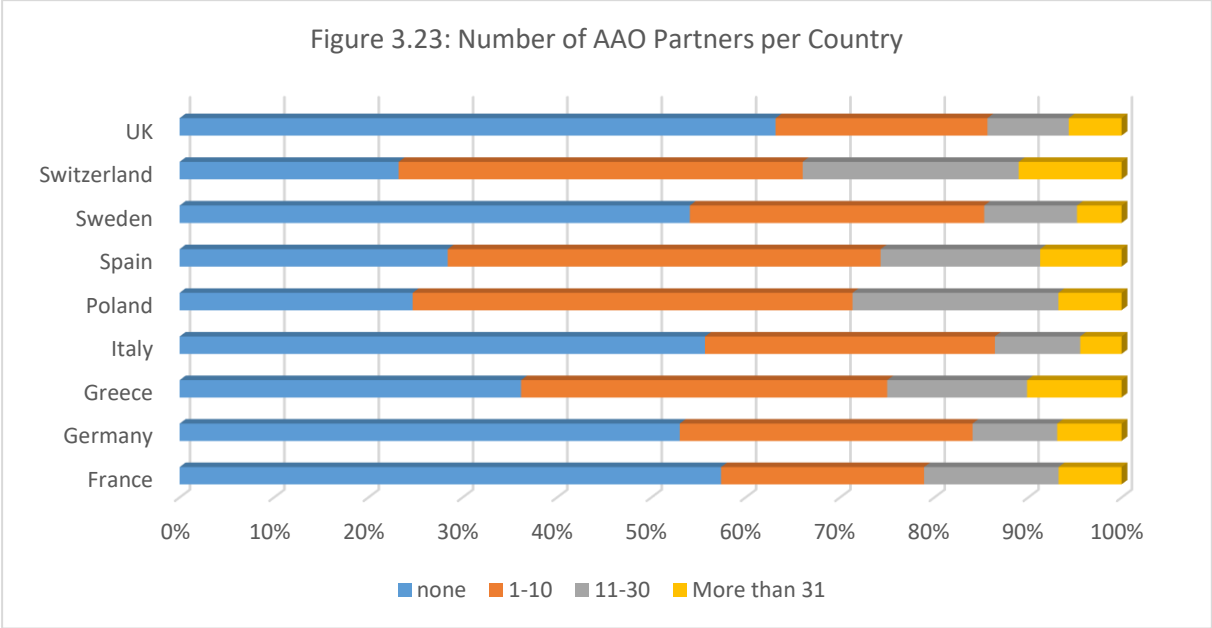
3.1.6 Supporters and/or Partners

The next two figures provide information on the number of partners that the AAOs have and the type of organization these partners are. Looking at the aggregate level, Figure 3.22 (Total N= 3,726) shows that almost half of the AAOs (44.4%) do not have or mention any partner, while one third (34.3%) have between one and 10 partners. Interestingly, there is a minority of about one fifth of all AAOs that have more than 11 partners; about 14.2% of the AAOs have from 11 to 30 partners, and 7% have more than 31 partners.

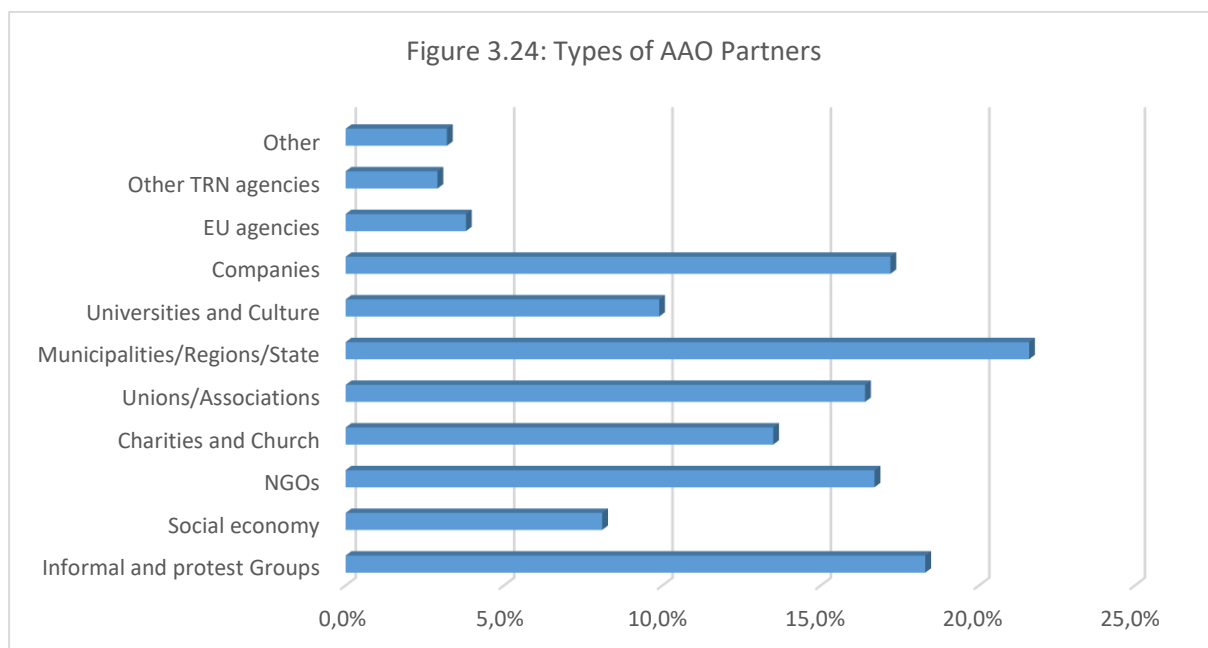


Focusing on a cross-national comparison, Figure 3.23 [Total N for each country is: FR(460), DE (232), GR(486), IT(361), PL(429), SP(436), SE(503), CH(327), UK (494)] shows that no partners are mentioned in more than half of the AAO websites in the UK, Sweden, Italy, Germany and France (from 63.2 - 53%). Almost half of the Polish, Spanish, Swiss and Greek AAOs have from one to 10 partners, while considerably lower frequencies on the same number of partners are seen in the rest of the countries. Having between 11 and 30 partners is more frequent in Switzerland (22.9%) and Poland (21.9%), and lower in Spain, Greece and France, and lowest in the remaining ones. The highest number of partners (more than 31) is more frequent in Switzerland (11%), Greece (10.1%) and Spain (8.7%) and lower in

the other countries. Thus, Spanish, Swiss and Polish AAOs appear to have more partners, when comparing cross-nationally.



A closer examination of the types of AAO partners in Figure 3.24 shows that the most frequent AAO partners are (N=4,297): municipal/local, regional and state authorities and organizations (21.6%) informal and protest groups (18.3%) and private companies and enterprises (17.2%). NGOs (16.7%), unions/associations (16.4%) and charities (13.5%) follow with lower frequencies. universities/cultural clubs (9.9%), social economy enterprises (8.1%), EU agencies (3.8%) and other transnational partners (2.9%) are of lowest in frequency as AAOs’ partners.



An examination of the type of AAO partners across the nine countries is illustrated in Table 3.5. A quick overview reveals an interesting pattern, with Swiss and Polish AAOs scoring top (first or second) frequencies in six different types of partners. They are followed by Greek, French and Spanish AAOs with similar top frequencies in four, three and three types of partners respectively. Polish AAOs also show the highest frequency (10.4%) in EU agencies partnership, whereas Polish (6.4%), Greek (5.6%) and French (5.4%) AAOs show the highest frequencies in other transnational partners compared to the other countries – even though these are at low levels.

Looking cross-nationally within each type of partner, informal and protest groups are more prevalent as AAO partners in Spain (35.7%), Switzerland (32.1%), Greece (29.6) and France (25.6%), but lowest in the UK (3.0%). Social economy enterprises partners are most frequent in Spain (24.0%), and Switzerland (21.9%), and lowest in Sweden (1.2%). NGO partners are more prominent in Poland (28.1%), Switzerland (26.1%) and Greece (23.6%), but least so in Germany (8.6%) the UK (7.4%).

Charities and Churches are most frequent partners in British (25.4%) and Polish AAOs (20.5%). Union partners of highest frequencies are found in Switzerland (35.4%), France (25.4%) and Spain (21.8%). Municipal/regional/central state agencies are more often partners of Polish (40.6%), Swiss (36.9%) and Greek (27.6%) AAOs. University and cultural club partners are more prevalent as partners in Swiss (17.4%) and Greek (16.4%) AAOs.

Last but not least, companies constitute an engaging partner type which shows higher frequencies across Polish (36.3%), Swedish (23.2%), Swiss (21.9%), Greek (21%) and British (18.4%) AAOs.

Table 3.5: Type of AAO Partners per Country*

Type of Partners	FR	GER	GR	IT	POL	SP	SE	CH	UK	Total
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
	(N)	(N)	(N)	(N)	(N)	(N)	(N)	(N)	(N)	(N)
Informal and Protest Groups	25.6 (128)	8.4 (42)	29.6 (148)	15.2 (76)	11.2 (56)	35.7 (164)	9.6 (49)	32.1 (107)	3.0 (15)	18.3 (785)
Social Economy	11.4 (57)	1.8 (9)	4.4 (22)	9.4 (47)	2.4 (12)	24.0 (110)	1.2 (6)	21.9 (73)	2.8 (14)	8.1 (350)
NGOs	10.2 (51)	8.6 (43)	23.6 (118)	12.0 (60)	28.1 (140)	17.2 (79)	19.8 (101)	26.1 (87)	7.4 (37)	16.7 (716)
Charities and Church	8.2 (41)	6.4 (32)	14.0 (70)	2.8 (14)	20.5 (102)	11.3 (52)	13.6 (69)	21.6 (72)	25.4 (127)	13.5 (579)
Unions/Associations	25.4 (127)	9.0 (45)	16.0 (80)	15.8 (79)	17.7 (88)	21.8 (100)	8.3 (42)	35.4 (118)	5.4 (27)	16.4 (706)
Municipalities/ Regions/ State	21.8 (109)	7.4 (37)	27.6 (138)	6.8 (34)	40.6 (202)	18.5 (85)	20.6 (105)	36.9 (123)	19.0 (95)	21.6 (928)
Universities/ Cultural Assoc.	13.4 (67)	2.0 (10)	16.4 (82)	3.2 (16)	13.7 (68)	6.8 (31)	9.4 (48)	17.4 (58)	9.0 (45)	9.9 (425)
Companies	11.8 (59)	7.4 (37)	21.0 (105)	5.2 (26)	36.3 (181)	10.7 (49)	23.2 (118)	21.9 (73)	18.4 (92)	17.2 (740)
EU agencies	2.2 (11)	0.4 (2)	7.2 (36)	0.2 (1)	10.4 (52)	6.3 (29)	1.8 (9)	5.1 (17)	1.4 (7)	3.8 (164)
Other transnational agencies	5.4 (27)	0.8 (4)	5.6 (28)	0.4 (2)	6.4 (32)	2.2 (10)	1.2 (6)	4.2 (14)	0.4 (2)	2.9 (125)
Other	3.4 (17)	2.2 (11)	2.6 (13)	0.8 (4)	3.6 (18)	6.1 (28)	1.4 (7)	5.7 (19)	4.4 (22)	3.2 (139)
N	(500)	(498)	(500)	(500)	(498)	(459)	(509)	(333)	(500)	(4,297)

* Note: Alternative activities are coded as dichotomous (yes/no variables) and therefore percentages do not sum to 100. Coding multiple categories was allowed since most of the AAOs engage in a variety of activities. Percentages are calculated based on the count of cases within each (country) category divided by the total number of AAOs of the country.

3.1.7 Supplementary actions

In addition to the alternative and solidarity activities which the AAOs organize to address their goals, they also carry out a wide variety of supplementary actions to promote their strategies and improve their effectiveness. More specifically, supplementary actions are parallel actions (including social movement ones) which are carried out at any time from January 2007 to the end of the coding period, aiming to create, promote, support, or/and participate in Solidarity Activities. Figure 3.25 (Total N=4,297) presents the main forms of supplementary actions taken by the AAOs at the aggregate level.

Highest in frequency (52.9%) are dissemination/promotional actions or public reports, including debates or roundtables, information events, charity exhibitions, arts events, ‘publication’ or (annual) reports, advertisements (e.g. of AAO activities), posters, stickers, banners or dissemination material, other dissemination actions. Next in frequency (28.3%) are verbal and/or written statements promoting and enhancing the AAO and its activities to the public; they consist of declarations in the conventional media or interviews, press conference/release, and written/verbal statement/resolutions in mainstream media.

Protest actions as depicted in the first four categories of Figure 3.25 (from strikes to conventional protest actions) constitute a major activity for a considerable portion of the AAOs. More prevalent are: a) conventional/soft protest actions (13.3%) such as launching of public initiative collection of signatures for initiative or referendum, participation in committees, consultations, or negotiations, campaigning, closed-doors meetings, and other conventional/soft protest actions; and, b) demonstrative protest actions, comprised of public referendum, demonstration, public protest, public rally, symbolic demonstrative actions, public/neighborhood/square assemblies, and other demonstrative actions. Less frequent (5.1%) but more significant in terms of action intensity are strikes, occupations of public buildings, squares (e.g. 15M, indignados, occupy); they also include hunger strikes, closing of shops, blockading an activity, a source, or a road, as well as sit-ins. Boycotts/buycotts are the least frequent (0.9%) protest actions.

Two other forms of supplementary action are important for AAOs: legal and parliament related actions. As seen in Figure 3.25, only 4% of the AAOs participate in parliamentary debates, or intervention, or apply political pressure other than lobbying. Less frequent (2.6%) but possibly very significant in terms of impact, are actions related to the court route such as litigations or legal procedures which informal or formal citizens’ initiatives or NGOs use to achieve their goals.

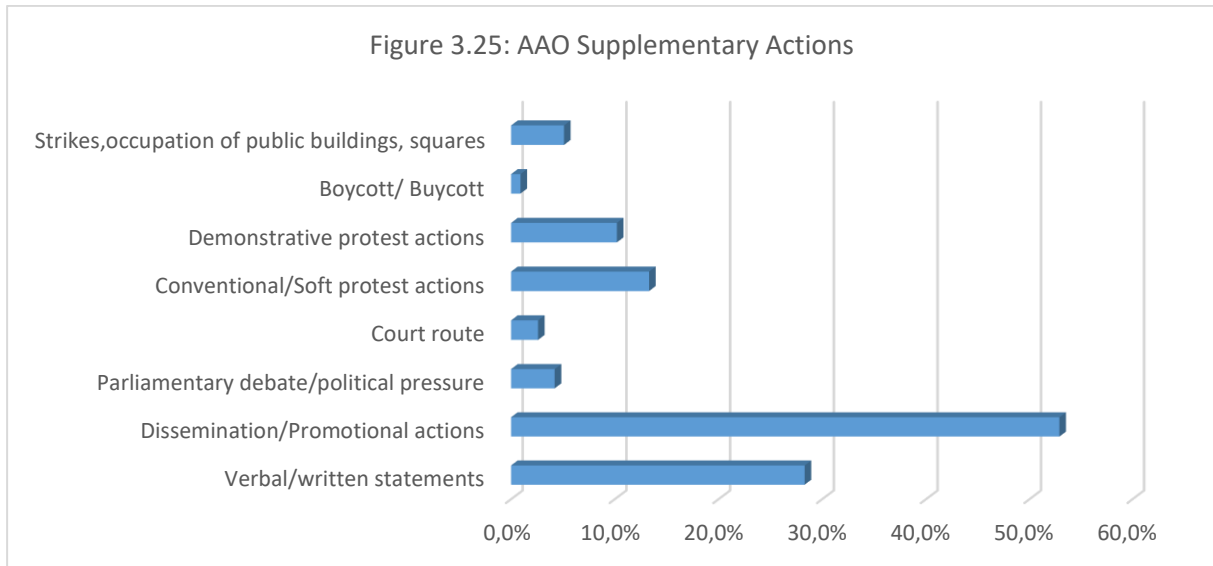


Table 3.6 shows AAOs' supplementary actions at the cross-national level. Although six of the nine countries show active participation in these fields, Germany, Sweden and the UK depict the lowest participation across all types of supplementary actions. More specifically, dissemination and promotional actions mount high frequencies across most countries, especially Italy (80.2%), Poland (73.3%), France (66.4%), but lowest frequencies in Sweden, the UK and Germany (34.2%, 38.4% and 16.7% respectively). Verbal or written statements are used mostly by French (57.4%), Swiss (50.8%) AAOs, less so by Polish (42.2%), Greek (37.8%) and Swedish (34.2%) and least by Italian and Spanish (4.8% and 6.3% respectively).

Parliamentary/political pressure or court routes are two action forms that show very low frequencies across all countries with the exception of Poland (12.7% and 6.4%), which scores highest in both types of actions. Conventional/soft protest actions are most frequent in Poland (26.5%), Spain (23.1%) and Switzerland (20.4%), lower in Greece (18%) and Italy (13.2%) and lowest in the other countries. Demonstrative protests are more prominent in Spain (30.1%), Greece (21%) and Italy (17.2%), lower in Switzerland, Poland, Sweden and lowest in Germany (2.6%), France (1.6%), and the UK (1.2%). Strikes and occupations reach top frequencies in Spain (21.8%) and Italy (15.8%), lower in Greece (5.4%), but extremely low frequencies in the remaining six countries. This is an expected finding, given the impacts on the crisis and anti-austerity policies on these countries, and the subsequent anti-austerity protests, especially manifested in the Indignados (*Αγανακτισμένοι*) movement, and the movement of the squares.

Table 3.6: AAO Supplementary Actions per Country*

AAOs Supplementary Actions	FR	GER	GR	IT	POL	SP	SE	CH	UK	Total
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
	(N)	(N)	(N)	(N)	(N)	(N)	(N)	(N)	(N)	(N)
Verbal/ Written statements	57.4 (287)	17.7 (88)	37.8 (189)	4.8 (24)	42.2 (210)	6.3 (29)	32.4 (165)	50.8 (169)	11.0 (55)	28.3 (1,216)
Dissemination/ Promotional actions	66.4 (332)	16.7 (83)	49.8 (249)	80.2 (401)	73.3 (365)	60.6 (278)	34.2 (174)	60.1 (200)	38.4 (192)	52.9 (2,274)
Parliamentary debate/ Political pressure	2.6 (13)	1.0 (5)	5.6 (28)	1.0 (5)	12.7 (63)	2.2 (10)	4.3 (22)	6.3 (21)	2.4 (12)	4.2 (179)
Court route	0.6 (3)	1.4 (7)	4.8 (24)	1.0 (5)	6.4 (32)	2.4 (11)	2.0 (10)	3.0 (10)	1.8 (9)	2.6 (111)
Conventional/ Soft protest actions	10.6 (53)	4.8 (24)	18.0 (90)	13.2 (66)	26.5 (132)	23.1 (106)	4.5 (23)	20.4 (68)	1.6 (8)	13.3 (570)
Demonstrative protest actions	1.6 (8)	2.6 (13)	21.0 (105)	17.2 (86)	6.2 (31)	30.1 (138)	4.9 (25)	7.8 (26)	1.2 (6)	10.2 (438)
Boycott/ Buycott	0.0 (0)	1.0 (5)	0.8 (4)	3.2 (16)	0.6 (3)	1.3 (6)	0.2 (1)	1.2 (4)	0.2 (1)	0.9 (40)
Strikes, Occupation of public buildings, squares	0.2 (1)	1.0 (5)	5.4 (27)	15.8 (79)	0.6 (3)	21.8 (100)	0.2 (1)	1.2 (4)	0.2 (1)	5.1 (221)
N	(500)	(498)	(500)	(500)	(498)	(459)	(509)	(333)	(500)	(4,297)

* Note: Alternative activities are coded as dichotomous (yes/no variables) and therefore percentages do not sum to 100. Coding multiple categories was allowed since most of the AAOs engage in a variety of activities. Percentages are calculated based on the count of cases within each (country) category divided by the total number of AAOs of the country.

3.1.8 Beneficiaries/Participants

The data presented in this section focus on the beneficiaries or the participants who benefit from the solidarity activities of the AAOs, i.e. those who do or do not actively engage in the organization - participants as well as nonparticipants such as activists in cooperatives, grassroots initiatives, self-help groups, or refugees. Figure 3.26 (Total N=4,297) below depicts 15 different types of beneficiaries/participants at the aggregate level, following the selected merging from the original 33 coding categories. The most outstanding beneficiary group for almost half of the AAOs (40.8%), is the 'general public and every interested person', an unexpected finding that reflects unmet needs for a wider beneficiary group during hard economic times.

The next three most prominent groups, mentioned by about one fourth of all AAOs, are ‘children, youth and students’ (26.9%), the ‘poor or marginalized people and communities’, including the homeless and the imprisoned (26.3%) and local communities (24.4%). This finding is also noteworthy, reflecting again the unmet needs of its young people, a more vulnerable segment of the population.

Lower in frequency are citizen-consumers/small enterprises (18.9%), the disabled/health vulnerable (15.2%), families (14.2%) and the uninsured/unemployed or precarious workers (13.7%) and immigrants/refugees (12.2%). New labor conditions and refugee crises are two issues that concern European AAOs, thus approximately 15% have as beneficiaries the precarious, the uninsured workers or the unemployed people, and the refugees and migrants. The elderly/pensioners (8.6%) and women (8.2%) and minorities/hate-crime victims (5.1%) are AAO beneficiaries at a much lower frequency.

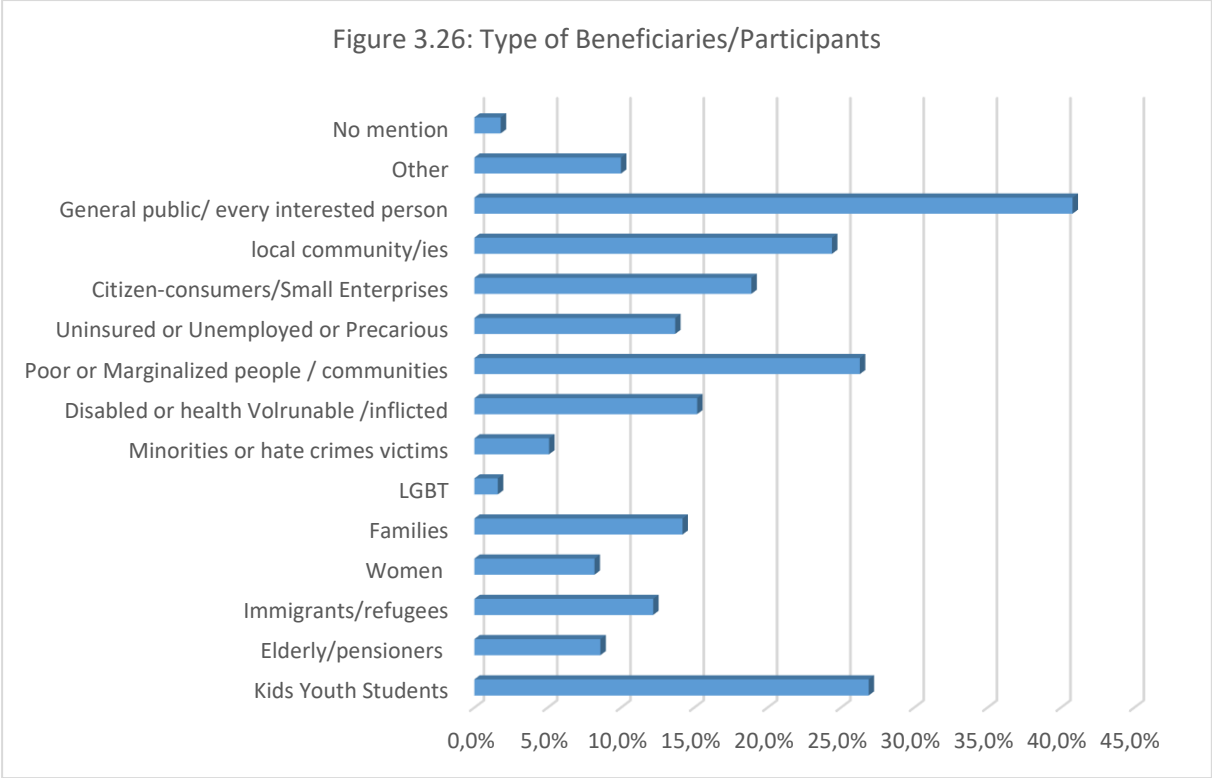


Table 3.7 offers data at the country level, unveiling very different patterns across the nine countries. It is noteworthy that three of the nine countries, i.e. Greece, Poland and Sweden, show very high frequencies on more than several types of beneficiary/participant groups. This could be interpreted as a higher density of AAO beneficiary/participant groups. The picture changes when looking at France, Germany, Italy, Spain the UK and Switzerland, which show more moderate or lower frequencies across these groups.

A systematic comparison within each beneficiary group, across the nine countries reveals the following. Children, youth, students are most prominent as beneficiaries in about half of the Swedish (55.2%) and Polish (50.6%) AAOs, moderately frequent in about a third of the Greek (37.4%) and Swiss (30.3%) AAOs, and less frequent in the other countries. The elderly or pensioners are most prominent, albeit at lower frequencies, in Poland (19.7%), Switzerland (15%), Sweden (13.9%) and Germany (11.6%), while they are least frequent in Greece, Italy, Spain, France and the UK.

Immigrants or refugees beneficiaries are most prevalent in Sweden (31.8%) and Greece (27.8%), less frequent in Germany (12.7%) and least so in the remaining countries. The disabled or health vulnerable/inflicted reach highest frequencies in Poland (35.7%), the UK (24.8%) and Sweden (22.2%), but lower ones in the other countries. Similarly, the uninsured, unemployed or precarious are more frequent in only two countries, namely Greece (27%) and Poland (22.7%) and less frequent in the rest. Women beneficiaries are most frequent in Sweden (21.8%), of lower prevalence in Poland, Spain and Switzerland, and least frequent in the other countries.

Families however are a more prominent beneficiary group, as they are most frequent in Poland (27.3%), Switzerland (24%), Sweden (21.8%), and Greece (19.2%), and less so in the rest of the countries. At the same time, a stronger presence of poor or marginalized people/communities as beneficiaries is visible across Germany (46.8%), Greece (34.8%), Poland (31.7%), Sweden (30.1%), followed more moderately by Spain (26.6%), Switzerland (24%) and the UK (22.6%).

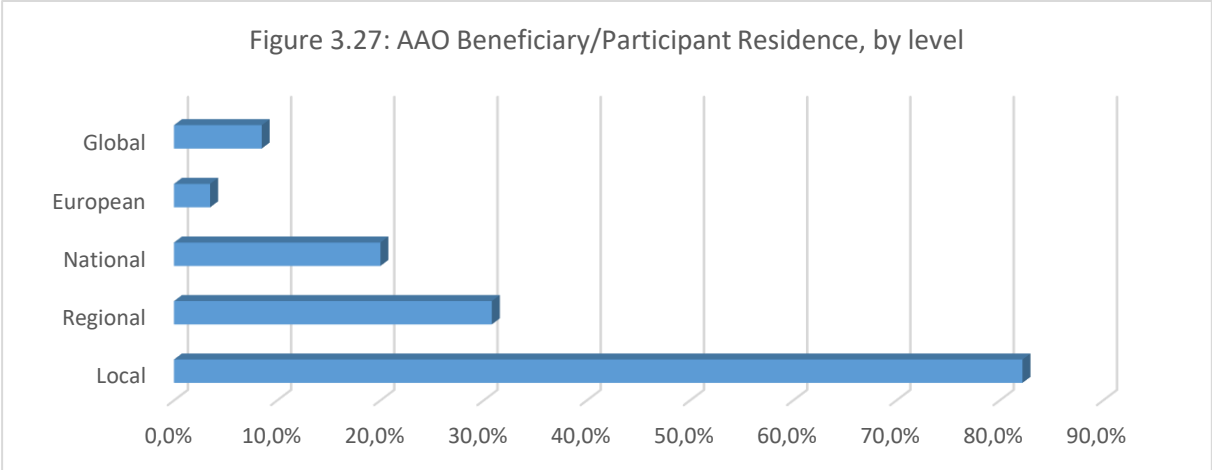
Similarly substantial is the prominence of citizen-consumers/small enterprises in five countries, i.e. France (40.2%), Switzerland (35.7%), Italy (29.8%), Greece (23%) and Poland (21.1), while it is lower in the remaining four, with the lowest in Sweden (2%). Furthermore, local communities are also a prevalent beneficiary, for half of the AAOs in Poland (49.4%), about one third of the French (31.8%) and about one fourth of the British (26.4%), Italian (26%), Swiss (22.2%) and Greek (22.2%) AAOs, while lower in the other three countries. The most prominent beneficiary group nevertheless, is the general public/every interested person across most countries, visible in the very high frequencies in Spain (71.7%), Poland (60%), Switzerland (59.5%), Greece (43%), France (38.2%), lower in Germany (34.1%), Italy (33.6%) and lowest still reaching about one fifth of the AAOs in Sweden (20%) and the UK (16%).

Table 3.7: AAO Beneficiaries/Participants per Country*

Type of beneficiaries	FR	GER	GR	IT	POL	SP	SE	CH	UK	Total
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
	(N)	(N)	(N)	(N)	(N)	(N)	(N)	(N)	(N)	(N)
Children/ Youth/ Students	12.4	11.6	37.4	11.4	50.6	13.5	55.2	30.3	19.6	26.9
	(62)	(58)	(187)	(57)	(252)	(62)	(281)	(101)	(98)	(1,158)
Elderly/ Pensioners	1.2	11.6	6.2	1.6	19.7	4.8	13.9	15.0	5.0	8.6
	(6)	(58)	(31)	(8)	(98)	(22)	(71)	(50)	(25)	(369)
Immigrants/ Refugees	1.4	12.7	27.8	6.4	5.6	8.7	31.8	7.5	5.6	12.2
	(7)	(63)	(139)	(32)	(28)	(40)	(162)	(25)	(28)	(524)
Women	2.6	3.2	5.2	2.6	9.6	10.0	21.8	12.0	8.2	8.2
	(13)	(16)	(26)	(13)	(48)	(46)	(111)	(40)	(41)	(354)
Families	5.4	9.0	19.2	4.8	27.3	8.1	21.8	24.0	11.2	14.2
	(27)	(45)	(96)	(24)	(136)	(37)	(111)	(80)	(56)	(612)
LGBT	0.0	1.0	1.6	0.4	2.0	0.7	2.2	3.6	3.4	1.6
	(0)	(5)	(8)	(2)	(10)	(3)	(11)	(12)	(17)	(68)
Minorities or Hate-Crime Victims	1.0	2.2	10.4	1.6	5.8	1.7	12.0	8.4	3.0	5.1
	(5)	(11)	(52)	(8)	(29)	(8)	(61)	(28)	(15)	(217)
Disabled or Health Vulnerable/ Inflicted	8.6	5.0	15.8	4.2	35.7	5.9	22.2	12.3	24.8	15.2
	(43)	(25)	(79)	(21)	(178)	(27)	(113)	(41)	(124)	(651)
Poor or Marginalized People/ Communities	6.8	46.8	34.8	12.8	31.7	26.6	30.1	24.0	22.6	26.3
	(34)	(233)	(174)	(64)	(158)	(122)	(153)	(80)	(113)	(1,131)
Uninsured or Unemployed or Precarious	7.2	11.4	27.0	10.0	22.7	13.3	8.8	15.9	7.4	13.7
	(36)	(57)	(135)	(50)	(113)	(61)	(45)	(53)	(37)	(587)
Citizen-Consumers/ Small Enterprises	40.2	5.4	23.0	29.8	21.1	11.3	2.0	35.7	6.8	18.9
	(201)	(27)	(115)	(149)	(105)	(52)	(10)	(119)	(34)	(812)
Local Community/ies	31.8	12.4	22.2	26.0	49.4	12.0	13.9	22.2	26.4	24.2
	(159)	(62)	(111)	(130)	(246)	(55)	(71)	(74)	(132)	(1,040)
General public/ Every Interested Person	38.2	34.1	43.0	33.6	60.0	71.7	20.0	59.5	16.0	40.8
	(191)	(170)	(215)	(168)	(299)	(329)	(102)	(198)	(80)	(1,752)
Other	9.4	6.4	10.2	4.6	17.1	5.7	13.0	15.0	9.8	10.0
	(47)	(32)	(51)	(23)	(85)	(26)	(66)	(50)	(49)	(429)
No mention	0.4	0.8	1.4	11.0	0.6	0.4	0.0	0.6	0.6	1.8
	(2)	(4)	(7)	(55)	(3)	(2)	(0)	(2)	(3)	(78)
N	(500)	(498)	(500)	(500)	(498)	(459)	(509)	(333)	(500)	(4,297)

* Note: Alternative activities are coded as dichotomous (yes/no variables) and therefore percentages do not sum to 100. Coding multiple categories was allowed since most of the AAOs engage in a variety of activities. Percentages are calculated based on the count of cases within each (country) category divided by the total number of AAOs of the country.

Focusing on the level of the beneficiary's/participant's residence, Figure 3.27 (Total N=4,297) illustrates that the vast majority reside at the local level (83%). Furthermore, approximately one third of the AAOs' beneficiaries reside in the region where the AAOs are based. National level beneficiaries are mentioned by 20% of the AAOs. Considerably fewer are beneficiaries/participants residing at the global level (8.5%), while even lower are those residing at the European level (3.5%).



Considering the impacts of the crisis on societal groups facing hard times to meet daily, basic needs, Figure 3.28 (Total N=2,177) focuses on the beneficiaries of the AAOs which are active in the urgent – basic needs field. The three most prominent categories of beneficiaries/participants are: the poor and marginalized people/communities (43.2%), children, youth and students (39.4%) and the general public (30.7%). Lower in frequency, but also important beneficiaries, are the disabled/health inflicted (26.2%), families (24.8%), immigrants/refugees (21.3%), local communities (20.5%) and the uninsured/unemployed or precarious (20.2%).

Figure 3.28: Beneficiaries/Participants of AAOs Active in Urgent Needs

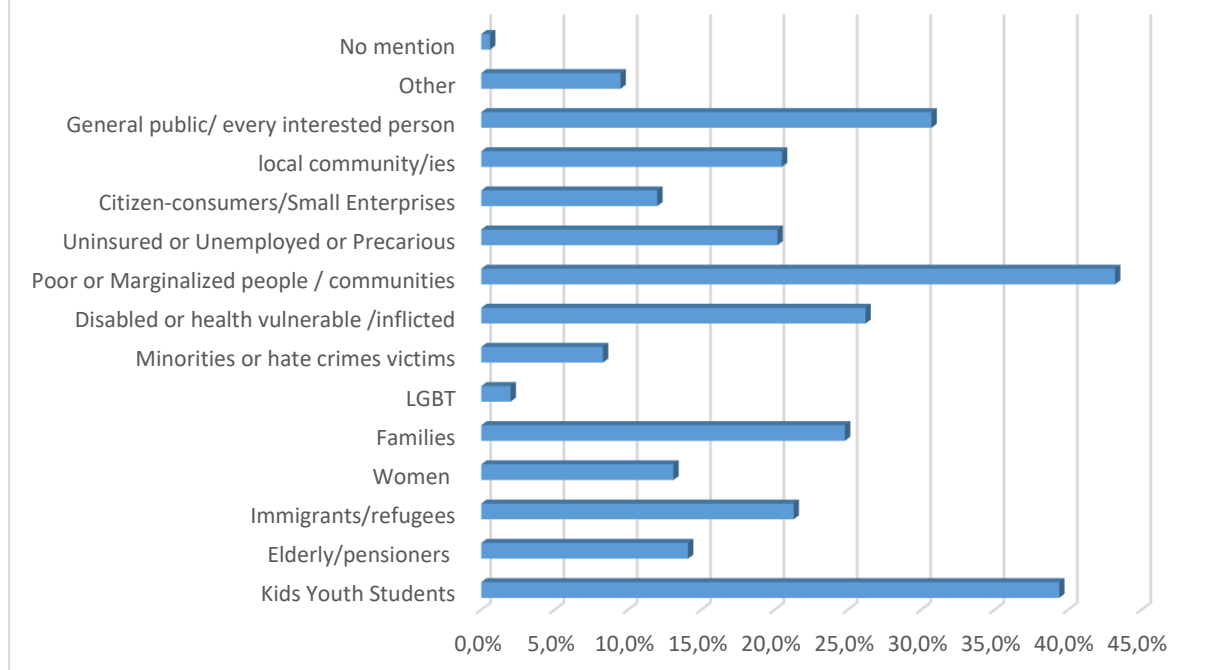


Table 3.8 provides a cross-country comparison focused exclusively on the AAOs offering solidarity activities related to basic/urgent needs, within each type of beneficiary/participant group. Children/youth/students are most frequent beneficiaries in Sweden (61.1%), Poland (56.8%) and France (46.7%) and Greece (46.3%), less frequent in Spain (23.7%) and the UK (22.3%), and lowest in Germany (15.2%). The elderly/pensioners have highest frequencies in Polish (23.7%) and Swiss (23.7%) AAOs, while lower in the other countries. Immigrants/refugees reach the top frequencies in Sweden (38.4%) and Greece (38.1%), lower in Italy (22.7%), Germany (17.9%), Spain (17.9%) and Switzerland (15.3%) and lowest in the remaining countries. Women and trafficking victims are the most frequent beneficiary group in Sweden (25.6%), lower in Spain (17.9%) and Switzerland (17.6%) and less so in the other countries. Minorities and hate crime victims are most frequent in Switzerland (17.4%) and Sweden (14.3%), but considerably lower in the rest.

Very high frequencies across the majority of the countries are noted for poor or marginalized people/community beneficiaries in Germany (68.8%), Spain (50.9%), Greece (46.3%), Switzerland (45%), and Poland (43.2%), lower in Sweden (34%), the UK (27.9%) and France (24.8%). Similarly high, but for five of the countries, are the frequencies for the general public as beneficiary, in Spain (67.6%), Switzerland (56.5%), Poland (53.9%), Greece (31.4%) and Italy (29.1%). Local communities follow with lower yet notable frequencies, in Poland (47.6%), Switzerland (26%), Italy (21.8%) and France (21%) and less so in the other countries. Citizen-consumers show a similar pattern, especially in France (28.6%), Greece (27.3%), and Switzerland (22.1%).

Table 3.8: Beneficiaries/Participants of AAOs Active in Urgent Needs, per Country*

Type of beneficiaries	FR	GER	GR	IT	POL	SP	SE	CH	UK	Total
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
	(N)	(N)	(N)	(N)	(N)	(N)	(N)	(N)	(N)	(N)
Children/ Youth/ Students	46.7	15.2	46.3	32.7	56.8	23.7	61.1	36.6	22.3	39.4
	(49)	(50)	(146)	(36)	(180)	(41)	(239)	(48)	(68)	(857)
Elderly/ Pensioners	4.8	16.4	9.5	5.5	23.7	11.6	17.4	23.7	5.6	14.1
	(5)	(54)	(30)	(6)	(75)	(20)	(68)	(31)	(17)	(306)
Immigrants/ Refugees	5.7	17.9	38.1	22.7	8.5	17.9	38.4	15.3	8.2	21.3
	(6)	(59)	(120)	(25)	(27)	(31)	(150)	(20)	(25)	(463)
Women	10.5	4.2	6.7	9.1	12.6	17.9	25.6	17.6	11.8	13.1
	(11)	(14)	(21)	(10)	(40)	(31)	(100)	(23)	(36)	(286)
Families	21.9	12.7	28.9	15.5	40.4	16.8	26.9	42.7	15.7	24.8
	(23)	(42)	(91)	(17)	(128)	(29)	(105)	(56)	(48)	(539)
LGBT	0.0	0.1	0.6	1.8	2.8	1.2	1.5	3.8	4.3	2.0
	(0)	(4)	(2)	(2)	(9)	(2)	(6)	(5)	(13)	(43)
Minorities or Hate-Crime Victims	3.8	2.1	12.4	7.3	8.2	3.5	14.3	17.4	3.9	8.3
	(4)	(7)	(39)	(8)	(26)	(6)	(56)	(23)	(12)	(181)
Disabled or Health Vulnerable/ Inflicted	39.0	6.7	22.9	17.3	49.5	13.3	25.3	24.4	34.8	28.2
	(41)	(22)	(72)	(19)	(157)	(23)	(99)	(32)	(106)	(571)
Poor or Marginalized People/ Communities	24.8	68.8	46.3	36.4	43.2	50.9	34.0	45.0	27.9	43.2
	(26)	(227)	(146)	(40)	(137)	(88)	(133)	(59)	(85)	(941)
Uninsured or Unemployed or Precarious	19.0	16.1	36.2	22.7	28.7	23.7	9.5	22.1	9.5	20.2
	(20)	(53)	(114)	(25)	(91)	(41)	(37)	(29)	(29)	(439)
Citizen-Consumers/ Small Enterprises	28.6	2.4	27.3	20.9	17.0	9.2	1.3	22.1	3.3	12.0
	(30)	(8)	(86)	(23)	(54)	(16)	(5)	(29)	(10)	(261)
Local Community/ies	21.0	10.3	15.9	21.8	47.6	12.1	14.8	26.0	17.0	20.5
	(22)	(34)	(50)	(24)	(151)	(21)	(58)	(34)	(52)	(446)
General public/ Every Interested Person	19.0	15.2	31.4	29.1	53.9	67.6	18.4	56.5	11.1	30.7
	(20)	(50)	(99)	(32)	(171)	(117)	(72)	(74)	(34)	(669)
Other	21.0	5.5	6.0	9.1	10.7	6.9	14.6	13.7	5.6	9.5
	(22)	(18)	(19)	(10)	(34)	(12)	(57)	(18)	(17)	(207)
No mention	0.0	0.3	1.0	7.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.8	0.3	0.6
	(0)	(1)	(3)	(8)	(0)	(0)	(0)	(1)	(1)	(14)
N	(105)	(330)	(315)	(110)	(317)	(173)	(391)	(131)	(305)	(2,177)

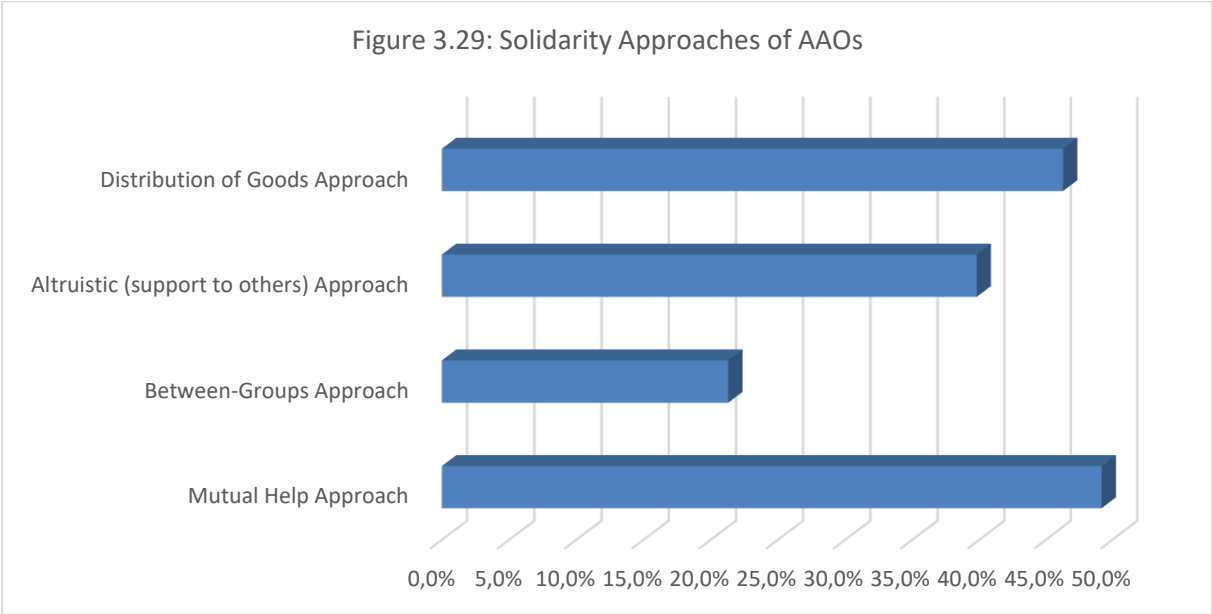
* Note: Alternative activities are coded as dichotomous (yes/no variables) and therefore percentages do not sum to 100. Coding multiple categories was allowed since most of the AAOs engage in a variety of activities. Percentages are calculated based on the count of cases within each (country) category divided by the total number of AAOs of the country.

3.1.9 Solidarity Approaches of AAOs

The four major solidarity approaches of this section, from bottom-up to top-down, are being traced through the information provided on the AAOs’ websites. The first *mutual help* approach embraces solidarity exchanges within a group or organization are oriented towards self-help, or mobilizing and collaborating for the promotion of common interests at the grassroots. The second approach, that of *between groups* has a similar bottom-up orientation mirrored in AAOs offering support or/and assistance between groups. The third approach, *support to others*, is visible in organizations that help or offer support to others in confronting hard times or seeking alternatives, in an altruistic manner. The fourth approach, *distribution of goods*, adopts a solidarity-from-above approach that is best reflected in the distribution of goods and services to others by philanthropic AAOs.

The tables and figures that follow illustrate the relationship between solidarity approaches with types of AAOs, the types of the activities they carry out, and the value frames they adopt in their solidarity practices.

Figure 3.29 (Total N=4,297) provides the dominant patterns of solidarity approaches that the AAOs follow at the aggregate level. The most prominent type is the mutual-help approach, adopted by almost half of the AAOs (49.2%). Second in frequency are distribution of goods AAOs, whose mission is the distribution of goods and services to people in need. This solidarity from above approach, is mostly visible in charities and other church related institutions. Third most frequent is an altruistic approach, where AAOs offer help and support to others. The lowest in frequency solidarity approach is support/assistance between groups, chosen by almost one fifth of the AAOs.



Looking deeper into the four solidarity orientations and how they are depicted across the different countries, interesting patterns surface. As Figure 3.30²⁸ illustrates, a mutual-help approach has highest frequencies in Italy, Spain, and France (more than 65% in each), lower yet very strong in Greece and the UK (approximately 50%) and less so in Switzerland and Germany (about one third of AAOs), while it is lowest in Sweden (22%).

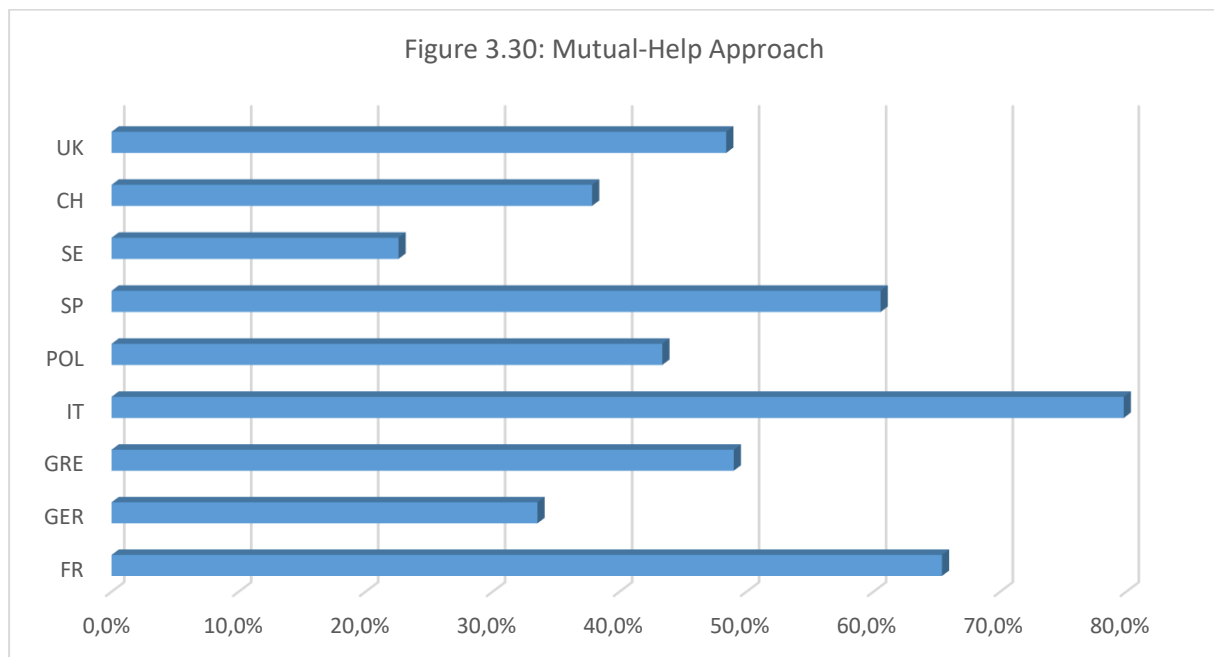
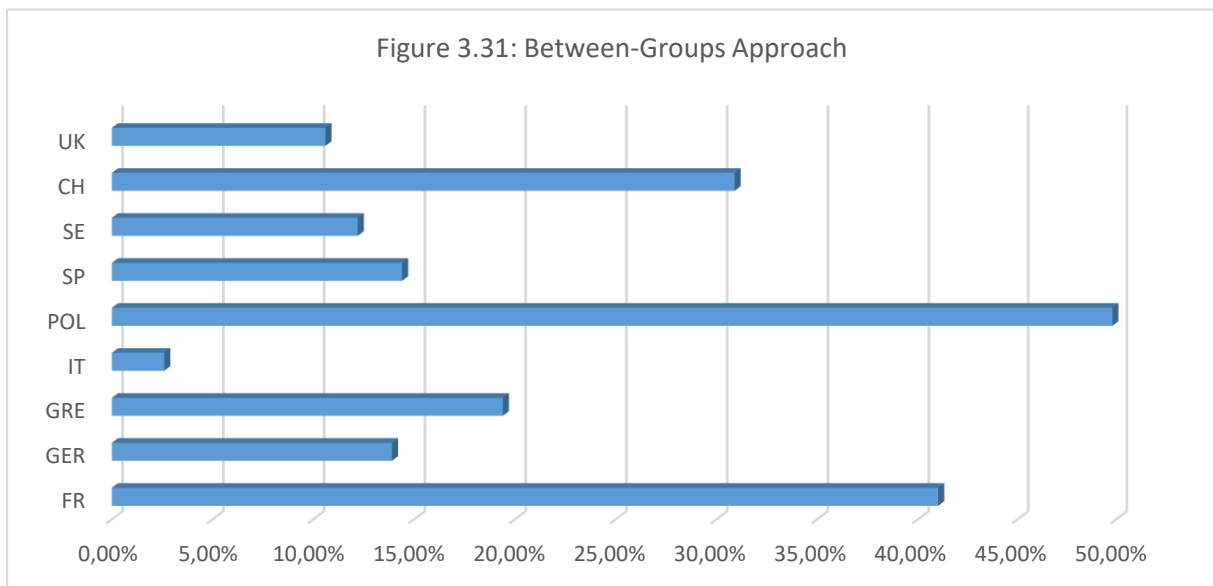


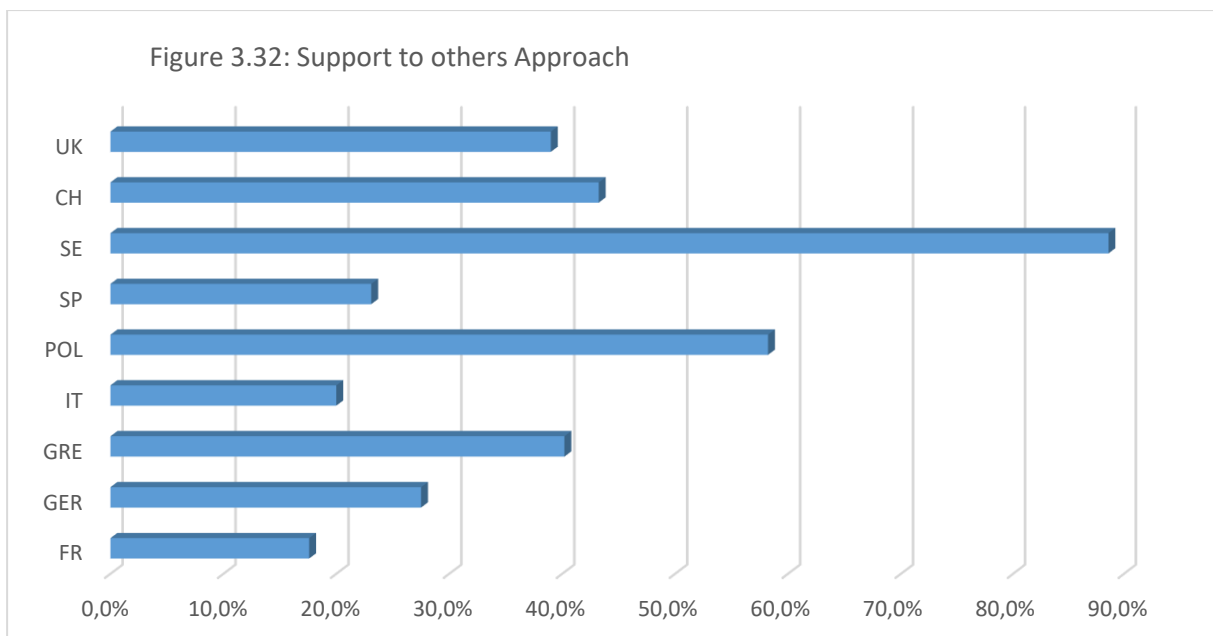
Figure 3.31 provides data for AAOs oriented towards solidarity exchanges between groups, across the nine countries²⁹. Two patterns and one distinct case are visible. In the first pattern, Poland, France and Switzerland take the lead with the highest frequencies (30% to 50%). In the second group are Greece, Germany, Spain, Sweden and the UK, showing lower frequencies (10% - 20%). Italy scores lowest on this solidarity approach (2.6%).

²⁸ Total N for each country is: FR (496), DE (492), GR (495), IT (497), PL (497), SP (439), SE (506), CH (329), UK (499)

²⁹ Total N for each country is: FR (496), DE (492), GR (495), IT (497), PL (497), SP (439), SE (506), CH (329), UK (499)

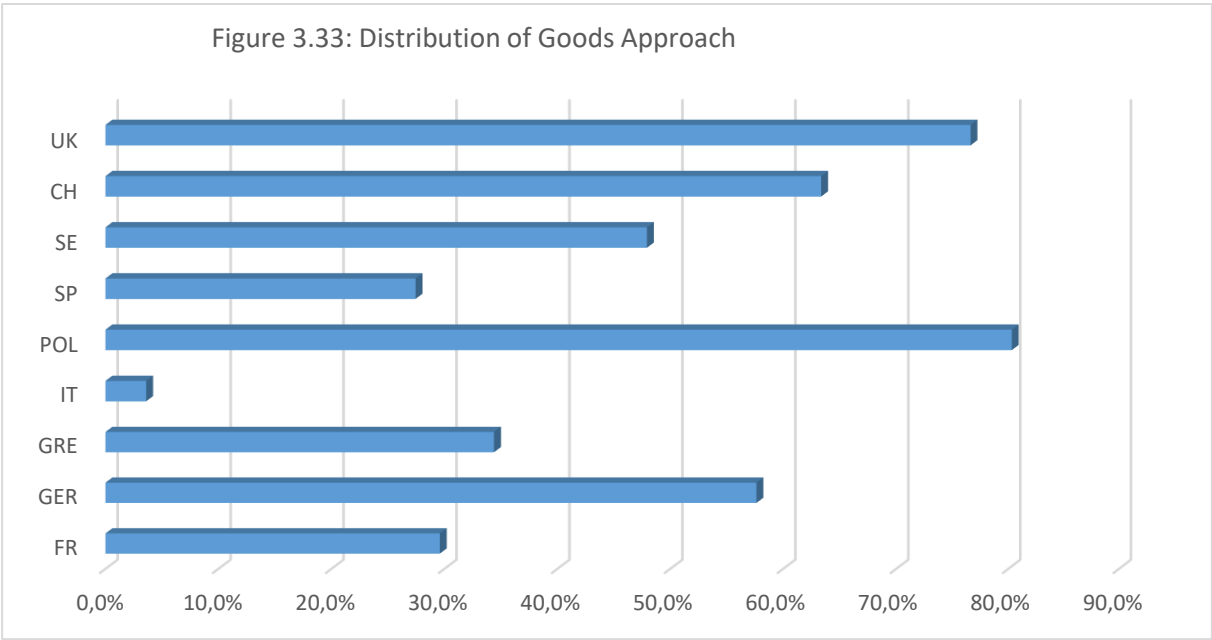


Cross-national similarities and differences also surface in Figure 3.32 that illustrates altruistic orientations of support to others³⁰. This solidarity approach is exceptionally high in Sweden and very high in Poland (88% and 58.2% respectively). It is considerably lower in Greece, Switzerland and UK (approximately 40%), and lowest in France, Spain, Italy, and Germany (17% -27%).



³⁰ Total N for each country is: FR (496), DE (492), GR (495), IT (497), PL (497), SP (439), SE (506), CH (329), UK (499)

Figure 3.33 provides information on the distribution of goods approach to solidarity³¹, expressed mostly by charities, churches and some NGOs. This AAO orientation is highest in Poland, the UK, Switzerland, and Germany (80% - 57%), lower in Sweden, Greece, Spain and France (47.9%-29.6%) and lowest in Italy (3.6%).



Shifting the focus of the analysis, Figure 3.34 offers evidence on how the four solidarity approaches are related to the different types of AAO³². Moving from the bottom-up to the top-down approaches, the role of informal and protest groups is progressively and steadily subsiding, while the charities and NGOs are progressively increasing.

More specifically, a *mutual-help* orientation is clearly driven to a large extent by informal and protest groups in almost half of the AAOs (42.6%). Social economy and NGOs follow in importance (19.9% and 18.5% respectively), while charities and union AAOs only play a small role (8.2% and 4.5% respectively). Support/assistance *between-groups*, is an approach first practiced by NGOs (32.6%), followed by informal and protest groups (19.4%), and to a less extent by social economy AAOs (16%) and charities (13.4%).

³¹ Total N for each country is: FR (496), DE (492), GR (495), IT (497), PL (497), SP (439), SE (506), CH (329), UK (499)

³² Total N for each approach is: Mutual Help (2,105), Between-Groups (908), Altruistic (support to others) (1,701), Distribution of Goods (1,972)

In the *support-others* approach, practicing support/assistance to others, NGOs take the top leading position in almost half of the cases (47.2%), while charities are also prevalent (22.9%). Considerably lower is the presence of informal and protest groups (12.9%) and social economy AAOs (9.7%); lowest still are unions (3.6%) and municipalities (2.1%).

These trends follow in similar patterns for the *distribution of goods* approach, portraying a stronger, as expected, prevalence of charities (26.6%) and a slightly decreased yet leading role of the NGOs (41.9%). They are followed by social economy (16.3%), but also by an expected reduction in informal and protest groups (7.2%). Similarly low as in the support-others approach are the unions (3.5%) and municipality AAOs (2.5%).

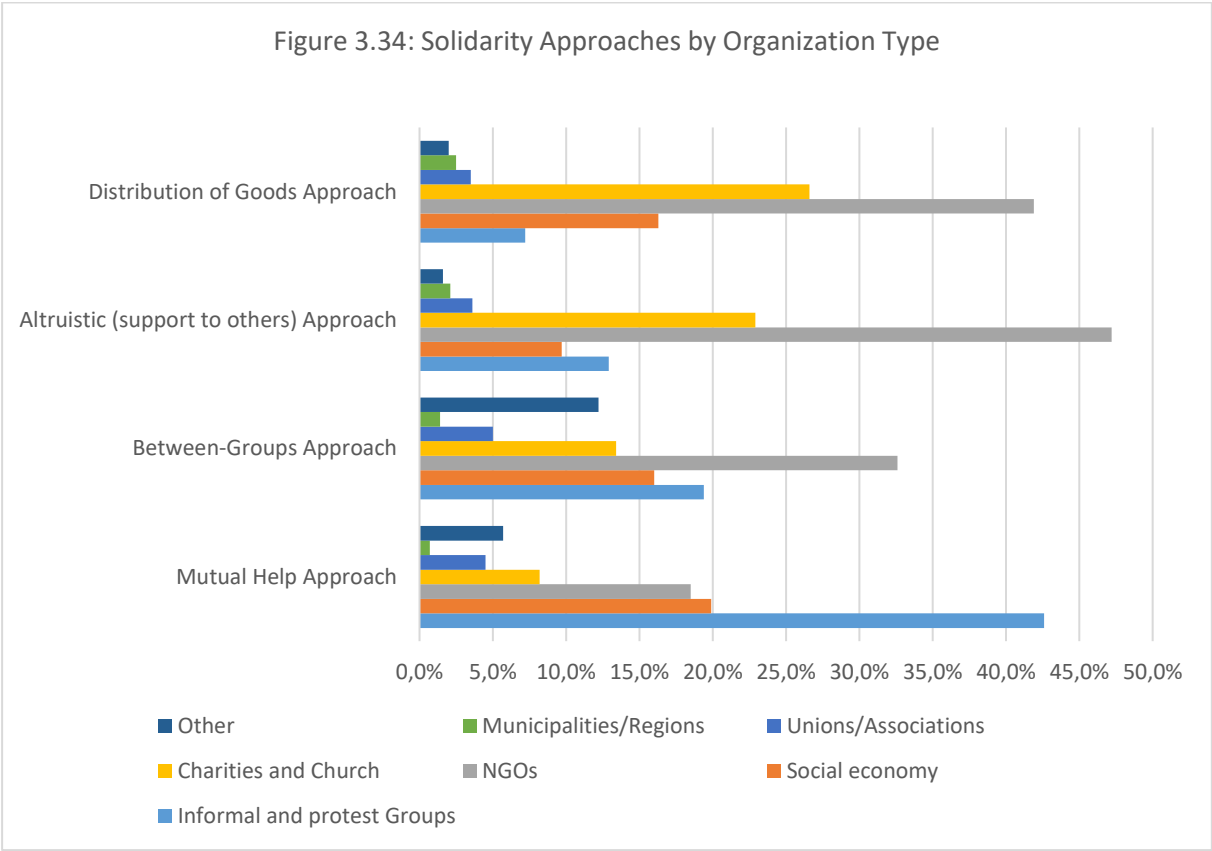


Table 3.9 provides a cross-country comparison for each of the main types of AAO which are oriented towards mutual-help solidarity activities. Informal and protest groups reach top frequencies (two-thirds of the AAOs) in crisis countries, i.e. Greece (73.7%) and Spain (67.9%). However, they also mount high frequencies (half of the AAOs) in Italy (54.3%), France (53.4%) and Germany (49.7%), lower in Switzerland (16.8%) and the UK (9.5%), and the lowest in Sweden (6.1%) and Poland (3.2%).

Mutual-help AAOs specializing in social economy are not as prevalent as the previous groups. They do, however, show the highest frequencies in Switzerland (41.6%) and the UK (35.1%), followed by less prominent frequencies in Germany (28.5%), Spain (25.3%) and Italy (22.2%), and even lower in Poland (12.5%) and Greece (9.1%). A notable lowest exception is the Swedish AAOs (1.7%).

Mutual-help NGOs make a strong appearance in only two countries, i.e. Poland (63.9%) and Sweden (63.5%), while they are less prevalent in Switzerland (28.8%), and even lower in Italy (14.9%), Greece (10.7%), the UK (10.3%) and Germany (9.7%). Spain and France have the lowest frequencies of such NGOs (3.2% and 2.1% respectively). Mutual-help charities are only found in the UK (43.4%), Sweden (24.3%) and Poland (14.4%). Their frequencies in the other countries are all below 1.2%. Mutual-help unions also have very low frequencies in all countries, the highest being in Switzerland (9.6%) and Italy (7.3%). Municipalities depict the lowest frequencies in all countries, all being below 1.4%.

Table 3.9: Mutual-help AAOs by Organization Type and Country

AAOs Organization Type	FR	GER	GR	IT	POL	SP	SE	CH	UK	Total
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
	(N)	(N)	(N)	(N)	(N)	(N)	(N)	(N)	(N)	(N)
Informal and protest Groups	53.4	49.7	73.7	54.3	3.2	67.9	6.1	16.8	9.5	42.6
	(174)	(82)	(179)	(215)	(7)	(188)	(7)	(21)	(23)	(896)
Social economy	7.7	28.5	9.1	22.2	12.5	25.3	1.7	41.6	35.1	19.9
	(25)	(47)	(22)	(88)	(27)	(70)	(2)	(52)	(85)	(418)
NGOs	2.1	9.7	10.7	14.9	63.9	3.2	63.5	28.8	10.3	18.5
	(7)	(16)	(26)	(59)	(138)	(9)	(73)	(36)	(25)	(389)
Charities and Church	0.3	1.2	0.4	0.0	14.4	1.1	24.3	0.8	43.4	8.2
	(1)	(2)	(1)	(0)	(31)	(3)	(28)	(1)	(105)	(172)
Unions/ Associations	4.9	3.6	4.9	7.3	3.2	1.8	3.5	9.6	1.2	4.5
	(16)	(6)	(12)	(29)	(7)	(5)	(4)	(12)	(3)	(94)
Municipalities/ Regions	0.9	0.0	0.8	1.0	1.4	0.4	0.9	0.0	0.4	0.7
	(3)	(0)	(2)	(4)	(3)	(1)	(1)	(0)	(1)	(15)
Other	30.7	7.3	0.4	0.3	1.4	0.4	0.0	2.4	0.0	5.7
	(100)	(12)	(1)	(1)	(3)	(1)	(0)	(3)	(0)	(121)
N	(326)	(165)	(243)	(396)	(216)	(277)	(115)	(125)	(242)	(2,105)

Table 3.10 offers data on how AAOs oriented towards solidarity ‘between groups’ relate to types of organization types of AAOs, by country. More specifically, NGOs focused on solidarity between-groups show high frequencies in seven of the nine countries, the highest being in Sweden (61.3%) and Poland (54.8%), followed by Germany (42%), Switzerland (30.1%), Greece (29.9%), Italy (23.1%) and Spain (18.3%).

Between-groups-oriented informal and protest groups show highest frequencies in Greece adopted in more than half of the AAOs (55.7%), but this is lower in Spain (31.7%), Germany (29%), and France (23.2%). They are less prevalent in Switzerland (18.4%) Italy (15.4%) and the UK (11.3%) and lowest in Poland (2.8%). Between-groups solidarity is similarly promoted in four countries, with the highest frequencies seen in Italy (46.2%), Switzerland (35.9%), Spain (33.3%) and the UK (32.1%). It is less often found in Germany (17.4%), France (12.3%), Greece (8.2%), Poland (6.9%) and Sweden (4.8%).

Between-groups solidarity is less prevalent in charities and church related AAOs across the nine countries, showing the highest frequencies in the UK (32.1%), Poland (29.8%), Sweden (22.6%), but only very low ones in the other countries (from 8.3% in Spain to 0.0% in Greece). Unions and even more so municipalities show the lowest frequencies of between-group solidarity across all countries.

Table 3.10: Between-Groups Approach by Organization Type and Country

AAOs Organization Type	FR	GER	GR	IT	POL	SP	SE	CH	UK	Total
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
	(N)	(N)	(N)	(N)	(N)	(N)	(N)	(N)	(N)	(N)
Informal and protest Groups	23.2	29.0	55.7	15.4	2.8	31.7	3.2	18.4	11.3	19.4
	(47)	(20)	(54)	(2)	(7)	(19)	(2)	(19)	(6)	(176)
Social economy	12.3	17.4	8.2	46.2	6.9	33.3	4.8	35.9	32.1	16.0
	(25)	(12)	(8)	(6)	(17)	(20)	(3)	(37)	(17)	(145)
NGOs	3.9	42.0	29.9	23.1	54.8	18.3	61.3	30.1	20.8	32.6
	(8)	(29)	(29)	(3)	(136)	(11)	(38)	(31)	(11)	(296)
Charities and Church	1.5	8.7	0.0	0.0	29.8	8.3	22.6	2.9	32.1	13.4
	(3)	(6)	(0)	(0)	(74)	(5)	(14)	(3)	(17)	(122)
Unions/ Associations	6.9	1.4	4.1	7.7	2.0	6.7	8.1	9.7	1.9	5.0
	(14)	(1)	(4)	(1)	(5)	(4)	(5)	(10)	(1)	(45)
Municipalities/ Regions	2.5	0.0	0.0	7.7	2.0	1.7	0.0	0.0	1.9	1.4
	(5)	(0)	(0)	(1)	(5)	(1)	(0)	(0)	(1)	(13)
Other	49.8	1.4	2.1	0.0	1.6	0.0	0.0	2.9	0.0	12.2
	(101)	(1)	(2)	(0)	(4)	(0)	(0)	(3)	(0)	(111)
N	(203)	(69)	(97)	(13)	(248)	(60)	(62)	(103)	(53)	(908)

Focusing on AAOs with a support-others solidarity orientation and organization types at the cross-national level, Table 3.11 shows the prevalence of NGOs, which reach very high frequencies in seven countries. They are most frequent in Sweden (70.7%), Poland (66.6%), Germany (60.9%), and Switzerland (41.5%), and less so in Italy (34%), Spain (27.2%) and Greece (27%). The lowest frequencies are seen in the UK (13.3%) and France (11.4%). Charities and church are the next in importance when it comes to support-others solidarity AAOs for five countries, with the highest frequencies reaching about half/more than half of these AAOs in the UK (62.1%), France (46.6%), and

about one fourth of those in Spain (23.3%), Poland (22.8%) and Sweden (22.2%). Support-others, informal and protest AAOs are only frequented in four countries, with highest frequencies in Greece (45%), Italy (32%), Spain (19.4%) and Germany (17.3%) and lowest in the others, from 11.4% in France to 1.4% in Poland.

Table 3.11: Support-Others Approach by Organization Type and Country

AAOs Organization Type	FR	GER	GR	IT	POL	SP	SE	CH	UK	Total
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
	(N)	(N)	(N)	(N)	(N)	(N)	(N)	(N)	(N)	(N)
Informal and protest Groups	11.4	17.3	45.0	32.0	1.4	19.4	3.8	11.3	4.1	12.9
	(10)	(23)	(90)	(32)	(4)	(20)	(17)	(16)	(8)	(220)
Social economy	3.4	3.8	9.0	24.0	3.4	27.2	0.9	28.2	16.9	9.7
	(3)	(5)	(18)	(24)	(10)	(28)	(4)	(40)	(33)	(165)
NGOs	11.4	60.9	27.0	34.0	66.6	27.2	70.7	41.5	13.3	47.2
	(10)	(81)	(54)	(34)	(193)	(28)	(318)	(59)	(26)	(803)
Charities and Church	46.6	12.8	5.5	1.0	22.8	23.3	22.2	5.6	62.1	22.9
	(41)	(17)	(11)	(1)	(66)	(24)	(100)	(8)	(121)	(389)
Unions/ Associations	12.5	2.3	5.5	5.0	1.4	1.9	1.3	9.9	2.6	3.6
	(11)	(3)	(11)	(5)	(4)	(2)	(6)	(14)	(5)	(61)
Municipalities/ Regions	3.4	0.8	7.5	3.0	2.8	1.0	0.2	1.4	0.5	2.1
	(3)	(1)	(15)	(3)	(8)	(1)	(1)	(2)	(1)	(35)
Other	11.4	2.3	0.5	1.0	1.7	0.0	0.9	2.1	0.5	1.6
	(10)	(3)	(1)	(1)	(5)	(0)	(4)	(3)	(1)	(28)
N	(88)	(133)	(200)	(100)	(290)	(103)	(450)	(142)	(195)	(1,701)

As seen in Table 3.12, the distribution of goods-oriented AAOs is dominant in NGOs and charities in six and five countries respectively. NGOs are the main top-down solidarity providers in Germany (74.5%), Sweden (65.4%), Poland (61.8%), and Greece (53.8%), followed by Italy (38.9%) and Switzerland (28.8%). Charities and Church are the most prominent distribution oriented providers in the UK (54.3%) and France (46.6%), while less prevalent in Sweden (28.4%), Poland (25.5%) and Spain (23.5%). Distribution of goods-oriented social economy initiatives is highest in Spain (42.9%), Switzerland (42.9%) and the UK (31.6%), while lower in the other countries, from 10.1% in Greece to 0.8% in Sweden. Such solidarity-oriented informal and protest AAOs are of low prevalence in most of the nine countries. With the exception of France (32.2%), the remaining range from 14.3% in Spain to 1.0% in the UK. Even less frequent are unions and municipalities that follow a distribution-of-goods orientation, with top-highest frequencies in Switzerland (15.4%) and Italy (5.6%) respectively.

Table 3.12: Distribution-of-Goods Approach by Organization Type and Country

AAOs Organization Type	FR	GER	GR	IT	POL	SP	SE	CH	UK	Total
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
	(N)	(N)	(N)	(N)	(N)	(N)	(N)	(N)	(N)	(N)
Informal and protest Groups	32.2	6.6	9.5	11.1	2.0	14.3	3.7	9.1	1.0	7.2
	(47)	(19)	(16)	(2)	(8)	(17)	(9)	(19)	(4)	(141)
Social economy	2.7	7.7	10.1	33.3	5.3	42.9	0.8	37.5	31.6	16.3
	(4)	(22)	(17)	(6)	(21)	(51)	(2)	(78)	(121)	(322)
NGOs	2.7	74.5	53.8	38.9	61.8	16.0	65.4	28.8	6.8	41.9
	(4)	(213)	(91)	(7)	(247)	(19)	(159)	(60)	(26)	(826)
Charities and Church	46.6	5.2	14.8	0.0	25.5	23.5	28.4	4.3	54.3	26.6
	(68)	(15)	(25)	(0)	(102)	(28)	(69)	(9)	(208)	(524)
Unions/ Associations	6.2	2.1	3.0	5.6	2.3	2.5	0.4	15.4	1.0	3.5
	(9)	(6)	(5)	(1)	(9)	(3)	(1)	(32)	(4)	(70)
Municipalities/ Regions	2.1	0.3	7.1	5.6	2.3	0.0	0.4	3.4	3.9	2.5
	(3)	(1)	(12)	(1)	(9)	(0)	(1)	(7)	(15)	(49)
Other	7.5	3.5	1.8	5.6	1.0	0.8	0.8	1.4	1.3	2.0
	(11)	(10)	(3)	(1)	(4)	(1)	(2)	(3)	(5)	(40)
N	(146)	(286)	(169)	(18)	(400)	(119)	(243)	(208)	(383)	(1,972)

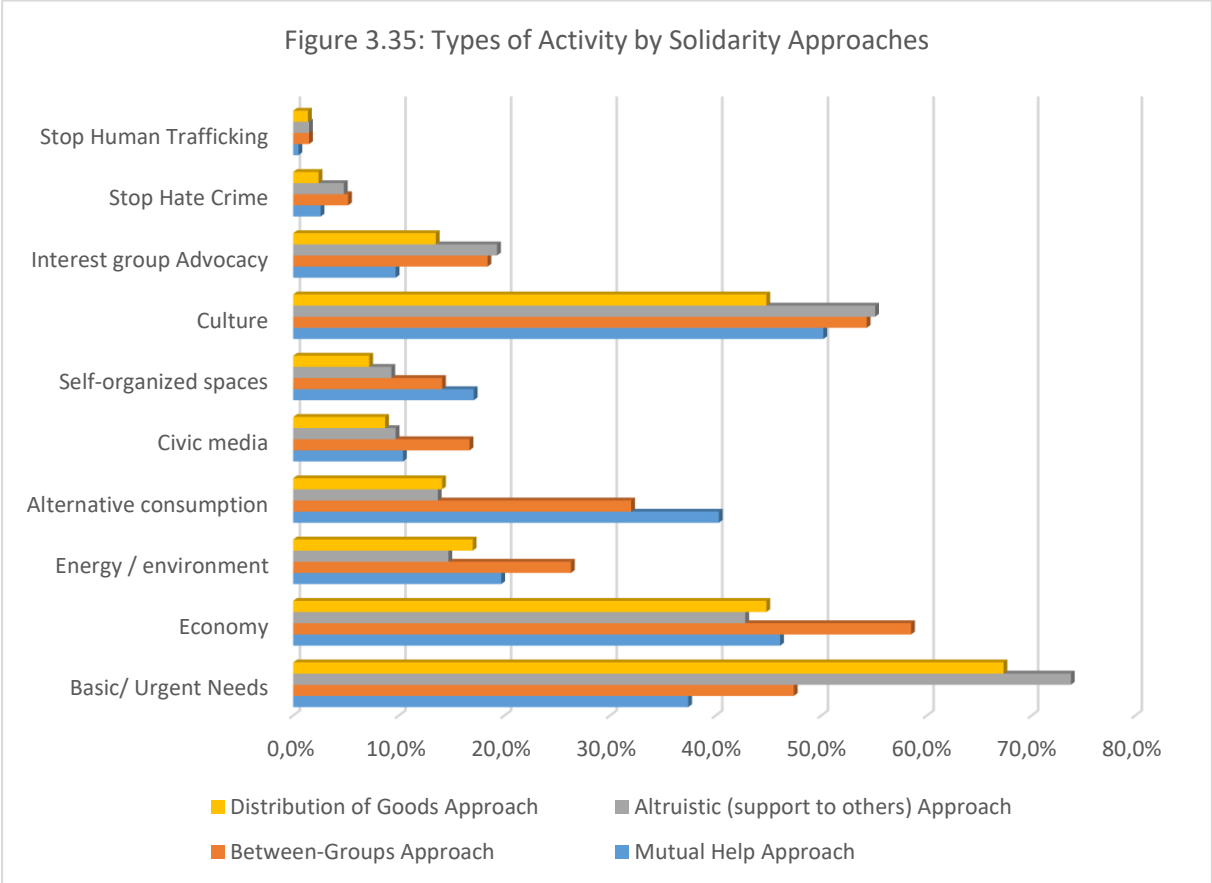
The next set of figures and table examine the relationship between the four solidarity approaches of the AAOs and the main types of solidarity activities they organize. Figure 3.35 offers an overview depicting the importance of some activities and their corresponding orientations, at the aggregate level³³. The five highest in frequency activities are: basic/urgent needs, culture, economy, alternative consumption and energy/environment. Each of these embraces different combinations of the four solidarity approaches. Basic/urgent needs activities are more top-down/distribution-of-goods driven solidarity activities, as they are primarily carried out by support-others and distribution-of-goods AAOs and secondarily by between-groups and mutual-help AAOs.

This picture changes when we examine economy, alternative consumption and energy/environment activities, whose primary solidarity approach is bottom-up driven and oriented towards mutual help and between-groups solidarity and secondarily led by support-others and distribution of goods AAOs. More specifically, economy activities are carried out more frequently by between-groups and mutual-help AAOs and less so by distribution of goods and support-others ones. Similarly, alternative consumption solidarity activities are organized more frequently by mutual-help and between-groups AAOs and less

³³ Total N for each approach is: Mutual Help (2,115), Between-Groups (916), Altruistic (support to others) (1,712), Distribution of Goods (1,989)

so by distribution of goods and support-others ones. A comparable pattern is also visible in the case of energy/environment activities, which are more often actualized by between-groups and mutual-help AAOs, and less so by distribution-of-goods and support-others ones.

Culture related activities deviate from the two basic patterns presented above, by reflecting a mix of top-down and bottom-up solidarity orientations, showing highest frequencies by support-others and between-groups AAOs and lower frequencies for mutual-help and distribution-of-goods ones.



Tables 3.13, 3.14, 3.15 and 3.16 offer data on the main types of solidarity activities for each of the four solidarity approaches of the AAOs at the cross-national level. Centering on mutual-help AAOs, Table 3.13 reveals three main patterns. First, mutual-help AAOs engaging in economy, culture related and urgent needs activities show higher frequencies in eight, eight and seven countries respectively. The highest frequencies in economy-related activities appear in Switzerland (73.8%), France (66.7%), Poland (56%) and Spain (54.3%). Top frequencies in culture activities are seen in Greece (82.9%), Sweden (81.7%) and Poland (79.2%), while top frequencies in urgent needs are shown in Sweden (74.8%), Poland (57.9%) and Greece (56.3%).

Secondly, mutual-help AAOs organizing energy/environment, alternative consumption and self-organized spaces in general show lower frequencies in a fewer number of countries (six and three countries respectively). Top frequencies in mutual-help oriented energy/environment are seen in Switzerland (42.1%), France (28.1%) and Greece (27.8%); in alternative consumption, in France (70.6%), Italy (61.7%) and Switzerland (43.7%); in self-organized spaces, in Switzerland (43.7%), Germany (25.7%) and Italy (22.6%). Third, mutual-help AAOs hold comparatively lower frequencies in interest group advocacy, civic media, and stop hate crime/human trafficking activities.

Table 3.13: Types of Activity by Mutual-help AAOs, per country

AAOs Activities	FR	GER	GR	IT	POL	SP	SE	CH	UK	Total
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
	(N)	(N)	(N)	(N)	(N)	(N)	(N)	(N)	(N)	(N)
Basic/ Urgent Needs	8.3	34.7	56.3	18.5	57.9	36.7	74.8	40.5	54.1	37.4
	(27)	(58)	(138)	(74)	(125)	(102)	(86)	(51)	(131)	(792)
Economy	66.7	48.5	33.9	27.3	56.0	54.3	37.4	73.8	31.8	46.1
	(218)	(81)	(83)	(109)	(121)	(151)	(43)	(93)	(77)	(976)
Energy / environment	28.1	21.6	27.8	8.5	25.0	11.9	5.2	42.1	16.9	19.7
	(92)	(36)	(68)	(34)	(54)	(33)	(6)	(53)	(41)	(417)
Alternative consumption	70.6	31.7	35.5	61.7	14.4	36.3	9.6	43.7	15.3	40.3
	(231)	(53)	(87)	(246)	(31)	(101)	(11)	(55)	(37)	(852)
Civic media	13.8	6.0	16.7	4.5	7.9	12.2	10.4	16.7	8.7	10.4
	(45)	(10)	(41)	(18)	(17)	(34)	(12)	(21)	(21)	(219)
Self-organized spaces	8.9	25.7	19.2	22.6	10.6	12.6	7.8	43.7	12.8	17.10
	(29)	(43)	(47)	(90)	(23)	(35)	(9)	(55)	(31)	(362)
Culture	19.0	28.7	82.9	51.4	79.2	57.6	81.7	34.1	31.4	50.2
	(62)	(48)	(203)	(205)	(171)	(160)	(94)	(43)	(76)	(1,062)
Interest group Advocacy	2.1	5.4	2.0	0.3	32.9	4.3	30.4	12.7	20.7	9.7
	(7)	(9)	(5)	(1)	(71)	(12)	(35)	(16)	(50)	(206)
Stop Hate Crime	0.0	3.6	6.5	0.3	3.7	0.4	13.9	0.0	3.3	2.6
	(0)	(6)	(16)	(1)	(8)	(1)	(16)	(0)	(8)	(56)
Stop Human Trafficking	0.0	0.6	0.4	0.3	0.9	0.0	0.9	0.8	1.2	0.5
	(0)	(1)	(1)	(1)	(2)	(0)	(1)	(1)	(3)	(10)
N	(327)	(167)	(245)	(399)	(216)	(278)	(115)	(126)	(242)	(2,115)

Centering on between-groups AAOs, Table 3.14 illustrates three main tendencies. First, between-groups AAOs engaging in urgent needs, economy and culture related activities show higher frequencies in seven, seven and seven countries respectively. Top frequencies in urgent needs are shown in Poland (69.4%), Greece (61.9%) and Sweden (61.3%). The highest frequencies in economy-related activities appear in Spain (75.8%), France (72.7%), Switzerland (71.8%) and Poland (61.7%). Top frequencies in

culture activities are seen in Poland (84.7%), Greece (82.5%), Italy (76.9%), Spain (72.7%) and Sweden (71%).

Second, between-groups AAOs organizing energy/environment and alternative consumption are overall less active and in a fewer number of countries (five and five countries respectively). Top frequencies in between-groups oriented energy/environment are seen in Greece (44.3%) in Switzerland (40.8%), Spain (34.8%) and Italy (30.8%). Those active in alternative consumption are mostly found in France (62%), Italy (46.2%), Greece (44.3%), Spain (43.9%) and Switzerland (33%).

Third, between-groups AAOs hold comparatively lower frequencies in interest group advocacy, civic media, self-organized spaces and stop hate crime/human trafficking activities.

Table 3.14: Types of Activity by Between-Groups AAOs, per country

AAOs Activities	FR	GER	GR	IT	POL	SP	SE	CH	UK	Total
	% (N)	% (N)	% (N)	% (N)	% (N)	% (N)	% (N)	% (N)	% (N)	% (N)
Basic/ Urgent Needs	13.2	50.7	61.9	23.1	69.4	45.5	61.3	45.6	41.5	47.4
	(27)	(35)	(60)	(3)	(172)	(30)	(38)	(47)	(22)	(434)
Economy	72.7	26.1	44.3	53.8	61.7	75.8	45.2	71.8	26.4	58.8
	(149)	(18)	(43)	(7)	(153)	(50)	(28)	(74)	(14)	(536)
Energy / environment	12.7	27.5	44.3	30.8	29.0	34.8	6.5	40.8	15.1	26.3
	(26)	(19)	(43)	(4)	(72)	(23)	(4)	(42)	(8)	(241)
Alternative consumption	62.0	18.8	44.3	46.2	10.5	43.9	14.5	33.0	11.3	32.0
	(127)	(13)	(43)	(6)	(26)	(29)	(9)	(34)	(6)	(293)
Civic media	22.0	10.1	23.7	7.7	6.5	9.1	16.1	35.0	11.3	16.4
	(45)	(7)	(23)	(1)	(16)	(6)	(10)	(36)	(6)	(150)
Self-organized spaces	6.3	23.2	11.3	23.1	11.3	15.2	8.1	39.8	3.8	14.1
	(13)	(16)	(110)	(3)	(28)	(10)	(5)	(41)	(2)	(129)
Culture	18.0	31.9	82.5	76.9	84.7	72.7	71.0	37.9	13.2	54.3
	(37)	(22)	(80)	(10)	(210)	(48)	(44)	(39)	(7)	(497)
Interest group Advocacy	4.4	24.6	6.2	0.0	33.5	7.6	27.4	17.5	26.4	18.4
	(9)	(17)	(6)	(0)	(83)	(5)	(17)	(18)	(14)	(169)
Stop Hate Crime	0.5	14.5	12.4	0.0	4.4	0.0	16.1	1.0	5.7	5.2
	(1)	(10)	(12)	(0)	(11)	(0)	(10)	(1)	(3)	(48)
Stop Human Trafficking	0.5	7.2	3.1	0.0	1.2	0.0	0.0	1.0	1.9	1.5
	(1)	(5)	(3)	(0)	(3)	(0)	(0)	(1)	(1)	(14)
N	(205)	(69)	(97)	(13)	(248)	(66)	(62)	(103)	(53)	(916)

An examination of support-others AAOs, in Table 3.15 also brings to surface two main patterns across the nine countries. First, support-others AAOs engaging in urgent needs, culture and economy related activities show higher frequencies in nine, eight and seven countries respectively. Top frequencies in

urgent needs are shown in Sweden (83.4%), Germany (82.5%) and Greece (77.6%). Top frequencies in culture activities are seen in Poland (78.6%), Greece (77.6%) and Sweden (60.1%). The highest frequencies in economy related activities appear in Spain (78.3%), Switzerland (66%), Poland (58.6%) and France (58%).

Secondly, support-others AAOs organize considerably fewer activities related to alternative consumption, interest group advocacy, civic media, self-organized spaces and stop hate crime/human trafficking activities. Overall, they do so in less than three countries. Top frequencies in support-others oriented alternative consumption activities are seen in Italy (37%), Switzerland (29.2%) and Greece (28.9%). Those active in interest group advocacy are found in Poland (28.3%) and Germany (27.7%); civic media are highest Switzerland (39.6%) and self-organized activities in Italy (31%).

Table 3.15: Types of Activity by Support-Others AAOs, per country

AAOs Activities	FR	GER	GR	IT	POL	SP	SE	CH	UK	Total
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
	(N)	(N)	(N)	(N)	(N)	(N)	(N)	(N)	(N)	(N)
Basic/ Urgent Needs	65.9	82.5	77.6	54.0	75.2	67.0	83.4	52.8	72.3	73.8
	(58)	(113)	(156)	(54)	(218)	(71)	(376)	(76)	(141)	(1,263)
Economy	58.0	19.7	44.3	31.0	58.6	78.3	31.5	66.0	22.6	42.8
	(51)	(27)	(89)	(31)	(170)	(83)	(142)	(95)	(44)	(732)
Energy / environment	11.4	16.1	21.4	15.0	22.4	22.6	2.2	37.5	4.6	14.7
	(10)	(22)	(43)	(15)	(65)	(24)	(10)	(54)	(9)	(252)
Alternative consumption	10.2	12.4	28.9	37.0	3.4	25.5	4.0	29.2	8.2	13.7
	(9)	(17)	(58)	(37)	(10)	(27)	(18)	(42)	(16)	(234)
Civic media	10.2	3.6	15.9	13.0	3.8	8.5	5.1	39.6	3.6	9.7
	(9)	(5)	(32)	(13)	(11)	(9)	(23)	(57)	(7)	(166)
Self-organized spaces	2.3	13.1	13.4	31.0	4.8	3.8	2.0	26.4	8.2	9.3
	(2)	(18)	(27)	(31)	(14)	(4)	(90)	(38)	(16)	(159)
Culture	30.7	19.7	77.6	57.0	78.6	51.9	60.1	41.7	32.3	55.10
	(27)	(27)	(156)	(57)	(228)	(55)	(271)	(60)	(630)	(944)
Interest group Advocacy	12.5	27.7	4.5	4.0	28.3	8.5	24.8	20.8	18.5	19.3
	(11)	(38)	(9)	(4)	(82)	(9)	(112)	(30)	(36)	(331)
Stop Hate Crime	1.1	7.3	9.5	3.0	3.8	0.9	6.4	2.1	2.6	4.8
	(1)	(10)	(19)	(3)	(11)	(1)	(29)	(3)	(5)	(82)
Stop Human Trafficking	2.3	3.6	2.5	2.0	1.0	0.0	0.7	3.5	0.5	1.5
	(2)	(5)	(5)	(2)	(3)	(0)	(3)	(5)	(10)	(26)
N	(88)	(137)	(201)	(100)	(290)	(106)	(451)	(144)	(195)	(1,712)

Looking at distribution of goods AAOs, Table 3.16 shows different types of activities at the cross-national level. Two patterns are illustrated. First, distribution of goods AAOs carrying out urgent needs, economy and culture related activities show higher frequencies in nine, eight and six countries

respectively. Top frequencies in urgent needs are shown in Sweden (87.3%), Germany (84.7%), Greece (74.4%) and Poland (69.8%). The highest frequencies in economy-related activities appear in Spain (76.2%), Switzerland (70.1%), Poland (56.5%) and France (49.3%). Top frequencies in culture activities are seen in Poland (79.3%), Greece (71.5%) and Sweden (60.2%).

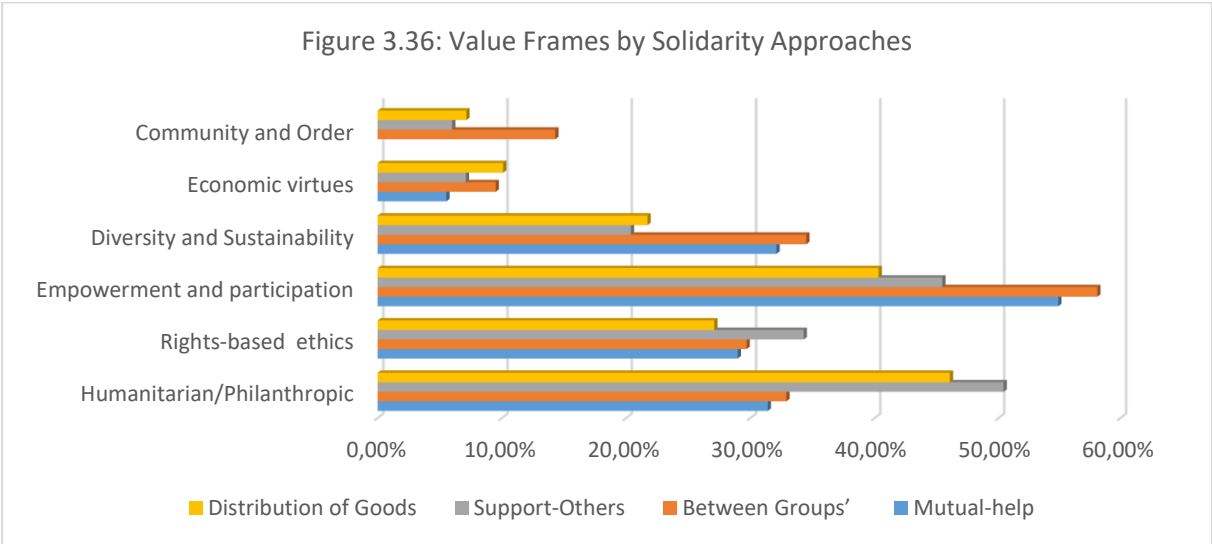
Nevertheless, distribution of goods AAOs organize considerably fewer activities when it comes to alternative consumption, energy/environment, interest group advocacy, civic media, self-organized spaces and stop hate crime/human trafficking activities. Overall, they do so in less than three countries. Top frequencies in support-others oriented alternative consumption activities are seen in Italy (33.3%), Spain (32.5%) and France (31.8%). Those active in interest group advocacy, are found in Poland (25.3%) and Sweden (18.9%); civic media are highest Switzerland (29.4%) and self-organized activities in Switzerland (26.5%) and Italy (22.2%).

Table 3.16: Types of Activity by Distribution of Goods AAOs, per country

AAOs Activities	FR	GER	GR	IT	POL	SP	SE	CH	UK	Total
	% (N)	% (N)	% (N)	% (N)	% (N)	% (N)	% (N)	% (N)	% (N)	% (N)
Basic/ Urgent Needs	41.2	84.7	74.4	55.6	69.8	43.7	87.3	45	66.6	67.3
	(61)	(243)	(128)	(10)	(279)	(55)	(213)	(95)	(255)	(1,339)
Economy	49.3	14.6	48.3	33.3	56.5	76.2	44.7	70.1	28.5	44.8
	(73)	(42)	(83)	(6)	(226)	(96)	(109)	(148)	(109)	(892)
Energy / environment	21.6	12.9	18	16.7	25.5	22.2	2.5	34.1	7.3	17.0
	(32)	(37)	(31)	(3)	(102)	(28)	(6)	(72)	(28)	(339)
Alternative consumption	31.8	12.9	6.4	33.3	7.2	32.5	6.1	27	9.9	14.1
	(47)	(37)	(11)	(6)	(29)	(41)	(15)	(57)	(38)	(281)
Civic media	5.4	2.4	14	11.1	5.0	11.9	5.3	29.4	5.7	8.7
	(8)	(7)	(24)	(2)	(20)	(15)	(13)	(62)	(22)	(173)
Self-organized spaces	2.0	5.2	1.7	22.2	7.2	4	1.6	26.5	6.3	7.2
	(3)	(15)	(3)	(4)	(29)	(5)	(4)	(56)	(24)	(143)
Culture	18.9	11.1	71.5	50	79.3	48.4	60.2	40.8	23.2	44.8
	(28)	(32)	(123)	(9)	(317)	(61)	(147)	(86)	(89)	(892)
Interest group Advocacy	5.4	6.3	2.9	5.6	25.3	7.9	18.9	13.7	13.3	13.5
	(8)	(18)	(5)	(1)	(101)	(10)	(46)	(29)	(51)	(269)
Stop Hate Crime	0.7	1.4	4.7	5.6	3.5	0	4.5	1.4	1.6	2.4
	(1)	(4)	(8)	(1)	(14)	(0)	(11)	(3)	(6)	(48)
Stop Human Trafficking	1.4	0.3	2.9	11.1	1	0	0.8	2.8	1.3	1.4
	(2)	(1)	(5)	(2)	(4)	(0)	(2)	(6)	(5)	(27)
N	(148)	(287)	(172)	(18)	(400)	(126)	(244)	(211)	(383)	(1,989)

The final figure and set of tables offer information on values frames and solidarity approaches of the AAOs. At the aggregate level, Figure 3.36 illustrates the frequencies of the four solidarity approaches within each main value frame³⁴. Overall, the top four value frames are (in ranking order), empowerment and participation, humanitarian/philanthropic, right-based ethics, and diversity and sustainability. Within each value frame, different patterns of the four solidarity approaches can be traced. More specifically, within empowerment and participation, the first most prominent value frame, between groups and mutual-help organizations are more frequent, followed by support-others and distribution of goods oriented AAOs. These combinations reflect a noticeable prevalence of the bottom-up approach.

In the second most frequented value frame, the humanitarian/philanthropic, support-others and distribution of goods solidarity approaches are highest in frequency, while between-groups and mutual-help oriented AAOs are lower; such findings indicate a solidarity from above orientation for this value frame. The third most prominent value frame, rights-based ethics shows highest frequencies for support-others and between-groups oriented AAOs, and lowest for mutual-help and distribution-of-goods ones, reflecting neither a clear top-down nor a bottom-up solidarity approach. Finally, in the fourth value frame, diversity and sustainability, between-groups and mutual-help oriented AAOs are more frequent, followed by distribution-of-goods and between-groups AAOs, reflecting more of a bottom-up solidarity approach.



Moving into the cross-country comparison for each of the different solidarity approaches, Table 3.17 offers data on value frames of the mutual-help AAOs. Two patterns are visible. First, mutual-help AAOs

³⁴ Total N for each approach is: Mutual Help (2,105), Between-Groups (908), Altruistic (support to others) (1,701), Distribution of Goods (1,972)

with empowerment and participation, humanitarian-philanthropic, diversity and sustainability as well as rights-based ethics value frames show higher frequencies in eight, three, two and two countries respectively. The highest frequencies in empowerment and participation value frames appear in Switzerland (82.5%) and the UK (63.2%). Top frequencies in humanitarian-philanthropic value frames are seen in Sweden (60%), Switzerland (48.4%) and Greece (48.2%). Top frequencies in diversity and sustainability value frames are seen in Switzerland (48.4%), France (45.6%) and Italy (41.1%). Rights-based ethics value frames are highest in Italy (45.4%), and Sweden (45.2%).

In contrast, in the second pattern, the value frames of economic virtues and community and order are comparatively of lower importance, with moderate frequencies only in one and one country respectively. Thus, community and order value (more tradition oriented) frames are exceptionally high in France (31.8%), compared to the next in frequency Poland (13%) – reflecting a more conservative solidarity approach. Economic virtue frames are also of low frequencies, the highest being in Switzerland (18.3%) and the UK (11.6%).

Table 3.17: Value Frames by Mutual-help AAOs, per country

Values Categories	FR	GER	GR	IT	POL	SP	SE	CH	UK	Total
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
	(N)	(N)	(N)	(N)	(N)	(N)	(N)	(N)	(N)	(N)
Humanitarian/ Philanthropic	18.0	16.2	48.2	26.8	24.5	36.7	60.0	48.4	28.5	31.4
	(59)	(27)	(118)	(107)	(53)	(102)	(69)	(61)	(69)	(665)
Rights-based ethics	21.4	9.6	19.6	45.4	21.8	32.4	45.2	19.8	34.7	29.0
	(70)	(16)	(48)	(181)	(47)	(90)	(52)	(25)	(84)	(613)
Empowerment and participation	51.4	47.9	54.7	43.6	56.5	57.6	58.3	82.5	63.2	54.9
	(168)	(80)	(134)	(174)	(122)	(160)	(67)	(104)	(153)	(1162)
Diversity and Sustainability	45.6	28.1	16.7	41.1	16.2	27.3	29.6	48.4	29.3	32.1
	(149)	(47)	(41)	(164)	(35)	(76)	(34)	(61)	(71)	(678)
Economic virtues	5.8	6.6	2.0	1.3	7.9	1.4	4.3	18.3	11.6	5.5
	(19)	(11)	(5)	(5)	(17)	(4)	(5)	(23)	(28)	(117)
Community and Order	31.8	6.0	3.3	0.8	13.0	7.6	1.7	11.9	5.4	9.6
	(104)	(10)	(8)	(3)	(28)	(21)	(2)	(15)	(13)	(204)
N	(327)	(167)	(245)	(399)	(216)	(278)	(115)	(126)	(242)	(2,115)

Table 3.18 provides a cross-national profile on value frames of between-groups AAOs. Two patterns can also be distinguished in these solidarity-from-below organizations. First, between groups AAOs with empowerment and participation, humanitarian-philanthropic, rights-based ethics as well as diversity and sustainability, value frames show higher frequencies in eight, three, three and two countries respectively. The highest frequencies in empowerment and participation value frames appear in the UK (84.9%), Switzerland (82.5%) and Sweden (59.7%). Rights-based ethics value frames are highest in

Spain (54.5%), Italy (53.8%), and Sweden (50%). Top frequencies in humanitarian-philanthropic value frames are seen in Sweden (54.8%), Greece (54.6%), and Switzerland (48.5%). Top frequencies in diversity and sustainability value frames are seen in France (51.7%) and Switzerland (50.5%).

The second pattern deviates to a large extent from the first. Comparatively lower in importance are the value frames of economic virtues and community and order, with moderate frequencies only in two and three countries respectively. Thus, community and order value (more tradition oriented) frames are highest (as in the previous table) in France (35.1%), and Poland (15.7%) indicating once more a conservative solidarity approach. Economic virtue frames are also of low frequencies, the highest being in Poland (12.9%) and Spain (10.6%).

Table 3.18: Value Frames by Between Groups' AAOs, per country

Values Categories	FR	GER	GR	IT	POL	SP	SE	CH	UK	Total
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
	(N)	(N)	(N)	(N)	(N)	(N)	(N)	(N)	(N)	(N)
Humanitarian/ Philanthropic	14.1 (29)	37.7 (26)	54.6 (53)	23.1 (3)	29.0 (72)	42.4 (28)	54.8 (34)	48.5 (50)	11.3 (6)	32.9 (301)
Rights-based ethics	29.3 (60)	24.6 (17)	32.0 (31)	53.8 (7)	21.4 (53)	54.5 (36)	50.0 (31)	25.2 (26)	20.8 (11)	29.7 (272)
Empowerment and participation	58.5 (120)	37.7 (26)	47.4 (46)	53.8 (7)	54.8 (136)	45.5 (30)	59.7 (37)	82.5 (85)	84.9 (45)	58.1 (532)
Diversity and Sustainability	51.7 (106)	36.2 (25)	24.7 (24)	30.8 (4)	21.4 (53)	37.9 (25)	25.8 (16)	50.5 (52)	20.8 (11)	34.5 (316)
Economic virtues	10.2 (21)	7.2 (5)	3.1 (3)	0.0 (0)	12.9 (32)	10.6 (7)	6.5 (4)	9.7 (10)	9.4 (5)	9.5 (87)
Community and Order	35.1 (72)	5.8 (4)	4.1 (4)	0.0 (0)	15.7 (39)	6.1 (4)	0.0 (0)	4.9 (5)	5.7 (3)	14.3 (131)
N	(205)	(69)	(97)	(13)	(248)	(66)	(62)	(103)	(53)	(916)

Table 3.19 offers cross-national data on value frames of support-others AAOs. Two main patterns are visible in these solidarity-from-above organizations. First, support-others AAOs show higher frequencies across six, four, three and two countries when it comes to the humanitarian-philanthropic, empowerment and participation, rights-based ethics, as well as diversity and sustainability value frames. Highest frequencies in humanitarian-philanthropic value frames are seen in Sweden (63.6%) and Germany (62.8%). The highest frequencies in empowerment and participation value frames appear in Switzerland (76.4%), the UK (53.3%) and Spain (46.2%). Rights-based ethics value frames are highest in Italy (52%), Spain (49.1%) and Sweden (44.8%). Top frequencies in diversity and sustainability value frames are seen in Switzerland (44.4%), Italy (82.2%) and Spain (30.2%).

As in the previous table, the second pattern diverges to a large extent from the first. Comparatively less frequent are the value frames of economic virtues and community and order, with moderate frequencies only in three and two countries respectively. More specifically, economic virtue value frames are high in France (20.5%), Switzerland (15.3%), and Spain (14.2%). Community and order value frames are also of low frequencies, the highest being in France (14.8%), Poland (13.8%) and the UK (9.7%). Both of these frames reflect a more conservative solidarity approach.

Table 3.19: Value Frames by Support-Others AAOs, per country

Values Categories	FR	GER	GR	IT	POL	SP	SE	CH	UK	Total
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
	(N)	(N)	(N)	(N)	(N)	(N)	(N)	(N)	(N)	(N)
Humanitarian/ Philanthropic	53.2 (46)	62.8 (86)	52.7 (106)	42.0 (42)	33.4 (97)	51.9 (55)	63.6 (287)	48.6 (70)	37.9 (74)	50.4 (863)
Rights-based ethics	30.7 (27)	18.2 (25)	22.9 (46)	52.0 (52)	25.2 (73)	49.1 (52)	44.8 (202)	27.1 (39)	36.4 (71)	34.3 (587)
Empowerment and participation	40.9 (36)	24.8 (34)	42.3 (85)	30.0 (30)	42.4 (123)	46.2 (49)	45.9 (207)	76.4 (110)	53.3 (104)	45.4 (778)
Diversity and Sustainability	23.9 (21)	19.7 (27)	12.9 (26)	37.0 (37)	15.9 (46)	30.2 (32)	12.2 (55)	44.4 (64)	21.0 (41)	20.4 (349)
Economic virtues	20.5 (18)	10.2 (14)	1.0 (2)	1.0 (1)	5.9 (17)	14.2 (15)	2.7 (12)	15.3 (22)	10.3 (20)	7.1 (121)
Community and Order	14.8 (13)	2.2 (3)	3.5 (7)	0.0 (0)	13.8 (40)	2.8 (3)	2.0 (9)	5.6 (8)	9.7 (19)	6.0 (102)
N	(88)	(137)	(201)	(100)	(290)	(106)	(451)	(144)	(195)	(1,712)

Table 3.20 offers cross-national data on value frames on distribution of goods AAOs. Three main patterns can be seen in these solidarity-from-above organizations. First, distribution of goods AAOs show higher frequencies across all nine countries when it comes to the humanitarian-philanthropic, as well as empowerment and participation. Highest frequencies in humanitarian-philanthropic value frames are seen in Germany (73.5%), Sweden (61.5%), and Spain (49.2%). The highest frequencies in empowerment and participation value frames appear in Switzerland (71.1%) and the UK (52%).

Second, distribution oriented AAOs' value frames of rights-based ethics as well as diversity and sustainability, show moderate frequencies in two and two countries respectively. Rights-based ethics are more frequent, albeit at moderate levels, in Sweden (45.5%) and Italy (44.4%), while diversity and sustainability are higher in Spain (42.1%) and Switzerland (40.3%).

Third, comparatively lower is the value frame of economic virtues, as well as community and order, in two and two countries respectively. More specifically, economic virtues, are highest in France (17.6%) and Switzerland (16.6%), whereas community and order value frames are highest in France (13.5%) and Poland (13.3%) and indicating once more a conservative solidarity approach.

Table 3.20: Value Frames by Distribution of Goods AAOs, per country

Values Categories	FR	GER	GR	IT	POL	SP	SE	CH	UK	Total
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
	(N)	(N)	(N)	(N)	(N)	(N)	(N)	(N)	(N)	(N)
Humanitarian/ Philanthropic	50.0	73.5	39.5	38.9	27.5	49.2	61.5	47.9	34.7	46.1
	(74)	(211)	(68)	(7)	(110)	(62)	(150)	(101)	(133)	(916)
Rights-based ethics	22.3	5.6	24.4	44.4	22.8	38.9	45.5	20.4	38.1	27.1
	(33)	(16)	(42)	(8)	(91)	(49)	(111)	(43)	(146)	(539)
Empowerment and participation	32.4	9.8	16.9	11.0	43.8	45.2	46.7	71.1	52.0	40.3
	(48)	(28)	(29)	(92)	(175)	(57)	(114)	(150)	(199)	(802)
Diversity and Sustainability	21.6	13.9	11.0	38.9	18.8	42.1	12.3	40.3	23.8	21.7
	(32)	(40)	(19)	(7)	(75)	(53)	(30)	(85)	(91)	(432)
Economic virtues	17.6	7.7	2.3	11.1	8.5	15.1	3.3	16.6	13.3	10.1
	(26)	(22)	(4)	(2)	(34)	(19)	(8)	(35)	(51)	(201)
Community and Order	13.5	1.0	3.5	0.0	13.3	8.7	1.6	10.4	6.0	7.1
	(20)	(3)	(6)	(0)	(53)	(11)	(4)	(22)	(23)	(142)
N	(148)	(287)	(172)	(18)	(400)	(126)	(244)	(211)	(383)	(1,989)

3.2 Explanatory Analysis: AAOs and Urgent/Basic Needs

The previous sections portray AAOs' main characteristics by describing their major types (e.g. unions/associations, NGOs, charities and church, informal and protest groups), the year of foundation, their different forms of resilient initiatives (e.g. basic/ urgent needs, culture, alternative consumption, civic media), AAOs' ultimate aims/goals as well as the proposed routes to achieve these aims/goals (e.g. direct actions, raise awareness, policy reforms), the resources used (e.g. paid staff, recruit personnel) their networks and collaborative partners (e.g. EU agencies, NGOs, social economy, charities and church), their supplementary activities (e.g. strikes and occupation of buildings, boycotts, protest) as well as the different type of beneficiaries (e.g. children, or youth or students, immigrants or refugees, uninsured or unemployed, disabled or health vulnerable).

The descriptive analysis indicates that the most prevalent type of AAOs' resilient activities across all countries (see Figure 3.5) is associated with basic/urgent needs including housing, food, health services, clothing/shoes, education etc. Such a finding underlines that AAOs' activities and services are quite often directed at ameliorating the living conditions of the most deprived individuals of the society who

are unable to cover their basic needs. Hence, AAOs – among others – play a critical role in alleviating the negative consequences of the current economic and social situation by providing help to citizens in need.

In accordance to Task 6.4 on the analysis of alternative action cases, the explanatory analysis in the following section focuses specifically on AAO activities related to basic/ urgent needs as the most prevalent actions that provide citizens alternative ways of enduring day-to-day difficulties under hard economic times, across the nine LIVEWHAT countries.

3.2.1 Data and Analysis

The main rationale of the analysis is to explore AAOs' resilient activity of basic/urgent needs by calculating the effect of specific variables that might increase or decrease the probability of such activity. Therefore, the dependent variable includes two responses measuring AAOs' involvement and non-involvement in activities aiming to cover basic/urgent needs. The independent variables include items that measure AAOs' attributes associated with their ultimate aim/goal, their type of solidarity orientation as well as their values, upon which actions draw in order to take their fundamental meaning. The specific approach unveils explanatory factors that capture AAOs' social, solidarity and value-oriented profiles that may lie behind the resilient activity of covering citizens' urgent/basic needs which represents the most critical component of human survival.

For the purposes of the present analysis, AAOs' ultimate aims/goals are measured with composite indexes that capture the economic approach and the social-collective one. The former is an additive score that includes three responses reflecting the AAOs' ultimate aim/goal associated with economic issues, such as 'reducing the negative impacts of the economic crisis/austerity/cuts', 'reducing poverty and exclusion' and 'promoting alternative economic practices, lifestyles and values/economic empowerment - e.g. producing and consuming'. AAOs' social-collective ultimate aim/goal is measured with a composite index including the additive score of five responses that emphasize social-collective issues such as 'combating discrimination (any type)/ to promote equality of participation in society (social dimension)', 'promoting and achieving social change at the collective/societal level', 'promoting democratic practices/defense of rights/improve public space', 'promoting collective identities and community responsibility/empowerment' and 'promoting social movement actions and collective identities'.

AAOs' solidarity orientation is captured with four dichotomous variables that measure different types of solidarity, including: a) mutual help/mobilizing or collaborating for common interests (labelled

‘bottom-up-solidarity’), b) support/assistance between groups, c) help/offer support to others in general (labelled ‘altruistic’) and d) distribution of goods and services to others (labelled ‘top-down-solidarity’).

AAOs’ value orientations are captured with three items that measure the values that frame the alternative actions undertaken by an AAO, i.e. the values upon which these actions draw in order to take their fundamental meaning. Each of these items has seven groups of values including two groups that capture civic virtues associated with humanitarian/philanthropic (such as ‘solidarity and altruism’, ‘truthfulness, honesty and sincerity’, ‘trust’, ‘dignity’, ‘voluntarism’ and ‘respect’) and rights-based ethics values (such as ‘political equality/equality’, ‘civil rights and liberties’, ‘human rights’/women’s rights/children’s rights’, ‘fairness/ ethics’, ‘social justice’ and ‘peace, safety’). Two groups that capture post-material values associated with empowerment and participation (such as ‘community building/empowerment’, ‘freedom and emancipation’, ‘self-reliance/self-sufficiency’, ‘participatory democracy’, ‘mutual understanding’, ‘collaboration across interested parties’, ‘internationalism/glocalism’) as well as with diversity and sustainability (such as ecology, environment, sustainability’, ‘intergenerational justice’, ‘respect for difference’, ‘toleration’). Two groups that measure materialist values associated with economic virtues (such as ‘economic prosperity’, ‘accountability’, ‘competitiveness and merit’, ‘professionalism’) and community and order (such as ‘security and stability’, ‘nationalism/national belonging’, ‘tradition’, ‘social equilibrium’, ‘social cohesion’, ‘preserving existing local communities’) and one last group including other values (‘other’ values are not used in the present analysis). Based on the above three items, three dichotomous variables are constructed measuring civic, post-materialist and materialist values.

As the dependent variable is a dichotomous measure indicating AAOs’ involvement and non-involvement in activities targeting to cover basic/urgent needs, the statistical analysis is based on binary logistic regression models in the nine countries participating in the LIVEWHAT project. Logistic regression is useful for situations in which researchers want to be able to predict the presence or absence of a characteristic or outcome based on values of a set of categorical and continuous predictor variables.

3.2.2 Results

Table 3.21 presents the results from binary logistic regression models in the nine countries. The analysis indicates that French AAOs emphasizing social and collective ultimate aims/goals are significantly more likely to be involved in activities associated with citizens’ basic/urgent needs; the inverse effect -whilst non-significant- is reported for economic aims/goals. With respect to French AAOs’ solidarity approach/orientation, the findings show that distribution of goods/top-down-solidarity from above, altruistic/support to others approaches as well as support/assistance between groups have positive impacts on basic/urgent needs; it should be noted that only the last two effects are significant. On the

contrary, French AAOs with a mutual help/bottom-up-solidarity orientation are significantly less likely to be involved in resilient activities of basic/urgent needs. Moreover, the analysis shows that French AAOs' underlining civic and post-material values are significantly more likely to be involved in urgent needs. Similar effects are reported for post-material values; whilst not-so-significant.

German AAOs stressing economic ultimate aims/goals are more likely to be involved in basic/urgent needs; on the contrary AAOs emphasizing social-collective aims/goals are less likely to be involved in the specific activities. However, none of these effects are significant. With respect to German AAOs' solidarity orientation, the findings show that altruistic approaches as well as top-down-solidarity-from above significantly increase the probability of being involved in basic/urgent needs. Similar results are detected for support/assistance between groups; however, the reported effect is non-significant. On the contrary, German AAOs emphasizing a bottom-up solidarity orientation are significantly less likely to be involved in basic/urgent needs.

Additionally, in German AAOs all the values under study have negative effects on predicting the probability of being involved in basic/urgent needs; the finding holds specifically for post-material values where the reported effect is significant.

Table 3.21: Binary logistic regression1 models in the nine countries

	FR	GER	GR	IT	PL	SP	SE	CH	UK
Aim/goal of AAOs									
Economic ultimate aim/goal	-.128 (.254)	.467 (.319)	.903*** (.206)	-.608* (.308)	.879*** (.234)	.657*** (.180)	-.043 (.230)	.346* (.163)	-.669* (.294)
Social and collective ultimate aim/goal	.575** (.202)	-.015 (.230)	.611*** (.158)	.950*** (.239)	.512*** (.142)	.766*** (.126)	.218+ (.121)	.276* (.120)	.230 (.202)
Solidarity Approach of AAOs									
Mutual Help/Bottom-up	-1.400** (.489)	-1.245** (.434)	.422 (.398)	2.057* (.828)	-.677* (.312)	.771+ (.406)	.263 (.411)	.299 (.287)	-.051 (.399)
Between groups support/assistance	1.258** (.448)	.575 (.505)	-.381 (.319)	-.352 (3.463)	.365 (.303)	.434 (.394)	-.658 (.455)	-.076 (.308)	-1.906*** (.485)
Support to Others/Altruistic	1.769*** (.382)	1.043* (.432)	1.788*** (.334)	3.711*** (.894)	1.409*** (.297)	2.440*** (.385)	2.924*** (.409)	.869** (.275)	.877* (.423)
Distribution of Goods/Top-down	.145 (.468)	1.796*** (.473)	2.248*** (.461)	2.749* (1.079)	.794* (.369)	.425 (.353)	1.704*** (.320)	.732* (.287)	.604 (.467)
Value orientation of AAOs									
Civic values	1.450*** (.345)	-.713 (.462)	.331 (.270)	-.188 (.463)	.573+ (.310)	.985*** (.284)	.764* (.359)	.784** (.273)	1.092** (.403)
Post-material values	.095 (.352)	-1.023* (.408)	-1.009*** (.294)	-.293 (.460)	-1.248*** (.334)	-.482+ (.284)	-.281 (.283)	-.374 (.397)	-.172 (.436)
Material values	.929** (.362)	-.532 (.474)	-1.684*** (.522)	-.555 (1.232)	-.430 (.335)	-.209 (.374)	-.377 (.560)	-.290 (.312)	-.491 (.447)
Constant	-2.224*** (.574)	1.715*** (.521)	-1.148* (.451)	-1.928* (.930)	-.381 (.478)	-3.329*** (.552)	-2.482*** (.571)	-2.234*** (.525)	1.165+ (.684)
Nagelkerke R ²	0.505	0.385	0.344	0.449	0.362	0.424	0.335	0.244	0.262
Observations	307	383	427	159	404	360	493	328	351

Notes: 1. The dependent variable is a dichotomous measure indicating AAOs' involvement and non-involvement in activities targeting to cover basic/urgent needs.

Table presents logistic regression coefficients B with standard errors in parentheses. + p< .10 . * p<.05. ** p<.01. *** p<.00

Greek AAOs underscoring either economic or social-collective ultimate aims/goals are significantly more likely to be involved in the resilient activity of basic/urgent needs. With respect to Greek AAOs' value orientation, the analysis shows that those emphasizing altruistic and top-down-solidarity from above approaches are significantly more likely to undertake activities related to basic/urgent needs. Similar findings are reported for the bottom-up-solidarity orientation; however, the reported effect is non-significant. The solidarity approach of support/ assistance between groups has a negative -whilst non-significant- effect in predicting the resilient activity under study. Moreover, the analysis shows that Greek AAOs underscoring civic values are more likely to conduct activities associated with basic/urgent needs; however, the reported effect is non-significant. On the contrary, Greek AAOs emphasizing either post-material or material values are significantly less likely to be involved in the resilient activity under study.

Italian AAOs stressing economic ultimate aims/goals are significantly less likely to carry out activities of basic/urgent needs; however, AAOs emphasizing social and collective ultimate aims/goals are significantly more likely to be involved in the specific resilient activities. With respect to Italian AAOs' solidarity orientation, the findings indicate that AAOs characterized by bottom-up-solidarity, altruistic and top-down-solidarity from above are significantly more likely to undertake activities related to basic/urgent needs. On the contrary, solidarity approaches of support/assistance between groups decrease the resilient activity under study; nonetheless the reported effect is non-significant. Additionally, the analysis shows that Italian AAOs emphasizing civic, post-material and material values are less likely to get involved in basic/urgent needs; however, none of these effects are significant.

Polish AAOs underlining either economic or social-collective ultimate aims/goals are significantly more likely to carry out activities including basic/urgent needs. With respect to Polish AAOs' solidarity approach, the analysis shows that AAOs emphasizing the altruistic approach and the top-down-solidarity from above orientation are significantly more likely to be involved in the resilient activities under study. Similar findings are reported for the solidarity orientation of support/assistance between groups; however, the reported effect is non-significant. Moreover, the analysis shows that AAOs highlighting bottom-up solidarity approaches are significantly less likely to carry out the activities under study. Civic values have a positive impact on Polish AAOs' involvement in basic/urgent needs. However, AAOs emphasizing post-material and material values are less likely to get involved in such resilient activities; the finding holds specifically for post-material values where the reported effect is significant.

Spanish AAOs stressing either economic or social-collective ultimate aims/goals are significantly more likely to conduct activities of basic/urgent needs. Additionally, the analysis shows that Spanish AAOs' emphasis on altruistic solidarity plays a critical role in predicting their involvement in basic/urgent

needs. The rest solidarity approaches under study have positive – whilst non-significant – effects on predicting the resilient activity of basic/urgent needs. With respect to value orientations, Spanish AAOs highlighting civic virtues are significantly more likely to be involved in basic/urgent needs. On the contrary, AAOs emphasizing material and post-material values are less likely to carry out such resilient activities.

Swedish AAOs highlighting economic ultimate aims/goals are less likely to conduct activities of basic/urgent needs. On the contrary, AAOs emphasizing social and collective ultimate aims/goals are more likely to be involved in the specific activities. However, none of the above effects are significant. With respect to Swedish AAOs' solidarity orientation, the analysis shows that AAOs emphasizing the altruistic approach and the top-down-solidarity from above orientation are significantly more likely to carry out activities of basic/urgent needs. Similar results are reported for the bottom-up solidarity orientation; though the reported effect is non-significant. It should be noted that the solidarity approach of support/assistance between groups has a decreasing -whilst non-significant- effect on the resilient activity under study. Moreover, the analysis shows that Swedish AAOs emphasizing civic values are significantly more likely to conduct activities associated with basic/urgent needs. On the contrary, AAOs emphasizing material and post-material values are less likely to be involved in such resilient activities; however, the reported effects are non-significant.

Swiss AAOs emphasizing either economic or social-collective ultimate aims/goals are significantly more likely to conduct activities of basic/urgent needs. Furthermore, Swiss AAOs stressing either an altruistic approach or a top-down-solidarity from above orientation are significantly more likely to be involved in the resilient activities under study. Similar results are reported for the bottom-up solidarity orientation; however, the reported effect is non-significant. It should be noted that the solidarity approach of support/assistance between groups has a decreasing – whilst non-significant – effect on the activity of basic/urgent needs. With respect to Swiss AAOs' value orientation, the findings indicate that AAOs underlining civic values are significantly more likely to conduct activities associated with basic/urgent needs. On the contrary, AAOs highlighting material and post-material values are less likely to be involved in such activities; nevertheless, the reported effects are non-significant.

British AAOs underlining economic ultimate aims/goals are significantly less likely to carry out activities associated with basic/urgent needs. On the contrary, AAOs emphasizing social and collective ultimate aims/goals are more likely to be involved in the specific resilient activities; however, the reported effect is non-significant. With respect to British AAOs' solidarity orientation, the analysis indicates that AAOs emphasizing approaches of support/assistance between groups are significantly less likely to be involved in activities of basic/urgent needs. Similar effects are reported for bottom-up-

solidarity orientation; however, the specific effect is non-significant. British AAOs highlighting an altruistic approach of solidarity are significantly more likely to carry out the activities under study. Similar effects are reported for top-down-solidarity from above; though the reported effect is non-significant. British AAOs emphasizing civic values are significantly more likely to conduct activities associated with basic/urgent needs. On the contrary, AAOs highlighting material and post-material values are less likely to be involved in such resilient activities; however, none of these effects are significant.

Exploring the overall results across AAOs in the nine countries, the findings unveil some similar and distinct characteristics in explaining their involvement in activities related to basic/urgent needs. With respect to the ultimate aims/goals, the analysis shows that AAOs in Greece, Poland, Spain and Switzerland stressing either economic or social-collective aims/goals are significantly more likely to carry out activities associated with basic/urgent needs. Although not all the reported effects are significant, the analysis indicates that French, Italian, Swedish and British AAOs underscoring economic ultimate aims/goals are less likely to be involved in the resilient activities under study. On the contrary, AAOs in the specific countries stressing social and collective ultimate aims/goals are more likely to carry out activities associated with basic/urgent needs. German AAOs stand out as the findings underpin a distinct pattern showing that economic aims/goals increase involvement in the resilient activities under study whereas social and collective aims/goals decrease it; yet none of these effects are significant.

With respect to the different types of solidarity orientations, the findings show that French, German and Polish AAOs share similar patterns in predicting involvement in activities including basic/urgent needs. Whilst not all of the reported effects are significant, the analysis shows that AAOs in the specific countries emphasizing the solidarity orientation of support/assistance between groups, the altruistic and the top-down-solidarity from above orientation are more likely to be involved in the resilient activities under study. On the contrary, AAOs highlighting bottom-up solidarity approaches are less likely to carry out the activities associated with basic/urgent needs.

Moreover, the findings indicate some similar patterns in Greek, Italian, Swedish and Swiss AAOs' solidarity orientations in predicting their involvement in basic/urgent needs. More specifically, the analysis shows that AAOs in the specific countries emphasizing the bottom-up solidarity orientation, the altruistic approach and the top-down-solidarity from above orientation are more likely to carry out activities of basic/urgent needs. On the contrary, AAOs highlighting the solidarity approach of support/assistance between groups are less likely to be involved in such activities. Spanish and British

AAOs have their own distinct patterns (as described above in each country's analysis) with respect to the impact of solidarity orientations on predicting the resilient activity under study.

With respect to AAOs' value orientation, similar patterns are detected in the majority of participating countries. Although not all of the reported effects are significant, Greek, Polish, Spanish, Swedish, Swiss and British AAOs underpinning civic values are more likely to be involved in activities associated with basic/urgent needs. On the contrary, AAOs in the specific countries emphasizing material and post-material values are less likely to be involved in such resilient activities.

Similarities are also detected in German and Italian AAOs, with respect to the effects of their value orientation on carrying out activities of basic/urgent needs. AAOs in both countries underscoring either civic, or material or post-material values are less likely to be involved in the activities under study. On the contrary, French AAOs -which have their own distinct pattern- emphasizing either civic, or material or post-material values are more likely to carry out activities related to basic/urgent needs.



PART 2: Online Survey with AAO Representatives

4. Online Survey on AAOs: Introduction and Method



The following sections are based on the research conducted in the context of the second phase of Work Package 6 (WP6) on alternative forms of resilience in times of crisis. The second phase involves conducting an online survey with Alternative Action Organizations (AAOs) across nine countries participating in the LIVEWHAT project including France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Poland, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and the UK. Research using online surveys with activists is rising (e.g. Harlow & Harp, 2012); however, online surveys with AAOs' representatives are rare, especially at the cross-national level.

This chapter draws on the results of cross-sectional and cross-national data capturing the main issues following the goals of the work package. In accordance with Task 6.5, an online survey's main rationale is to offer information concerning AAOs' mechanisms, tactics, and links of the involved actors, the ways in which they address citizens' rights through the promotion of alternative forms of resilience for citizens confronting crises, and the different types of resources required to sustain them in order to address citizens' rights.

The University of Crete (UoC) coordinated the second phase of WP6, which includes preparing the questionnaire (in English), constructing the web-tools, administering and operating the online surveys using Limesurvey across all countries as well as writing the report.

The Method

WP6 has adopted a multi-method approach of content analysis of Alternative Action Organizations (AAOs) websites in its first phase, with an online survey of AAOs as well as subsequent qualitative interviews with representatives/initiators, in the second phase³⁵. The undertaken approach responds to the need for such studies, as also advised in the recent recommendations by scholars of social movement organizations and new media opportunities (Stein, 2016).

³⁵ More information on the first phase method is included in chapter 2 of this report.

4.1 The Sample

The survey's sample is drawn from the WP6 first phase, including locating and coding AAOs using relevant hubs and websites across participating countries in the LIVEWHAT project. More information on the sampling methods applied is included in Chapter 2 of the WP6 first phase report.

Invitation e-mails were sent to the random samples of approximately 500 AAOs in each country³⁶ using the email lists of the coded AAOs of the WP6 first phase (see Table 4.1 below). The total sample size (N) of all nine participating countries is 4,562.

4.2 The Online Questionnaire

Following Task 6.5 ("Preparation of questionnaire for the online survey"), UoC prepared the questionnaire (English version) including items associated with the main goals of the work package, i.e. to capture AAOs' main types of actions (e.g. providing services such as food, shelter, education, etc., drafting analytical documents, researches, reports, fundraising etc.) and resources (e.g. material, human etc.); specific tactics and mechanisms applied to address citizens' rights (e.g., policy formation, calls for participation in conventional and unconventional political actions, collaborative activities etc.); constraints and limitations in achieving AAOs' goals in the passing year (e.g. lack of resources etc.); as well as experienced changes in demand and issues at the context of the recent economic crisis (e.g. changes since 2010 in different type of activities, frequency of actions, beneficiaries, material and human resources etc.).

Each country translated the instrument to its national language and ensured equivalent translation from the English version. Each participating country pre-tested the questionnaire with up to five AAOs. The final version of the questionnaire is formed by taking into account the results of the pre-tests.

The online survey was completed by AAOs' representatives or active members. The former is defined as a person (e.g. a director, a leader, a spokesperson, or any other person) who works closely with the group/organization/association and has a thorough knowledge of its main scope and activities. 'Active member' is defined as a person who has a thorough knowledge of AAO's main scope and activities.

4.3 The Online Survey

Following Task 6.6, UoC conducted the online surveys across all countries targeting AAOs identified in the WP6 first phase. The UoC team formatted the web-tools, ran and centrally administered the online

³⁶ For Switzerland email-invitations were sent both in French and German.

survey using Limesurvey³⁷. Limesurvey is an open-source online survey application which is based on PHP programming language and MySQL database. It is widely used as a web interface to develop and publish online surveys, collect responses, create statistics, and export the resulting data to other applications. The choice of hosting the web-based survey application in the University of Crete/School of Social Sciences data server is one of the safety measures that the UoC team applied. As a second level of security precautions, the survey setup requires the connection through a digital signed certificate, in order to assure that participants have a secure connection between their terminal and the survey platform.

The survey was initially planned to run between the 2nd May 2016 and 17th June 2016, but the period was extended to 30th June 2016, to achieve a higher response rate. During the period under study, apart from the initial invitation, four reminders have been sent encouraging AAOs to participate in the online survey.

The response rates ranges from 5.2% in the UK to 17.1% in Switzerland (Table 1). In Germany and Spain, the response rate is approximately 11%, in Greece and Sweden around 16%, in France and Italy around 12 % and in Poland around 10%.

Table 4.1: Sample size, responses and response rates

Country	N (No of invitations sent)	Final N (No of Responses)	Response rate %
France	579	72	12.4
Germany	497	54	10.9
Greece	499	81	16.2
Italy	498	62	12.4
Poland	494	51	10.3
Spain	490	53	10.8
Sweden	513	80	15.6
Switzerland	492	84	17.1
UK	500	26	5.2
Total N	4562	563	12.3

It should be noted that due to the limited number of observations, the findings presented in the following sections reflect some indicative rather than representative results across the AAOs in the nine countries under study.

³⁷ <https://www.limesurvey.org/en/>

5. Online Survey Main Findings at the comparative and national level



Main Findings

This section provides the analysis of the WP6 phase two-survey data. Following Task 6.7, the online survey data is analyzed through traditional statistical methods (for example, descriptive analysis, correlations, and regressions). Firstly, descriptive analyses on key variables of interest provide a picture of alternative forms of resilience in times of crisis and how this varies across a set of variables in each country as well as across participating countries. Secondly, further exploratory (e.g. Pearson correlation r) and explanatory analysis (e.g. multiple regression analysis) is applied to the overall data to show how these variables influence each other³⁸.

5.1 Descriptive Analysis

5.1.1 AAOs' year of foundation

Table 5.1 presents the AAOs' year of foundation across all participating countries, indicating that most of them (59.2%) are founded between 2001 and 2015, i.e. they are relatively recently established. Based on the available data, there is some preliminary evidence that some countries have longer traditions in the establishment of such organizations than other countries. On the one hand, 35.4% of Swiss AAOs and 26.6% of Swedish ones were established earlier than 1985; for the same time period none was established in Poland and a limited number is detected in Italy (3.2%), Greece (7.4%), Germany (11.1%) and Spain (11.3%). On the other hand, in specific countries the vast majority of AAOs are established during the last 15 years, i.e. 76.5% of Polish, 72.6% of Italian, 70.4% of Greek, 67.9% of Spanish and 66.2% of French AAOs are founded during 2001-2015. Focusing specifically on the establishment of AAOs during the last five years, which falls within the recent economic crisis, Southern European countries have the highest percent of newly founded AAOs. For instance, 50.6% of Greek, 46.8% of Italian and 41.5% of Spanish AAOs were established during 2010-2015. High percentages are also detected in Poland (39.2%) and France (33.8%), whereas the lowest ones are reported in Sweden (15.2%) and Switzerland (15.9%).

³⁸ The specific analysis is not carried out at the cross-national level due to the limited number of observations in specific countries.

Table 5.1: Alternative Action Organizations' year of foundation

	Earlier than 1970	1971-1985	1986-2000	2001-2009	2010-2015	DK	Total
	% (N)	% (N)	% (N)	% (N)	% (N)	% (N)	% (N)
France	8.5 (6)	9.9 (7)	12.7 (9)	32.4 (23)	33.8 (24)	2.8 (2)	100.0 (71)
Germany	5.6 (3)	5.6 (3)	33.3 (18)	25.9 (14)	24.1 (13)	5.6 (3)	100.0 (54)
Greece	6.2 (5)	1.2 (1)	21.0 (17)	19.8 (16)	50.6 (41)	1.2 (1)	100.0 (81)
Italy	0.0 (0)	3.2 (2)	21.0 (13)	25.8 (16)	46.8 (29)	3.2 (2)	100.0 (62)
Poland	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	23.5 (12)	37.3 (19)	39.2 (20)	0.0 (0)	100.0 (51)
Spain	3.8 (2)	7.5 (4)	20.8 (11)	26.4 (14)	41.5 (22)	0.0 (0)	100.0 (53)
Sweden	22.8 (18)	3.8 (3)	24.1 (19)	30.4 (24)	15.2 (12)	3.8 (3)	100.0 (79)
Switzerland	17.1 (14)	18.3 (15)	23.2 (19)	23.2 (19)	15.9 (13)	2.4 (2)	100.0 (82)
UK	11.5 (3)	11.5 (3)	30.8 (8)	23.1 (6)	23.1 (6)	0.0 (0)	100.0 (26)
Total	9.1 (51)	6.8 (38)	22.5 (126)	27.0 (151)	32.2 (180)	2.3 (13)	100.0 (559)

5.1.2 What Activities are AAOs and their members/supporters carrying out during the last 12 months?

This section provides information related to AAOs' most important type of action and supplementary activities as well as information regarding calling their members or supporters to take specific actions.

5.1.3 Which were the most important types of AAO action?

Table 5.2 presents AAOs' most important types of action which were carried out during the last year. Across all countries, the most prevalent actions involve providing services (e.g., food, shelter, education, healthcare, counselling etc.) (53.6%); networking and helping other AAOs (48.8%); and organizing cultural events and activities (47.6%). By contrast, the least prevalent actions include mobilizing citizens through protests and demonstrations (13.3%). The most prevalent activity of providing services is reported in Greece (66.7%) and Germany (66.7%), of drafting analytical documents, researches, reports in Switzerland (32.1%) and Spain (30.2%), of fundraising in Germany (38.9%), of interest representation/lobbying institutions in Sweden (60.0%), of political education of citizens/raising awareness (e.g. through trainings, events, leaflets, public campaigns etc.) in Poland (56.9%) and Spain

(50.9%), of mobilizing citizens through protests and demonstrations in Greece (21.0%), of organizing cultural events/activities in Italy (67.7%) and of networking/helping other groups/organizations/associations in Spain (58.5%) and Sweden (55.0%).

Focusing on each country separately, the most prevalent type of action in British AAOs involves providing services (65.4%) and networking or helping other AAOs (42.3%). In French AAOs, half of the actions used in the last 12 months involve networking and helping other AAOs. Moreover, popular actions involve organizing cultural events/activities (47.2%) and political education of citizens (43.1%).

In German AAOs, 66.7% of actions involve providing services; networking and helping other AAOs (44.4%); organizing cultural events/activities (38.9%) and fundraising (38.9%) are also popular type of main activities. In Greek AAOs, apart from providing services which has the highest prevalence across all types of actions (66.7%), more than half of activities involve networking and helping other AAOs (51.9%) and 48.1% involve the organization of cultural events/activities. In Italian AAOs, the most prevalent activity type involves organizing cultural events (67.7%); popular activities also include networking and helping other AAOs (46.8%) and providing services (43.5%).

In Polish AAOs, more than half of the actions include organizing cultural events (58.8%) and political education of citizens (56.9%). Moreover, the prevalent types of action include providing services (47.1%) and networking/helping other AAOs (43.1%). In Spanish AAOs, 58.5% of the actions aim towards networking and helping other AAOs; more than half of the actions involve providing services (54.7%) and the political education of citizens (50.9%). In Swedish AAOs, 60% of actions involve interest representation/lobbying institutions; more than half of actions include providing services (57.5%), networking and helping other AAOs (55%) and organizing cultural events (50%). In agreement with the overall findings, in Swiss AAOs the most prevalent type of activities include providing services (54.8%) and networking/helping other AAOs (42.9%).

Table 5.2: Alternative Action Organizations’ most important types of action used in the last 12 months

	France % (N)	Germany % (N)	Greece % (N)	Italy % (N)	Poland % (N)	Spain % (N)	Sweden % (N)	Switzerla nd % (N)	UK % (N)	Total % (N)
Providing services (e.g., food, shelter, education, healthcare, counselling etc.)	31.9 (23)	66.7 (36)	66.7 (54)	43.5 (27)	47.1 (24)	54.7 (29)	57.5 (46)	54.8 (46)	65.4 (17)	53.6 (302)
Drafting analytical document, researches, reports	23.6 (17)	11.1 (6)	23.5 (19)	17.7 (11)	21.6 (11)	30.2 (16)	17.5 (14)	32.1 (27)	7.7 (2)	21.8 (123)
Fundraising	16.7 (12)	38.9 (21)	13.6 (11)	19.4 (12)	33.3 (17)	17.0 (9)	22.5 (18)	22.6 (19)	26.9 (7)	22.4 (126)
Interest representation / Lobbying institutions	13.9 (10)	20.4 (11)	23.5 (19)	3.2 (2)	23.5 (12)	24.5 (13)	60.0 (48)	21.4 (18)	15.4 (4)	24.3 (137)
Political education of citizens / raising awareness	43.1 (1)	20.4 (11)	37.0 (30)	25.8 (16)	56.9 (29)	50.9 (27)	45.0 (36)	32.1 (27)	3.8 (1)	36.9 (208)
Mobilize citizens through protests and demonstrations	12.5 (9)	7.4 (4)	21.0 (17)	16.1 (10)	5.9 (3)	11.3 (6)	13.8 (11)	16.7 (14)	3.8 (1)	13.3 (75)
Organizing cultural events and activities	47.2 (34)	38.9 (21)	48.1 (39)	67.7 (42)	58.8 (30)	39.6 (21)	50.0 (40)	39.3 (33)	30.8 (8)	47.6 (268)
Networking and helping other groups/ organizations/associations	50.0 (36)	44.4 (24)	51.9 (42)	46.8 (29)	43.1 (22)	58.5 (31)	55.0 (44)	42.9 (36)	42.3 (11)	48.8 (275)

5.1.4 Did the AAOs conduct any supplementary activities?

Table 5.3 provides data about the supplementary actions related to conventional and contentious politics that are often used by the AAOs in order to achieve their goals and targets in the last 12 months. The most prevalent activities across all countries include participating in social media (80.5%); in local (79.0%) and regional (62.0%) meetings/conferences/debates and dissemination of information about key problems in respective fields of action (77.1%). Only half of activities include participating in national meetings/conferences/debates. The least prevalent activities across all countries involve organizing/participating in protests addressing the EU or its agencies (10.5%) and organizing transnational campaigns (12.0%). Across all countries, participation in local meetings/conferences/debates is highest in Poland (93.8%), Sweden (93.0%) and Italy (92.5%), in regional meetings in Poland (87.5%), in national meetings in Sweden (70.0%) and transnational ones in Poland (39.6%). Participation in commissions/committees of the national or regional parliament is highest in Poland (29.2%) and in local councils' work in the UK (73.7%). The highest prevalence of development of studies, strategies, draft laws is reported in Poland (47.9%), Sweden (42.9%) and Switzerland (41.2%), whereas dissemination of information about key problems in respective fields of action is most prevalent in Sweden (95.7%).

Across all countries, organizing local (66.7%) and regional (35.4%) campaigns are most prevalent in Poland whereas national (33.3%) and transnational (22.0%) campaigns are most prevalent in Greece. Organizing or participating in protests addressing local (30.8%), regional (38.5%), central government (37.5%) and EU agencies (20.5%) are most prevalent in Spain. Participation in social media (such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc.) is highest in Poland (97.9%) and Spain (97.6%).

Focusing on each country separately, the analysis indicates that in British AAOs the most popular activities involve participating in social media (95.0%), in local (90.0%) and regional (78.9%) meeting/conferences/debates, as well in local councils' work and disseminating of information about key problems (73.7%). In French AAOs, the most prevalent activities involve disseminating information about key problems (73.0%) participating in local (67.7%) and regional (57.8%) meeting/conferences /debates. Similarly, in German AAOs participating in local (73.8%) and regional (52.4%) meeting/conferences /debates as well as disseminating information about key problems (69.0%) are the most popular activities in the last 12 months.

In Greek AAOs, the most prevalent activities include participating in social media (96.8%), dissemination of information about key problems (88.9%) and participating in local meetings/conferences/debates (63.5%). It should be noted that more than half of activities involve participation in national (57.4%) and transnational meetings (51.6%). In Italian AAOs, the most

prevalent activities include participating in local meetings/conferences/ debates (92.5%), in social media (84.6%) and well as disseminating information about key problems (57.1%). In Polish AAOs, the majority of actions involve participating in social media (97.9%), participating in local (93.8%) and regional (87.5%) meeting/conferences /debates, disseminating information about key problems (83.3%) and organizing local campaigns (66.7%).

In Spanish AAOs, similarly to AAOs in other countries, the most prevalent activities include participating in social media (97.6%), participating in local (85.7%) and regional (62.5%) meeting/conferences/debates and disseminating information about key problems (76.2%). More than half of activities involve participating in local councils' work (56.1%) and organizing local campaigns (58.5%). In Swedish AAOs, the most popular activities include disseminating information about key problems (95.7%), participating in social media (94.4%), participating in local (93.0%), regional (69.0%) and national (70.0%) meeting/conferences/debates as well as in local councils' work (62.0%). In Swiss AAOs, the majority of activities involve participating in local (64.2%) and regional (67.2%) meeting/conferences/debates, disseminating information about key problems (67.2%) and participating in social media (63.2%).

Table 5.3: Alternative Action Organizations’ supplementary activities in the last 12 months

	France % (N)	Germany % (N)	Greece % (N)	Italy % (N)	Poland % (N)	Spain % (N)	Sweden % (N)	Switzerla nd % (N)	UK % (N)	Total % (N)
Participation in local meetings, conferences, debates	67.7 (44)	73.8 (31)	63.5 (40)	92.5 (49)	93.8 (45)	85.7 (36)	93.0 (66)	64.2 (43)	90.0 (18)	79.0 (372)
Participation in regional meetings, conferences, debates	57.8 (37)	52.4 (22)	45.0 (27)	48.1 (25)	87.5 (42)	62.5 (25)	69.0 (49)	67.2 (45)	78.9 (15)	62.0 (287)
Participation in national meetings, conferences, debates	43.8 (28)	35.7 (15)	57.4 (35)	39.2 (20)	60.4 (29)	43.9 (18)	70.0 (49)	42.6 (29)	47.6 (10)	50.0 (233)
Participation in transnational meetings, conferences, debates	20.3 (13)	7.1 (3)	51.6 (32)	17.3 (9)	39.6 (19)	19.5 (8)	29.0 (20)	29.9 (20)	10.5 (2)	27.2 (126)
Participation in commissions/committees of the national or regional parliament	21.9 (14)	7.1 (3)	13.3 (8)	7.8 (4)	29.2 (14)	25.0 (10)	27.5 (19)	22.7 (15)	0.0 (0)	19.0 (87)
Participation in local councils’ work	21.9 (14)	40.5 (17)	21.7 (13)	14.0 (7)	56.3 (27)	56.1 (23)	62.0 (44)	9.0 (6)	73.7 (14)	35.7 (165)
Development of studies, strategies, draft laws	22.2 (14)	19.0 (8)	27.9 (17)	24.0 (12)	47.9 (23)	31.7 (13)	42.9 (30)	41.2 (28)	21.1 (4)	32.3 (149)
Dissemination of information about key problems in respective fields of action of your initiative	73.0 (46)	69.0 (29)	88.9 (56)	57.1 (28)	83.3 (40)	76.2 (32)	95.7 (67)	67.2 (45)	73.7 (14)	77.1 (357)
Organizing local campaigns	6.3 (4)	48.8 (20)	41.7 (25)	41.2 (21)	66.7 (32)	58.5 (24)	56.3 (40)	14.7 (10)	31.6 (6)	39.4 (182)
Organizing regional campaigns	14.3 (9)	21.4 (9)	23.3 (14)	23.5 (12)	35.4 (17)	30.0 (12)	20.9 (14)	23.5 (16)	21.1 (4)	23.4 (107)
Organizing national campaigns	23.8 (15)	19.0 (8)	33.3 (20)	29.4 (15)	18.8 (9)	22.0 (9)	30.0 (21)	20.6 (14)	10.5 (2)	24.5 (113)
Organizing transnational campaigns	14.3 (9)	0.0 (0)	22.0 (13)	13.7 (7)	8.3 (4)	19.5 (8)	10.1 (7)	8.8 (6)	5.3 (1)	12.0 (55)

Organize/participate in protests addressing local government or its agencies/ companies	7.9 (5)	9.5 (4)	13.3 (8)	37.3 (19)	16.7 (8)	30.8 (12)	20.3 (14)	23.9 (16)	21.1 (4)	19.7 (90)
Organize/participate in protests addressing regional government or its agencies/ companies	11.1 (7)	7.1 (3)	11.7 (7)	28.0 (14)	2.1 (1)	38.5 (15)	7.2 (5)	22.4 (15)	10.5 (2)	15.1 (69)
Organize/participate in protests addressing central government or its agencies/ companies	25.4 (16)	4.8 (2)	33.3 (20)	26.0 (13)	16.7 (8)	37.5 (15)	27.1 (19)	13.4 (9)	10.5 (2)	22.7 (104)
Organize/participate in protests addressing EU or its agencies	12.7 (8)	4.8 (2)	20.0 (12)	12.0 (6)	4.2 (2)	20.5 (8)	10.1 (7)	4.5 (3)	0.0 (0)	10.5 (48)
Participation in social media (such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram etc.)	62.5 (40)	39.5 (17)	96.8 (61)	84.6 (44)	97.9 (47)	97.6 (41)	94.4 (67)	63.2 (43)	95.0 (19)	80.5 (379)

5.1.5 Did AAOs call their members or supporters to take specific conventional and unconventional political actions?

This section investigates calls that AAOs made to their members or supporters in order to take specific conventional (such as contacting local/regional/government officials) and unconventional political actions during the last 12 months. These would include activities such as promoting or supporting petition, ethical trade/investment, public demonstrations, strikes, blockades/sit-ins, occupations of buildings/ sites boycotting of certain products or organizations.

Table 5.4 presents AAOs' calls to their members, supporters, volunteers or partners to make specific actions in the last 12 months. Across all countries, the most prevalent actions include conventional political behaviors such as contacting local officials (59.6%) as well as unconventional ones including promoting or supporting petitions (52.3%), ethical trade/investment (48.4%) and public demonstrations (40.4%). Across all countries, the most prevalent actions of conventional political behaviors such as contacting local officials are reported in Italy (79.2%) and Poland (78.7%), whereas contacting regional officials is most prevalent in Poland (55.3%) and contacting government officials in Greece (45.0%) and Poland (42.6%).

With respect to unconventional political behaviors, these are most prevalent primarily in Italy and Spain. More specifically, promoting or supporting petitions is highest in Spain (76.2%) and Italy (61.5%); ethical trade/investment is highest in Spain (81.0%) and Italy (71.2%); boycotts of certain products or organizations is most prevalent in Spain (46.2%); public demonstrations are highest in Switzerland (58.7%) and Spain (53.7%); strikes (22.5%) and occupations of buildings/sites (25.0%) is most prevalent in Spain; whereas promoting or supporting blockades/sit-ins is the highest in Italy (30.8%).

In British AAOs, the most prevalent types of action asked of members/supporters/volunteers include contacting local officials (52.6%) and promoting or supporting petitions (52.6%). In French AAOs, promoting or supporting ethical trade/investment (60.9%), contacting local officials (57.1%) and supporting public demonstrations (49.2%) are the most popular actions asked. In German AAOs, more than half of actions asked of members/supporters/volunteers involve contacting local officials (52.4%) and 38.1% promoting or supporting ethical trade/investment. In Greek AAOs, contacting local (60.7%), regional (47.5%) and government (45.0%) officials as well as promoting or supporting petitions (47.5%) are among the most popular calls for actions.

In Italian AAOs, contacting local officials (79.2%), promoting or supporting ethical trade/investment (71.2%) petitions (61.5%) and boycotts of certain products or organizations (46.2%) are the most popular calls for action. In Polish AAOs, the most popular calls for action involve contacting local (78.7%) and regional officials (55.3%); whereas, more than half of calls for actions involve promoting

or supporting petitions (51.1%). In Spanish AAOs the most prevalent calls of action include primarily non-conventional political behaviors such as promoting or supporting ethical trade/investment (81.0%) and petitions (76.2%). Also more than half of actions involve contacting local officials (65.9%) and promoting or supporting public demonstrations (53.7%). In Swedish AAOs, more than half of call of actions involve contacting local officials (56.5%) and promoting or supporting petitions (53%). In Swiss AAOs, more than half of calls for actions involve unconventional political behaviors such as promoting or supporting demonstrations (58.7%) and petitions (51.6%).

Table 5.4: Alternative Action Organizations’ calls for conventional and unconventional political actions

	France	Germany	Greece	Italy	Poland	Spain	Sweden	Switzerland	UK	Total
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
	(N)	(N)	(N)	(N)	(N)	(N)	(N)	(N)	(N)	(N)
Conventional political actions										
Contact local officials on behalf of your group/ organization /association	57.1 (36)	52.4 (22)	60.7 (37)	79.2 (42)	78.7 (37)	65.9 (27)	56.5 (39)	36.5 (23)	52.6 (10)	59.6 (273)
Contact regional officials on behalf of your group/ organization/ association	46.0 (29)	21.4 (9)	47.5 (29)	37.7 (20)	55.3 (26)	47.5 (19)	28.4 (19)	33.9 (21)	26.3 (5)	39.0 (177)
Contact government officials on behalf of your group/ organization/ association	31.7 (20)	14.3 (6)	45.0 (27)	21.2 (11)	42.6 (20)	9.8 (4)	34.3 (23)	22.2 (14)	26.3 (5)	28.6 (130)
Unconventional political actions										
Promote or support a petition	48.4 (31)	31.0 (13)	47.5 (29)	61.5 (32)	51.1 (24)	76.2 (32)	53.0 (35)	51.6 (32)	52.6 (10)	52.3 (238)
Promote or support ethical trade/ investment	60.9 (39)	38.1 (16)	41.0 (25)	71.2 (37)	34.0 (16)	81.0 (34)	37.3 (25)	38.1 (24)	26.3 (5)	48.4 (221)
Promote or support boycotts of certain products or organizations	39.1 (25)	19.0 (8)	23.8 (15)	46.2 (24)	19.1 (9)	29.3 (12)	13.6 (9)	17.5 (11)	10.5 (2)	25.2 (115)
Promote or support public demonstrations	49.2 (31)	23.8 (10)	38.7 (24)	40.4 (21)	25.5 (12)	53.7 (22)	32.8 (22)	58.7 (37)	26.3 (5)	40.4 (184)
Promote or support strikes	6.3 (4)	4.8 (2)	17.7 (11)	13.5 (7)	8.5 (4)	22.5 (9)	1.5 (1)	4.8 (3)	10.5 (2)	9.5 (43)
Promote or support blockades/ sit-ins	7.9 (5)	7.1 (3)	8.2 (5)	30.8 (16)	4.3 (2)	20.0 (8)	3.0 (2)	3.2 (2)	5.3 (1)	9.7 (44)
Promote or support occupations of buildings/ sites	6.5 (4)	9.5 (4)	8.5 (5)	18.0 (9)	4.3 (2)	25.0 (10)	1.6 (1)	1.6 (1)	5.3 (1)	8.3 (37)

5.1.6 Did AAOs face any constraints during the last 12 months, and if so, which ones?

This section discusses constraints that AAOs faced during the last 12 months. These constraints refer to a lack of material resources (such as lack of funding, of individual donations and of material resources), lack of human resources (such as lack of volunteers, of active members, and of organizational leaders) and lack of collaboration with other organizations and agencies (such as local/regional/national government or its agencies, EU agencies, non-state agencies, and transnational organizations).

Table 5.5 and Table 5.6³⁹ present AAOs' most important constraints to achieve their goals. Across all countries, the most prevalent constraints include lack of funding (57.2%), lack of cooperation with/support from central (47.7%), regional (42.9%) and local government or its agencies (44.4%). Moreover, across all countries important constraints are associated with lack of human resources, including lack of volunteers (40.5%) and active members (42.8%).

Lack of funding is most prevalent in Poland (80.4%) and Greece (71.2%); similarly, lack of material resources such as individual donations is higher in Poland (59.0%) and Greece (59.3%). In the latter country, lack of material resources (e.g. supplies, material goods and services, meeting/office space) (50.0%) is more prevalent compared to other countries. Lack of human resources such as lack of personnel with informational, technical, organizational and networking skills is higher in Poland (51.1%) and Germany (50.0%); lack of volunteers in Italy (61.4%) and France (60.0%); lack of active members in France (62.1%) and lack of organizational leaders (e.g. individuals who provide relatively stable organizational guidance and who function as spokespersons) in Poland (49.0%). Lack of cooperation with or support from local (55.3%) and central government (73.2%) is higher in Poland and from regional government in Italy (64.1%). Lack of cooperation with or support from other non-state groups/organizations/associations is more prevalent in Italy (28.9%), from EU agencies in Poland (48.6%) and from transnational organizations (e.g. United Nations, World Health Organization etc.) in Greece (38.1%).

The cross-sectional analysis indicates that in most British AAOs lack of funding (65.0%), lack of cooperation with/support from local (50.0%) and central (57.9%) government or their agencies are important constraints. In French AAOs, lack of human resources such as volunteers (60.0%) and active

³⁹ Table notes: % based on respondents selecting points 6 through to 10 on the 0-10 scale. Q: During the last 12 months which have been the most important constraints to achieve your goals? Please state your answers on a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 means "not at all important" and 10 means "extremely important".

members (62.1%) are prevalent constraints. Also, lack of funding (48.3%), lack of support from central government (44.2%) as well as EU agencies (43.6%) are considered important constraints in French AAOs. In more than half of German AAOs under study, important constraints are considered the lack of active members (55.8%) and the lack of cooperation/support from central government (51.9%). Also, important constraints include lack of cooperation with local (48.6%) and regional government (44.8%), lack of volunteers (47.4%), lack of organizational leaders (42.9%) and lack of funding (40%).

In the majority of Greek AAOs, important constraints are primarily associated with lack of material resources such as lack of funding (71.2%), lack of individual donations (59.3%) and lack of material resources (50%). Moreover, important constraints include lack of cooperation with central (52.9%), local (41.8%) and regional government (44.0%), the EU agencies (40.9%) and getting funding from the main organization (45.8). In most of Italian AAOs under study, the lack of cooperation with central (67.7%) and regional government (64.1%) as well as lack of volunteers (61.4%) are important constraints. Moreover, half of Italian AAOs consider important constraints the lack of funding and lack of cooperation with local agencies.

Among the majority of Polish AAOs, lack of funding (80.4%) seems to be a critical constraint; additionally, more than half of Polish AAOs consider as important constraints the lack of cooperation with central (73.2%), local (55.3%) and regional (61.0%) government and the lack of personnel with informational, technical, organizational and networking skills (51.1%). Moreover, 49.0% of Polish AAOs consider as important constraints the lack of organizational leaders and 48.6% the lack of cooperation with EU agencies. Almost half of Spanish AAOs consider lack of funding (48.8%) and lack of cooperation with or support from local government (47.5%) important constraints. Similarly, more than half of Swedish (55.9%) and Swiss AAOs (56.3%) consider lack of funding an important constraint. Specifically among Swedish AAOs almost half of them consider lack of active members (49.2%) and lack of cooperation with local government (49.2%) important constraints.

Table 5.5: Most important constraints to achieve Alternative Action Organizations' goals

	France		Germany		Greece		Italy		Poland	
	Mean	Important (%)	Mean	Important (%)	Mean	Important (%)	Mean	Important (%)	Mean	Important (%)
Lack of funding	6.77	48.3	7.30	40.0	9.01	71.2	7.45	50.0	9.02	80.4
Lack of individual donations	6.34	27.7	6.84	29.4	8.17	59.3	6.24	30.0	7.73	59.0
Lack of material resources	5.70	29.8	6.32	28.9	7.15	50.0	5.62	38.8	5.65	31.9
Lack of personnel with informational, technical, organizational and networking skills	6.38	45.6	6.70	50.0	6.65	34.5	5.47	29.2	6.78	51.1
Lack of volunteers	7.83	60.0	6.95	47.4	6.18	40.0	7.72	61.4	5.84	38.3
Lack of active members	7.28	62.1	7.02	55.8	6.52	39.7	5.69	34.0	7.65	57.8
Lack of organizational leaders	5.44	32.8	6.32	42.9	6.28	34.0	4.31	23.4	6.18	49.0
Lack of cooperation with/ support from local government or its agencies	6.25	38.2	6.81	48.6	6.52	41.8	7.38	50.0	6.86	55.3
Lack of cooperation with/ support from regional government or its agencies	7.30	39.1	7.98	44.8	7.30	44.0	8.56	64.1	8.29	61.0
Lack of cooperation with/ support from central government or its agencies	7.72	44.2	8.68	51.9	7.86	52.9	9.41	67.7	8.76	73.2
Lack of cooperation with/ support from other non-state groups/organizations/associations	5.83	21.6	6.00	25.7	6.09	25.0	6.84	28.9	5.00	23.4
Lack of cooperation with/ support from EU agencies	7.90	43.6	8.09	34.8	7.70	40.9	8.57	40.7	7.59	48.6
Lack of cooperation with/ support from transnational organizations	8.13	7.1	7.39	5.0	7.59	38.1	8.84	31.8	7.88	33.3
Getting funding from the main organization we belong to	6.77	21.9	7.30	23.1	9.67	45.8	7.30	30.0	9.61	31.3

Table 5.6 (continued): Most important constraints to achieve AAOs' goals

	Spain		Sweden		Switzerland		UK		Total	
	Mean	Important (%)	Mean	Important (%)	Mean	Important (%)	Mean	Important (%)	Mean	Important (%)
Lack of funding	6.43	48.8	7.08	55.9	7.29	56.3	8.14	65.0	7.59	57.2
Lack of individual donations	5.70	31.6	6.52	33.3	6.82	34.0	6.45	18.8	6.81	37.6
Lack of material resources	5.00	26.2	4.38	22.5	4.76	21.0	6.90	41.2	5.60	31.3
Lack of personnel with informational, technical, organizational and networking skills	5.32	30.2	5.43	43.1	5.00	27.4	5.71	35.0	5.92	38.5
Lack of volunteers	5.09	28.6	5.70	37.9	5.32	17.9	5.52	31.6	6.29	40.5
Lack of active members	5.70	32.6	6.75	49.2	6.03	17.3	6.10	18.8	6.56	42.8
Lack of organizational leaders	4.70	19.5	4.63	29.0	4.74	14.0	4.43	11.1	5.26	29.5
Lack of cooperation with/ support from local government or its agencies	6.70	47.5	7.16	49.2	6.06	26.8	6.55	50.0	6.69	44.4
Lack of cooperation with/ support from regional government or its agencies	6.98	40.0	7.84	34.1	6.12	26.3	6.24	38.9	7.43	42.9
Lack of cooperation with/ support from central government or its agencies	7.11	34.4	6.84	33.3	7.21	28.3	7.68	57.9	7.85	47.7
Lack of cooperation with/ support from other non-state groups/organizations/associations	6.14	22.2	4.82	19.0	5.38	14.8	6.33	13.3	5.74	21.7
Lack of cooperation with/ support from EU agencies	7.60	24.0	8.69	38.2	9.57	23.8	7.29	30.8	8.23	38.0
Lack of cooperation with/ support from transnational organizations	7.53	4.8	8.13	20.6	9.40	29.2	7.57	27.3	8.15	23.3
Getting funding from the main organization we belong to	8.29	11.8	6.28	20.0	8.42	17.9	8.81	36.4	8.00	25.3

5.1.7 With whom do the AAOs collaborate and on what activities?

Across all countries, the vast majority of AAOs (96.3%) have collaborated with other groups/organizations/associations (Table 5.7). The highest percentage of non-collaborations are reported for Polish (7.8%) and Swiss (6.0%) AAOs.

Table 5.7: Alternative Action Organizations' collaborations

	Collaboration % (N)	Non-collaboration % (N)	Total % (N)
France	97.2 (70)	2.8 (2)	100.0 (72)
Germany	96.3 (52)	3.7 (2)	100.0 (54)
Greece	97.5 (79)	2.5 (92)	100.0 (81)
Italy	100.0 (62)	0.0 (0)	100.0 (62)
Poland	92.2 (47)	7.8 (4)	100.0 (51)
Spain	96.2 (51)	3.8 (2)	100.0 (53)
Sweden	96.3 (77)	3.8 (3)	100.0 (80)
Switzerland	94.0 (79)	6.0 (5)	100.0 (84)
UK	96.2 (25)	3.8 (1)	100.0 (26)
Total	96.3 (542)	3.7 (21)	100.0 (563)

5.1.7.1 Collaborative partners

Table 5.8 presents AAOs' collaborations with other groups/ organizations/associations. Across all countries, the most prevalent collaborators include associations/charities (e.g. humanitarian aid associations)/NGOs (53.3%), local governments (49.4%), community or neighborhood associations/credit unions/ solidarity initiatives (41.6%) and cultural/arts/sports associations/clubs (41.0%). The least popular collaborators involve EU agencies (9.1%), trade unions/labor/work associations (9.4%) and farmers' unions/farmers' associations (9.1%).

A cross-country collaborations with local (76.5%), regional (39.2%) and central (43.1%) government is most prevalent in Poland, whereas collaboration with EU agencies is most prevalent in Greece (22.2%). Collaborations with political parties/political organizations is most prevalent in Sweden (28.8%), Spain

(28.3%) and Germany (27.8%), with religious organizations (41.3%) and associations/charities (73.8%) in Sweden. Moreover, collaborations with community or neighborhood associations/credit unions/solidarity initiatives/informal social movement groups are most prevalent in Spain (56.6%) and Italy (54.8%); whereas collaborations with formal cooperatives/social economy enterprises/time banks (64.2%), consumer groups or organizations (39.6%) and trade unions/labor/work associations (15.1%) is most prevalent in Spain. Collaborations with farmers' unions/farmers' associations is highest in Italy (16.1%); with professional organizations in the UK (46.2%); with cultural/arts/sports associations/clubs (70.6%) and corporate sponsors/partners (39.2%) in Poland; with small/local businesses (53.7%) in Germany and university /research center institutes (49.1%) in Spain.

Exploring collaborations in each country separately, the analysis indicates that in British AAOs the most prevalent collaborators include local governments (46.2%), professional organizations (46.2%), small local businesses (46.2%), associations/charities/NGOs (42.3%) and community or neighborhood associations (42.3%). In French AAOs, more than half of collaborations take place with associations/charities/NGOs (56.9%) and 44.4% with local government. In German AAOs, more than half of collaborations take place with small/local businesses (53.7%); moreover, high prevalence of collaborations is detected for community or neighborhood associations (44.4%) and local government (42.6%).

Greek AAOs have more collaborations with associations/charities/NGOs (55.6%), local government (45.7%), university/research institutes (43.2%), community or neighborhood associations (42.0%) and small local/businesses (40.7%). In Italian AAOs, more than half of collaborations take place with cultural/arts/sports associations/clubs (66.1%), community or neighborhood associations (54.8%), formal cooperatives/social economy enterprises/time banks (51.6%) whereas half of collaborations take place with local government and associations/charities/NGOs.

Polish AAOs primarily collaborate with local (76.5%) and central government (43.1%), with cultural/arts/sports associations/clubs (70.6%), with associations/charities/NGOs (47.1%) and community or neighborhood associations (47.1%). The most prevalent collaborations of Spanish AAOs take place with formal cooperatives/social economy enterprises/time banks (64.2%); more than half of collaborations take place with community or neighborhood associations (56.6%), associations/charities/NGOs (50.9%) and local government (50.9%). The 73.8% of Swedish AAOs' collaborations take place with associations/charities/NGOs, 53.8% of collaborations involve local government, 42.5% cultural/arts/sports associations/clubs and 41.3% religious organizations. The most prevalent collaborations of Swiss AAOs involve associations/charities/NGOs (48.8%), community or neighborhood associations (42.9%), local (40.5%) and regional governments (39.3%).

Table 5.8: AAOs' collaborations with other groups/organizations/associations

	France % (N)	Germany % (N)	Greece % (N)	Italy % (N)	Poland % (N)	Spain % (N)	Sweden % (N)	Switzerla nd % (N)	UK % (N)	Total % (N)
Local government or its agencies	44.4 (32)	42.6 (23)	45.7 (37)	50.0 (31)	76.5 (39)	50.9 (27)	53.8 (43)	40.5 (34)	46.2 (12)	49.4 (278)
Regional government or its agencies	31.9 (23)	9.3 (5)	24.7 (20)	19.4 (12)	39.2 (20)	30.2 (16)	18.8 (15)	39.3 (33)	15.4 (4)	26.3 (148)
Central government or its agencies	20.8 (15)	5.6 (3)	22.2 (18)	4.8 (3)	43.1 (22)	7.5 (4)	23.8 (19)	16.7 (14)	7.7 (2)	17.8 (100)
EU agencies	6.9 (5)	5.6 (3)	22.2 (18)	3.2 (2)	9.8 (5)	7.5 (4)	11.3 (9)	2.4 (2)	11.5 (3)	9.1 (51)
Political parties or political organizations	5.6 (4)	27.8 (15)	14.8 (12)	16.1 (10)	7.8 (4)	28.3 (15)	28.8 (23)	13.1 (11)	11.5 (3)	17.2 (97)
Religious organizations (such as church, mosque, synagogue etc.)	16.7 (12)	29.6 (16)	11.1 (9)	12.9 (8)	27.5 (14)	17.0 (9)	41.3 (33)	9.5 (8)	26.9 (7)	20.6 (116)
Associations/Charities (e.g. humanitarian aid associations)/NGOs	56.9 (41)	38.9 (21)	55.6 (45)	50.0 (31)	47.1 (24)	50.9 (27)	73.8 (59)	48.8 (41)	42.3 (11)	53.3 (300)
Community or neighborhood associations/Credit unions/ Solidarity initiatives/ Informal social movement groups	38.9 (28)	44.4 (24)	42.0 (34)	54.8 (34)	47.1 (24)	56.6 (30)	16.3 (13)	42.9 (36)	42.3 (11)	41.6 (234)
Formal Cooperatives/Social economy enterprises/Time banks	33.3 (24)	22.2 (12)	28.4 (23)	51.6 (32)	25.5 (13)	64.2 (34)	20.0 (16)	31.0 (26)	23.1 (6)	33.0 (186)
Consumer groups or organizations	30.6 (22)	13.0 (7)	14.8 (12)	33.9 (21)	7.8 (4)	39.6 (21)	7.5 (6)	11.9 (10)	11.5 (3)	18.8 (106)
Trade unions/ Labor/ Work associations	6.9 (5)	5.6 (3)	8.6 (7)	11.3 (7)	0.0 (0)	15.1 (8)	12.5 (10)	14.3 (12)	3.8 (1)	9.4 (53)

Farmers' unions/ Farmers' associations	18.1 (13)	14.8 (8)	6.2 (5)	16.1 (10)	2.0 (1)	13.2 (7)	0.0 (0)	7.1 (6)	3.8 (1)	9.1 (51)
Professional organizations	25.0 (18)	11.1 (6)	16.0 (13)	8.1 (5)	5.9 (3)	20.8 (11)	27.5 (22)	28.6 (24)	46.2 (12)	20.2 (114)
Cultural/Arts/Sports Associations/Clubs	37.5 (27)	33.3 (18)	37.0 (30)	66.1 (41)	70.6 (36)	28.3 (15)	42.5 (34)	29.8 (25)	19.2 (5)	41.0 (231)
Corporate sponsors /partners	19.4 (14)	35.2 (19)	18.5 (15)	12.9 (8)	39.2 (20)	18.9 (10)	23.8 (19)	20.2 (17)	15.4 (4)	22.4 (126)
Small/local businesses	36.1 (26)	53.7 (29)	40.7 (33)	24.2 (15)	33.3 (17)	45.3 (24)	23.8 (19)	36.9 (31)	46.2 (12)	36.6 (206)
University /Research Center Institutes	30.6 (22)	25.9 (14)	43.2 (35)	30.6 (19)	41.2 (21)	49.1 (26)	40.0 (32)	33.3 (28)	30.8 (8)	36.4 (205)

5.1.7.2 Collaborative activities

Table 5.9 presents AAOs' type of collaborative activities with other groups/organizations/associations. Across all countries the most prevalent collaborative activities involve conducting joint activities (66.4%), sharing information/research/counseling (53.3%) and sharing material resources (e.g. supplies, material goods and services, meeting/office space) (41.2%); whereas the least popular collaborative activity involve the co-organization of joint requests to EU agencies (8.3%) and non-state donors (9.6%). The collaborative activity of conducting joint activities is most prevalent in France (79.2%), Italy (74.2%) and Poland (72.5%); of sharing material resources in Poland (60.8%) and Spain (56.6%); of sharing personnel with informational, technical, organizational and networking skills (50.0%) and members/volunteers (59.7%) in Italy.

Additionally, the collaborative activity of sharing information/research/counseling is most popular in France (68.1%), Poland (66.7%) and Italy (64.5%) and of co-organizing trainings for members in Poland (47.1%). The co-organization of joint requests to non-state donors is higher in Greece (18.5%), of joint requests to local government in Poland (39.2%) and Spain (39.6%), to regional government in Poland (29.4%), to central government in Greece (29.6%) and Poland (27.5%) and to EU agencies in Poland (27.5%). The most prevalent collaborative activity of co-organizing joint lobbying/advocacy is reported in Spain (37.7%) and Sweden (36.3%), whereas joint mobilization for protest actions is highest in Greece (27.2%), France (26.4%) and Italy (24.2%).

Exploring AAOs in each country, the analysis shows that in British AAOs more than half of collaborations involve sharing information/research/counseling (57.7%) and conducting joint activities (53.8%). Similarly in French AAOs, the majority of collaborations include sharing information/research/counseling (68.1%) and conducting joint activities (79.2%). Moreover, 44.4% of collaborations involve sharing material resources (e.g. supplies, material goods and services, meeting/office space). In German AAOs, the most prevalent collaborative activities involve conducting joint activities (59.3%) and sharing members/volunteers (38.9%). Similarly to AAOs in other countries, in Greek AAOs more than half of collaborative activities include conducting joint activities (63.0%) and sharing information/research/counseling (50.6%).

In Italian AAOs, more than half of collaborations involve conducting joint activities (74.2%) sharing information/research/counseling (64.5%), members/volunteers (59.7%) and personnel with informational, technical, organizational and networking skills (50.0%). In Polish AAOs, conducting joint activities (72.5%), sharing information/research/counseling (66.7%), sharing material resources (e.g. supplies, material goods and services, meeting/office space) (60.8%) and co-organizing training for members (47.1%) are the most popular types of collaborative activity. Similarly to AAOs in other

countries, in Spanish AAOs the most prevalent types of collaborative activity include conducting joint activities (66.0%), sharing material resources (56.6%), sharing information/research/counselling (47.2%) and personnel with informational, technical, organizational and networking skills (41.5%).

In Swedish AAOs, more than half of collaborations involve conducting joint activities (66.3%) and sharing information/research/counselling (55.0%), whereas 38.8% involve sharing material resources and co-organizing training for members. In Swiss AAOs, more than half of collaborations include conducting joint activities (58.3%) and sharing information/research/counselling (52.4%).

Table 5.9: Alternative Action Organizations' collaborative activities

	France % (N)	Germany % (N)	Greece % (N)	Italy % (N)	Poland % (N)	Spain % (N)	Sweden % (N)	Switzerland % (N)	UK % (N)	Total % (N)
Conducted joint activities	79.2 (57)	59.3 (32)	63.0 (51)	74.2 (46)	72.5 (37)	66.0 (35)	66.3 (53)	58.3 (49)	53.8 (14)	66.4 (374)
Shared material resources (e.g. supplies, material goods and services etc.)	44.4 (32)	38.9 (21)	38.3 (31)	32.3 (20)	60.8 (31)	56.6 (30)	38.8 (31)	31.0 (26)	38.5 (10)	41.2 (232)
Shared personnel with informational, technical, organizational skills	20.8 (15)	25.9 (14)	24.7 (20)	50.0 (31)	19.6 (10)	41.5 (22)	27.5 (22)	19.0 (16)	23.1 (6)	27.7 (156)
Shared members/volunteers	36.1 (26)	38.9 (21)	38.3 (31)	59.7 (37)	31.4 (16)	37.7 (20)	31.3 (25)	17.9 (15)	19.2 (5)	34.8 (196)
Shared information/research/ counselling	68.1 (49)	14.8 (8)	50.6 (41)	64.5 (40)	66.7 (34)	47.2 (25)	55.0 (44)	52.4 (44)	57.7 (15)	53.3 (300)
Co-organized trainings for members	22.2 (16)	16.7 (9)	22.2 (18)	24.2 (15)	47.1 (24)	17.0 (9)	38.8 (31)	21.4 (18)	23.1 (6)	25.9 (146)
Co-organized joint requests to non-state donors	6.9 (5)	7.4 (4)	18.5 (15)	4.8 (3)	15.7 (8)	3.8 (2)	7.5 (6)	9.5 (8)	11.5 (3)	9.6 (54)
Co-organized joint requests to local government or its agencies	15.3 (11)	18.5 (10)	17.3 (14)	25.8 (16)	39.2 (20)	39.6 (21)	8.8 (7)	7.1 (6)	15.4 (4)	19.4 (109)
Co-organized joint requests to regional government or its agencies	13.9 (10)	7.4 (4)	16.0 (13)	6.5 (4)	29.4 (15)	22.6 (12)	1.3 (1)	13.1 (11)	3.8 (1)	12.6 (71)
Co-organized joint requests to central government or its agencies	12.5 (9)	1.9 (1)	29.6 (24)	9.7 (6)	27.5 (14)	13.2 (7)	3.8 (3)	8.3 (7)	3.8 (1)	12.8 (72)
Co-organized joint requests to EU agencies	4.2 (3)	1.9 (1)	18.5 (15)	1.6 (1)	27.5 (14)	11.3 (6)	1.3 (1)	3.6 (3)	11.5 (3)	8.3 (47)
Co-organized joint lobbying/advocacy	15.3 (11)	14.8 (8)	24.7 (20)	4.8 (3)	19.6 (10)	37.7 (20)	36.3 (29)	16.7 (14)	7.7 (2)	20.8 (117)
Joint mobilization for protest actions	26.4 (19)	11.1 (6)	27.2 (22)	24.2 (15)	7.8 (4)	18.9 (10)	7.5 (6)	14.3 (12)	0.0 (0)	16.7 (94)

5.1.8 Did the AAOs experience increased demand for different type of activities since 2010?

Table 5.10 presents AAOs' increased demand for specific issues since 2010, i.e. in the context of the current economic crisis. Across all countries, the highest prevalence of issues with increased demand concern specifically networking and helping other groups/organizations/associations (69.9%); providing non-material support (e.g. interpersonal, emotional etc.) (53.0%); exchanging services and products (43.9%); providing legal aid/legal services (42.5%); providing free educational services and material (e.g. classes, books, etc.) (42.4%) and concerning energy/waste/environment/animal rights issues (40.4%).

The highest prevalence of increased demand for food programs (e.g. free meals food banks) (58.6%) and free material support (e.g. clothes, shoes etc.) (59.3%), as well as for free health care (e.g. medical exams, medicines, vaccines) (55.2%), and debt counseling (e.g. mortgage problems etc.) (39.7%) is reported in Greece and for homeless services in Sweden (43.1%) and Greece (41.4%). More British AAOs compared to AAOs in other countries report an increased demand for housing problems advice (52.4%), emergency financial support (47.6%), networking and helping other AAOs (85.0%) as well as providing non-material support (75.0%).

The highest prevalence of increased demand for free educational services (64.4%) and legal aid/legal services (74.5%) is reported in Poland, whereas general assistance and support in everyday activities (e.g. help with shopping etc.) is most prevalent in Germany (41.5%). The highest prevalence of increased demand for exchanging services and products (67.3%), consumer/producer issues (62.7%) and energy/waste/environment/animal rights issues is reported in Italy (62.7%).

The cross-sectional analysis indicates that in British AAOs the majority of actions with increased demand since 2010 include networking and helping other groups/organizations/associations (85.0%), employment advice/training programs (76.2%) and non-material support (75.0%). More than half of activities with increased demand involve free material support (55.0%), exchange of services and products (52.6%), food programs (52.4%) and housing problems advice (52.4%). In French AAOs, more than half of actions with increased demand since 2010 include networking and helping other groups/organizations/associations (61.3%), energy/waste/environment/animal rights issues (61.3%) and consumer/producer issues (61.3%). In Germany, 65% of actions with increased demand include networking and helping other organizations, and more than half involve food programs (54.8%) and free material support (53.7%). Moreover, an increased demand is detected for non-material support (48.8%), exchange of services and products (45.2%), housing problems advice (43.9%) and general assistance and support in everyday activities (e.g. helping with shopping etc.) (41.5%).

In Greek AAOs, the highest prevalence of actions with increased demand involve legal aid/legal services (72.4%), networking and helping other organizations (67.2%), non-material support (64.5%), free educational services (59.7%), free material support (59.3%), food programs (58.6%), free health care (55.2%) exchange services and products (52.6%). Additionally, increased demand is detected for employment advice/training programs (43.3%), emergency financial support (43.1%), homeless services (41.4%), energy/waste/environment/animal rights issues (41.4%) and housing problems advice (40.7%). In Italian AAOs, the majority of actions with increased demand are detected for networking and helping other organizations (81.1%), exchange of services and products (67.3%), energy/waste/environment/animal rights issues (62.7%) and consumer/producer issues (62.7%).

In Polish AAOs, the highest prevalence of actions with increased demand is reported for legal aid/legal advices (74.5%) and free educational services and material (64.4). Moreover, high prevalence of actions with increased demand is reported for networking and helping other organizations (63.0%), employment advice and training programs (57.4%), non-material support (52.2%), exchange of services and products (51.1%), free material support (44.4%) and energy/ waste/ environment/ animal rights issues (44.4%)

The majority of actions with increased demand in Spanish AAOs are reported for networking and helping other organizations (75.6%), non-material support (69.0%), and exchange of services and products (61.0%). High percentages are also detected for free educational services (48.8%), employment advice/training programs (47.6%), consumer product issues (47.5%), legal aid/legal services (46.3%), and free material support (40.5%).

In agreement with the findings in other countries, the highest prevalence of action with increased demand in Swedish AAOs is reported for networking and helping other organizations (76.9%). Also, the majority of actions with increased demand involves non-material support (75%), free educational services (59.7%) and legal aid/legal services (56.9%). Moreover, high percentages are reported for employment advice/training programs (47.6%), free material support (46.2%) and homeless services (43.1%). In Swiss AAOs, like in AAOs in other countries the highest prevalence of action with increased demand is detected for networking and helping other organizations (63.3%), 42.4% involve non-material support and 33.3% exchange of services and products as well as employment advice/training programs.

Table 5.10: AAOs' increased demand for different type of activities since 2010

	France % (N)	Germany % (N)	Greece % (N)	Italy % (N)	Poland % (N)	Spain % (N)	Sweden % (N)	Switzerland % (N)	UK % (N)	Total % (N)
Food programs (e.g. free meals/ food banks)	11.5 (7)	54.8 (23)	58.6 (34)	10.4 (5)	34.8 (16)	35.7 (15)	32.3 (21)	10.0 (6)	52.4 (11)	31.2 (138)
Free material support (e.g. clothes, shoes etc.)	14.8 (9)	53.7 (22)	59.3 (35)	35.3 (18)	44.4 (20)	40.5 (17)	46.2 (30)	13.6 (8)	55.0 (11)	38.4 (170)
Homeless services	4.9 (3)	22.5 (9)	41.4 (24)	12.5 (6)	31.1 (14)	21.4 (9)	43.1 (28)	5.0 (3)	40.0 (8)	23.7 (104)
Housing problems advice	16.4 (10)	43.9 (18)	40.7 (24)	16.3 (8)	31.1 (14)	38.1 (16)	34.4 (22)	26.7 (16)	52.4 (11)	31.4 (139)
Free health care (e.g. medical exams, medicines, vaccines)	11.5 (7)	10.0 (4)	55.2 (32)	12.8 (6)	34.1 (15)	14.6 (6)	28.1 (18)	15.0 (9)	31.6 (6)	23.7 (103)
Free educational services and material (e.g. classes, books, etc.)	14.8 (9)	36.6 (15)	59.7 (37)	43.1 (22)	64.4 (29)	48.8 (20)	59.7 (37)	23.3 (14)	25.0 (5)	42.4 (188)
Employment advice/Training programs	24.6 (15)	22.5 (9)	43.3 (26)	23.4 (11)	57.4 (27)	47.6 (20)	47.6 (30)	33.3 (20)	76.2 (16)	39.5 (174)
Debt counseling (e.g. mortgage problems etc.)	8.2 (5)	12.2 (5)	39.7 (23)	12.5 (6)	27.3 (12)	24.4 (10)	23.8 (15)	10.0 (6)	42.9 (9)	20.8 (91)
Emergency financial support	19.7 (12)	27.5 (11)	43.1 (25)	24.5 (12)	33.3 (15)	17.1 (7)	29.0 (18)	23.0 (14)	47.6 (10)	28.3 (124)
Legal aid/legal services	11.5 (7)	25.0 (10)	72.4 (42)	27.1 (13)	74.5 (35)	46.3 (19)	56.9 (37)	31.1 (19)	26.3 (5)	42.5 (187)
Networking and helping other groups/organizations/ associations	61.3 (38)	65.0 (26)	67.2 (39)	81.1 (43)	63.0 (29)	75.6 (31)	76.9 (50)	63.3 (38)	85.0 (17)	69.9 (311)
Non-material support (e.g. interpersonal, emotional, etc.)	27.9 (17)	48.8 (20)	64.5 (40)	36.0 (18)	52.2 (24)	69.0 (29)	75.0 (48)	42.4 (25)	75.0 (15)	53.0 (236)

General assistance and support in everyday activities	8.2 (5)	41.5 (17)	31.0 (18)	36.0 (18)	37.0 (17)	36.6 (15)	34.4 (22)	8.5 (5)	33.3 (7)	28.1 (124)
Exchange of services and products	29.5 (18)	45.2 (19)	52.6 (30)	67.3 (33)	51.1 (24)	61.0 (25)	20.3 (12)	33.3 (20)	52.6 (10)	43.9 (191)
Energy/Waste/Environment/Animal Rights issues	61.3 (38)	24.4 (10)	41.4 (24)	62.7 (32)	44.4 (20)	36.6 (15)	23.7 (14)	30.0 (18)	26.3 (5)	40.4 (176)
Consumer/producer issues	61.3 (38)	27.5 (11)	31.6 (18)	62.7 (32)	35.6 (16)	47.5 (19)	14.8 (9)	23.3 (14)	15.8 (3)	36.8 (160)

5.2 Further Exploratory and Explanatory Analysis: AAOs' experienced changes and exposure to a changing environment at the context of recent crisis

The descriptive analysis in the previous sections sheds light on AAOs' main types of action and supplementary activities, their mechanisms, tactics and links of the involved actors in terms of collaborative partners and activities, the increased demand for different type of actions as well as the major constraints in achieving their goals in each country participating in the LIVEWHAT project as well as cross-nationally.

The main rationale of the following sections is to explore AAOs' activity by taking into account changes experienced since 2010, i.e. in the context of the recent crisis. The descriptive analysis shows (see below Table 5.11, Table 5.12, Table 5.13) that across all countries the majority of AAOs report an increase in conducting their main activities since 2010; this reflects that increased activism takes place within an evolving environment that is marked by moments of crisis and related challenges. The analysis that follows explores each of these related changes as well as their inter-relation with AAOs' activities.

The findings are based on the last item of the survey's questionnaire capturing changes since 2010 associated with AAOs' activities, state and non-state funding, volunteers, members, beneficiaries, collaborative activities, involvement in policy and decision-making procedures at the local, regional and national level, participation in unconventional political actions (such as protests) and social media. Responses are provided on a scale ranging from 1 ("large increase") via 3 ("remained the same") to 5 ("large decrease"); responses are inversed so as higher values to indicate increasing trends. The descriptive analysis explores each of the changes under study. The explorative and explanatory analysis uses composite indexes to capture changes in material (mean score of state and non-state funding), human resources (mean score of number of registered members, active members and volunteers) and AAOs' involvement in policy and decision-making procedures (mean score of local, regional and national governments) as well as the rest of the indicators under study.

It should be noted that due to the limited number of observations, cross-sectional analysis is omitted; the exploratory and explanatory analysis that follows is based on data from all participating countries.

5.2.1 Have the AAOs experienced changes since 2010, and to what extent?

Table 5.11 and Table 5.12 present AAOs' detected changes since 2010 in specific issues across all countries capturing potential changes at the context of the current crisis. The majority of AAOs report an increase in conducting main activities (57.1%), whereas 33.6% state that the frequency remained the same. Moreover, the vast majority of AAOs across all countries report an increase in the number of beneficiaries (72.7%), 19.8% that it remained the same and just 7.6% that it decreased.

With respect to material resources, most AAOs report a decrease in state funding (42.2%), 35.7% that it remained the same and 22.2% that it decreased. Most AAOs report that non-state funding remained the same (43.2%), whereas 36.7% report an increase and 20.1% a decrease in non-state funding. With respect to human resources, more than half of AAOs report that since 2010 an increasing trend is detected in registered members (51.5%) and number of volunteers (52.2%), whereas most AAOs report an increase in active members (44.9%); however 36.6% state that they remained the same and 18.5% they decreased.

In the vast majority of AAOs is reported an increase of collaborations with other groups/organizations/associations (68.3%) and participating in social media (such as Facebook, Twitter, etc.) (81.5%). More than half of AAOs report that participation in protest actions has remained the same (51.4%), whereas 35.3% state that there has been an increasing trend since 2010.

With respect to the involvement in policy and decision-making procedures with local governments, 44.4% of AAOs report it remained the same and 42.9% it increased. Almost half of AAOs (48.2%) report that involvement in policy and decision-making procedures with national governments has remained the same and 35.8% it has increased, whereas more than half of AAOs state that involvement in policy and decision-making procedures with regional government has remained the same (52.4%) and 36.7% it has increased.

Table 5.11: Changes in specific issues (1) since 2010

	Frequency of conducting main action % (N)	State funding % (N)	Non-state funding % (N)	Number of registered members % (N)	Number of active members % (N)	Number of volunteers % (N)	Number of beneficiaries % (N)
Moderate or large increase	57.1 (228)	22.2 (51)	36.7 (97)	51.5 (202)	44.9 (184)	52.2 (205)	72.7 (250)
The same	33.6 (134)	35.7 (82)	43.2 (114)	28.8 (113)	36.6 (150)	27.0 (106)	19.8 (68)
Moderate or large decrease	9.3 (37)	42.2 (97)	20.1 (53)	19.6 (77)	18.5 (76)	20.9 (82)	7.6 (26)
Total	100.0 (399)	100.0 (230)	100.0 (264)	100.0 (392)	100.0 (410)	100.0 (393)	100.0 (344)

Table 5.12: Changes in specific issues (2) since 2010

	Collaborations with other groups /organizations % (N)	Involvement in policy and decision-making procedures with local governments % (N)	Involvement in policy and decision-making procedures with regional governments % (N)	Involvement in policy and decision-making procedures with national governments % (N)	Participation in protest actions % (N)	Participation in social media (such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram etc.) % (N)
Moderate or large increase	68.3 (298)	42.9 (114)	36.7 (77)	35.8 (69)	35.3 (77)	81.5 (318)
The same	27.1 (118)	44.4 (118)	52.4 (110)	48.2 (93)	51.4 (112)	16.7 (65)
Moderate or large decrease	4.6 (20)	12.8 (34)	11.0 (23)	16.1 (31)	13.3 (29)	1.8 (7)
Total	100.0 (436)	100.0 (266)	100.0 (210)	100.0 (193)	100.0 (218)	100.0 (390)

Table 5.13 displays the mean and standard deviation of the issues changed in the AAOs since 2010, indicating whether these changes are – on average –on the rise (>3) or on the decrease (<3). On average, AAOs’ number of beneficiaries and participation in social media show the highest increase since 2010. However, also the frequency of conducting main activities, the collaborative actions as well as other issues seem to follow an increasing trend in the context of the recent crisis. On the contrary, funding and specifically state-funding shows on average a decreasing trend since 2010, providing some preliminary evidence of AAOs’ limited economic resources to achieve their main goals.

Table 5.13: Mean and Standard Deviation of issues changed in the AAOs since 2010 (1=large decrease, 5=large increase)

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Frequency of conducting main action	3.71	.986	399
State funding	2.63	1.189	230
Non-state funding	3.15	1.030	264
Number of registered members	3.42	1.126	392
Number of active members	3.33	1.066	410
Number of volunteers	3.40	1.074	393
Number of beneficiaries	4.01	.985	344
Collaborations with other groups /organizations	3.85	.834	436
Involvement in policy and decision-making procedures with local governments	3.35	1.013	266
Involvement in policy and decision-making procedures with regional governments	3.31	.931	210
Involvement in policy and decision-making procedures with national governments	3.20	1.013	193
Participation in protest actions	3.29	.928	218
Participation in social media (such as Facebook. Twitter. Instagram etc.)	4.27	.801	390

5.2.2 Are changes in AAOs’ activities related to and explained from other changes and challenges since 2010?

The explorative analysis that follows focuses specifically on AAOs’ activity since 2010 and its interrelations with changes in material and human resources, number of beneficiaries, collaborative activities, involvement in policy and decision-making procedures, participation in protest actions and in social media (such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram etc.).

Table 5.14 indicates the significant positive correlations of AAOs’ activity since 2010 with detected changes in their human resources, number of beneficiaries, involvement in policy decision making

procedures, in their collaborative activities as well as in their participation in protests and social media. On the contrary, AAOs’ activity is negatively correlated with material resources indicating a decrease in material resources including both state and non-state funding.

Table 5.14: Pearson Correlation r of AAOs’ activities and related changes since 2010

	Pearson Correlation r	N
Material resources	-.162**	392
Human resources	.566**	392
Number of beneficiaries	.563**	317
Collaborative activities	.473**	392
Involvement in in policy and decision-making procedures	.394**	283
Participation in protests	.348**	209
Participation in social media	.325**	351

* p<.05, ** p<.01, *** p<.001

Table 5.15 presents the results from multiple regression analysis, indicating that since 2010 AAOs’ activities can be interpreted by relevant changes within an evolving environment that is marked by moments of crisis and related-challenges. The model explains almost 44% of the variance in AAOs’ activities, indicating that material resources -whilst non-significant- have a negative effect on AAOs’ activities whereas human resources a significant positive one. Such findings provide some evidence that in times where material resources are scarcer, AAOs’ extensive actions are primarily supported by the growing number of citizens including volunteers, members and participants. An additional factor that may counterweight the lack of material resources is AAOs’ collaborative activity with other groups/organizations/associations, which significantly increases their activity.

Table 5.15: Multiple regression analysis for predicting AAOs’ activities (N=454) in relation to other changes since 2010

	b	SE b
Material resources	-0.028	0.023
Human resources	0.240***	0.041
Number of beneficiaries	0.312***	0.043
Collaborative activities	0.238***	0.046
Involvement in in policy and decision-making procedures	0.133**	0.049
Participation in protests	0.134*	0.055
Participation in social media	0.072	0.048
Constant	-0.334	0.312
Adjusted R ²	0.439	

Notes: Table presents unstandardized coefficients b and standard errors

With respect to AAOs’ different mechanisms and tactics to address citizens’ rights, the results show that AAOs’ unconventional political involvement in protests plays an important role in interpreting their increased activity; similar results are reported for their involvement in policy and decision-making procedures. The latter underpins that political institutions are more responsive to AAOs in times of crisis, given the fact that involvement in the local, regional and national policy and decision-making procedures significantly increases their activity. Participation in social media increases AAOs’ activity; however such an effect is non-significant.

The significant effect of beneficiaries on AAOs’ increased activity, provides some preliminary evidence of changes at the wider environment, including the number of individuals affected at the context of the current crisis. The demand of alternative forms of resilience for an increasing number of citizens confronting crisis inevitably leads to an increased activity to support those in need.

5.3 References

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PART 3: Qualitative Interviews with AAO Representatives

6. Qualitative Interviews: Introduction, Method and Main Findings



Part 3 of the WP6 report presents the findings of a qualitative investigation undertaken by the consortium⁴⁰, where interviews with representatives of Alternative Action Organizations (AAOs) were carried out in all of our nine participating countries. The chapter at hand offers an introduction to the qualitative analysis, details on the method followed by the nine teams, as well as the main findings of phase 3 based on the analysis of the qualitative interviews in the subsequent nine national chapters.

6.1 Introduction

The aim of phase 3 is to offer a better understanding of the operation and the role of AAOs in enhancing collective forms of citizens' resilience during times of crisis, through qualitative, in-depth interviews. For this purpose, twenty⁴¹ interviews were conducted per country shedding light on the qualitative traits of AAOs. In particular, the study examines the following issues: the mission and political aims of AAOs; the influence of the economic crisis, their initiatives and projects; their relationship with the government and other organizations; their beneficiaries and participants; the outcomes and their best practices. Each national report is structured on the basis of these themes.

A common methodological approach is used in all participating countries. AAOs, our target population, were identified and mapped in a previous stage of the study and sample selection was largely based on two criteria, the formal vs. informal dimension and the policy advocacy vs. service orientation, according to which four generic AAO types are conceptually formed. Each national team followed a unique combination of methods to select and approach its sample

⁴⁰ The important contribution of the task force on the methodological aspects of phase 3, especially of Lorenzo Bosi and Christian Lahusen, is gratefully acknowledged and highly appreciated.

⁴¹ Except for Germany and Sweden with 21 interviews, Poland with 19 interviews, as well as the UK and Switzerland with 13 interviews each.

– quota samples based on the categories formed with the introduction of the two dimensions, random sampling from the list of WP6.1, sending mass invitations, case selection based on AAOs prominence in selected fields or based on personal contacts or through snowballing - according to the special traits of the target population at the national level (as indicated by the two previous stages of Livewhat WP6) and aiming at achieving a sample which is balanced according to the aforementioned criteria. AAOs' national distribution, action type and beneficiary types and the political leaning of organizations are criteria which are further considered by national teams.

The national samples altogether cover a wide spectrum of AAO types: charities, NGOs, solidarity groups for the satisfaction of basic needs and the support of vulnerable groups, local grassroots, protest groups, social movement organizations, far-right organizations, religious organizations, labor organizations, social cooperatives, work collectives and other social economy enterprises, cultural associations and groups for the support of other civil society organizations.

An integrated topic guide which defined the fields of the study and allowed flexibility according to the occasion was used by all interviewees. The interviews' duration varied, with an average of one hour per interview. Their location was arranged based largely on interviewees' convenience, while occasionally they were conducted via Skype and the telephone. The interviews were mostly conducted between June and October 2016 (with the exception of the Italian team, which started interviewing in March).

The main obstacle faced by our researchers during the fieldwork relate to the fact that interviews had to be carried out in the summertime. Refusals on participation recorded also included unwillingness to take part in an EU-funded research project, suspicion about the purposes of the study or lack of interest.

6.2 Political issues

Political issues were initially discussed with our interviewees with the aim of understanding how the mission and action of AAOs is connected to political aims, values and ideals.

Humanitarianism and emancipation, social justice, equality, cooperation and solidarity are rooted in the value systems of AAOs. Democracy, civic participation and empowerment are also highly valued. Ecological values and sustainability related values represent another cluster of values mentioned mainly in Germany and Poland. Values related to professionalism are witnessed in Polish and British interviews.

Most German, French, Greek and Italian AAOs view their action as being genuinely political. Not only those organizations which are manifestly oriented towards policy advocacy, but also service oriented organizations define clear and sound political aims for themselves. This does not hold true for the UK and Poland, where organizations' representatives usually stress that their goals are pragmatic rather than political.

AAOs in their majority adopt a critical standpoint towards state policies, they challenge the dominant system and market values and initiate actions which propose an alternative to capitalistic organization of economic and socio-political life, which is usually reflected in the denial of governmental support and cooperation. This emerges as a key finding from the interviews conducted in most countries with the exception of the UK, where a partnership rather than a protest model seems to be prevalent. Moreover, a tendency towards depoliticisation is also seen, mainly as an expression of criticizing the system and less usually as an indication of acceptance or resignation. The economic crisis seems to magnify the disposition of AAOs to confront governments and pursue social change, particularly in countries which are intensely affected by the crisis, such as Greece and Italy.

Ideological orientation varies from conservatism to radical left and anarchic outlooks, with the left-leaning organizations being predominant when organizations acknowledge a political leaning. Direct relations to political parties were rarely reported. In Switzerland, most AAO representatives express their neutrality and independence from any kind of political pressure or influence. Many AAOs elsewhere abstain from positioning themselves ideologically, adopting a more inclusive and action-oriented approach.

With regard to the form of political action adopted, formal organizations act politically mainly through lobbying or via advisory activity in state or local administration committees, while the

informal groups act politically through protest, engagement in political advocacy activities and through educating the public.

6.3 Economic Crisis Effects

The economic crisis has in general increased AAOs activity and disposition towards the development of innovative action, which is a reflection of the societal quest for alternative paths of citizens' resilience. The organizations which are mainly influenced by the crisis are those dealing with vulnerable groups and migrants and which aim at the satisfaction of basic needs (e.g. food, housing, health). In addition, solidarity organizations' scope broadened and the introduction of innovative action intensified, something that is most visible in countries harmfully hit by the crisis. Nevertheless, AAOs are also themselves affected by the crisis as a result of the imbalances between their resources and societal needs as well as due to the generalized climate of instability.

The crisis produced budgetary cuts and harsh austerity measures, unemployment and job insecurity, the increase of inequalities and a widespread loss of confidence together with distrust in institutions and the political system. Greek interviewees report that the crisis has limited the capacity of families and individuals who until recently belonged to the middle classes to meet their needs, thus leading a large segment of the population to deprivation. Spanish interviews reveal that the crisis is most seriously affecting the youth, since the economic hardship families experience, together with high unemployment rates and frustration, discourage them from continuing their studies. Hence, the crisis context created the conditions for the creation of alternative structures of support and prompted the social economy flourish. New civil society and solidarity organizations emerged as a result. This is reflected on the national samples of those countries most seriously affected by the crisis (Greece, Italy and Spain) in which a considerable portion concerns organizations which created during and due to the crisis.

The crisis is usually seen by AAOs' representatives as an opportunity for experimentation and broadening of their activity. In Italy, it is noticed that social turbulence due to the crisis is providing opportunities to politicize economic struggles and express them through radical initiatives. In countries less heavily affected by the economic crisis, there is still an increase of social demand for the supportive action of solidarity groups and the alternative economy due

to unemployment and social anxiety. In Germany, the crisis is motivating society towards a value shift but also encourages solidarity towards those – individuals, groups as well as whole nations – who are most seriously affected. Swiss AAOs representatives do not perceive any direct consequences of the crisis on their operation (with the exception of the organizations working with vulnerable groups), while they pointed out indirect effects, mainly related to the operation of the capitalistic system and the negative impact of the liberal market on their networks and associations.

The refugee crisis is usually mentioned by German and Swedish AAOs representatives as related to the economic crisis and relevant to the intensification of AAOs' activity. In Sweden, an indirect effect of the economic crisis is that groups of beneficiaries have changed as a result of immigration, with immigrant populations are increasingly becoming the main beneficiaries of AAOs. The reverse is observed in Italy and Greece, where the financial crisis urges interest and participation of the native population in supporting structures and programs which were only used by immigrants before the crisis.

Furthermore, the crisis context negatively influences the operation of AAOs, since their funds are reduced and participation is becoming unstable, while demand increases. In France, associations that are mainly political, and which also receive extensive state funding, have suffered the most in the crisis. In Spain the fall in funding together with increased complexity of the bureaucracy has resulted in drastic reductions on AAOs' personnel. Volunteering is also attenuated and commitment on participation is reduced, as mentioned both in Greek and Spanish interviews. In Poland, a country which is not harmed by the recent economic crisis, AAOs state that EU funding is becoming less accessible and their networks with other European countries are deteriorating. In the UK, on the other side, there is reported a desire to move beyond the austerity idea of plugging a sort of 'gap' in the welfare state towards a far more, positive and empowering notion of people gaining skills, social connections and advice in a community setting.

6.4 Initiatives and Projects

AAOs' projects and initiatives are developed as a response to their beneficiaries' needs and reflect the main challenges and problems faced by European society. AAOs usually adopt

multitask approaches, which involve different action types and concern both the provision of services and advocacy. The actions undertaken by AAOs are reportedly characterized by heterogeneity, flexibility and innovation, inasmuch they are tailored to the needs of specific populations and localities. Altogether, the national samples of the nine participating countries cover a very broad spectrum of actions, which are summarized in what follows.

Services which focus on basic needs include the provision of food (e.g. social kitchens and soup kitchens), shelter and commodities such as clothes and furniture as well as healthcare services to those in need (the homeless, poor and immigrants). In addition to these, AAOs usually offer psychological support and consultancy on legal, labor and financial (tax-related mainly) issues. Actions which aim at empowerment such as educational services (e.g. language classes and tutorials to assist students' learning) together with other types of activities, such as training courses for the unemployed and projects which aim at encouraging artistic expression are reported in Spain, Greece and Sweden. Another type of activity seen in Spanish organizations concerns initiatives to assist people who do not have the capacity to pay for basic utility services: water, electricity and gas. In Italy, there are reported activities of housing occupation coordination and projects of building a mutual aid scheme based on members' contributions.

Political advocacy is expressed through different action types, apparently according to the degree of formalization of the organization as well as the degree in which a nation is exposed to economic and socio-political crisis. Hence, in Sweden, AAOs' representatives mainly refer to activities of communication with policy-makers and the organization of public campaigns, while in Greece advocacy involves more confrontational types of activity, including lobbying and protest participation. Watch-dog activities, political protest and participation in local consultations are reported in Polish interviews.

Alternative economy associations and informal groups are developed under the criteria of democracy, equity, respect for the environment and collective rights. They include solidarity-based consumer groups and consumer associations, consumers-producers networks, work collectives and fair-trade enterprises (Italy, Greece and France), social economy initiatives to include vulnerable groups, such as disabled persons working as art merchants (Poland). Alternative economy ventures include initiatives elsewhere adopted by AAOs, such as alternative currencies, time banks and barter clubs.

Another category of activity includes the repertoire of action developed around a physical space: self-managed spaces in which different initiatives and projects take place are mentioned in Germany, France and in Italy; community centers and social clubs, providing co-working spaces or meeting places for the enhancement of cultural and symbolic capital are reported in Spain and Poland. Bonding and collective identity building initiatives are also mentioned in Greek interviews.

In parallel to their main activity, many AAOs undertake initiatives of collective empowerment aimed at awareness arousal, knowledge diffusion and encouragement of public participation. These include public libraries, public lectures and the organization of artistic events, art exhibitions and cultural workshops. Three types of pivotal communication initiatives are mentioned in Switzerland, relating to the increase of the number of volunteers, the information of local community about AAO's activities, and fundraising.

In addition to the aforementioned projects, our study interviewees have also referred to initiatives regarding organizational issues. In the UK for example, initiatives on feedback and data collection, as well as fund-raising initiatives are mentioned.

6.5 Governance and Networks

One of the aims of the study was to understand how civil society organizations relate to political institutions, with other social actors and with each other. Our interviews' findings shed light on the relationship of AAOs with the government, public administration, local authorities and other organizations and interest groups.

Different attitudes are reported with respect to AAOs' relation with the government, with the differences observed being interpreted under the light of the formal/informal distinction to some extent. Hence, formal organizations, such as NGOs, usually establish a constant relationship with the government. This seems to be unavoidable, since they base their activity on public funding, which may pose restrictions on AAOs' perceived independence as noticed in the Spanish interviews. Other organizations abstain from public money and from any relationship with the government in order to preserve their autonomy or because their ideological standpoint suggests a confrontational rather than a cooperative approach. This is often observed in Greece, Italy, Spain and Germany and rarely in Sweden. The latter is the only country in which it is

reported that state and municipal institutions seek occasionally help from civil society organizations.

Another dimension of AAOs' connection with political institutions comes from the degree to which the core group of activists are engaged in politics, as noticed in the sample of Italian organisations. In France, only members of environmental organizations and unions mentioned having established linkages to political parties. In Greece, connection with policy actors become more visible when it comes to local administration, which is reportedly interested in and supportive of initiatives known by the administration itself. Finally, one usual way in which local administration supports AAOs is via the provision of the space to host AAO activities.

Apart from government and local administration, AAOs are often related to public administration when they carry out activities in public spaces – e.g. they have to ask for special permission. Additionally, they may cooperate with public services and organizations, such as public education schools and universities or with public hospitals, with unions as well as professional groups. One of the most significant features of the researched organizations in Poland is a strong connection to locality.

As regards networking and the establishment of relationship with other organizations, this is widely acknowledged as important or even vital for AAOs in order to gain public reach and exchange knowledge.

6.6 Beneficiaries and Participants

AAOs may act towards a single specified population, various target groups or society at large. Regarding participation, different forms of engagement are observed. In what follows, the issues of beneficiary groups and participants' profiles are discussed.

Organizations which offer services for the satisfaction of basic needs – such as soup kitchens, social kitchens, housing projects, networks of goods collection and delivery – act primarily towards vulnerable groups, such as the poor, homeless people and immigrants. Empowerment projects, materialized through social tutorials, public lectures and educational or art workshops most of the time address children, youth or the unemployed.

Advocacy organizations have specified target populations, children, young people, women, families, citizens affected by the economic crisis, migrants and refugees among other marginalized or vulnerable groups of society. Other organizations address the working class or a segment of it, such as precarious workers or freelancers.

Social economy organizations, such as social cooperatives, solidarity agriculture projects, and work collectives benefit participants themselves as long as they are making a living through their work in the organization. Self-beneficiary groups are those which take part in alternative economy ventures, such a barter club or a community cooperation of horizontal structures. The same holds for consumer-producer networks and fair trade enterprises, in which small enterprises and small producers are both participants and beneficiaries. Moreover, the general public can be regarded to benefit from all the aforementioned actions, since these recommend alternative choices of consumption and inasmuch as these initiatives and the organizations which undertake they remain open and accessible. In the case of consumer associations, citizens and consumers are apparently the beneficiaries.

The reach of social clubs and cultural groups usually does not exceed the local level, which suggests that the beneficiaries of their actions are communities, neighborhoods and local citizens.

With respect to participation, voluntary work is mostly taking place in the organizations' activities, which holds true across all action types of AAO. Volunteers are usually students, retired or unemployed people but may also be individuals who hold regular jobs and contribute either by exercising their professional qualifications (such as in the provision of healthcare services and legal advice) or irrespectively of their occupation. Most service-provision AAOs encourage their beneficiaries to participate in the activities of the organization as volunteers. In some countries, such as Greece and the UK, it is underlined by AAOs' representatives that volunteer participation is usually considered as a means to acquire working experience and as an opportunity for future paid employment, possibly within the organization.

Apart from the active engagement in organizations' activity, participation is possible through private donations or via crowdfunding. Noticeably, however, as pointed out in German interviews, the heterogeneity in participation is problematic when the organization adopts a

consent-based approach in its governance or demands active involvement of its members. Hence passive modes of participation are avoided in social economy enterprises or in the more alternative, subcultural and radical groups.

6.7 Outcomes and Best Practices

At the end of our interviews, we asked respondents to evaluate the outcomes of the organizations they represent and discuss their main successes, failures and challenges. This section describes the main findings with respect to AAOs' self-assessment and best practices' recommendations.

AAOs' evaluations are mostly positive, except for short-lived ventures, which need more time to evaluate. While in Sweden, AAOs seem not to be keen on evaluation techniques and the measurement of effectiveness, monitoring and assessment practices have been viewed as helpful by British interviewees. In Italy, it is observed that the activists of mainly social organisations tend to focus on direct outcomes, while activists belonging to more politicized organisations tend to go beyond them and discuss the relevance of their action in addressing broader social issues.

Organizations are in general proud of their initiatives and the work undertaken by their members. The promotion of new and alternative approaches together with the establishment of democratic processes and horizontal structures at the organizational level are considered their most important achievements by representatives. Collaborations, networking and the establishment of associative spaces are mentioned when respondents referred to the successes of their organization. Project experimentation and innovativeness, mainly as reflected in public reach, are also mentioned when considering the positive outcomes of AAOs.

While increased public interest in the action undertaken by civil society organizations and the rise in the number of incomers are indicators of success, meanwhile, meeting increased social needs, and the readiness and flexibility necessary to fit in the social context of their operation are conceived to be their major challenge. When considering problems, our respondents referred to funding issues, as well as institutional, legal and political instability. French data reveal that the main problem is caused by the drastic drop in public funding, alongside with the growth of beneficiaries originating by the spreading of poverty, uncertainty, and general vulnerability,

which holds true for all countries affected by the financial crisis. When it comes to failures, AAOs representatives refer to issues of introversion, lack of experience and expertise, and the instability of participation.

The hybrid approaches in which service provision works in synergy with advocacy and the breadth of initiatives are regarded by our respondents as a good practice in Poland. Networking and communication strategies elsewhere described help organizations to be relatively resistant to problems emerging from political conflicts. In the UK, new models of funding with gaining funding from the corporate/private sector are highlighted in many interviews regarding good practices.

6.8 Summary

Since the economic crisis in 2008, European society has been experiencing continual changes in economic, political and institutional fields. Most importantly, the everyday life of European citizens has worsened and the hardship provoked by persisting crisis is reflected in increased unemployment, reduced social benefits and lower living conditions. These lead to social turbulence as well as to the search of alternative forms of resilience. AAOs can be viewed as being the collective actors who develop resilient, coping strategies to confront hardship, provide opportunities and create spaces of empowerment and social emancipation through alternative and innovative paths.

These civil society organizations and collectivities had to be broadly defined with respect to their organizational structure, action type and field of interest to cover the spectrum of needs they seek to satisfy and to fully understand their societal potential. Our sample of countries, Sweden, France, Switzerland, Germany, the UK, Spain, Italy, Poland and Greece, allowed us to attain a comprehensive description of how alternative to conventional solidarity action is expressed, since these countries have been affected by the crisis to various degrees but also because they are characterized by different traditions of civic engagement.

What all AAOs have in common is their core values – social solidarity, fairness, inclusive cooperation, networking and civic participation – as well as their disposition to remain loyal to their mission but still flexible according to the social context in which they operate. Close collaboration of participants and beneficiaries, respect for the environment and the

establishment of ties in their locality further characterize AAOs. A common ground of AAOs, which stressed by our Swiss team, is the creation of environments where beneficiaries can feel safe and comfortable and develop feelings of belonging. Irrespective to the degree of their politicization, most AAOs adopt critical outlooks towards the current growth model and their activity aims at proposing resilient, alternative and sustainable practices.

The AAOs tend to focus precisely on the urgent needs faced by vulnerable groups such as women, children, minorities and the elderly, who have been affected by the crisis. It is the middle class that is more broadly affected in the countries most seriously hit by the economic crisis (Greece, Italy and Spain) where increased unemployment, working precariousness and cuts in public spending have led to unprecedented austerity. The impoverishment of families in Greece is reflected in children being unable to pay for their food in school and the rise of demand for food and products of everyday usage, as mentioned by AAOs' representatives. In Spain, our interviews reveal that the youth particularly are harmed by persisting crisis, with anxiety, frustration and the loss of hope accounting for leaving their studies. Rising poverty among the elderly is reported in German interviews. As mentioned in most countries, immigrants and refugees have also gone through very hard times during the crisis.

All of the aforementioned social groups are mentioned to be AAOs' target groups. The qualitative data of phase 3 show that in countries where there was no crisis or crisis effects have been at their minimum, the beneficiaries of these solidary, civil society organizations are largely vulnerable and marginalized groups – such as the homeless, drug addicts, long-term unemployed people and victims of trafficking and crime, as mentioned in Swedish interviews – or local citizens, communities and neighborhoods (Poland).

The crisis has affected AAOs themselves by creating instability in their funding, but also in the commitment of their participants. AAOs' resistance to crisis-related and other political, institutional and socio-economic pressures and their longevity can be the subject of more in-depth analysis in future publications based on the qualitative data produced in phase 3 of WP6. Further analysis and research needs also to focus on, a) background variables like available resources and contextual variation, b) on beneficiaries and volunteers, as well as c) AAOs' relation with the state, the EU and other international agencies.

7. France



7.1 Introduction

This report provides a discussion of ‘Alternative Action Organizations’ (henceforth, AAOs) in France. It is based on the delivery and analysis of 20 qualitative interviews with representatives of 20 French AAOs. Accordingly, the report sets out to describe the impact of the economic crisis in France and of how French society is currently coping with these impacts – along with those of any other crises related to economics – via the mediation of the AAOs themselves. In focusing on the best initiatives and projects highlighted by French AAOs, not only do we provide information on the perception of the economic crisis (and related crises) but we also focus on the main challenges, risks, and problems. At the same time, we examine the ways in which civil society organizations try to cope with the economic crisis (and related crises) and seek to generate resilience as well as improving coping strategies.

In line with the work plan, the French team has conducted 20 interviews with the representatives of 20 AAOs. Drawing on the findings of first phase (6.1) of WP6, especially the mapping of different types of AAO, we have identified the prevalent types of AAO at the country level, their position along the formal/informal dimension and their policy/solidarity orientation. Based on this method, 60 target AAOs were selected. These AAOs were first contacted via email, then by telephone. Only eight AAOs out of 60 agreed to participate in the project following the email contact. Two more AAOs joined the project after the telephone briefing. Five more AAOs were selected as a result of snowballing throughout the first wave of interviews, by asking interviewees to suggest further possible names of relevant organizations to be contacted. Finally, the French team chose to use their personal contacts —according to criteria of local or regional significance and relative standing of each AAO— to select the last five AAO representatives to be interviewed.

Overall, the sample is well shaped in terms of the main dimensions, with 10 formal vs 10 informal AAOs along the formal/informal axis, and 10 services vs, 10 politically-oriented along policy/solidarity axis. The resulting sample has also taken account of the AAOs’ distribution on the national territory. Ten interviewed AAOs are based in Paris (which hosts the headquarters of the majority of AAOs), while three others are based in the south-west, two in the north-west, two in the south-east, and three in the north-east. Gender was taken into consideration since the beginning. However, given the limited available time to contact the organizations and arrange the interviews, gender especially was left in the

background, compared, for example, to age differences. The final sample includes 8 women and 12 men. The average age of the interviewees is around 40 years.

At the same time, the sampling has followed in accordance with the main findings of the first phase (6.1) of the WP6. Five interviews have been conducted with alternative and NGO (1; 2; 3; 4; 5); five interviews have been conducted with informal citizens/grassroots (6; 7; 8; 9; 10). Two interviews have been conducted with protest groups (11; 12). One interview has been conducted with conservative grassroots groups (13). Three interviews have been conducted with NGOs/Volunteer Associations/Nonprofit Organizations (14; 15; 16). One interview has been conducted with charities (17). Lastly, one interview has been conducted with a labor organisation (18) while two further interviews have been conducted with formal social economy enterprises (19; 20). Even considering the “AAOs actions’ beneficiaries” variable, the sampling accurately follows the findings of the first phase (6.1) of the WP6. Six of the target AAOs act towards Small Enterprises/Producers; four of the target AAOs act towards citizen-consumers; four of the target AAOs act towards a local community/ies; one of the target AAOs acts towards children; two of the target AAOs act towards women; four of the target AAOs act towards vulnerable people (migrants for the most part, but also precarious workers or the unemployed).

The setting of interviews was quite varied. Eight representatives were interviewed in their respective AAOs’ headquarters. Two representative were interviewed during an event they had organized. Three representatives decided to visit interviewers in their office at Sciences Po. Five interviews were realized on Skype, while two were conducted by telephone. Ten interviewees – that is, half the sample – agreed that the interview could be recorded, whereas the other 10 interviewees did not agree to have their interview recorded. The first contact e-mails to the target AAOs were sent at the end of May 2016. The interviews were conducted from June 10, 2016 to July 28, 2016.

Each interview lasted one hour on average. The longest interview lasted for over two hours. We found a strong relation between the involvement of AAOs in the economic crisis and the duration of interviews. Usually, the more the AAOs were involved, the longer their representatives were eager to speak.

The fact that interviews had to be carried out in the summertime, within a timespan of two months, limited the availability and choice of AAO personnel from which selecting the interviewees according to the WP6 criteria. That is, limited timing to conduct interviews proved to be a main issue. A certain degree of suspicion from interviewees has been another important factor. In particular, some people and organizations manifested their doubts about the interview in general, and how specific questions were going to be used in particular. Some refusals were motivated with the unwillingness to take part in an

EU-funded research project owing to a basic disagreement the AAOs had with what they perceived as the EU's political agenda. Furthermore, some AAOs' representatives either had no time to dedicate to our project, or were openly uninterested in it.

Interviewees confirmed that they understood clearly each question they were asked. However, sometimes interviewees said that it was difficult for them to disentangle their own personal perspective from the AAO's point of view.

7.2 Political Issues

Some key findings have emerged from the high position and extensive experience of the representatives of organizations. Fifteen out of 20 interviewees are either the president or the vice-president of their organizations. Three others are volunteers, while the remaining two interviewees have qualified themselves as employees. Among the 20 interviewed AAO representatives, only five have declared to be or to have been in the past linked with political parties. Four of these five representatives belong to volunteer-based organizations having as beneficiaries almost exclusively small enterprises/producers and citizen-consumers. The political party they all refer to is the Green Party. According to the interviews in France, therefore, there is a strong relationship between Green Party militancy (in the past or at the present time) on the one hand, and membership in Producers and Citizen-consumers based AAOs on the other. The fifth representative of this group of political or formerly political representatives belongs to a union, and asked that the party to which he belongs to should not be named.

The other 15 representatives claim they have no connections with any political party. They have all stressed the non-party character of their organisations. In spite of this claim, however, 15 out of 20 interviewees maintain their organisation's actions to be genuinely political. According to one of the interviewees from a Citizens/grassroots AAO,

"...our organisation is non-party and nonreligious, but we are nonetheless militants, supporting new forms of solidarity and criticising the current political system: the one based on capitalism."

(Interview 6)

Another interviewee says:

"...our organization is non-party and nonreligious, but we ourselves are political in that we uphold the cause of the female role in French and European society and we support solidarity among women who choose to take care of their family."

(Interview 2)

In addition, a third interviewee from a migrants focused AAO says:

“We propose services to help the migrants but at the same time we uphold a clear political position, which is to promote an open and welcoming migration policy.”

(Interview 4)

Sixteen out of our 20 interviewees are not having their first experience in dealing with AAOs. The majority of them can be considered to have developed a professional know-how with regard to the associations’ ‘universe’. Of course, each one has walked their own individual path, but they share common traits in relation to the organisations’ particular fields. For example, eight out of 10 representatives from organisations classified as ‘Small Enterprise/Producers’ and ‘Citizen-consumers’ (according to our internal WP6 guidelines) collaborated with or belonged to environmental groups and movements. The remaining two representatives differed from the others merely in that they only participated to Green Party initiatives and actions, while the others had an average of two job or internship experiences in various NGOs before becoming full-time members of their current organisation.

Fifteen out of 20 interviewees have been moving from one organisation to another, and/or they have taken part in actions organised by more than one group within the same general field (for example, those starting in the migration field tend to stay in the migration field, etc.). Four out of 20 interviewees are having their first experience as activists within an organisation. For two of them, their interest in the field arose after leaving their job, and stemmed from wanting to participate in charity or generally socially-helpful actions. In the words of one of the interviewees working with migrants:

"I started to take part in my organisation’s activities as a volunteer, only lately, after retirement, but in truth I have been desiring to work with migrants for a very long time. Before starting my job career as accountant, I had attended some training courses to prepare for humanitarian aid, only to drop that occupation for personal reasons. That dream, I always carried with me, and here, in this association, I feel like I have a purpose and I’m useful."

(Interview 5)

The remaining two already participated in actions organized by associations, but only sporadically.

Emphasis should also be put on some differences in the personal motivations claimed to be at the root of participation in the various associations’ activities. These differences often depend upon the

placement of the organisation on the formal/informal axis, where the great NGOs are the apex of formality, while the grassroots, political, local groups are close to the purely informal end of the spectrum. Within the greatest and more strictly organised NGOs, personal motivation grows together with the increasing professional involvement of the individual in the association's dynamics. By contrast, in smaller and more informal groups, a spontaneous and more directly political urge to change the status quo are more likely to play a stronger role in driving people to activism. In particular:

- For those working with environmental issues or within the producer-consumer framework, the motivation often stems from a critical stance toward the capitalist system and from the need to keep contact with food or other basic economic activities.

In the words of an interviewee,

“Our organisation is against the capitalist system, against supermarkets and mass consumption. We want to defend local producers.”

(Interview 19)

- For those who belong to the so-called “Informal Citizens/grassroots” (according, as usual, to the WP6 grid), the motivation is political in nature and the criticism is aimed specifically to the French associative system, which is considered to be too focused on services while lacking in political vision (and even too uncritical, submissive and passive to a national political agenda and governance). In the words of an interviewee,

“Our actions are towards the migrants, we go find them on the streets and speak with them. We are not offering to them any service. We only try to establish a human connection with them, and they in turn begin participating in our activities and helping us. We are against NGOs' professionalism.”

(Interview 10)

Hence, we can sum up from these findings that many AAOs' representatives included in our study had already accumulated some experience within the associational field, whether in NOGs or informal groups, before taking responsibilities for the ones they now lead, participate in or work for. Activists who work in environmental associations are usually those with the largest experience and more likely to have connection with the Green Party or other environment-oriented parties.

7.3 Economic Crisis Effects

The specific question about the effect of the economic crisis on the organizations and their strategies produced long and detailed commentaries among interviewees. Each answer about the effect of the economic crisis on the organizations and their networks took on average fifteen minutes and led to

interesting findings. The main conclusion is that associations that are mainly political, and which also receive more extensive state funding, have suffered the most in the crisis. Subsequent rebalancing policies have affected these associations through substantial cuts. The most important example is given by the numbers of humanitarian associations funded by the French Minister of Social Affairs, with an overall budget of 35.000€ in the 2006. In 2008, 2009 and 2010 the French Minister of Immigration has funded the associational field with 55.000€, 56.000€, and 47.000€ respectively. But in the aftermath of the economic crisis, by 2011 the associational field did not receive any more substantial public subsidy. The specific sector of activity appears to be the most important factor in determining the impact of crisis on each AAO – certainly more than the orientation alongside the solidarity/service or political and formal or informal dimensions (as defined in WP6). The AAOs which suffered the worst during the crisis are those dealing with migrants and vulnerable people. These organizations have been progressively forced to focus on more urgent needs (e.g. food, housing, health) across the country. Among these AAOs, the ones which operate halfway between formal and informal and between services' provision and political action are the most heavily affected. This is due to the vicious circle of the reduction of their public funding while at the same time their potential beneficiaries (that is, those people in need) are growing.

Furthermore, the employment crisis makes it difficult to enlist new personnel or maintain those already in place. This in turn puts at risk many projects and relationships with sponsors and beneficiaries. The same work must be completed with less manpower, less time and at a faster pace. A representative says:

“One of the consequences of the economic crisis and of the austerity policies is that more and more people in need come seeking our aid. We have to face an increasingly growing demand and we cannot take care of everyone, because we are forced to cut the time for each single person or to filter and try giving the priority to the situations we deem to be the most urgent.”

(Interview 1)

Another consequence consists in the lack of training of the recently recruited volunteers. In the words of an interviewee:

“We have had an increase in volunteers during the last years. We do our best trying to train them all, but they cannot reach the competence level of the sector's professionals, and in the most difficult situations, going without professionals means more problems.”

(Interview 17)

For the smallest groups (either formed almost exclusively by volunteers, or with no more than five employees), based on services' provision (help to the sick, migrants or other vulnerable people), the economic crisis meant a progressive slowing down of their activities, sometimes up till the final shut down of their associations. The French team interviewed two associations of this type, which were going through very hard times. But interviews overall showed that even representatives of larger organisations talk about the concrete risk of finding themselves in the same situation.

An interviewee, speaking on behalf of an organisation dealing with the social support and health care of migrants, says:

“Small associations have an hard time proving their worth in a system where funds are progressively cut off and that are only granted to organisations following the same efficiency-based logic which inspires capitalist competition. These associations used to do innovative, original things, they cared for integration and for the dialogue between French people and the migrants. But they didn't make it: those who try to do something new, they don't survive. Only organisations providing services, and which can prove through numbers that they are efficient, survive.”

(Interview 5)

Overall, interviewees have confirmed that, for the associations affected to a greater extent by the crisis, there has been a drastic change in terms of strategies and the search for new networks. In the specific assistance sector, even associations which have not undergone the reduction of their funds have been hit hard by the crisis, given that there was a drastic increase of users due to the crisis itself. Crucially, however, some more political associations complain that budget cuts do not stem from the effects of economic crisis, but from 'European liberal crisis and values', hiding behind the failure to fund certain services. In the words of an interviewee,

“The economic crisis has not been as heavily negative as the crisis of European liberalism.”

(Interview 15)

In particular, the largest associations were less affected by the crisis, no matter what sector they were working in. While furthering the development of a strong sense of 'resilience', the crisis has also been felt in specific sectors such as agriculture.

By contrast, the economic crisis has not had a clear negative impact on those organizations dealing with environmental issues. According to their representatives, there has been a steady growth in the number

of people participating in their organizations throughout recent years, along with a multiplication of local branches across the country. Increasingly, more citizens approach alternative markets, production or consumption models, and local producers. Accordingly, these associations that do not receive public subsidies or other private funding have sometimes remained unaffected by the crisis. And, in the organizations based mostly on voluntary work, there has been a remarkable growth of membership in the time of crisis. Given the widespread reception of the tenets of grassroots and proximity farming, there has been an enlargement of market volumes leading to the growth of employment possibilities. One could thus say that these associations have profited from the crisis. Far from furthering a contraction of resources and strategies, there has been a development with a broader vision and an increase of international networks between similar associations.

In general, the crisis has been seen as an opportunity, especially on the side of many small non-political associations. One of the interviewees states:

“No, we had no negative impact from the economic crisis, on the contrary, the small producers that work with us increased their gain because they are now able to sell everything they grow.”

(Interview 20)

Along these same lines, the representative of another AAO dealing with fair trade says:

“We felt no impact because the crisis hit banks, corporations, the hard economy. We have nothing to fear from the crisis of capitalism because we are outside of capitalism, and we propose an alternative economy. We are enjoying an increase in number of subscriptions. In 2016 we went over 100 members. More and more people become aware of the goodness of alternative economical practices, whereby the relationship between producer and consumer develops without any intermediary.”

(Interview 10)

For non-political associations that were born more recently, however, the discourse is different again. Since they do not have a method of comparison with the pre-crisis era, the interviewees were not able to indicate substantial variations in terms of strategies or pre-crisis budgets. One could add up that, among the youngest generations at the head of non-political associations, it is common to find out the overall feeling of being the product of the economic crisis itself. In the words of an interviewee,

“We are children of the crisis.”

(Interview 9)

7.4 Initiatives and Projects

The variation in impact of the crisis on associations of different kinds, sizes and scopes, comes together with a correspondent spectrum of differences in the action taken to counter the crisis. The typical strategy employed by medium-sized organizations formed by employees (between 15 and 30) is the creation of new job positions in order to attract funds (which are more easily granted to association exhibiting a clear and stable societal structure, with fixed positions suggesting an higher degree of professionalism, and with people whose only task is to look for funding possibilities).

According to a representative,

“We suffered so much from the crisis that we had to create a full-time job position for a person dedicated to the search for funds. State funds have visibly shrunk, the same goes for regional funds. Now we need one person to follows every procedure, to do the paper works, to write down projects addressed to private financiers.”

(Interview 14)

Another widespread strategy consists in raising the request for volunteers needed to support the professional operators in their daily routines. For the largest NGOs (those with more than 100 employees on French territory), the best routes are the same. They search for private sponsors and recruit more volunteers tasked with assisting the professionals in their daily work. Even more than private financiers, great international organizations — ranging from the worldwide agencies such as the UN or the EU to corporate groups or transnational foundations — become the main target of this search for funds. To gain and maintain the support of such organizations is by far the top priority for AAOs of both large and medium size. For other types of association, the impact of the crisis is less dramatic, and no specific counter-strategies have been developed. The typical project of those classified in WP6 as ‘movement networks supporting alternative development’ and ‘groups promoting bio-products of local farm’ are advocacy as well as educational activities for their volunteers and employees. The aim is to build a new economic system, more respectful toward people and environment.

As regards unions and the groups labelled ‘Informal Citizens/grassroots’, the recorded protest actions (street demonstrations or marches against the new job act and informal open assemblies) are about the distrust toward the national and European governmental policies (i.e. the austerity-inspired reforms and acts) more than about the economic crisis in itself. Compared to the years before 2010, the frequency of meetings that were arranged by ‘Informal Citizens/grassroots’ groups to exchange ideas and proposal has increased, driven by a stronger need to self-organize and strengthen politics from below. In fact, all

the AAO taken into consideration tend in general to establish partnerships with other similar organizations within the same sector and arrange regular meetings with them, so as to discuss and write together common protest documents to be addressed to political representatives.

7.5 Governance and Networks

Eight out of the 20 organisations taken into consideration are associative and militant networks of more than 100 local associations whose main aim is social economy and respect for the environment. Their actions are thus focused on economic, social, cultural, and environmental rights, as well as the promotion of alternative developments or of bio-products of local farms. All these organisations uphold the idea of exchange between producers and consumers which should be an alternative to the predominant capitalistic market system. In the words of an interviewee,

“We make the observation that wealth is unequally distributed in the world and that the current organization of international economy exacerbates inequalities and generates a violation of the human rights and a destruction of the environment and of the sense of solidarity.”

(Interview 8)

Two out of the 20 AAOs are protest/informal groups that mobilize against government policy by supporting the creation of informal spaces where citizens and associations of different kind can gather, meet together, and build up more stable interactions in order to discuss common issues and problems of social relevance. Three out of the 20 AAOs deal with migration and vulnerable sectors of the population (the poor, the *sans papiers*, women in trouble). One of these three AAOs dealing with vulnerability is a national NGO, while another is a regional-scope association and the third is a small, local association. These three AAOs consider themselves to be organisations involved in politics for defending the rights of vulnerable parts of the population. The first two organizations offer a series of services, while the third is entirely devoted to political activism and to the criticism of government migration policy.

Two other AAOs interact with women and children issues. One claims to defend the rights of women to take care of their family, supporting a return to the traditional idea of the family as a place where children relate closely to their parents. In the words of an interviewee,

“Without the unity in the family at its base, our society cannot become a better one.”

(Interview 3)

The other association also claims to defend women’s rights, but by taking the opposite direction. Accordingly, its representative says that:

“Our aim is to defend women who work and who are left alone by the national welfare system. Women who finds themselves with children and without a partner are among the groups with an highest risk of falling into poverty.”

(Interview 16)

A union organization was set up with the purpose of defending workers’ rights, even building up a relation of opposition against the government over the last job reform and current work policies. Another AAO is a foundation which gives funds to other associations dealing with vulnerable population sectors, mainly the poor and the sick, or families with employment difficulties or those going through economic troubles. Finally, the last three organisations all similarly promote and support the establishment and practice of fair trade and a fully sustainable economy.

Overall then, all the interviewed organizations have intensified their horizontal collaborations during the last five years, working with each other, while the relations with established political actors has remained unchanged. The relations between organizations focused on the support or defence of vulnerable groups and their institutional counterparts (local and national agencies and offices) has become progressively more tense. In particular, this tension has focused on the reduction of public funds and the political choices of government, which, in the words of an interviewed representative,

“...leaves to the associations the burden of taking care of the more vulnerable groups and people while at the same time withdrawing any form of economic support.”

(Interview 13)

Another interviewee has confirmed that:

“The associations are the only actors who stands up to defend the poor people in need, caught between the austerity policies implemented by government, through which the welfare state is about to disappear, and the new political trend of close the borders. We [“the various associations”, e.n.] have to work together to be stronger before the politicians and the government.”

(Interview 2)

As regards the organizations labelled as ‘Small Enterprises/Producers’ and ‘Citizen-consumers’ and the cooperatives linked to the environmentalism networks, these work together on a regular basis. The main reason, in this case, is to magnify the visibility and spread their cause among citizens and the general public. Members of these environmentalist organizations, as mentioned earlier, are the only ones, along

with the unions, who told us of having established relevant linkages to political parties. As noted, the crisis has not been a major obstacle for these organizations. Accordingly, there has been no relevant change in terms of strategy and research of new networks.

7.6 Beneficiaries and Participants

Thirteen AAOs bring into connection the so-called ‘Small Enterprises/Producers’ with the ‘Citizen-consumers’ in the limited space of local communities. These AAOs are based on the meeting of groups of consumers with one or more producers. Their initiatives rest strongly on the active role of the beneficiaries who participate in many ways to the organizations’ activities: they can be employed as volunteers in shops, or they can act as promoters by founding new local branches of their organization, or they can merely help negotiating the prices of the product together with the producers. The most formal organizations (two in the above mentioned thirteen) deal exclusively with smallholdings and small enterprises, promoting and supporting the formation of cooperatives composed by enterprises which work respecting the environment and according to a vision of fair trade, social economy, and sustainable development. These organizations thus limit themselves to give an organizational and economic support to the enterprises interested in joining their efforts in that framework. One of the interviewees states:

“We help small enterprises survive the economic crisis. Small enterprising participating in our network are not suffering financially from the crisis.”

(Interview 20)

One of the two interviewed protest groups operates exclusively with migrants, while the other deals with all citizens and people in general. The one focused on migrants is formed by volunteers who search for migrants (stations, roads, etc.), talk with them, and try to convince them to get involved in the group’s activities. The involved migrants become volunteers themselves, helping in turn for more migrants to learn French and to look for places where to spend the day or find a regular shelter. According to a representative of one of these groups, these type of activities are quite different from those of services-providing associations and are furthermore genuinely political (‘protest-oriented’).

According to a representative of this group, the economic crisis had negative effects for migrants:

“...Homeless migrants grew in number during the last years and they live in greater and greater poverty. Railway stations are overcrowded with them and the association cannot properly take care of them all.”

(Interview 11)

The second protest group deals with organizing events and writing documents which expose and condemn the exploitation of African territories.

Two AAOs operate with women and children. One is formed by volunteers, with the expectation that every member can play an active role in the daily activities of the association. On the group's blog, these women exchange opinions and plan their activities. The second organization, by contrast, is more formal, and it is composed by volunteers and employees whose task is to provide services and offer support to women with children who find themselves in hardship. One of the interviewees states:

“The effects of the crisis on women with children is dramatic. They are the new poor of our society. There's need for specific policies in order to better their situation. Increasingly more women come here requesting economic support.”

(Interview 17)

The remaining four organizations of the sample deal with vulnerable and marginal segments of the population. Three of them work mainly with migrants, two are in the health sector, another one brings material and legal support to migrants in situations of vulnerability or uncertainty (waiting to obtain the residency permit, being without shelter etc.).

The last organization's purpose is to defend the rights of workers and the unemployed. This group is one among those witnessing a rise in the number of their beneficiaries living in a state of severe uncertainty and insecurity. The interviewee states:

“The real problem is for the groups already living in a state of economic uncertainty. These people cannot find an employment, save for the spare temporary, insecure job. The young, non-specialized, the lone women with children, the foreigner.”

(Interview 18)

7.7 Outcomes and Best Practices

While the data resulting from WP6.3 need to be analysed in more detail along with the results of previous steps in WP6.1 and WP6.2 (that is, the quantitative data), the sample taken into examination here gives us already some interesting indications on the impact of the crisis in the French associational field. These data would have difficult to collect without in-depth qualitative interviews, which in turn could not be properly arranged without an extensive reference grid as elaborated throughout previous WP6 steps. A main finding is that the economic crisis has been hitting France in various ways and with different

intensities depending on the operating sector as well as the size of the AAO taken into consideration. The most affected AAOs have been those providing services to vulnerable segments of the population (mostly, migrants and the poor). Among these, the smallest and less formal groups dealing with integration proved to be the most exposed to the crisis. These AAOs, which various interviewees considered to be the ones proposing the most 'alternative' actions, are today at risk of extinction. Then in the 60 organizations preliminary contacted by the French team answered that they could not deliver the interview because they already had to stop their activities some months before. This means that, in the short time passing between the different WP6 steps, these organizations passed from a state of full activity (making them viable targets of the WP inquiry to paralysis) to final demise.

Furthermore, the crisis of AAOs can be observed across the whole national territory, with peaks in the smallest cities. The most resilient organizations are found in the great urban centres, mainly in Paris. This is due to the thicker network of AAOs and the more extensive number of volunteers in the capital city. In fact, the main problem for many medium-sized AAOs is caused by the drastic drop in public funds devoted to them, alongside with the growth of beneficiaries originating by the spreading of poverty, uncertainty, and general vulnerability. These AAOs try to deploy counterstrategies in order to carry out their activities, for example through the creation of new job positions specifically conceived with the purpose of seeking funding opportunities and sponsors. They are also aware of the risk of working in a state of permanent emergency by which they have to deal with more pressures owing to the increased numbers of beneficiaries and less personnel. This means having to focus increasingly on the mere provision of services while at the same time decreasing their focus on the political dimension.

It is remarkable that the AAOs which are active on the whole national territory are the least affected by the crisis. Even for them, though, it can be observed that political activities progressively decrease at the same time as the offer of various services continues to increase. The informal and protest-based AAOs are generally formed only by volunteers, and hence, are they not directly concerned by the economic crisis. Considerable indirect effects, however, should not be ignored. For example, finding a place for the group's headquarters can become difficult or even impossible at a time of intense growth in rents. Accordingly, many informal protest groups occupy abandoned or unused places, which are sooner or later cleared by the police, redeveloped and then eventually offered again in rent to the same AAOs that occupied them in the first place, but at a reduced cost which the association, sometimes, can now afford.

Once again, we have found that the AAOs untouched by the economic crisis are those that operate in the field of the protection of environment and organic production. The fact is that, despite the economic

crisis, more and more people choose to change their mode of consumption and their nutrition habits, even if that means spending more than one would otherwise spend buying food at supermarkets.

Through qualitative interviewing, the French team has identified a set of ‘best practices’ in the context of the economic crisis. Indeed, all interviewees talked about their own AAO’s best practices in times of organizational hardship, lack of funds, and decreasing personnel. Attention could thus be focused on the main best practices in the field, as we have found them more consistent with organizational activities’ end strategies in the French context, and as they are directly acknowledged by the greatest number of representatives.

The first ‘best practice’, given that it appears to be in use among all the associations that were surveyed, is their extensive engagement in the establishment of networks. In fact, the organizations work together and pool their efforts so as to face the economic crisis and increase the visibility of their actions and initiatives. In doing so, the causes commonly supported by different organizations can become more visible *vis-à-vis* policy elites and public power representatives, for example through jointly arranged demonstrations, events, and communications.

A second widespread ‘best practice’ is the building of datasets in order to educate the public through publications and dissemination of information via media channels. One of the interviewees, for example, has put emphasis on the collection of data over the specific problems that illegal migrants face when trying to gain access to the state welfare in order to inform the public about this issue. This work of the education of citizens is an important step with a view to pressuring the government into the undertaking of specific choices and the elaboration of overall policies.

A third best practice consists in the collaboration with, and support of, universities and research centers so as to further shared projects. An AAO representative, in this regard, says:

“This phenomenon is widespread in France. There are some national associations which specialized themselves in the participation to scientific projects co-directed together with scholars from the academic world. We also do that sometimes. It is useful in order to illustrate and publicly expose the situation. We take part in national and international academic conferences and we host and receive scholars and keep in touch with them. The work we do, this way, is to build networks and expose the situation with credible sources and scientific data to back up our claims.”

(Interview 12)

In the words of another interviewee:

“Besides, to work with scholars allow us to reflect on our very activities from the outside. When you work in a hurry you have no time to stop and reflect, and in that professional researchers can sometimes be helpful.”

(Interview 17)

Lastly, an additional best practice that has emerged consists in the establishment of new associative spaces where different organizations can work together. Some associations, for example, have engaged in squatting in an old, abandoned hospital in Paris. They have used the building to work together for welcoming homeless people. The place has also become a place for cultural exchange, where many meetings, assemblies and events are held.

7.8 Summary

A number of main points can be emphasized to summarize the key findings of this report. First, many interviewees had previous experience in other NGOs and associations. This previous associational experience may be taken as an evidence of a process of progressive professionalization of people working in the social sector. This process of professionalization may lead to the weakening of the more political aspects of activism, as some interviewees have emphasized. One of the more promising research paths this report opens up for future research in France is to closely study the process of professionalization of this associational field. In particular, some interviewees have talked about the risk that a purely service-provisional idea of AAOs might deprive people operating in the sector of their militant purpose and drive. There is a convergence, here, with the findings of existing academic studies on the French associative world. Yet it should also be noted that members of the AAOs operating in the environment protection sector are, more often than others, strongly connected with the Greens and environmental parties through overlapping membership and participation in common activities.

Another crucial point that has emerged in this study is that the impact of the crisis varies depending on their respective size and operating sector. More than the difference between formal and informal or between politically-oriented versus service-providing, the factor that seems to influence how much an organization suffers from the economic crisis is the operating sector. The AAOs providing services to vulnerable segments of the population (for example, migrants and the poor) are those most heavily affected by the crisis. By contrast, the AAOs which claim to have been relatively unaffected by the crisis are those more connected with the protection of the environment and the market of bio products. Space

is thus opened up for further research into reasons why this specific sector, far from suffering from the crisis, is going through such a substantial flourishing.

In addition, we have found that the uneven impact of the crisis leads to different counterstrategies on the part of the organizations, depending on their size and orientation. The main strategies always involve the search for stable funding channels — whether they consist in private sponsors or large transnational agencies — and more generally the tendency to work together by establishing networks of AAOs operating in the same sector. The importance of volunteers as a strategic asset has progressively grown with the crisis, as they are increasingly vital to replace lost personnel. While raising new issues, the increased presence of volunteers somewhat counterbalances, at least in specific sectors, the overall process of professionalization. Examining best practices, not only did we find the extensive creation of new job positions specifically conceived to seek funding opportunities and sponsors, but also we found the decision to build datasets in order to alert the public through publications, dissemination via media channels. Furthermore, it has emerged quite clearly that the economic crisis has brought about a growth in demand on the majority of AAOs dealing with the provision of services. This has led to a state of permanent ‘hurry’ that forces many associations to sacrifice important parts of their activities, such as advocacy and self-analysis, to focus instead on overwhelming daily basic tasks.

There are some good links between AAOs and political parties, especially the Green Party. In fact, activists who work in environmental associations are usually the ones with the longest experience. These linkages, however, are not prevalent in the field as they concern only a quarter of organizations. Political urge and broader vision to change things are especially dominant among smaller and more informal organizations, even if the latter do not translate their political urge into established contact with political parties. Another point to emphasize is that some interviewees, rather than talking about the economic crisis itself, have especially focused on the specific crisis of the welfare system and access to it. In doing so, they have revealed the deeper political consequence of the crisis, which can also be linked to the fact that the majority of interviewees admit that it is increasingly harder to establish and maintain meaningful relations with government and institutions. More broadly, we have detected a general disagreement with the political choices of government and with the stance of political opposition.

Our study has also revealed some crucial findings over interactions and networks. We put emphasis on informal spaces where citizens and associations of different kinds can gather, meet, and build up more stable interactions to discuss common issues and problems of social relevance. These networks also involve a more extensive relationship with universities and research centres. All the interviewed organizations have intensified their horizontal collaborations during the last five years, working with

each other. These widespread interactions have allowed for maintaining a working focus on a large volume of different beneficiaries, including smallholdings and small enterprises, migrants, women, children, and a variety of vulnerable and marginal segments of the population. This finding can surely be linked to the widespread reception and adoption of alternative forms of solidarity, consumption, and political action. These alternative forms, more than ever before, appear to be in line with the daily problems and aspirations of citizens. Their importance is especially evident *vis-à-vis* the impact of crisis on families, women, children, minorities, and other vulnerable groups. Our findings do show that all these vulnerable groups suffer the most the economic crisis, as they are indeed the most important beneficiaries for many organizations which, at the same time, increasingly lose access to financial resources.

In particular, we have found that the AAOs which suffered the worst during the crisis are the ones dealing with vulnerable people, especially those organizations which operate halfway between formal and informal and between services' provision and political action. Yet the economic crisis has not had a negative impact on those organizations dealing with environmental issues, with more citizens increasingly approaching alternative markets, production or consumption models, and local producers. One could go as far as saying that these associations have profited from the crisis. Far from furthering a contraction of resources and strategies, there has been a development of voluntary membership, with a broader vision and an increase of international networks with similar associations.

8. Germany



8.1 Introduction

This report summarizes our findings from the third phase of Work Package 6. For this part of our research, 21 interviews with representatives of Alternative Action Organizations (AAOs) were conducted. For the data presentation in this report, key areas of interest were defined in order to give the reader the best possible overview of the material and highlight findings relevant to the project. After we briefly describe our sampling strategy and the sample itself in the following paragraphs, section 8.2 summarizes findings concerning personal experiences of the interviewees and the political aims and core ideals of the AAOs. Section 8.3 summarizes effects of the economic crisis as perceived by the interview partners. In section 8.4, examples of specific initiatives and projects are listed in order to highlight not just the variety of alternative actions but also their main focuses. This is followed by a description of the governance structures and networks of the AAOs as the interview partners described them (section 8.5), i.e. including their evaluation of these. Section 8.6 summarizes information about the beneficiaries of but also the participants in the projects and initiatives. Finally, we describe outcomes and best practices, again as seen by the interview partners (section 8.7), before we conclude in section 8.8 by also giving some outlook for possible further research.

The interview partners were selected according to two dimensions, namely the orientation of AAOs towards policy or service, and their degree of formalization. The latter is reflected in the sample of interviews conducted in Germany as it includes more formal charity and social service oriented organizations like food banks and soup kitchens, a municipality connected neighborhood office as well as formal but alternative businesses on the one side and less formal grass root initiatives rooted in local subcultures on the other side (one free shop, housing projects, solidarity agriculture). However, given the traditions of the German third sector, we expected already in the beginning a high degree of formalization, i.e. organizations choose very often constructs like ‘e.V.’ (listed association) in order to be able to receive donations and to deal with legal challenges. Alternative housing projects use the same formal and legal constructs as collective enterprises, e.g. formal GmbH structure (a legal form for businesses), as soon as money is involved and due to legal and tax issues.

Compared to, for example, Greece, we found the AAOs in the original sample of websites (see part on Greece in this report) overall to be older and organizationally more developed.⁴² This is clearly connected to the different impact of the crisis (see chapter on Greece). There is, at first glance, a bias towards service orientation of the German sample which is connected to a minor role that protest played for the organizations in Germany. Still, the policy aspect is well covered since most organizations do engage in political actions, ranging from direct lobbying to political education, all the way to defining their economic activities as being ‘political’ themselves. In order to, on the one hand, include regional specifics, and, on the other hand, be able to find local networks, three regions were chosen. We included organizations in a middle-sized West-German city, organizations in a bigger East-German city, one in a small East-German city, and, last but not least, a number of AAOs in the capital Berlin. This ensured additional regional variation and accounted for the differences in social structure and civic engagement between East and West Germany.

The interviews were conducted in various places, according to the wishes of the interviewees and what was most convenient for them. Two activists (from a women’s group and a barter club) were interviewed in cafés, one in the interviewer’s own office, one at his home (the interviewee being involved in an alternative housing project and known by the interviewer beforehand), three at the homes of the interviewees who use their homes also partly for their organization (one self-employed, one solidarity agriculture initiator, one alternative housing activist), and the remaining at the offices of their organizations. In the latter cases, the interviews were almost always combined with a small ‘tour’ of the daily work of the AAOs. Giving the interview partner the choice of place should improve confidence of the person (e.g. familiar environment) but also readiness to meet for an interview as it better suits their schedule preferences.

The interviews were conducted between June 27th and October 13th 2016, thus the field phase clashed with the summer vacation period. This made it sometimes difficult to find time for the interviews but, in general, those who responded to our requests were happy to give interviews and were often also interested in the work of the LiveWhat project. The contact was initiated via email and in most cases a specific date was organized via telephone. About one third of initial email requests were successful. Only one explicitly turned down the request stating that they did not want to be ‘cost free data providers for some research project’. All interviews conducted went smoothly, with difficulties only encountered on two occasions where it was more difficult to explain the purpose of our research. Mostly, the

⁴² Loukakis, Aggelos, Johannes Kiess, Maria Kousis, Christian Lahusen. 2016. "Alternative Forms of Resilience in the Eurozone Crisis: Comparing the Greek and German Experience, 2007-2016", paper presented at the *Council for European Studies (CES) 23rd General Conference 2016*, Philadelphia.

atmosphere was friendly and open, ranging from professional (older interviewees, formal organizations) to more informal settings (interviewer and interviewee having similar social backgrounds in age, education, etc.). The interview partners ranged in age from college students to employees and pensioners and nine out of twenty-one interviewees were women. All formally hold the position of official representative, initiator, or similar leading position; however, some also emphasized the horizontal, non-hierarchical structure of their organization. Regardless of the way the AAOs are organized officially, e.g. collectively organized groups vs. traditional associations with boards etc., in the older and more formal organizations roles and positions are more clearly appointed.

8.2 Political Issues

In a first step, we focus on positions and experiences of the interviewed activists. Comparing the personal experience of the interviewees, there were basically two main groups: those who entered an existing organization and at some point took over a position of responsibility in the organization, and those who started or initiated new organizations themselves (together with others). The experiences of these two groups differ to some degree. For the first group, the changes into leadership were often unplanned e.g. caused by dropouts of older board members (Interviews 4, 11, 13). Activists in this group are older and taking over leadership positions is a form of duty, sometimes a necessity, or carried by the will to keep the organization alive. For the latter group, especially for the social or sustainability-oriented enterprises, there was often a specific form of ‘alternative entrepreneurship’ (e.g. Interviews 5, 6, 8, 18, 19). As one interviewee put it, she would like to see more people to engage with their ideas and energy for a better future like she does:

Well, just being afraid all the time, all can go wrong [...] and just doing it, starting something, if this would attract more people, more energy, I don't know more. But I spread this idea!

(Interview 9)

Activists of this group were mostly younger and so were their organizations.

For some of the interviewees, their organization is a full-time job and they actually make their living from it (Interviews 2, 3, 9, 19); for others, it is full-time but they are pensioners (Interview 6); for others, it is an activity in their spare time (Interviews 1, 4, 10, 16, 17, 18). The latter could be again divided in those of more subcultural character (e.g. Interviews 17, 18) and those which could be described as classic civic engagement, even though this differentiation is sometimes misleading, e.g. in the case of Interview 20.

In a second step, we focus on the organizations' missions, core ideals and political aims. The ideals and aims of the organizations differ both in scope, i.e. societal impact vs. alternatives for group members, and direction, i.e. policy vs. service orientation. Some clearly utter their principal goal of overcoming or establishing an alternative to capitalism in general. This includes more defensive viewpoints and slogans like the following:

We don't inherit the world from our fathers, but we borrow it from our children.

(Interview 2)

Another activist stated:

I want, for example, never to take on debt, because that's a growth driver.

(Interview 9)

These clear positions on sustainability can be seen as typical for the large environmental movement which has a strong tradition and base in Germany, but also for the dissatisfaction with the state of society as a whole:

So we for sure want to draw some attention to the fact that this 'throw-away-society' is not necessarily the highest and best dogma.

(Interview 17)

One step further and with a clear political-economic agenda an alternative housing activist stated his organization's goal:

The basic idea is like that: To withdraw real estate, houses from the market – the power of disposition to those who actually live in them.

(Interview 18)

This was combined with specific critique of the current housing policies by the government in Germany:

The national government sells its real estate in big cities at the highest price, there you can see/ That is Schäuble-austerity at home, right.

(Interview 18)

These organizations, like most AAOs that we interviewed, engaged mainly in concrete actions – in that case:

[...] pragmatic aims: advising, supporting. Networking for people who want to operate or start some form of self-managed, in the broadest sense, housing cooperatives.

(Interview 18)

But these specific, pragmatic strategies were often connected by the interviewees to bigger goals:

That it is not enough, so to say, [...] I would say to do political campaigning, but that one has somehow to set some material basis against it, against capitalism. In a certain way, and there we had this idea we establish a collective [enterprise] [...]. The aim is, after all, to establish alternative economic structures, which carry themselves. Which are economically sustainable, at the end this is the political approach, to say, if we want to change something in society, we can't leave out work and we want to organize work differently.

(Interview 19)

Most of the interviewees considered their work, even the solely pragmatic actions, to be political in this sense. In other words, 'political' was defined widely and included sometimes simply the establishment of alternatives to mainstream economics. Some interviewees were less enthusiastic:

"It sadly is to the most part service, externally at least, but it is still also, to use once again this overstretched concept 'politics', still political in quotation marks, to also show, that it is ALSO about a different way of economics, than the way we do it today. That is, clothes worn SHORT-TIME, then thrown away, again bought, and so on. "

(Interview 17; emphasis marked by capital letters)

Other organizations, however, were less ambitious with stating goals and their critique on capitalism. For example, the women's organization we interviewed focuses on the (re-)integration of women in the labor market by building self-esteem, networks and giving personal advice. While they affirm feminist ideas and the self-organization of women, this is not generalized or canonized in political claims; rather they concentrate on daily work and very practical claims (see Interview 1). A representative of one food bank, while emphasizing the own limited scope, also pointed at the responsibility of the state:

We do not fully provide, we only support.

(Interview 8)

She went on to claim that, if needs go beyond what they can offer, people should take to the street to protest and turn to the state.

8.3 Economic Crisis Effects

The effect of the crisis on the organizations included in our sample was mostly indirect. Many reported a more long-term and continuous growth of the number of beneficiaries (Interviews 6, 8) and/or customers (Interview 2). As one food bank representative put it, “there was always something” going on that increased the number of beneficiaries (Interview 6) and until today they are not reaching all that would be entitled to receive support (Interview 8). Again, she emphasized that it could not be the job of her organization to help all people and to full extent:

We do not want to provide basic supply. We want to give what we have.

(Interview 6)

This organization is already providing 1.5 million people with food, while about seven million would be entitled (i.e. holding some official entitlement to public assistance) to receive almost cost-free food from them. Individually, the crisis in Germany did have some effect and one of the barter club activists explicitly stated that when she became unemployed the barter club was a possibility to have,

...a social network and to swap ideas, and to get help and to save money.

(Interview 13)

A direct consequence of the Great Recession is the higher prices for property and increasing rents, both due to the low interest rates and ‘safe haven’-effects: people invest increasingly in German real estate which accelerates the already problematic growth rates of prices in the cities (Interview 18). This makes it more and more difficult to establish alternative housing projects but also increases pressure on low-income households (Interview 14). For others, the effect of the crisis is even a reverse one:

Well, Germany has passed on the crisis abroad relative effectively, so much that rather some people that had free time during the day earlier now also loiter in their jobs.

(Interview 16)

The crisis, however, did have some effect on the motivation of the people involved in the organizations.

Well, it has definitely encouraged us, because we observed from the outside what was happening to the people because of the crisis.

(Interview 15)

For one social entrepreneur, her value systems and aims were mostly established before, but,

The crisis was maybe again a confirmation for the sick system.

(Interview 9)

For a collective enterprise we interviewed, the crisis increased their motivation to become economically independent and less attackable by economic developments:

One can see that it became necessary in these countries (in Southern Europe) to organize differently because of the crisis and I think that we can take that step AFORE so to speak.

(Interview 19; emphasis marked by capital letters)

The women's network interviewed reported an increase of activity during the crisis years of 2008/2009 when women were more interested and did not trust the traditional male breadwinner model anymore.

The network was more alive then.

(Interview 1)

Now, after the crisis was not visible anymore for them, they had again become,

SATED and COMFORTABLE.

(Interview 1; emphasis marked by capital letters)

Also, the crisis in Greece led to some solidarity actions which were, however, small in scope, e.g. buying olive oil from a cooperative (Interview 16) or exchanging know-how (Interviews 18 and 19).

Interviewees repeatedly mentioned two crises: the refugee 'crisis' and Hartz IV (the Agenda 2010 labor market reforms in the early 2000s):

Yes I think, well, Hartz IV, refugees and, those are definitely two big topics which matter to us, which are also very important in the house. Whereas Hartz IV and precarious life situations more or less, that has for us, those who live here, a big impact and that leads also to organization. [...] No one goes alone to the Agency. [...] Last time, nine people went to the Agency, because one guy was threatened a few times that he'll receive cuts.

(Interview 15)

Poverty and social exclusion – for which the state and the government are held responsible – are seen as drivers for social disintegration and high crime rates among the youth (Interview 12).

Another ‘crisis’ mentioned several times was the arrival of a great number of refugees in 2015 which led to additional efforts of the organizations to organize help (Interviews 1, 16, 17). The increase in the numbers of refugees was also connected to the financial crisis by some of the interviewees (see Interview 17). At times and in the eyes of some activists, the work with refugees was becoming so dominant that they had little time for other political work (Interview 16). Others saw no effect at all, of any crisis (Interview 4). For another interviewee, people in general are more interested today in questions of sustainability and also in their work they made a slight shift from economic and ecological sustainability to also include social sustainability (Interview 11). Thus, although the crisis in the more narrow sense did not have a huge impact on Germany, there are economic hard times and also signs of worsening connected to austerity, labor market reforms, and insufficient support of refugees by the state.

8.4 Initiatives and Projects

The organizations interviewed in Germany engage in a wide variety of activities and in the following we describe examples to provide an overview. Most initiatives were not related to the crisis directly but the projects can still serve as examples of resilience-building as they aim to help people coping with individual hard times (barter clubs, food banks, homeless initiative, etc.) or to build more resilient and sustainable economic structures (alternative housing, sustainable and social enterprises, etc.). The activities range from networking to specific, very local actions that aim at very simple problems, e.g. a dark alley in the neighborhood that attracts crime.

The women’s network is organized precisely as that: a network for exchanging information and for building confidence and trust. To this end, the group organizes topical lectures, as a way to attract women, after which they have a half an hour networking round (Interview 1). Another organization functions basically as an open space for other organizations and does not engage in own activities. But they provide the basis for different initiatives, reaching from solidarity food cooperatives to political groups, the local branch of an anarchist trade union, an organization of unemployed, and more (Interview 16). Also the barter clubs work primarily as networks. One of them does not engage in further activities (Interview 4) while the other one does participate in organizing lectures and providing information to the public together with other organizations and institutions (Interview 13). The latter also wants to strengthen their organizational structure as they see basic and technical problems with the way the network is organized and to lower the bar for new participants. Also network based are the solidarity food cooperatives. Here, members regularly initiate extra projects that enlarge the product line by jointly ordering from other cooperatives also in Greece or Spain or by starting side projects like the raising of chickens to provide eggs for everyone interested in the group. The projects very much live from individual engagement (Interview 10). The next level of initiatives of this organization would be to

create a network of solidarity food projects in order to exchange specialized products between the groups. This is being organized at the moment. In the other solidarity food project, there were also plans to organize as a food cooperative to jointly buy additional organic food at lower prices – mostly because they cannot grow and provide special products like coffee themselves (Interview 5).

The sustainability awareness initiative we interviewed focuses on public lectures and political and environmental education. Their newest projects include the plan to have their talks included at the local university's *Studium Generale* and to include social sustainability more visibly in their thematic range. To this end, they organize an exhibition showing who actually runs the university, that is, people who do night shifts, do the cleaning etc. Another idea that has not yet been implemented is to establish ecological and reusable cups-to-go at the university (Interview 11). Some interviewees described different dimensions of activities, including networking and exchange of ideas among projects and people involved in similar activities, lobbying and advocating, including activities with local and municipality administration and the establishment of a service division, as a means to professionalize and establish themselves (Interview 18). The case of this umbrella organization of alternative housing projects is particularly interesting as it currently also engages with projects beyond the city in smaller and less affluent communities where housing prices (see section above) are still affordable. This is achieved by advising specific projects but also by networking and informational events in the region and beyond (Switzerland and Greece were mentioned).

The social and sustainable enterprises we interviewed were much more focused on their individual business model but this does not exclude other activities, reaching from educational to social.

Well, first of all we are doing agriculture. Then we have founded an association not only as a legal construction [for the ownership of the farm], but also because the association is charitable, charitable because it does public relations. Thus we try to spread those ideas we have and make public the forms of agriculture we do. We do a lot of public relations, starting with guided tours, public lectures, farm festival or social gatherings.

(Interview 2)

They supply local schools with organic fruit, offer tours for school classes, internships for school kids, etc. Another social enterprise collects money during its regular activities and organizes cooking events with specific groups like refugees or the poor (Interview 9) aiming to spread the ideas of good and healthy food and making these ideas available for all social groups. Finally, a collective enterprise we interviewed only engages in help and support for other collective projects in similar branches in their

own city (giving advice, sharing storage capacity) but also with one group in Greece (advising and assembling of machinery) as they have themselves not yet the funds to do more (Interview 19).

The biggest organization interviewed in this sample was a food bank or Tafel:⁴³ They have 45 supply points distributed across the city, supplying some 50,000 persons just with this one ‘pillar’. The other ‘pillar’ consists of more than 300 partner organizations that are supplied with food, both pillars together reach 125,000 persons each month. As a third pillar, they established a project where they,

...teach children and adolescents in processing food, about food and what to do with it, because we say we have to do something for the next generation. If we see that in this generation, that people cannot cook anymore, because they can't cook anymore or because they don't want to cook anymore/ Everyone watches cooking shows, but no one cooks with it then. That is something fascinating, it just not materializes in practices.

(Interview 8)

Beyond that, this specific organization is related to many other organizations in the city and joins actions and projects. Networking and collaborations are key to the actions of this organization.

The neighborhood organization we interviewed referred to a long list of small projects that they conducted over the years reaching from social integrative projects like cooking classes to urban building issues like the illumination of walkways where girls got robbed regularly or other safety related measures. A central area of work is neighborhood management, including the involvement and participation of citizens in urban planning and a periodic round table. The interviewee specifically reported on two prestigious projects that we also want to present here:

And since a few years we have an “adolescents workshop” here where we have truants, school drop outs, and young adults that already went through a number of qualification programs and are still without a degree and without work, we try to make up for their school degrees for those still required to go to school and for the others to find out in which areas they have talents and where they could work. Each of these groups works at that place for one year and we get ENORMOUS successes. We were a little bit shocked in the first year [...] when four out of five

⁴³ 'Food bank' is used here as a general concept. The Tafel concept in Germany (and Austria and Switzerland) has a more specific codex. While food banks work more as a storage system where firms can bring food that they cannot sell anymore and then social organizations can buy from the food banks, the German system is organized more in a way of direct provision to beneficiaries (see end of Interview 8).

passed. In the second year nine out of ten, in the third year seven out of eight [...] which is very interesting because in all these cases the school had said: 'this young man is not trainable'.

(Interview 3; emphasis marked by capital letters)

The resources needed for this kind of work with the young people are also reported to be enormous, but, as the interviewee emphasized, it can work. Another project is a joint venture with a local association that works with young offenders. The interviewee tries to get these young people and gives them special tasks like renovating playgrounds or skate parks in order to establish an identification with the facilities of the neighborhood and the young people:

And we have almost no damages where we did this because there is a totally different identification with the things, where the young people not only joint the planning but also helped with the construction. Someone who shoveled 20 cubic meters of concrete KNOWS what he did and will not just go there and destroy things because he knows what is behind it.

(Interview 3; emphasis marked by capital letters)

A homeless help organization reported also different projects or work areas. For one, they have established shared apartments that are used for transitory housing. During the stay of the clients, additional help is provided by social workers. After the first years of the organizations they added an ambulant option in the mid 1990ies which aims to help people that have not yet lost their home but are threatened because they can't pay their rent anymore. This is described as a win-win situation because the housing associations have less trouble and do not lose money if help is provided at an early stage (Interview 14). Revealingly, private housing companies were not even mentioned here.

8.5 Governance and Networks

The relations with state institutions or other established political actors varied again widely from very close (one neighborhood organization is fully funded by the municipality) and well established contacts (e.g. the food banks), to distanced and even repulsing (subcultural oriented and anti-capitalist groups). The more alternative the groups were in their approaches, the more critical they were of the state and the less they were included in the social welfare infrastructure.

The easiest support from established government or political structures is the provision of space to meet for groups, like one of the barter clubs stated (Interview 4). The women's group also has regular contacts to the local gender mainstreaming office, agencies for advanced training, and an office of the city that focuses on employability of women (Interview 1). The sustainability awareness organization regularly cooperates with political think tanks that finance political education events, *Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung*

(Green Party) and *Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung* (SPD), Greenpeace and the youth organization of the Left were the ones named specifically (Interview 11). For other organizations, important and regular contacts concentrate around building permits or similar. These contacts are often regarded as mostly friendly and all right as municipalities appreciate the organization (Interview 2) or the interviewees perceive at least some interest from the municipalities (Interviews 11 and 18). But others reported ties also to be not as important or a necessary evil because of the bureaucracy (Interviews 9, 19). Distance and absence of conflict is most important for them.

For them I am a normal catering enterprise. They do not know, that I [laughs] wish world peace [laughs].

(Interview 9)

Again, others were very clear about not being interested in contacts with the state or established political parties (Interviews 5, 10, 16, 17, 19). These were initiatives with a clear anarchist, anti-capitalist, and/or subcultural background.

For the food banks and the most formal organizations that rely on direct money from the government (neighborhood office) or the welfare system (homeless initiative), contacts are much more frequent, established, and important. For the neighborhood office, it is daily routine:

But I have said it before, we have a well-functioning network. [...]. I know the whole administration, I know the structure, I know the organization, but most of all I know a lot of people. I do not have to, that I have to be honest about, if I engage with the municipality administration/ A citizen would only get an answer when he writes a letter, because only then he creates a file [laughs] [...] Normally I do not have to 'create a file'. I call colleagues and say: 'Hello, I have a problem, could need help,' and then it goes under way.

(Interview 3)

And he added:

I am the interface to the local administration. It is a nice phrase, interface between citizens, administration, and politics, interface between social service agencies, administration, and politics. [...] With our work we try generally [...] to network, with that we succeeded [...], no neighborhood has such a good network.

(Interview 3)

This network includes churches; schools; kindergartens; youth centers; the local children, youth, and family help center; social welfare agencies; a private youth project; the prevention unit of the police; and the integration agency. Beyond that, political affiliation is depicted as not helpful:

We have the agreement [here] at the round table: no politician comes to our round table. We do not do politics, we solve problems. Yes, and if politicians come to us, we discuss with them, we like to do that and we emphasize what is possible and what is not, but we ourselves and I myself we do not engage in politics.

(Interview 3)

The *Tafeln* (food banks) also reported very good contacts. For example, the mayor of one city helped with building permits at their new location and the waste disposal service by the city is for free. Still, the relationship to ‘politics’ is not without conflict because of basic structural problems:

I think we take our task seriously. That is taken for granted, but we also expect from politicians, that they engage more for our pensions and that there is simply a better pay.

(Interview 6)

The second food bank is involved in many regional and nationwide initiatives. Many members of the regional parliament are individual supporters of the *Tafel*. These contacts to politicians and administrations seem to be very valuable and for these organizations are an important part of their network stretching the political sphere:

I have via the different activities, via the many awards and via the many events many contacts in the political direction. And so I find this also very nice, since it is very colorful because of that. SO it is not important whether it is SPD, CDU, the Greens, earlier it was also the FDP. I will definitely exclude the AfD, that is totally clear, and everything from that area, that is also clear. But all other existing, there it is ok.

(Interview 8)

On top of that, the national federation of the *Tafeln* is under the auspices of the Federal Ministry of Families, Seniors, Women and Youth, even if that brings the criticism of being close to politics – despite the fact that they do not rely on government funds at all (ibid.). For these NGOs, nonpartisanship seems to be an important asset to be successful in the long term.

For the homeless initiative, the coordination with the local administration is key. They receive funds only for their work with homeless people or persons who are facing homelessness. The contacts to the

local social services department are also crucial for helping as soon as possible and often preventative. This cooperation worked less well in the past when changes in administration made it more difficult to engage with beneficiaries, thus good cooperation is not taken for granted but highly appreciated. (Interview 14) Finally, in terms of financing alternative projects, the respective municipalities but also EU funds (EFRE) are often named, as well as private (*Montagsstiftung*) or political (see above) foundations.

Relations to government bodies or political actors were in often not reported as being important. Because interviews were conducted in only three regions, in these regions, many of the organizations had contacts between each other that were mentioned by the interviewees. As described above in the section on ties with political actors, network building differs between organizations: some see it as vital to their initiatives, others have some contacts which are however not core to their mission. In the subcultural and alternative organizations, ties are often less formal (helping with tools and machinery) or organized by individuals rather than the organizations: e.g. people living in the housing projects obtain food from the solidarity agriculture project which themselves are distributing there products at the open space project we interviewed. The social entrepreneur interviewed founded the sustainability awareness initiative before she left it because she finished university. These ties were not known before the interviews were conducted but revealed a tight social fabric among these organizations, that is, at least in one region the interviews focused on.

The neighborhood initiative once again gave a good example for the first category:

We observed that here are many families of which children go to school and kindergarten in the winter months with insufficient clothing. The kids come without sandwich boxes etc. And from our round table for example we have since a couple of years now a cooperation with the local Tafel where families can buy food etc., fruit, vegetables, yoghurt on the cheap. That kind of things we develop at the round table.

(Interview 3)

Generally, every actor is a possible cooperation, depending on the pending issues and ongoing projects (Interview 3). The *Tafeln* themselves rely on a wide network of donors. Beyond that, they have their national umbrella association with over 900 local branches (and a few more in Austria and Switzerland). Another organization that works in their area are the “clothing shops” of the church affiliated *Diakonie* where people can buy cheap used clothes and shoes (Interview 6).

One social entrepreneur reported on two layers of her network, her community that helped crowdfunding her business and which remains as a social base that she cultivates via Facebook and a newsletter, and her business partners. The latter are integral part of the alternative business model and were described as follows:

I have a strong team around me [...] and there is a broad network of partners who produce things, for example vegetables, our organic farmer [...] that is just [...] this chain of appreciation, that we have a super good relationship to our baker/ we have been there and have baked with them, it's about 40 kilometers.

(Interview 9)

And the networking was described even enthusiastically:

I am really a networker and I am really good linked up.

(Interview 9)

Personal ties and communities are also important for the housing projects and the other two alternative enterprises because they rely on direct credits as financial kick-off but also on help from friends and other projects (Interviews 2, 18, 19).

Since in one city there are many groups that engage in sustainability, degrowth, and, more generally, environmental issues the possibilities for the organization we interviewed in this area are huge. However,

That, somehow, is not so easy because every association has its own structures and own things they are doing [...] I think that there is not so much a core network, but always different people or if you do a specific topic, then you contact people anew [...] also because the students are done with studying at some point and so it is difficult to establish a core network.

(Interview 11)

Within the degrowth and sustainability discourse, an alternative think tank was named as an important partner (Interview 11). Thus, a high density of groups sometimes works less in terms of cooperation but as a breeding ground or also a range of opportunities for newcomers.

For the solidarity agriculture projects networks are an important way to learn, buy seeds more cheaply, and modify their product line through cooperation (Interview 10). Beyond the local network, individual ties are used for special products and importing products such as olive oil. The classic organic farm we

interviewed is a member of an umbrella association which helps with the branding but beyond that seems not to rely on a network other than the group of supporters that helped funding the farm at the beginning (Interview 2). The barter clubs are also not involved in a lot of networking activity: there is a national association but only one mentioned it. There is a clearing institution where ‘coins’ from different regional barter clubs can be transferred but this, as well, seems not to play a big role and thus networking is limited to exchange experiences (Interviews 13, 4). Still for these organizations, local networks and contacts are important for their daily work of course.

For the politically alternative, left-wing groups open spaces and hosting different action groups is a matter of principal. The solidarity agriculture organizations, *VoKüs*,⁴⁴ and anti-fascist groups are part of personal and political networks in the city (e.g. Interviews 15, 16, 18). The free shop has its space in a (formerly) squatted building with other projects, including craft shops sport groups, artists, etc. and all help finance the whole complex (Interview 17). Alternative banking like *betacoop*, direct credits, and the GLS bank have been named by many projects as well (Interviews 2, 7, 15, 16, 18, 19). Compared to this, the alternative enterprises are more open at least when it comes to their buyers: it is not the case that they only produce for ‘the scene’ even though some politically friendly may belong to the core buyers (e.g. Interview 19).

8.6 Beneficiaries and Participants

All organizations rely on the engagement of their participants and roughly three types of participants can be distinguished. First, there are those making a living with or through their organizations. This includes the social enterprises for which the whole idea of the project is to find alternative economic activities (Interviews 7, 9, 19), the farmers, both at the organic farm and in the solidarity agriculture projects (Interviews 2, 5, 10), and the social service related organizations that basically hold regular jobs (Interviews 3, 14) but also one now widely institutionalized and professionalized alternative culture, living, and housing project (Interview 20). Secondly, there are those participants investing a large amount of time in their organizations, this is true, at least to some extent, for most interviewees since they hold responsible positions but some exceed, usually if they can make a living in occupations relevant to the AAO’s objectives or when they are already retired (Interviews 6, 8, 12). There are also those, and this is true for most other participants beyond the directly interviewed, who engage in their spare time while they study or hold regular jobs (Interviews 1, 4, 10, 11, 12, 15, 16, 17, 18) including the participants in the solidarity agriculture projects, housing projects, or the many volunteers working

⁴⁴ *VoKüs* = *Volxküche* or people’s kitchen is a kind of soup kitchen that developed in the European squatter scene in the 1970s and 1980s.

in soup kitchens. Of these some are also retired, but many do it also additionally to their jobs. Third and finally, there are those participants who contribute to the organizations as donors (Interviews 6, 8, 17) or by giving direct credits or participate in crowdfunding (e.g. Interviews 2, 9, 15, 19). The advantage of having many donors supporting with small amounts is that this source is less likely to run out in economic downturns when e.g. companies may cut donations (Interview 8).

The reasons for participation can be diverse even in one organization:

Some come out of Christian motivation, others because they finally want to give something back, because they are well off themselves and they want to help others. Again others say: 'I am in need myself, that's why I want to do something for others, who are in the same situation.' Then there are those, that say: 'I need to participate, because I need a reason to get up in the morning at seven and to want to be somewhere at eight or nine.' So there are endless motivations, there hasn't been a change.

(Interview 8)

This heterogeneity sometimes causes the problem of effective governance, and in this particular organization – a classic civil society organization – there is thus a clear top-down idea about the principals and main aims of the AAO. This contrasts heavily with the collective, consent-based and radical democratic approach of the alternative organizations (solidarity agriculture and alternative housing). More problematic is often the social structure. In the area of classic social engagement, there is an age bias:

The problem is that young people are not becoming members anymore. They now do text [with their mobiles] donation, or they donate once to somewhere, whatever, but they do not become members so easily. And that is a problem.

(Interview 8)

A similar observation was made by the Interview partner of an alternative open space project:

[...] a lot of young generation students just stayed away, because - I don't even think that it is objectively so much more work and less spare time, but the subjective PRESSURE is much more. And people, I believe, feel less that they can afford this, to do something that does not earn money or pimps your CV.

(Interview 6; emphasis marked by capital letters)

Another self-observation by activists is that the more alternative, subcultural AAOs, e.g. housing projects and solidarity agriculture cooperatives, are often quite homogenous:

We definitely have to admit that we have built this house only with people that went to university. That is, we have two or ONE person [out of 25] that did not study and two people did vocational training but went on also to study [...] we were all white, mid, end 20ies, beginning 30ies, that just had the privilege to study, that is, studying was a big thing, you must not ignore that. And there you have simply other capacities, than if you do vocational training und more time to/ the possibility to arrange things differently, to take a semester off.

(Interview 15; emphasis marked by capital letters)

For the core groups of these projects, it is thus not primarily about meeting urgent and basic needs:

I think it is not so much the main motivation, but the main motivation is simply to [...] yes, to live fair, I would say, without impacting other people, that you don't even know mostly, somehow negatively in their way of life and possibilities.

(Interview 10)

They also talk openly about their problems with reaching out to socially weak groups:

Yes of course, there is a lot of lifestyle there, because without conviction [...] most people would get out during the winter months. [...] It is definitely the case that if someone comes to me then he comes with the desire, 'I want to know where my vegetables come from. I want it to be regional. And I want it to be seasonal.

(Interview 5)

The same activist also reported failed plans:

This was also an idea, not only to provide to this organic elite, because IT IS AN ORGANIC ELITE. They have the privilege of knowledge.

(Interview 5; emphasis marked by capital letters)

Another interviewee said:

Sadly it is still a more or less stereotype kind of people that participates in such a project and often it is relatively young people, studying or having just finished university, and small, young

families. And actually to 100 percent one can say, [...] only intellectuals, that is, people that are not really under pressure, directly that is. [...] And people that really have problems with the economic situation and fight for survival or do not have much, they don't come to us but go to the supermarket. Even though this accelerates the whole thing further, right?

(Interview 10)

When I visited the project during distribution, this was also my impression: the group was quite homogenous and people were talking about the fresh vegetables, the quality and the 'love' that went into growing the food. However, it seems some projects can, over time, include a more heterogeneous stratum:

There are from time to time new people that bring in new ideas and so it develops. [...] As one can see [...] it is also very normal people.

(Interview 17)

This means not only people connected to the alternative, formerly squatted project complex which is also a major hub in the anti-capitalist, alternative scene.

Especially the barter clubs, the solidarity agriculture projects, and the housing projects are mostly self-beneficiary, i.e. participants and beneficiaries are the same group of people. In the solidarity agriculture projects participants pay a monthly fee with which they finance the farmer and the farm. In return they receive, according to their shares, the products of the farm. Collective group participation and benefitting from the joint investment involves also to help in critical phases, like harvest periods:

You know, it is just a lot of responsibility. It also involves thinking for oneself, to be initiative. Because it also involves, from time to time, to show up on the field and to help. Right. The people do not pay relatively low prices for nothing but because we save labor costs.

(Interview 5)

This is a similar approach to the one of the alternative housing projects, where renovating activities are done together and by all members (Interviews 15, 18). In the case of the alternative housing enterprise, beneficiaries also help to keep prices low (Interview 7).

In barter clubs, exchange is based on reciprocity and only happens if demand and supply match:

The MARKET says what is needed. That is not different than in the economy.

(Interview 4; emphasis marked by capital letters)

However, at least in the other, bigger barter club the actual monetary benefit is outweighed by the social benefit (see also Interview 1 with the women's organization) that comes with the exchange relationships as one interviewee explains:

I would think the latter. Yes. For me personally, yes. I believe that the latter is more important, to be among people. That you have social contact, that you experience appreciation first of all. That is not normal anymore on the regular labor market, right? [...] When someone helps me, I thank him and when I help someone, he as well and most of the time you get a meal as well, that's also something social/ that is important. Especially when [laughs] I went into unemployment and I worked for people, that I received a meal. That helped me personally for my structure very much [...] And I think eating together is somehow important. That may sound kitschy to you. [laughs] [...] But eating alone all day is not nice when you have been with other people for eight hours.

(Interview 1)

The kind of exchanges also changed. In earlier years, many goods were exchanged through the network, e.g. furniture, but today it moved much more into services:

Moving, painting, window cleaning. Cleaning in general is very, very popular.

(Interview 13)

In general, the people involved are very diverse:

There are also very stark people among us. It is a spectrum that I would never have known otherwise. Of people, that are totally out of the social net, no health insurance, living from hand to mouth, working somewhere and getting paid. So called dropouts. But also high-ranking, former important persons that are happy that they are among people again. So it is very mixed.

(Interview 13)

The more alternative solidarity agriculture project and the collective enterprise have a very solidarity oriented approach to distribute costs and work.

There is that concept of solidarity in our enterprise, in the solidarity agriculture. [...] I would say, we try if possible to include everyone [...] If someone comes and says, he has only little money and he cannot pay the contribution, which as a mean now is 60 Euro, no, 70 Euro, he

can only pay 40, [...] then [...] the other members see if they can compensate this. That is more what brings in the solidarity.

(Interview 10)

In the collective enterprise solidarity is key especially within the group:

For OURselves, I would say [...] where we see our own social needs somehow to have priority that is actually/ that we try that everyone has enough time. For things beyond the collective. [...] That is the social component.

(Interview 19; emphasis marked by capital letters)

In one housing project we interviewed, the people support each other also, for example, when they need to go to the social security agency:

There is no fixed plan, but we all know that this is an unjust procedure and that a lot goes with information so that you have to know your rights, that are behind that and that [...] you don't let some case worker intimidate you alone or what not.

(Interview 15)

The interviews conducted included organizations that sometimes focused on specific groups as primary beneficiaries. The women's group e.g. focuses on women and here it reaches mostly those above 40 which have finished family planning and now look for new opportunities. They would like to reach out to younger women as well, but are not successful. The neighborhood management organization focuses mostly on children and kids. Here the focus is on especially underprivileged, i.e. those from disadvantaged families, or with criminal records, school dropouts, etc. The homeless initiative helps about 90 people during a month, some of which stay long in the facilities provided. Others are only helped to find a new apartment or to get their finances back together. While the visible homelessness is predominantly male, more recently the gender gap has closed. Furthermore, today more elderly are facing homelessness, connected to raising poverty in this age group, and also very young people are more at risk. A last observation that this interviewee shared was that their beneficiaries are much keener now to openly state racist comments:

What we of course see now with our beneficiaries is that migrants are the new enemy.

(Interview 14)

This could be seen as the product of (perceived) competition in an environment that gets tougher.

Obviously, the food banks, too, are classic top-down organizations. Some 60,000 volunteers hand out food to allegedly 1.5 million people each month and there is a clear relationship of volunteers on the one side and the beneficiaries on the other side. The help is highly appreciated as one interviewee stated:

There are many that state this: 'if it weren't for you, then we would not go to bed sated every night'. That's how it is. Definitely.

(Interview 6)

In this respect, the growing poverty among elderly but also child poverty was mentioned several times. Still, the number of people coming to the food banks does not necessarily increase because of a real change of the number of people in need but because of the growing acceptance of the food banks: already now 7.5 million people would be entitled to claim food assistance from them (Interview 8). The soup kitchen not connected with the *Tafel*-network also has school classes coming for education, classes on food preparation, as well as offers for offenders to do their social work hours at the organization. The approach here is similar to the one of the neighborhood management organization: they try to give their clients a meaningful task and to offer them social appreciation – which they must, and this was emphasized by the activists, earn (Interviews 12 and 3). Another group of vulnerable people that reached the food banks in particular, but also other initiatives were refugees. This was especially a topic since 2015, but interviewees emphasized that refugees were already coming in higher numbers since 2010 and that this was also, in their perspective, connected to the global financial and economic crisis.

For other AAOs, the clientele is limited more or less because of social or educational boundaries, as already mentioned in the section above. The people coming to lectures on sustainability are mostly people who are already interested (Interview 11). The alternative housing enterprise has an even more homogeneous clientele:

These are all ecologically interested people. The first announcement I did in the [city magazine] and in an organic super market, and in the organic shop it worked actually best. [...] There are three elements that need to fit: the first thing is a bit the ecological, sustainability. [...] Then the social, that is that people look for other people to actually live with them. Those who only want to have an apartment and want to be left alone, they need to go to the normal housing associations [...] And the third is, that they need to get along with me. Because I am extremely present here and I do all the things.

(Interview 7)

After that, if a party in one of the houses has for some reason less money, they also pay a lower rent.

8.7 Outcomes and Best Practices

Looking first at the collectively organized AAOs, their alternative methods of organization are already an important success and have helped to build resilience for themselves:

Because I rather look at the Southern countries [...] one can see [...] that it became a necessity in these countries because of the crisis to organize differently and I think that we can do this step BEFORE. [...] if there is a deep economic crisis, I believe those people that are organized collectively etc. are much better prepared.

(Interview 19; emphasis marked by capital letters)

Also in a very different group, the women's organization, organizing and networking was considered as an effective tool for empowerment for those participating (Interview 1). Resilience is also an issue for the organizational structure and financing of many AAOs.

Our project or many solidarity project deliberately go without EU funding. The reason is, because, I already mentioned, it is almost a full economic cycle. And all long-term funding that comes in make you dependent. That is very simple. Short time yes [...] I would advice against long-term, because I have seen this often in projects and enterprises: IF they are cancelled, the clamour is big.

(Interview 5)

Also, one of the *Tafel* interview partners emphasized that it is better to have many small donors than a few big that, especially in economic hard times, cancel their commitment (Interview 8). For barter clubs, the problem is their size: on the one hand it is hard to organize more people without additional funds, on the other hand,

There HAS got to be a full cycle, if one wants to start anew and make it bigger, there has to be a functioning cycle immediately.

(Interview 13; emphasis marked by capital letters)

We asked in our interviews whether the organizations think of themselves as 'effective'. On the one side we received different interpretations of the meaning of effectiveness, on the other, the subjective feeling of being effective was also a question of scale: the organizations and projects themselves were mostly seen as being efficient and effective, but when it came to their actual impact, many were more pessimistic. One solidarity agriculture activist stated:

I come out of a scene where the concept of efficiency is being hated. I think this is stupid, because I think efficiency is a tool. Efficient to me is to work more pleasant without destroying my body [...]. It works perfectly well in reaching our goals. [...] [But not] if one thinks in old structures, [...] what are you talking so much? Just sell your vegetables! The concepts depends of course on the circumstances.

(Interview 5)

A social entrepreneur summarized:

I don't measure myself. [...] I think it is enormous what I achieve. If I think that now a kindergarten/ that 40 children there are supplied with organic food, that is gigantic for me. [...] Well, I am still ready, if someone calls for a revolution [...] I'll join. [laughs].

(Interview 9)

Even for (considering their aims and values) the very idealistic projects, there is a strong sense of realism when it comes to the actual impact, without this turning into pessimism. For others, being effective is not necessarily a goal:

That is entirely not effective. [...] if you calculate this as working time that you spend to achieve a goal, you can just drop it. It only [laughs] works because people have fun and the cause is nice for them.

(Interview 16)

If at all, they want to spread the do-it-yourself idea.

Effectiveness of Social Services

Overall, the more formal organizations concentrating mainly on social services and provision of basic needs were also very convinced of the impact of their work, but at the same time problematized social and economic circumstances (see below). One *Tafel* activist summarized:

And we see it, too, 60,000 volunteers or supporters for the Tafeln nationwide. That is an order of magnitude. We count as one of the biggest social institution in the country now. And it something, something we really can be proud of on the one hand. On the other hand it is of course burdensome situation, because we know: THAT can never find an ending.

(Interview 8; emphasis marked by capital letters)

The other *Tafel* activist confirmed this:

As I said, we will never reach the goal, that is as long as I can be active or will be active.

(Interview 6)

However, their ‘business model’ was described as being very effective, although it only works with the right engagement:

We are very careful and the executive board asks the managers regularly whether they are satisfied with us. [...] You really have to be active [...] For some time it was a boom: ‘Yes, Tafel, yes I do a Tafel. That is something great. That’s recognized.’ And so on. ‘I can better my own image with it.’ Those people should better stay away.

(Interview 6)

Beyond that, the *Tafeln* believe that they have a major impact in society that also shows in their recognition and invitations from other organizations (Interview 8).

Also for the social service and basic need oriented organizations, ‘efficiency’ was not a necessarily clear concept:

Being effective, efficiency, compatibility, I’d say, these are criteria that are extremely important, so called controlling tools. [...] Efficiency is a certain question. Efficiency is a cost-benefit-calculation and as I have shown with the example of the middle school students at our workshop, it is very intense. [...] I say it is efficient. You can ask the same thing a politician who would say: ‘Are you crazy?’

(Interview 3)

But there are also long-term and visible successes that the interviewee mentioned:

When I started to work here, I had mediations with rivalling youth groups, Germans, Russian-Germans, foreign, at that time mainly Kosovo-Albanians that had war with each other. There were rapes in subterranean garages, skulls smashed by baseball bats, burglaries, rip-offs, three rivalling youth gangs, that were known in the whole city and believe me, I had mediation meetings where I was seating there dripping with sweat [...] So there we definitely achieved successes, because we don’t have such a problem anymore.

(Interview 3)

The most effective project of the homeless initiative seems to be preventative work with people who are threatened with eviction but are not yet on the street. However, more traditional work is also considered effective:

We have relatively few cases with revolving door effect. [...] Insofar I would say that this is quite sustainable.

(Interview 14)

Being effective here is understood as sustainable, long-term help for the client. A soup kitchen activist also reported this:

I see it with the volunteers. We have volunteers from all social strata. How prejudices diminish for people from higher classes, how people from lower social classes grow more self-esteem and social competence, self-esteem really grows. And with that also skills developed in a sustainable way. I see it with school students, with those in a program, basically everywhere. The weltbild changes.

(Interview 12)

In economic respects, those organizations that rely on making profits can show success but there are equally critical problems. For the organic farm, financially it is always working

[...] at the limit [...] [What would help is] fair food prices. Plain and simple.

(Interview 2)

Also for (at the moment well-operating) collective enterprise, the biggest threats are market pressures:

There are resources that we need. If the market is closed on these, we have a problem. A very big problem and we would be gone probably quite fast.

(Interview 19)

To prepare against the big established companies as well as well-financed start-ups that invest a lot of capital in marketing, they would need more cooperation with other projects, e.g. a recycling pool since here the big companies hold quasi-monopoles. A similar point considers the raw material needed for production: big companies can buy much cheaper and with much more room to maneuver:

Access to resources: totally disadvantaged. The prices fluctuate without end and since I am concerned with this I know what food speculation is.

(Interview 19)

Alternative business models are, nevertheless, often quite competitive. One solidarity agriculture activist compared their model to regular organic vegetables:

You can say that it is 30 % cheaper. And the quality is not worse, sometimes even better.

(Interview 10)

Especially the housing projects are, once they have been founded, economically very stable:

The experience shows that such projects as a rule don't bankrupt.

(Interview 18)

And the interview partner from an alternative housing association added:

I believe, if you care about people, that is a grandiose business model. [...] Because if I only try to exploit them and try to get more and more out, whatever is possible, then it starts to turn bad. Because they realize it and then they try to cheat the landlord. And you get into a loop that is no fun and that has no end.

(Interview 7)

Still, market effects even limit the efficacy of the social service provider:

Yes, the impact ends, however, at some point. One can do a lot in the field of qualification, education, and free-time activities. Here, one can achieve much. What we cannot change is the labor market. And the labor market is in the end the coping stone.

(Interview 3)

At this point, political circumstances were mentioned to be not favorable for alternative and resilient action. For some projects, bureaucracy both on the lower level, with local or university bureaucracy (Interview 11), or on the national level, i.e. tax laws etc. (Interview 9), was a big problem. But the critique, at times, was also very direct. As an alternative housing activist put it:

If the federal government sells real estate in the city centres to the highest price, you can see it/ this is Schäuble-austerity in the domestic space. [...] Of course now, as I said, there are many talking about social housing, but in the same shitty way we had it before. [...] All in all it is exploitation oriented, capitalist urban planning and housing policy.

(Interview 18)

This also limits potential partner options:

So organized urban planning always has the problem that they only have tools in the direction of prettying up really. And to slow down this prettying up, when it becomes too pretty, they don't have anything for that.

(Interview 16)

More generally, political circumstances were evaluated mostly negative: The critique includes the ignorance towards growing old-age poverty (Interview 6) but also more generally that,

Our politicians are not simply fighting poverty, but, if at all, they administrate it.

(Interview 8)

And this was also mixed with pessimism:

If we want to get rid of Hartz IV we would need the basic income. There is no other alternative. [...] Insofar no, our social critique at the end gets to nothing. But it gives me a good feeling.

(Interview 6)

8.8 Summary

Most interview partners did not see direct negative effects of the crisis for their clientele. However, this does not mean that people do not experience hard times. Most important, especially in terms of numbers, is the raising poverty among the elderly, a development that e.g. the food bank activists reported. Also, specific groups of young people are threatened by social and economic exclusion, which often appears as a spatial division. Poverty among children in Germany is much discussed in terms of equality of opportunities. Rather than an overall crisis, these group-specific issues could also be described as a form of dualization where a (smaller) group is drifting away from the other group that is not experiencing hard times.

While Germany has not experienced a severe economic and, more importantly, social crisis i.e. the widespread loss of employment and cuts in welfare, at least three general points make the case interesting in a comparative setting: first, many organizations are older and more formalized than, e.g., in Greece,⁴⁵ which opens up the opportunity to learn from them in terms of organizational structures but also specific know-how in transnational exchange. This includes also the acknowledgement that long-term urgent needs oriented organizations cannot survive without the engagement, donations, and support

⁴⁵ Loukakis, Aggelos, Johannes Kiess, Maria Kousis, Christian Lahusen. 2016. "Alternative Forms of Resilience in the Eurozone Crisis: Comparing the Greek and German Experience, 2007-2016", paper presented at the *Council for European Studies (CES) 23rd General Conference 2016*, Philadelphia.

of people that can spare time and money and also not without political help – this can be small things like being exempted from waste disposal fees. Furthermore, alternative action often develops where people have time and, if only little, money because they can rely on social benefits. While this is certainly not an option for everyone, these pioneers develop ideas and implement projects that can serve as models for more or less everyone. Good examples of this are collective and social enterprises that actually work profitably, and alternative housing, that, too, are sustainable solutions, especially in the face of housing markets under stress.

Secondly, austerity, poverty, and economic hard times are of course not unknown in Germany. Some of our interviewees also speak of crisis: we can summarize this as a ‘latent crisis’ of late capitalism or neoliberalism. Moreover, the hardships and the big number of poor people that especially the food banks face daily makes it hard to stay with the notion of absence of crisis. In addition, many AAOs we interviewed are motivated by the perception that the current unsustainable growth model, capitalism in general, and politics are in a state of crisis. Thus, we may speak of different experiences of hardship and observe a different scope of the AAOs, because of which, however, we can learn all the more from comparative reading. The fact that there are 1.5 million people getting additional supplies – only from food banks organized under the Tafel label and many more are so poor that they would be eligible as well – speaks for itself. Worsening economic conditions for Germany have the potential to quickly turn into substantial social problems here as well. The AAOs we investigated in Germany, but also those in other countries, could be examples to bolster social structure and to hint at political reforms that would make life easier for those initiatives.

Third, as one activist pointed out himself, the relative calm situation – but with the experience of the financial and economic crisis and their social consequences in mind – allows building resilient projects now before the next crisis may also affect Germany. Diversified economic models that adhere to basic principles like solidarity, sustainability, and collective organization, in the view of many of our interview partners can thus provide a toolbox for times to come.

A future focus for research and analysis could be regional networks. We have already touched on this with our sampling and with the analysis presented here: the social fabric between organizations is often quite thick and only reveals its importance after the fifth or sixth interview and closer looks. More research needs also to focus on background variables like available resources, human capital, historical preconditions etc. In the eyes of some of our interview partners, in the East German city we focused on, the post-unification era with low rents and high unemployment but a critical size and a high number of university students made for a good environment to test out alternative ways of housing, living, and

working. The same is true for Berlin. In our West German case, the social fabric is different and other organizations, including parties, unions, and churches, play a more important role in civic engagement. These factors and their relevance to different forms of AAOs should be investigated further.

8.9 Annex

List of interviews

- 1 Women's organization, West Germany
- 2 Organic farm, West Germany
- 3 Neighborhood development organization, West Germany
- 4 Barters club, West Germany
- 5 Solidarity agriculture initiative, East Germany
- 6 *Tafel* (soup kitchen), West Germany
- 7 Alternative housing association, East Germany
- 8 *Tafel* (soup kitchen), Berlin
- 9 Alternative social enterprise, East Germany
- 10 Solidarity agriculture initiative, East Germany
- 11 Sustainability awareness group, East Germany
- 12 Soup kitchen, Berlin
- 13 Barters club, East Germany
- 14 Social service agency focusing on homeless, East Germany
- 15 Alternative housing project, East Germany
- 16 Free space project, East Germany
- 17 Free shop, East Germany
- 18 Alternative housing umbrella organization, East Germany
- 19 Collective enterprise, Berlin
- 20 Social center including collective housing, working, cultural events, Berlin
- 21 Alternative youth club, East Germany



9.1 Introduction

This report presents the results of fieldwork on Alternative Action Organizations (AAOs) which has been carried out under Work Package 6 of the LiveWhat research project. The aim of this study is first, to provide in-depth information on how society copes with the economic crisis and any other crises which relate to the economic crisis, and second, to shed light on how people cope and embrace or create alternative forms of resilience. This introductory part of the report presents our sample and sampling procedure. The second section presents political issues, such as AAOs' mission, ideals and political aims. The third section discusses the effects of the economic crisis. The fourth section concerns the initiatives and projects undertaken by AAOs. The fifth section covers issues of governance and network. The sixth section presents those who are considered both the beneficiaries and participants of AAOs, while the following section presents the outcomes and best practices introduced by these organizations. The concluding section summarizes the main findings of the study.

This report is based on 20 in-depth interviews with AAO representatives, who are active in Greece. The organizations/groups and collectivities of our sample have been selected from a list of 3,645 AAOs which operate all over Greece and which were identified in a previous stage of WP6. Two dimensions or criteria are used to insure internal variance and to cover the variety of AAOs: the formal vs. informal character of the AAO, based on their legal status as an expression of the degree of institutionalization, and their orientation towards service provision vs. policy advocacy. Broadly defined, these dimensions constituted the rules of thumb to map AAOs in a two-dimensional space, without regarding each category as being mutually exclusive and, in general, without overvaluing their generic quality in describing the factual character of our population.

Due to the difficulties we experienced in approaching our sample and arranging our interviews (non-updated contact information of the less formal AAOs, refusals due to workload, late responses during the summer), we allowed replacements of AAOs initially selected with others which satisfied our criteria, without disturbing the balance established by the introduction of the aforementioned dimensions.

Our sample is characterized by a diversity in terms of size, internal organization, membership and action types. Different types of organization are included in the sample (see Table 1), from social cooperatives and work collectives, organizations and groups for the support of vulnerable groups (children, families, young people, immigrants and the poor), community solidarity initiatives (e.g. for the provision of health and educational services), environmental organizations (both NGO and grassroots), and the church. The AAOs included in our sample are located in different territories of the country.

Due to the multifarious nature of AAOs, we had to adopt a broad definition of who is considered a representative and thus participant in the study. Representatives were those members or participants who have a significant degree of involvement and a thorough knowledge of the AAO mission, values and purposes. Noticeably, the formal AAOs, such as NGOs, present steady structures and division of labor compared to informal organizations, such as the work collective, which supports horizontal and non-hierarchical structures, including job rotation. This fact is reflected in the discourses of participants, where formal AAOs' representatives adopt well-documented and factual approaches while the representatives of informal AAOs produce experience-driven approaches.

The sample of individual participants presents a diversity in terms of age, gender, educational and vocational background. Even though the political orientation and ideological standpoint of participants, manifested in their discourses, greatly varies, all have strong bonds with and devotion to the AAO they represent.

AAOs have been approached by sending them invitations and through personal contacts. The interviews were conducted from June to September 2016. Most interviews were held either at the place hosting the AAO or in a café. All interviews have been recorded with the permission of those being interviewed and then transcribed for the analysis. The length of the interviews varies from 50 minutes to 1.5 hours. Participants in general reply with easiness and promptness.

The questions posed have an exploratory character, aiming at understanding the basic characteristics of AAOs with respect to their mission and values, their participants and beneficiaries, but most importantly their action towards the enhancement of citizens' resilience in times of crisis. The ultimate aim is to unravel how the actors involved in AAOs, both collective and individual, define, approach and create alternative paths to confront hard economic times. Indeed, many of our cases initiated their activity during the crisis, most of them have developed new projects to correspond to the special needs they saw emerging out of the crisis and all of them see their mission as being very relevant to the economic, social, institutional and structural facets of the crisis.

Table 9.1: Distribution of interviewed AAOs based on their orientation, Greece

Orientation of AAO	Formal/informal Orientation of AAO	
	FORMAL	INFORMAL
SERVICE	Charitable Fund of church, Crete NGO for the protection of children, Athens NGO for the support of youth, Athens NGO for the protection of families, Athens Municipality social service (e.g. grocery, soup kitchen and kitchen gardens), Peloponnese	Social clinic, Thessaloniki Social tutorial, Macedonia Network for the support of the poor, Peloponnese Social kitchen, Athens
POLICY Advocacy	Social cooperative (venture of horizontal structures), Peloponnese Social cooperative of bio-farmers, Crete Consumer cooperative, Attica Fair trade social enterprise, Athens Work collective (café), Athens Environmental NGO, Athens	Integral cooperative (venture of horizontal structures), Crete Group for the support of immigrants, Crete Consumers-producers network, Crete Grassroots environmental group, Crete Agriculture collectivity, Crete

9.2 Political Issues

A first objective of the study is to understand AAOs' mission as connected to values, ideals and political aims. Participants were asked about the goal of their organization and what kind of socio-political change they would like to bring about in their environment. Based on their answers, this section presents the findings with respect to how AAOs define themselves politically.

AAOs are distinguished for being socially sensitive and intolerant of injustice and inequality, irrespective of their political orientation. Humanitarian and emancipatory values are rooted in their value system. Their ideal is to build a fair, caring and required society, in which the relationships will be more authentic and less impersonal and their members will be more respectful of each other and of nature.

Our relationship with our food and the people who produce it is changing. We now stop seeing just tags with numbers in the supermarket, but we see that behind these numbers and any numbers in the future, there are people with specific needs.

(Interview No.8)

Solidarity seems to be a core value of AAOs. This is manifested through actions of supporting vulnerable groups, both by the provision of goods and services and by acting politically in order to defend their

rights. Solidarity encourages behaviors of cooperation, unity and collectiveness. It establishes a philosophy of mutual or bidirectional exchange, which may be not be visible at a first sight, such as in the case of the social tutorial:

Our operation is substantially based on the voluntary will of its members, who are the teachers, the association of parents and the students. Each of them has taken on a specific role. What do I mean by that? When we need for example to replace a light bulb or fix the hydraulic system, we already kept on file, with their consent, data from parents who have a particular specialty - so we will ask them to come and repair the problem.

(Interview No.5)

It is believed by AAOs members that actions of solidarity promote self-conscious and responsible behaviors which elevate citizenship. Nevertheless, the notion of solidarity is most of the times understood by AAOs in a politically meaningful manner.

We decided to name our clinic "social solidarity clinic" and the "solidarity" component is a basic condition of our existence, because we juxtapose it to charity. [...] We believe that charity establishes unequal relationships, placing those who are giving at the top and those who are accepting at the bottom.

(Interview No.4)

AAOs do have a political 'say', expressed through making claims, recommendations or criticism to policy makers. Their ideological outlook range from conservative to radical left and anarchic standpoints. However, many AAOs do not ideologically position themselves by choice, adopting a more inclusive and action-oriented approach.

A political party says: "I am a Trotskyist, Maoist, Leninist and you are the same, so we agree on how the world will be after the revolution [...] What's our theory? - This is the one. How the theory analyzes and explains the changes made now? – That way". The [...] [group for the support of immigrants] is thinking 180 degrees differently, saying: "What are our needs now that I am unemployed and you as well or I live in a city occupied by private interests and we do not have access to the healthcare system?"

(Interview No.7)

Service-provision-oriented AAOs demand equal access to social goods, such as food, healthcare and education. These organizations act politically by exercising pressure to governments and local authorities. Policy-oriented AAOs, on the other side, locate themselves farther away from the state. They

largely oppose capitalism and its values, such as utilitarianism, competitiveness, consumerism and commercialization. Usually they are substantially linked with radical social movements, such as ‘de-growth’. Hence, they adopt practices of an alternative socio-economic organization. From their own perspective, social economy is viewed as a subversive condition and not as a supplement to the existing economic model.

Once you recognize that this society is an unfair society in its depth, with inequality, intense poverty and racism [...] yes, the ultimate target is to move in a fair society, where people live in peace and equality. Beyond that, we are of course not merely targeting values, we need to make specific small steps so that, hopefully, at some point the big steps will be achieved.

(Interview No.7)

AAOs which were born during the crisis value democratic processes, decentralization and self-sufficiency and they try to make these a practice. They are much more critical of the system and distrusting of governments and tend to look at their interventions as a means of societal change, rather than as isolated ventures of citizens’ and communities’ empowerment, which may remain the focus of older and well established (usually formal) AAOs. In additions, crisis derived AAOs most usually embrace protest, as a form of political participation, especially as a reaction to austerity policies.

Well-established organizations, such as NGOs, act politically mainly by participating in policy-making committees and consultation procedures, by lobbying activity and campaign setup, together with the adoption of other instruments, such as petitions. The informal and militant groups apart from protest, engage in lobbying and networking activities, however they see their influence as being weak.

We discovered along the way that there was no one to put on the agenda what we as a network have said, in order to have a support and go with it further. If all that we were saying all these years, to create an [integrated] social front against the memorandums and look at new ways [to do things] in this country – I am referring to 2011-2012, to [what happened in] the squares and all that. If we had brought all of these [forces] together to synthesize something, it would have been a tremendous convenience [for what we are doing now].

(Interview No.17)

But what, in the end, can be considered the legacy of AAOs? What do they see as being their main contribution to future generations? As one of their representatives succinctly puts it:

The most influential part of these projects is not the expression of some positions and the lobbying to support them, but that they are making material realities which can change society,

not radically, this is impossible, but they can show that an alternative way of doing things is possible. Because when something is changing socially, politics then follow. It cannot be otherwise [...].

(Interview No.14)

9.3 Economic Crisis Effect

The economic crisis has given impetus to AAOs, both by making people more susceptible to economic hardship, thus turning them to the search for alternative routes to resilience, and by motivating them to undertake action beyond ‘business as usual’. From this perspective, the crisis framework provided opportunities for AAOs to flourish, which holds true particularly in countries strongly hit by the crisis, such as Greece.

For AAOs which existed before the recent economic crisis, problems were always there – poverty, disease, unemployment and social exclusion – but the crisis intensified them and made them more visible. This means that for the older organizations the crisis’ impact is evaluated in quantitative terms. The groups and organizations which emerged during the crisis, on the other side, view crisis as being the catalyst in the creation of the conditions for their appearance.

The reason why social clinics were built was that austerity policies led in leaving 2,500,000 Greeks uninsured. When one cannot pay the insurance fund either because his business is closed or because he has been left unemployed, he, at the same time, ceases to have access in the healthcare system. [...] We, therefore, started to operate the social clinic in order to cover the uninsured.

(Interview No.4)

Cuts in education, healthcare and social welfare together with taxes increase and the rise of unemployment brought about unprecedented deprivation and social anxiety. In such conditions, AAOs with an orientation towards the satisfaction of basic needs satisfaction provide a lifeline for a large segment of the population who suddenly is looking at their living conditions dramatically worsening. In any case the crisis urges the broadening of solidarity actions. As one of our interviewees explains, the crisis made their action field and organization type shift, which was imposed by the needs of beneficiaries.

Since January 2010 we created our statutes, made this office [...] because peoples’ need changed a lot: from 2007 to 2010 we worked only at the level of psychological support, by

organizing art workshops for children and their parents and our target was the relationships within the family; since the outburst of the crisis we initiated our goods delivery service which we then established as our main action.

(Interview No.18)

Economic hardship and austerity policies also influence policy oriented organizations. They redirect their attention towards more practical approaches.

A change in the [group for the support of immigrants] is that we have made a shift from abstract theoretical discourse -due to needs' straining- to an approach of practical solidarity; something that would have been previously condemned by the left, as an action of charity, of simple help.

(Interview No.7)

Persisting crisis is posing barriers to AAOs' operation. It seems that service-oriented organizations are more seriously affected compared to policy-oriented ones. This is because an increase of needs coincides with a reduction of resources, or else that beneficiaries still increase, while participation and economic support wanes. There are several reasons for this, such as exhaustion (due to the increase of demand but also because participants are also themselves affected by the crisis) and donors' impoverishment.

People who, until recently, supported us, now require our support. This is very common nowadays.

(Interview No.6)

Other types of AAO are also experiencing difficulties because of the crisis. Social enterprises see their revenues being reduced as long as consumption decreases, while, at the same time, they keep prices at low levels as an expression of their solidarity, which is nevertheless an essential element of their philosophy.

Evidently, the crisis not only makes numerous new organizations appear in the field but also makes as many as them quit. This is revealed when interviewees mention groups or ventures in which they participated but no longer exist. The crisis in Greece has been so overwhelming, triggering a plethora of reactions towards the invention of alternative forms of resilience, making it hard for them, at the same time, to gain widespread acceptance.

The paradox of the crisis, you as a sociologist know it better, is that the needs are growing up, but services dwindle. What does this mean? It means that many people, who benefitted until 2009 by a specific organization, which now does not work or has frozen its activities come to us.

(Interview No 6)

Certainly, it takes time for an AAO to define itself and put down roots, going through experimentation in public diffusion and establishment. Things are progressing slower when it must overcome the hurdles of bureaucracy, legislative complexity and overregulation, which has characterized policy-making in Greece during the economic crisis. A member of a work collective described that it took them two years to redact their association statutes and start up. On the other hand, overregulation has been beneficial for other AAOs:

So, I asked a friend, it was then during the end of 2011 [...] and he told me that a new regulation, Law 4019/2011, which refers to the social economy, fits a lot in what we were having in mind. We had a look on it and then started telling our friends, asking them to bring others and start thinking what we can make out of it [...] and how] to build a self-sufficient community.

(Interview No 10)

In general, the crisis helped people to better understand their needs and redefine what is important to them. Crisis created the conditions for people to realize their weaknesses and feel insecure, but at the same time to rally and to claim the control over their lives. Under these conditions, AAOs showed people how to organize their lives alternatively, in a way which is free from mediations and dependencies.

I think that is a result of the crisis and of any nutritional insecurity caused by a crisis, to learn to cultivate the earth, to learn how to eat.

(Interview No.8)

9.4 Initiatives and Projects

Our study pays particular attention to the exploration of the initiatives and innovative projects introduced by AAOs. These organizations are in fact characterized by their disposition to identify social needs and invent new and unconventional ways to satisfy them. Flexibility is crucial for the survival and success of AAOs, since awareness of what to expect is limited. AAOs' activity relates to their objectives, which can be divided in three categories: first, to help others, second, to recommend alternative forms of organizing socio-economic life; and, third, to defend rights (individual, social and ecological). In what follows, the initiatives and projects introduced by AAOs with regards to these types of objectives are presented.

The provision of goods and services to those in need of support includes a broad spectrum of humanitarian and solidarity projects, such as soup kitchens, provision of clothing, food and

commodities, monetary support, provision of shelter, medical and educational services, as well as accounting and legal services, transfer facilities, counselling and psychological support. Action of this kind is undertaken by the formal service-provision oriented organizations in our sample, such as the charitable fund of the church, the social service of the municipality, the NGOs for children and family protection, as well as by groups and collectivities which do not constitute legal entities, such as the social clinic, the social tutorial and the local network for the support of the poor. It is not rare, however, to find such actions being provided by policy advocacy oriented groups, such as the group for the support of immigrants, which collects apparel and offers language tutorials to migrant populations.

Apart of the above-mentioned projects, there are also initiatives with a more innovative character reported in our interviews. As such, a program of homeless' social inclusion is undertaken by the church in cooperation with an academic team, which finds shelter to homeless people in different locations of the city to avoid ghettoization phenomena. Moreover, a program undertaken by the municipality's social service includes granting vegetable gardens both to families (based on social criteria) and to public services, such as day nurseries, thus contributing in making them self-contained but also encouraging social learning. Yet another innovative initiative concerns food delivery to poor students, via the introduction of a method which assures the anonymity of beneficiaries:

In a school with 150 children, some of them are chosen to be given food for free, but nobody knows. So the child goes to the canteen and gets it – he knows he will go there every noon at the break to get a sandwich and an orange for free. [...] but nobody knows the child is not paying in the canteen.

(Interview No.3)

Innovative initiatives are also developed by the NGO for children protection. One of these is the provision of medical and dental services to children who live in distant and inaccessible areas through the conversion of a truck to a small medical center which travels all over Greece. Another initiative encourages adolescent voluntarism, through participation in campaigns on teenagers' issues, such as smoking prevention, environment and internet safety. Another one concerns family reunification actions to refugees, and yet another project involves activities for the daycare of children from poor families:

We take the children from their home in the morning, accompany them to school, take care of their medical needs, their reading, their food, their clothes, their entertainment and in the afternoon their parents pick them. Social workers and psychologists help children in this structure. At the same time, they help parents to recover, e.g. to find a job.

(Interview No.6)

The projects introduced by the NGO for the support of families include: a charity shop, a program of parental counselling through experiential parent workshops in public schools, a hall of residence for students from poor families, goods' dispatches to refugee camps together with the organization of art workshops.

Projects which aim to encourage artistic expression as a means of creativity, participation and social inclusion, are largely undertaken by the NGO for the support of the youth. Most of these have an educational character such as theater, music, cinema, dance, handicraft and photography classes. They also operate tutorials and language classes, together with programs of psychological and social support of immigrants and refugees, while a mobile primary school class with interactive elements represents one of their most innovative initiatives.

Solidarity initiatives are developed not only with respect to the main activity of AAOs but also for the accomplishment of complementary aims. The social kitchen apart from food delivery is undertaking projects to help people in need, such as finding and organizing spaces for the homeless to serve their basic needs and organizing social tutorials for pupils from poor families. The social clinic, apart from its medical services, undertakes activities for the support of refugees but also the support of other AAOs, such as a social kitchen and a work collective. One of its projects includes the purchase of coupons from a social economy grocery and their provision to refugees and to the social kitchen. Another initiative which aims at promoting tolerance towards refugees includes the organization of outdoor interactive activities and artistic events in which both refugee and native populations participate.

Social enterprises base their activity on unconventional and eco-friendly practices of production, non-capitalistic principles, non-hierarchical relationships and non-mediated economic exchange. The initiatives adopted towards this direction include the introduction of time banks, alternative currencies and cryptocurrencies, trade without intermediaries, decision-making through the establishment of assemblies and alternative ways of building. In what follows, the representative of the integral cooperative describes how the alternative currency system operates:

[there is a] platform in which all members are registered, essentially it includes the balance of each member, our wallet in alternative currency which tells you your purchases, your coins, if the balance is negative or positive and it records in a transparent manner all changes in an account.

(Interview No.9)

The network of consumers-producers is itself a project of community-supported agriculture, which establishes an electronic channel of direct communication between producers and consumers, aimed at strengthening local production. Together with the electronic platform, its members organize public communication events, such as public talks, in-farms events and participation in eco-fests.

Public communication projects, raising awareness campaigns and petitions are the main actions undertaken by policy advocacy organizations together with the participation in protest events.

Knowledge diffusion initiatives seem to be particularly important for AAOs. The target of communication may be not only citizens but also other new AAOs.

We organize a sustainability workshop [...] in which we share our experience and help people who are either starting now or have already started but do not know how to address issues of internal operation, such as how to organize themselves, how to make collectively decisions in the assembly, about subgroups, members' commitments etc. This is one part. The other part is the practical one, including costing and issues regarding the operation of the cooperative. And another one is the political part.

(Interview No.15)

Finally, initiatives at the organizational level are often undertaken by social cooperatives and work collectives. Bonding and collective identity building are important in collective ventures upon which the livelihood of participants depends. A participant of a local bio-farming cooperative describes the establishment of a conscience support group which deals with all issues that concern the cooperative's values, philosophy and principles of operation.

9.5 Governance and Networks

One of our study objectives is to reveal if and how AAOs are connected with established political actors and other groups. Our findings suggest that their relation with the government and local authorities varies, with the formal vs. informal dimension partly accounting for this variation. With few exceptions, AAOs avoid being related to the government, which comes not as a surprise, given their critical stance towards state policies, which intensified with the introduction of austerity measures. More positive dispositions are recorded with respect to local administration, which is mainly supportive. Concerning their relation with other groups, it seems that cooperation and networking is a basic element for them to develop their activity, to get to know better their field or for knowledge exchange purposes.

A good relationship with the government is reported by the representatives of the church and the NGOs for child support and the protection of youth. Specifically, the church mentioned that its actions are delegated by the government. The NGOs, meanwhile, play an advisory role by participating in committees and public consultation processes.

We are invited by all institutional actors, ministries, the parliament, independent authorities such as the advocate of the child, the ombudsman or the child health institute, to say our opinion when making public consultations on law issues relating to children. Always we say our opinion, present our actions and say how we can help in the implementation of a law.

(Interview no. 6)

Other organizations do not report having a relationship with the government, with some being more critical or dismissive, such as the social clinic, the work collective and the local group for the support of migrants. All clarify that any relation with national or EU governance and political parties is unwelcome.

We do not want to have any relationship with the state or with state bodies, nor with the European Union to get grants. This is to say, we do not accept money from those who we believe are responsible for today's living conditions [...] So we have no relationship with political parties, we have no relationship with government organizations, NGOs, and any organizations which are granted funds from the European Union to do their job.

(Interview no. 4)

Holding relationships with individual politicians is also reported as avoided by most organizations studied, so as not to be used by politicians for their own political benefit. A representative of the network for the support of poor families informed us that the participation of political actors in the group and connection with political parties is largely discouraged. On the contrary, the NGO for the protection of children rights reports keeping contact with members of parliament and other policy-makers involved in law preparation.

It is much more likely for local administration to be related with an AAO than the government, but, nevertheless, there are cases, namely the agriculture collective and the consumer association, which appear to have a negative attitude towards any kind of cooperation. In the case of the social tutorial, the municipality provides the space and covers the electricity of the building, while somewhere else, the municipality expands its support beyond hosting AAOs activities, to the replacement of volunteers with personnel and the incorporation of some of their projects to its social services. But also in cases in which there is no permanent relationship or support, local authorities may co-participate with local AAOs in

events concerning issues of common interest, which was the case when a consumers-producers network together with the city council organized a workshop on the cottage industry.

Apart from government and local administration, other public services and organizations are mentioned for their linkage with AAOs. The social clinic representative reports that the premises in which the clinic is housed, including costs for electricity and water supply, are granted by the local trade union. The NGO for children protection mentions cooperation with public services, with the prosecution and police, with municipalities' social services, hospitals and schools.

When it comes to non-state actors, AAO representatives express positive attitudes towards networking, which they consider to be beneficial for cooperation, knowledge exchange and public exposure. With the exception of the church, which rejected cooperation with informal organizations and groups (though being related to governmental welfare organizations) all other groups are open to cooperation with other AAOs and civil society groups.

AAOs support each other. The work collective and social cooperatives have economic ties with other collaborative or solidarity economy ventures. Most usually, organizations choose to buy consumables or supplies for their activity from organizations with a similar philosophy. For example, the social clinic provides financial support to a social kitchen and to a work collective, while it has accepted financial assistance from other collectivities abroad.

Cooperation is usually seen among groups of the same or relevant activity as well as the same region. Organizations which have families with children as their target population cooperate with teachers and parents' associations, but also with groups of a more specialized interest, such as with groups of breastfeeding support, as happens in the case of the local network for supporting the poor. In a similar vein, the social clinic and the social tutorial cooperate with neighboring organizations of the same action field but also with other local collectivities and citizens' groups. Likewise, social cooperatives and the work collective report to have assisted shorter lived ventures, by showing them their know-how.

In addition, AAOs tend to maintain good relations with AAOs of the same organizational type. NGOs cooperate with each other and informal groups and collectivities do likewise, while cooperation among the two types seems to be avoided or disliked, despite groups sharing the same agenda, due to differences in approach, such as in the case of the grassroots environmental group and environmental NGOs.

Networking is usually attained through participation in festivals (e.g. eco-festivals, alternative economy festival) which accommodate workshops, public talks and artistic events, where AAOs get to know each

other and share their experiences. Networking activity is also met amongst militant groups both, at the local and national level, to organize protests and other actions. The aforementioned collaborations and networking activity, however, recommends ad hoc networks. Networks with a permanent character are the local integral cooperative itself and an urban network of cooperatives, which numbers six members.

9.6 Beneficiaries and Participants

Service oriented organizations benefit people in need of support, while organizations of social and solidary economy benefit participants themselves. An organization defines its target population according to its action type, although AAOs are generally characterized by their disposition to remain alert and very open, since they are themselves born out of the necessity to satisfy unmet societal needs. This section describes the study's findings with respect to the kind of needs AAOs address, their participants and beneficiaries and their experiences with them.

Some organizations aim to satisfy basic needs: food, shelter and clothing. They address vulnerable groups: people who are poor, homeless and persecuted. Such organizations may be both formal and informal. Based on our interviews with a representative from the church, those who ask the church to support them have already tried other options and view the church as a lifeline or their ultimate resort. It is hence crucial not to discourage or disappoint them. The municipality social service targets the unemployed, low income individuals, former drug addicts, battered women, poor families with children and immigrants. The local informal network for the support of the poor is particularly sensitized towards families which undergo difficulties of an economic nature as well as towards children with disabilities. The NGO for the support of families also targets poor and unemployed families, noting that they are in their majority former middle class members.

Moving upwards in the pyramid of needs, there are organizations which aim to satisfy the need for wellbeing by providing healthcare services, including psychological support. Such is the case of the social clinic, which has as its target population those in need of healthcare, who do not have access to the public healthcare system.

Self-actualization is a need satisfied when the individual is given opportunities to be creative and skillful. The social tutorial mission is to provide learning opportunities to children from families which have been hit by the economic crisis in order to improve their school performances and help them succeed in university entrance exams. The NGO for the protection of the youth addresses young people who experience or are at risk of social exclusion, such as young prisoners, young Roma, young immigrants,

young unemployed, and young women, to all of whom they provide services of empowerment and capacity building.

Migrant population are also targeted by the above-mentioned organizations. The social tutorial representative reports that about 20% of their beneficiaries are immigrants, same as the social clinic, while the refugee crisis is sharply increasing this percentage nowadays.

When we started we mainly addressed migrants. In the course of time and as the crisis deepened things were reversed: while foreigners were 70% of our first patients initially and only 30% they were Greeks, rates now are reversed, i.e. 70-80% Greek population and 20% immigrants. Of course now we have another big problem to face: refugees.

(Interview No.4)

Migrants are exclusive beneficiaries in the collectivity for the support of migrants, which is active less towards practical support than towards exerting political pressure for the defence of their rights. In a similar manner, migrant/ refugee children and young people are the beneficiaries of the NGO for the support of children and the NGO for the support of the youth respectively.

The beneficiaries of the social cooperatives, the work collective, the consumer association and the environmental organizations are defined in broader terms. Specifically, they see the community, neighborhood or local citizens as being the beneficiaries of their actions. Society at large is also mentioned as being benefited by many organizations.

Regarding AAOs' participants, various modes of participation are observed. In government and local administration affiliated organizations, participants are largely employees; in NGOs, they are personnel, volunteers, as well as donors; in solidarity groups and networks of citizens' support, participants are volunteers; while those who participate in social enterprises are making a living through their participation in the organization.

While the majority of participants in service-oriented AAOs are volunteers, there are differences in their roles. Moreover, often a critical disposition is recorded towards voluntarism, alongside a wish to reserve some kind of returns for the participants of AAOs. In some cases, volunteers are responsible for undertaking the main activity of the organization, such as in the NGO for the protection of families, where psychologists who offer their services are volunteers, similar to the work provided by all specialized physicians in the social clinic. In other cases, volunteers are assigned roles which do not bear high degree of responsibility. As the representative of the organization for the support of the youth puts it:

All of our basic consulting and psychological services are offered by paid professionals. We have a very clear approach about what we consider volunteering. Volunteering is not to exercise my vacation without getting paid nor to take a snake out of a whole and undertake full responsibility for this.

(Interview No.19)

Being an outcome of the crisis, the increase in the number of beneficiaries has led to the establishment of criteria and evidence-based decision-making on beneficiary groups. This is the case for the social tutorial and the NGO for the support of families. The opposite, however, occurs as well, when an AAO avoids determining beneficiaries to stay clear of stigmatization. This is observed in the case of the social kitchen, which does not distinguish between participants and beneficiaries, thus placing co-participation at the forefront. Hence, whoever wants to share the experience of cooking and eating altogether is welcomed to take part as a participant and a beneficiary of the social kitchen and this attribute is what differentiates it from soup kitchens.

It does not matter who you are and where you come from; what matters is that we are human. Those who believe humans are all equal, do have a position in the social kitchen [...] The homeless could find food but wanted to have a company, they don't want others to feel pity for them and give them food as they feed dogs [...] An owner of a multinational company came and I told him I will accept his contribution, given that he would come to cook and eat with us together on the road; indeed he came and cooked with us and ate in the plastic bowls.

(Interview No.20)

Interestingly, there is an interchange between these different modes of participation as well as between participants and beneficiaries. In nonprofit organizations, where participation is based on volunteering, the organization may be granted a subsidy at some point and create jobs to replace some of the volunteers. This applies to NGOs as well, where many staff members have participated as volunteers prior to their employment. In social enterprises, the work collective and social cooperatives, participants can also be considered as beneficiaries. Finally, there are cases of service provision organizations which report that people who previously were supporting their action (through donations or participation) have become beneficiaries during and due to the crisis.

9.7 Outcomes and Best Practices

The members of AAOs who participated in our study provide overall positive evaluations of their group's action. Problems, however, are identified as well as failures with respect to specific aims. Nevertheless, organizations remain vigilant, trying to learn from their own mistakes. Their alternative,

unconventional approach – together with the recognition of their contribution by society and the success with which some of their projects are met – allows them to recommend best practices.

Organizations which orientate themselves towards service provision, such as the charitable fund of the church, the social clinic and the social tutorial ascribe their success to the outcomes of their actions, namely relief to those in need. The high levels of demand and number of incomers are for them indicators of success. For alternative economy groups, such as social cooperatives and work collectives, their survival and continuation is valued as a success in its own right. For militant and pressure groups, such as environmental organizations and advocates of vulnerable groups, success is usually connected to the achievement of their political aims. Our interviews, however, reveal that particularly for the informal AAOs what is valued at most, thus being recognized as a success, is when they achieve to remain loyal to their mission, reach the public, promote an alternative to the dominant value system and motivate people to make informed choices.

The society is still tied, we do not have conditions of social cannibalism due to ventures like the social kitchen, the soup kitchens, the [group for the support of immigrants]. This is for me the greatest political added value. Unfortunately we did not achieve many things with the big protests. What has remained, I do not know whether it is a lot or little, are the projects of this kind, which invited people to take their lives into their hands, to define their needs and, even in very difficult times, to dream and to look at some prospects and make something themselves.

(Interview No.7)

When it comes to failures, AAO representatives refer to issues of introversion, lack of experience and expertise (mainly in social enterprises), and low participation which intensify when based on volunteerism. Usually, also mentioned is problems of limited resources, coordination, management and efficiency. Social enterprise representatives mention the absence of a legislative framework for the support of social and solidary economy, which cannot flourish under the prevailing conditions of market competitiveness.

Another problem is that democratic processes and horizontal structures are often sources of conflict. The establishment of assemblies makes decision-making strenuous.

In general, when everybody has to be involved in all decisions, this has a strength on its own but has a weakness as well. It is different anyway. We all need to know several things. This takes time, it takes effort, it needs training and there is always an issue of attention fragmentation.

(Interview No.14)

When asked about best practices, AAO representatives very often refer to activities of communication and cooperation with other organizations, groups and collectivities. It is mentioned that in cases of humanitarian action, for example in a refugee camp, communication and coordination of activities among groups and organizations active in the field was crucial for the success of the venture. Another instance of successful cooperation which recommends good practice is the case of the social grocery's cooperation with supermarkets which daily provide them products with very minor defects (in packaging for example), which would have been discarded otherwise.

Best practices are also reported with regard to initiatives of public communication. As such, the representative of the environmental NGO refers to memorandum- related law popularization initiative. The local group for the support of immigrants distinguishes war-related raising awareness campaigns as well as refugees' support campaigns. Public events, such as thematic festivals (eco-festival, alternative economy festival etc.) and artistic events are mentioned by organizations for their success in knowledge exchange and knowledge diffusion targeting. For their effectiveness at a smaller scale, a thematic library and a philosophy café are mentioned by two interviewees, while another one mentions workshops for children:

We are organizing small workshops for preschool children, to put their hands in the soil, to plant, to see how a seed is growing, to have a sense of how production is connected to the season of the year.

(Interview No.10).

As best practices, our interviewees also mention copying strategies towards making communities more self-contained, especially with reference to the current crisis framework. Such practice, are not yet applicable but they are recommended based on the experience gained by AAOs activity. The network of consumers-producers claims that it would be possible to connect a small neighborhood (of 20 households) to a single producer to cover all their needs in seasonal vegetables. Another recommendation is to introduce independent organizations, such as a social clinic, to the local integral cooperative in order to make them sustainable, i.e. allow their participants to make a living from their activity in the organization. Yet another suggestion which comes from abroad is the idea of repair cafés, where people can bring whatever needs to be repaired and do it themselves with the guidance of professionals, while all participants are potentially both service providers and beneficiaries.

9.8 Summary

This report presents the findings from in-depth interviews with Alternative Action Organizations' (AAOs) representatives which have been operating in Greece over the last few years. AAOs are defined

by their quality to initiate alternative to mainstream practices in order to confront economic hardship. Our sample includes various alternative action organizations, groups and collectivities with respect to their size, internal organization, membership and action types, all of which are located in different regions all over Greece. The aim of the study is to explore the basic characteristics of AAOs with respect to their mission, values and action towards the enhancement of citizens' resilience in hard economic times. The study particularly aims to understand how the crisis framework has influenced AAOs, both by providing opportunities and by providing obstacles for their operation, as well as to uncover the content of their projects and innovative action.

In the words of AAO representatives, the crisis lowered people's living conditions, so that the middle class in Greece is now approaching the poverty threshold. People who until recently were supporting the actions of AAOs are increasingly themselves searching for support. This holds particularly for families and the elderly, who are mainly affected by the crisis, since cuts in salaries and pensions together with unemployment restrict their ability to make a living. This is reflected in the demand for clothes and consumables and most importantly for food, children are usually unable to cover their food expenses in school. Women and the youth are mainly affected by unemployment, which make them stir themselves to get involved in volunteerism, solidarity groups and alternative economy ventures.

According to our findings, humanitarian and emancipatory values are predominant, while solidarity is largely a guiding principle. AAOs' ideal is to build a fair, caring society, where relationships are more authentic and people are more respectful of each other and of nature. AAOs' action has political content, since it criticizes the political and economic state of affairs and proposes alternative options.

Drawing evidence from our interviews, economic crisis spurs interest and participation in AAOs, activates local networks and favors the diffusion of innovation practices of co-operation and self-help. Hence, the crisis framework provided opportunities for AAOs to experiment and be heard by society. Nevertheless, persisting crisis also poses barriers for their operation because beneficiaries increase, while participation and economic support wanes.

AAOs undertake a plethora of projects and initiatives, which can be summarized into the following three action types. First, actions that support of others, which include the provision of food, clothes and shelter, medical and pharmaceutical services, psychological support, educational services, consultation, legal and accounting services. Second, actions which recommend alternative forms of organizing socio-economic life, which include initiatives to detour the market (time banks and alternative currencies), to overpass intermediaries (fair trade), to strengthen local production (agri-food cooperatives), to establish non-hierarchical workplaces and to abolish the division of labor (work collectives). Third, actions for

the defence of individual, social and ecological rights, which include protest, other strategies for political pressure, such as petitions, and raising awareness initiatives.

As concerns AAOs' relationship with the government and local administration, our findings recommend that most AAOs avoid being related to the government, while the same does not exist for local administration, which may be supportive, mainly with regard to the humanitarian, service-provision-oriented initiatives. AAOs are related to other organizations, such as unions, public services, the police, municipalities, hospitals and schools, but also with interest groups and other AAOs. Networking among AAOs of the same action type is met usually, but these networks rarely have a permanent character.

AAOs' beneficiaries are people in need in the case of service-oriented organizations: vulnerable groups, the poor, homeless, women, children and migrant populations, and participants themselves as regards the militant groups and social enterprises. Concerning participation, different modes are reported, from personnel, to volunteers, donors and individuals who are making a living through their participation in the organization. There is an interchange between the different modes of participation as well as between participants and beneficiaries.

AAOs' achievements to remain loyal to their mission: reach the public, promote an alternative to the dominant value system and motivate people to make informed choices are valued at most when they are asked to assess their action. Participation and the number of incomers are said to be used as indicators of success by some AAO representatives. When it comes to failures, AAO representatives refer to issues of introversion, lack of experience and expertise as well as problems of limited resources, coordination, management and efficiency.

The experience gained from this study indicates some challenges for future research. More fieldwork is needed on AAOs' organizational structures and operation, on other types of solidarity organizations, as well as on beneficiaries' outlook on AAOs' activity. Moreover, longitudinal data would allow to examine solidarity organizations' sustainability in the long run but also to understand the extent of participants' engagement in them. Finally, of particular interest would be the study of AAOs' visibility in the social sphere and the qualitative traits of their public exposure in the mass and other media.

10. Italy



10.1 Introduction

This report aims to provide in-depth information about the different kinds of alternative action put in place by social actors in Italian society to cope with the economic crisis. We have focused on twenty Alternative Action Organizations (AAOs), with the goal of reconstructing strategies, approaches and experiences that characterize their action in the current social and economic context. After briefly presenting the sample, the report will focus on political issues, economic crisis effects, initiatives and projects, governance and networks, beneficiaries and participants, and on outcomes and best practices.

We have interviewed twenty representatives of AAOs, selecting ten representatives of formal organizations and ten representatives of informal organizations. We have selected these organizations on the base of the data emerging from the WP6.1, but at the same time we have looked to complete possible voids in that sample for the Italian case by adding, for example, far-right organizations or social movement organizations which have acted during the current crisis. We have ensured political pluralism, including in the sample representatives of social movement organizations and trade unions related to the political left, of religious organizations and also of the political right, and groups characterised by no political leaning. We have also aimed at geographical variation, interviewing representatives of organizations active in the North (5), Center (9) and South (4) of the country and of national organizations (2). In our sample, we have AAOs which have emerged long before, immediately before and during the economic crisis. The interviews were directly conducted in person by the members of the Italian team of LIVEWHAT, between March and July 2016.

10.2 Political Issues

Most of the organizations and groups we have met belong to the left-wing milieu. Within this group, there are those coming from: the post-autonomous tradition (Rete Organization 20, Organization 11, Organization 15, Organization 12, Organization 17, Organization 19), the left (Organization 3, Organization 4, Organization 16, Organization 10, Organization 18, *Cinecittà Bene Comune*), and the Global Justice Movement (Organization 2, Organization 5, Organization 1). Other organizations we have met are linked to a religious and non-political background (Organization 6), or are mainly social organizations (Organization 8, Organization 9), or belong to the far right (Organization 7 and

Organization 13). These differences in political background are reflected in different political goals (or their absence) and different perspectives on the political connotations and implications of alternative action.

Those coming from a background of strong politicization tend to see alternative actions in the context of the economic crisis as a tool to build social roots for their organization, put together a critical mass of people for future mobilisation and increase the level of politicization of certain groups of people. Interviewees tend to describe this as a dialectic process, in which social and political aspects influence each other. A representative of an occupied factory well represents the relationship between activists involved in a particular initiative and those characterised, like him, by a previous politicization:

Our project was political since the beginning: from a union struggle, in which people were asking for help to find a new owner, in front of the failure of the owner, that delocalised to Poland, he took away the machines, he dismantled a piece of Italian production system [...] the classic struggle evolved. A collective of people that had started a struggle for work in traditional terms managed to evolve into a phase of occupation of the factory and re-conquest of their own job. [...] Of the 200 people, 15 remained. [...] Some people, including me, joined them in solidarity. [...] The struggle was political since the beginning, with the occupation there the addition of an economic component. [...] Now there is no separation between the political and the economic aspect, one cannot exist without the other. [...] For me, my commitment here is a form of militancy to make an idea of alternative resist in this phase. We have to rebuild an idea of alternative from below. [...] As a political militant, I consider important rebuilding from below an idea of alternative and building networks of real experiences that are able to respond to the needs for which they need, but, at the same time, to generate contention. [...] From a political point of view, this is the plan: entering society, answering a need, politicising this need to politicise society. And this will be useful to build networks of similar experiences [...] that will be able to build a revolutionary movement.

(Interview No.10)

Social and religious organizations, instead, tend to focus on providing services, without excluding political connotations, but considering them ancillary in terms of priority. This does not mean, of course, that they do not face political issues, such as the role of their services in the context of a welfare state. A doctor in the Organization 8 ambulatory well explains her position on the issue:

The goal of Programma Italia is not to create an alternative system to the [public] healthcare system. Instead, everything we do in these places is to facilitate access, thus [...] we try to send them the people to a certain public healthcare structure. [...] An important part of our job is to recognize the problems and report them back to the ASL46 so that the public [structure] can take care of them.

(Interview No.8)

Furthermore, what is common for AAOs, whether they are formal or informal, is the aim to change the way in which people behave. There is in these alternative actions an important goal, which is that of educating. Globalization, for these actors, cannot be challenged through the usual means of actions. What is needed is a change of the individuals, of how they consume, of how they relate to each other and so on. In this way ‘to educate to fair-trade and solidarity’ is for a representative of Organization 5 the main aim of his own group. This educational goal takes on a very peculiar meaning when it interacts with far-right ideologies, as it emerges from an interview we have conducted with a representative of Organization 13:

Our objective is to seek to aggregate and form people with a non-aligned thinking. The first vocation of this space is esoteric, the objective is that to raise as many young people as possible and try to provide them with an overview of society different from what the media propose them [...] the first objective is that of training. Before we think about new programs what is needed are new men [...] Solidarity-based purchasing groups have a type of approach to the phenomenon of progress, growth and consumption that in some way presupposes a work on the person. Which is, the person in some way goes to analyze what is the context in which he is constrained and does not accept some of the principles that are part of the consumer dimension even before the citizen. This assumes somewhat an earlier work on the person, on his way of relating with the world, with his individuality but also putting his individuality to the service of the community, as in the case of our organization, of a common good, of a set of people united by the same idea in the world, trying to act on themselves first and then act out.

(Interview No.13)

⁴⁶ Azienda Sanitaria Locale: Local Healthcare Agency

This latter quote is taken from a representative of an AAO which comes from the far-right. In the Italian context, some right-wing AAOs have also started to use these forms of action. They clearly claim that in using these repertoires of actions they have copied their usual enemies:

We have resumed the practices that were of a certain left. Obviously, we have translated these in our vision of the world.

(Interview No.13)

10.3 Economic Crisis Effect

The interviewees tend to identify different effects of the economic crisis on their activities, that we can roughly group into four different categories: the crisis as the creation of new needs and of social initiatives to address them; the crisis as a factor determining a change in the composition of the beneficiaries of certain initiatives; the crisis as a political opportunity for radical initiatives; the crisis as a factor reducing the resources for collective action.

Regarding the first effect, some of our organizations have been created as an immediate response to needs created by the economic crisis: the factory in Milan was closed in the context of the economic crisis, and it was as a response to the crisis that workers organised and occupied it. The same thing can be said for Organization 14: their ‘tent against the crisis’ was started in 2015 to give a direct answer to the economic hardship of the residents of the neighborhood. The citizens acted as a direct response to a situation of crisis, as an activist stated:

Here you can really see the crisis. You see it in the markets, you see it in the closed shops, you see it in the elderly people that go to look at the fruit that remains at the end of the market. [...] Shops close and never open again.

(Interview No. 14)

A very similar landscape is described by the representative of Organization 1, a solidarity-based purchasing group:

Many times I come to the city market and I see distinguished gentlemen, people you recognize as school teachers or professors, with suits that are perfectly clean but threadbare. They look like those in the post-war films. They do not shop, they pick up the stuff that is left there when the market closes.

(Interview No.1)

The second effect is the visible change in the social composition of the beneficiaries of certain initiatives, due to the worsening economic conditions of increasing parts of the population. The Organization 8 ambulatory, for example, had been thought and planned as an initiative aiming to address the difficulties of migrants to access the Italian healthcare system, but our interviewee reported an increasing participation of Italians in the program, mainly ‘for economic reasons’. A similar dynamic is reported by an activist of Organization 15, who reports a change in the composition of beneficiaries: while before their services were accessed mainly by politicized parts of the people, the crisis is pushing towards them more and more people whose participation depends directly on economic hardship:

Once there was a demand [for services] that was large and increasing, but now the growth is exponential. Thus, since the needs is broadening so much, it is more difficult to answer to all the needs, and it is even more difficult to involve those in need in a collective dimension. We meet much more loneliness than we did before, and thus for us it is harder to work, because it is harder the daily life we meet. The beautiful part of our work is the reflection of the dramas that are in society in this moment.

(Interview No.15)

If it is true that these forms of actions in times of economic crisis are capable of pushing non-politicized people towards a political AAO, what seems even more interesting is that in times of crisis these forms of action allow political persons to cross their political boundaries because they need certain services. This is the case of Organization 17, where beneficiaries are said to come ‘not necessarily from the radical left or even from the left, but as well from the center-right’ (Interview No.17). A representative from an informal AAO politically aligning itself with the far-right has suggested:

We have noticed a change in the last four to five years. Whereas previously our organization was sought only by a youth band of people, from 15 to 30 years, for some years now we have, also in consideration that we have started a series of activities in the area, obtained the consent from a different base. A world linked to the world of pensioners, families and precarious workers. It is also changed because we have changed our activities. At the beginning of the new millennium we did not do what we call 'the solidarity gathering', which is the collection for Italian families in crisis, and that is a solidarity gathering indeed. These are collections that are made by the militants and sympathizers and are then brought to the people who in some way are indigent. These activities were not made in the early years of the organization, because there was hardly a public to turn to or anyway that public was almost completely covered by some organizations and institutions, such as Caritas, responsible to cover that need. With the crisis

there has been a change that we have noticed and that we have used with the goal to get the results and to have a range of people and potential consensus that previously we had not. We have put together within this social space a social service that includes the presence of some professionals (lawyers, accountants, etc.) that offer free of advice to those who in some way need it [...] This project received excellent feedback. [...] Within this district it has consolidated the idea that the service we give is qualified and usable, then came people from other political orientations avail these services.

(Interview No.17)

The third effect is the opportunity the crisis provides for certain political initiatives, in particular the more radical ones. Some interviewees explicitly claimed that their goal was to politicise the economic struggles linked to the context of crisis. An activist of an occupied factory said very clearly:

The only way not to lose in a struggle is not to give up. Our bet was to give continuity to the struggle that normally develops in a case of crisis.

(Interview No.10)

For many representatives, the worsening of the economic conditions is indeed seen as an opportunity since they confirm that the neoliberal way of life and way of ruling the west are wrong, which in a way provides to these AAOs the legitimacy to be critical.

The fourth effect is the reduction of the resources necessary for collective action. This is particularly visible in organizations that require a certain economic commitment. A phase of economic hardship makes it more difficult for citizens to face the costs that are inherent to a specific political choice. This is the case, for example, of some forms of alternative consumption. For example, an activist in a network of organic farmers states:

We started in a period in which there was no crisis, in which there was no one that challenged the system, a part some small underground group. Thus, in the beginning we had many people that came to our markets, e they were people interested in our project, people that made a choice of political militancy, many people that made a choice linked to the healthiness of products, and so on. The crisis has changed a bit the things. The crisis has reduced a bit the attendance to the markets, even if this is counterbalanced by the increase in the number of markets.

(Interview No.2)

This negative impact of the economic crisis on alternative action is not limited to the economic component, but it is, instead, a consequence at the political level. Many activists see an increasing tendency to individualism, especially in the sectors of society that are most directly hit by the crisis. An activist of a neighborhood committee in Rome told us:

There is a closure, a barbarization of society. The social relations are based on 'making my own justice'. People are going around with knives between their teeth the whole day. They are feeling lonely. This is the climate. Then, if you organize something, you still manage to take out the good that is still there, in the people. But people are worn out, they are embittered.

(Interview No.14)

10.4 Initiatives and Projects

The organizations we have sampled are involved in a rather broad set of initiatives and projects. We will present here the most relevant of them, grouped in general categories that have been partially based in the typology used in the first phase of WP6.

Six of our organizations are mainly engaged in addressing the primary needs of the people of their community. In particular, two of the organizations whose representatives we interviewed are collectives whose main activity is the coordination of housing occupation in their respective cities (Organization 11 and Organization 20). As we have observed elsewhere, housing occupations have a long tradition in Italy, since the 1970s, and the economic crisis has enhanced their scale, level of coordination and centrality in the public sphere. This is in particular in the big metropolitan areas and in medium sized cities of northern and central Italy, with a significant role of migrant families as a social reference and of post-autonomous social centers as political actors.⁴⁷ While housing is mainly addressed by organizations coming from a social movement milieu, healthcare is addressed both by activists related to movement areas (as in the case of the Organization 19) and by formal and well-established organizations such as Organization 8: these organizations provide mainly access to healthcare to those who have cultural or legal problems in accessing the public system, but the increase in co-pay fees is increasingly pushing Italians towards these services. Religious organizations play a significant role in these kinds of activities, as witnessed by the interview to the representative of Organization 6, that for thirty years has been providing education (in the afternoon, complementing formal education) and recreation to the children of poor families. Finally, Organization 14, a network of citizens, social

⁴⁷ Bosi, L. and Zamponi, L. (2015) Direct Social Actions and Economic Crises: The relationship between forms of action and socio-economic context in Italy. *Partecipazione e Conflitto* 8(2), pp.367-391.

movement organizations and associations of the neighborhood, provides both food (through a weekly soup kitchen and the distribution of ‘anti-crisis packages’) and healthcare service, in a tent and in a container in the middle of a square, to poor residents. It also provides support services on housing and labor issues.

Labor is another relevant cluster of alternative action: three of our organizations are belong to the workers’ union scene: both the grassroots union confederation Organization 4 and the collective of freelance and precarious workers Organization 12, provided legal assistance and aid related to tax and labor issues to their members; Organization 9 went beyond this traditional repertoire of labor-related services, building a mutual aid scheme, based on the contributions of its members, that help free-lance workers of that sector in case of sickness.

A third group of organizations has as a core element of their initiatives and projects the idea of an alternative model of consumption and, in general, economy. Activities include the organization of solidarity-based purchasing groups (as in the case of Organization 1), the management of fair-trade shop (Organization 5) and the creation of a vast networks of farmers and consumers (Organization 2), able to grow food, following the principle of organic agriculture and of 0-km trade, and to sell it in different spaces in the city, from social centers to public squares. A recent and innovative experiment in the field of agriculture is the one of Organization 18, with a collective of former agronomy students that has occupied an abandoned state-owned farm in the outskirts of the city and is now working it following the principles of self-management, treating it as a common. The activities of the organization include production and commerce of food, laboratories of agriculture for the public and the distribution of small portion of lands to local families as self-managed gardens. The idea of self-management informs also the story of Organization 10, an occupied factory that follows the example of the ‘recuperated factories’ in Argentina in a rather different context, given the fact that the last owners took away all the machines: their initiatives include all sorts of activities, from renting space to recycling, with the goal of providing an income for the workers of the cooperative and of promoting principles and practices of self-management as an alternative to the crisis.

Finally, six of the organizations whose representatives we interviewed are built around a physical space: this is particularly relevant for occupied social centers (Organization 15, Organization 16), but also for an ARCI club like Organization 3 and for hybrid experiences like those situated on the far-right (Organization 13, Organization 7), that, notwithstanding the strong link with an established political party, draw inspiration on symbols and practices of the social movement left. Self-managed spaces become laboratories in which different initiatives and projects take place, from labor-related assistance

to healthcare aid, from legal services to informal education, from hospitality of refugees to 0-km markets.

10.5 Governance and Networks

Concerning the relationship with politics, this is a quite complex issue, that every organization faces in its own way. Some organizations consider themselves as eminently social, and thus they address politics as something external, with which it is necessary to establish a certain relationship, but with distinct roles, maintaining a distance that enables organizations to judge and value. The outcomes of these evaluations are not always positive, as testified by the words of a representative of Organization 6:

Politics? Let's draw a veil over it. I know every one of them, the mayor is a friend of us, with the assessor for youth we are on first name terms, with everyone we love each other, but they have to go. They have really no idea. I always tell them: you should come here for one week, to see who the people are, and then you will learn how to do politics. They do not have the pulse on the situation, because they are far away for the base. They are way far. [...] They are not bad people, criminals or what. But they are people that do politics either for heritage, because the party is supporting them and they go on, or because they have no job, and so they propose themselves. [...] Once in the local party section there was training, education, now this does not exist anymore. I have tried to organize a school of politics here, for three years, but only four or five people showed up, the people do not respond. The common good is tiresome.

(Interview No. 6)

The increasing distrust towards political parties and professional politicians makes it harder and harder for activists to delegate political representation. Thus, some organizations tend to distance themselves completely from state institutions, while other respond to this crisis by choosing self-representation. In fact, some organizations, even coming from more radical milieus, decide to break the barriers that usually separate social movements and institutional politics, ending up electing some of their own representatives in local institutions. This choice requires an analysis of the respective role of social action and institutional politics, as reported by a representative of Organization 15:

Ours a was the first social center, together with another one, in Rome, at the end of the 1990s, to face the institutional dynamic, nominating then, for the first time, a person in the city council and a person in the district council. [...] This has not happened in a peaceful way, in this sixteen years, but it helped us to think in a different way, not only from the subjective point of view, but

also developing the capacity to think about the world around us, using the institutions as a tool that is available to the community in a process of self-government and participation. [...]

(Interview No.15)

As we have shown in section 10.2, when discussing political issues, some of the organizations we have analysed are deeply politicized in their internal composition, in the sense that most of the core group of activists involved in their daily lives are in a way or in another engaged in politics. This is the case, for example, of Organization 3, many members of which are involved in parties, unions, associations and movements on the left. This condition creates the need of a specific work, to protect the social activity of the organization from an excessive identification with politics, as the representative of the organization explains:

One the one hand, it is inevitable a certain contamination and overlapping between the social life of the club and the strong political connotation of the people who participate in it. [...] And we think that it is necessary to go beyond the distinction between social and political. [...] On the other hand, there is the need to respect the sensibilities of everyone, in terms of politics. In a context in which there is no clear reference for anyone in terms of political party [...] we have never chosen to have the club siding in support of a political force.

(Interview No.3)

A visible phenomenon is the transformation of specific services, begun in the context of a common political collective, turning them into independent political entities, then in time tending to develop an almost complete autonomy from the political collective. This is the case, for example, for Organization 19, which was born inside a social center and is still hosted in it, but in time, while maintaining a positive relationship with the social center, developed its own political identity, expressed by its own political assembly especially on the issue of healthcare:

We almost never go the assemblies of the social center. There are two or three people, including me, that follow all the activities of the social center, that go to the assemblies, but it is rare, we go if we need something, if we need help to do something or if there is an issue in which we are personally interested. Now in the social center the different projects are rather autonomous, and this is a good thing, because there is no imposition of a political line. [...] Then some of the people of the social center come to our assembly. [...] There is an organizational assembly and a political assembly. [...] We express ours independently, without involving the space.

(Interview No.19)

If we want to summarize, we have noticed a form of pragmatic relationship between AAOs and institutions. AAOs, regardless of how radical they are, establish some contacts with the institutions and sometimes subsidise services, which during the crisis the institutions are not anymore capable of providing.

10.6 Beneficiaries and Participants

Regarding beneficiaries and participants in alternative actions, the first thing that needs to be said is that most of the organizations the representatives of which we interviewed are rooted in a quite precise local community. Only two organizations (the workers' unions Organization 9 and Organization 4) conduct their main activities at the national level, while all the others see their neighborhood or their city as the main horizon of their initiatives. From this point of view, we have identified six groups of organizations.

The first group is constituted of the actors that do not address a specific group from the social or territorial point of view, but, instead, propose certain choices and behaviors to the general public. This is mainly the case for organizations related to alternative consumption, such as solidarity-based purchasing groups, organic farmers' networks and fair-trade cooperatives. They are social initiatives but also economic activities, and they address the general public. This picture emerges quite clearly from the words of the representatives of Organization 2 and Organization 1.

The widest group [of beneficiaries] is represented by family with a good level of education and a lower-middle income. Teachers, lower-middle class that makes a choice, that has a certain level of consciousness on the issue of consumption. This is still our hard core. It is clearly very hard for us to involve the classic lower class. Because of the prices, even if, for what regards organic products, we have the most competitive prices, even with the large-scale retailers.

(Interview No.2)

We do not have an all-proletarian base: we have professional, we have retirees, we have students.

(Interview No.1)

The second group consists of those organizations that address mainly the working class or one segment of it. This is typically the case of trade unions, with Organization 4, as a confederation, addressing all workers in general, Organization 9 focusing of the specific sector of translators and Organization 12 attempting to involve in particular freelance and precarious workers.

The third group is constituted of organizations that target their beneficiaries based on a national distinction: this is clearly the case of far-right groups like Organization 7 and Organization 13, that explicitly address Italians, and Italians only, excluding migrants from their services.

A fourth group of initiatives identifies those organizations the activities of which are mainly addressing poor, marginalized or vulnerable components of the society. In this case, the distinction is not based on class or ethnicity, but on the condition of experiencing hardship, from the economic, social and cultural point of view. This is clearly the case with housing occupations, which involve those who cannot afford to pay rent, but also concern healthcare-related initiatives, as a representative of Organization 19 explains:

Even if we are in center, we are in rather lower-class area. [...] One quarter are migrants, sent by Organization 8, the rest are Italians. Migrants come to us because they have problems with their STP,⁴⁸ or they cannot pay the co-pay fee. The Italians come to us mainly for economic reasons.

(Interview No.19)

The same target of beneficiaries is shared also by Organization 6, that explicitly aims to address the children of families who live in difficult social conditions, and by the Organization 14 network, whose representative describe in this way the people who participate in their activities:

Homeless, unemployed, retirees with the minimum pension, Roma [...] All the people that were sucked in by this crisis. The other Rome, the one of which nobody ever talks.

(Interview No.14)

The case of Organization 14 is a hybrid between the fourth group (organizations targeting poor, vulnerable and marginal groups of people) and the fifth one, that identifies organizations whose main focus is territorial, and in particular rooted in a certain neighborhood of a city. Here we are referring to social centers like Organization 15, Organization 16 and Organization 17, and to the ARCI club Organization 3. The activities of these groups do not address the general public, as in the case of the first group, and they are definitely geared towards the lower classes, given the left-wing worldview that informs them. Still, the social composition of the beneficiaries of their activities strongly depends on the

⁴⁸ *Straniero Temporaneamente Presente*, ‘Temporarily Present Foreigner’, code that foreigners need to use in order to access the public healthcare system in Italy.

one of the neighborhood in which they are situated. A very clear example of this relationship is provided by a representative of Organization 3:

This area is populated by people that are not exactly the middle-class as we thought about it some time ago. I do not even know whether it makes sense to talk about middle class, in the crisis. We are talking about people who have problems in paying rent, that have precarious jobs, that often ask their parents for help [...]. In this neighborhood there are many different forms of poverty. There is a visible poverty, that you see in the homeless and in the clandestine underground factories populated by migrants [...] and there is something different. The world we mainly intercept is a rather definite world in its generational composition and in the path through which it got here: 20- to 40-year-olds, coming from other cities of Italy, because they came to study or to work here. There is a significant presence of young couples, with small children.

(Interview No.3)

The sixth group is constituted of organizations whose main beneficiaries of the activists of which coincides with the members of the organization itself. This is the case of communities like those involved in experiences of self-management, like Organization 10 or Organization 18, in which the production of an income able to sustain the community itself is a core element of the political project. This does not mean that this organizations work as close communities; rather, they often aim to devise specific strategies as initiatives to involve the public, as in the case of the self-managed gardens for local families proposed by Organization 18.

10.7 Outcomes and Best Practices

In terms of outcomes, a distinction needs to be made. In fact, while organizations characterised mainly by a social nature, without specific political leanings, such as Organization 9 or Organization 8, tend to focus on the direct outcomes of their actions, on the effect that the services they provide have on specific people, the organizations characterised by a higher level of politicization tend to focus more on the indirect outcomes of alternative action. In particular, some organizations are well aware that the direct effect of their initiatives and projects is limited by structural factors, by the fact they are a small volunteers' organization, unable to face all the issue generated by the economic crisis in their community, but they consider what they do particularly relevant because it creates the conditions to reconstruct the social fabric that the crisis has weakened.

When asked about the outcomes of their activities, in fact, activist of mainly social organization tend to focus on direct outcomes. A representative of the Ambulatory of Organization 8 explained in this way the outcome of their initiative on the local community:

For the Roma we are really the only place where they can go. In Campania there is a rather big problem with healthcare assistance to foreign minors. If parents do not have a residence, or a job, when children are sick they have to be brought to the emergency room, when the law establishes that minor have to be assisted even if they are illegal or anyway without a residence. For them it is really clear that we are their only reference, so it is easy to understand the usefulness. Then I was really happy to have a positive feedback from the people of the neighborhood, that appreciate the fact that they can come here, even only to talk about the problems they have. The people thanks us, even only to have chosen this place, that does not have many services.

(Interview No.8)

Instead, activists belonging to more politicized organizations tend to go beyond the direct outcomes of their action, when asked about the impact on the community, and to underline the relevance of alternative action to recreate social ties, a sense of community, that they consider fundamental for political action. A very clearly example is provided by a representative of Organization 19:

The ambulatory allows you to be recognisable in the neighborhood and to transmit some messages. [...] It is nice, when we do the ambulatory there is these groups of ten people waiting, there are the ladies, the migrants, there are very funny scenes. And it gives you the chance to talk: "Madam, do you know that they are closing the hospital?", and you can start transmitting, in a very simple way, some messages. And we organised the rally against the closure of the hospital, some of them came, in solidarity. It is not the thing that will make you do the revolution, but...

(Interview No.19)

The relationship between direct and indirect outcomes is analysed also by an activist of Organization 16:

We want to give immediately an answer, that can be an answer of solidarity, with the activities, that in some way are services that should be provided by public institutions, and that now are not granted. But at the same time we do not want to limit ourselves to give an immediate answer,

as a resistance to the crisis, but we want to build, based on these resistances, a project that challenges the municipality on some small struggles that we can conduct. [...] We aim first of all to reconstruct an immediate resistance to the problems the crisis has brought us to face. But above all we want to make so that this kind of resistance can create a recomposition of all the subjects that have no voice in the political dynamics of our territory and of country, and rebuild from below an encompassing political project.

(Interview No.16)

10.8 Summary

The analysis of our interviews shows a quite complex landscape. Alternative Action Organizations in Italy include groups belonging to different political areas, engaged in different activities, addressing different social sectors and pursuing different long-term goals. This visible internal variation makes particularly interesting the common traits shared by the organizations.

First, there is a broadly shared tendency, in all interviewees, to underline the necessary concreteness of their activities, in this particular economic context. This is not the time for ideological elaboration or sophisticated distinctions: this is the time to do something, concrete, immediate and effective, to address the urgent problems of a growing part of the population. The insistence on the urgency and concreteness of their activities is vastly shared by interviewees, across political and geographical lines.

Second, all interviewees acknowledge a direct effect of the economic crisis in their activities. In most cases, this is a positive effect, in the sense that either their projects started as a response to the crisis or the crisis provided the chance to broaden the audience of their initiatives or to politicize existing struggles and issues. A negative effect of the crisis is also identified by some activists, as a reduction of the resources that allow people to participate in some types of alternative action. All the interviewees agree in considering the impact of the economic crisis on the Italian population as being rather strong, in particular on the most vulnerable sectors of society (such as, in some cases, ethnic minorities), but also on the middle class. When asked to identify the parts of society that were most violently hit by the crisis, they tend to mention homeless, Roma and migrants, but they also point out that a growing part of the Italian lower-middle class is suffering a significant worsening on living conditions.

Third, most interviewees share a rather pragmatic view of politics: either they share the widespread distrust towards established political institutions and actors, or in any case they acknowledge it and recognize the need to take it into account when planning their initiatives and establishing relationships with politics. The set of choices that organizations take is broad, from a complete separation from party

politics to a cross-contamination, from joining a party to running as independents in elections. But they have in common this pragmatic attitude, and in particular the idea that traditional politics is obviously in crisis and that it can be instrumentally used for different goals.

Fourth, many interviewees reported how the experience of alternative action in the context of the economic crisis provided them the opportunity to engage not only with a broader audience of beneficiaries, but also with a broader network of partners, cutting across previous differences and political belongings.

Fifth, alternative action in the context of the economic crisis seems to be for many organizations an opportunity for innovation and change. Not only social organizations tend to propose initiatives and projects that are partially replacing the role of the state, and from which public institution may learn more than something, but also these projects prove to be a significant learning experience for the organizations themselves and for the people involved in them.

10.9 Annex

Sample

Formal Organisations

- Organization 1
July 4th
This is an association which organizes a solidarity-based purchasing group and other activities in a city of the north-east.
- Organization 2
July 5th
This is an association of farmers and consumers organising markets of organic and 0-km products in various social centers and squares of a northern city. It started in the early 2000s.
- Organization 3
June 28th
This is an ARCI (national association of leftist cultural clubs) club in a neighborhood of Rome. It organises a wide set of cultural, musical and social activities, including a support service for labor-related problems, targeting both employees and freelance workers.
- Organization 4
June 23th

This is a national grassroots trade union confederation. It was established in the 1980s. It provides services to legal and social services to workers.

- Organization 5

June 24th

This is a social cooperative born in 2008. Its aim is to promote a solidarity economy. It sells fair-trade food as well as handicrafts.

- Organization 6

June 30th

This is a religious-based volunteers' organization started in the 1980s to help children of poor families in a neighborhood of a southern city.

- Organization 7

June 23th

This is the youth group of a right-wing political party. In a neighborhood of Rome, it offers social and legal services to Italians.

- Organization 8

July 1st

This is a humanitarian NGO that has provided emergency medical treatment to civilian victims of war since 1994. Since 2015, the Ambulatory in a neighborhood, in the periphery of a southern city, has been providing access to healthcare to migrant and, increasingly, also Italian residents.

- Organization 9

April 28th

This is a workers' union, belonging to the CGIL confederation. It has recently started a mutual project to help freelance workers from its sector in case of sickness.

- Organization 10

April 23rd

This is a factory, close to a northern city, that was closed in 2012 and that, since then, has been occupied by a cooperative, involving both former workers of the factory and other people. The cooperative now manages different activities in the factory, following the principle of self-management and the example of Argentinian recuperated factories.

Informal Organisations

- Organization 11

April 28th

This is an informal organization, established in Rome in the early 2000s. It is involved in squatting houses for migrant and, increasingly, also for Italian residents.

- Organization 12

This is an informal trade union organization, in Rome, seeking to defend the rights of precarious, unemployed and foreigner citizens. It has been established over the last three years.

- Organization 13

Florence, May 5th

This is a far-right social center, in a city of central Italy, established in the early 2000s. It offers social and legal services to Italians.

- Organization 14

April 27th

This is a network of associations, social centers and individuals in a neighborhood in Rome, involved in many social activities including a soup kitchen, the distribution of food to poor families and healthcare services.

- Organization 15

June 28th

This is a squatted social center in a neighborhood in Rome, engaged in a series of social activities, including solidarity with refugees, education, occupations, etc.

- Organization 16

June 30th

This is a squatted social center in Naples, engaged in a series of social activities, including education, healthcare assistance, labor-related services, etc.

- Organization 17

May 18th

This is an occupied space in the center of a northern city, established in 2012. It is involved in different socio-cultural activities, including: education, musical activities, hosting farmers and consumers' markets of organic and 0-km products, support service for labor-related problems and refugees.

- Organization 18

June 20th

This is an occupied and self-managed farm, in a publicly-owned piece of land outside a city in central Italy.

- Organization 19

July 1st

This is an informal and self-managed healthcare service hosted by a social center in the center of a southern city.

- Organization 20

March 25th

This is an informal organization, in a small northern city, involved in squatting houses for migrants and, increasingly, also for Italian residents. It was established in the late 1990s.

11. Poland



11.1 Introduction

The aim of the report is to provide and analyze data on how Alternative Action Organizations (AAOs) in Poland have been operating since 2008, when the economic crisis in Europe began. On the one hand, and differently than in some Western and Southern European countries, economic downturn has been almost absent in Poland. On the other hand, however, a low average income level, widespread precarious employment and the overall scope of poverty all result in a standard of living and quality of life in Poland much below the average in the European Union. This, accompanied with more scarce European Union resources, has given rise to (new) coping strategies at both the individual and organizational level. Our focus on those organizations that develop alternative types of action, such as local exchange trading systems, social groceries, boycotts, consumer cooperatives, occupying buildings, etc., intends to shed light on the ways in which society critically evaluates the meaning of crisis and constructively creates solutions to social problems.

In this report, we investigate whether Alternative Action Organizations in Poland recognize economic crisis or other types of crisis as triggers of change in their environment and internal strategies. In the first section, we present how the researched organizations speak about their fundamental values and political goals. In the second section of the report, the organizations' experiences of crisis are discussed. The following sections present initiatives and actions as well as examining the networks and networking strategies of the organizations studied. Subsequent parts of the report provide information on the beneficiaries of those organizations. The report ends with the organizations' own assessment of good practice and the main problems they face, along with a summary of our findings.

This report is based on an analysis of nineteen interviews with the representatives of informal civic groups and social organizations working in Poland. For this research task, a quota sample has been constructed, encompassing five service-oriented formal organizations, five service-oriented informal groups, five policy-oriented organizations and five policy-oriented informal groups. Twelve organizations were randomly sampled from the list elaborated within WP 6.1. task of the LiveWhat project. Eight more organizations (mainly informal groups) were added to balance the sample, in particular regarding the policy sphere in which organizations are active (civic participation, social assistance, ecology, industrial relations, culture) and regarding the organizations' use of alternative

forms of work. Although the original sample consisted of twenty organizations, only nineteen interviews were conducted. In the case of one policy-oriented organization, the interview appointments were repeatedly postponed. As specified in later parts of the report, the final sample consists of six formal service-oriented organizations, four informal service-oriented groups, five formal policy-oriented organizations, and four informal policy-oriented groups. Despite the lower number of interviews conducted than originally planned, the analysis proved a high level of saturation of data in the factual sample

It should be noted that the task guidelines on sample construction were followed strictly. However, we have observed that in the cases of the researched civic groups and organizations, both the division into policy-oriented and services-oriented subjects, as well as the division into formal and informal subjects, seemed not to fit well with those organizations' characteristics. Firstly, as elaborated later, most of the organizations deliberately employ 'a hybrid approach' in their actions, combining provision of various services with engagement in policy-making on local and national levels. Thus, the distinction into service-oriented and policy-oriented organizations mirrors only a relative and often slight focus of the organizations' activity. In the case of one organization, after conducting the interview we decided to move it from a policy-oriented into service-oriented subgroup. Secondly, the distinction into formal and informal groups in our sample does not reflect the legal status of the organizations in two cases. Namely, three organizations classified as informal in the sample are registered as associations. Their representatives emphasize, though, that the necessity of cooperating with local government has forced them to register but in practice they do not accept any internal structures or hierarchies.

The following groups and organizations were researched:

a) Formal service-oriented organizations:

- Cultural organizations' support centre offering space and advice to emerging organizations (FS1)
- Agricultural cooperative which runs shops with fair trade products (FS2)
- Cultural association which offers workshops and runs a social garden (FS3)
- Association protecting cultural heritage which runs community history archives (FS4)
- Association offers a broad range of social services, including hostels, social kitchen, social economy initiatives for people with disabilities, etc. (FS5)
- Community centre (FS6)

b) Informal service-oriented groups:

- Two different groups which offer meeting and office spaces for civic groups (IS1)
- A group providing graphic, design and film production services for ecological organizations (IS2 and IS3)

A group organizing informal exchange of goods and services (IS4)

c) Formal policy-oriented organizations:

Association fighting air-pollution (FP1)

Foundation developing public policy solutions for local governments and companies (FP2)

Foundation developing policies on sustainable development for local governments and companies (FP3)

Neighborhood watch-dog and self-help association (FP4)

Organization fighting for global justice (FP5)

d) Informal policy-oriented groups:

Neighbors group protecting a historical settlement (IP1)

Cooperative supporting small retailers and a watch-dog of developers' investments (IP2)

Neighborhood group aiming at activation of local community (IP3)

City watch-dog organization (IP4)

Interviews were conducted between July and November 2016, both face-to-face (in Warsaw and Kraków) and via Skype. Skype interviews were conducted with two formal service-oriented organizations and three formal policy-oriented organizations, due to the geographical distance of the respondents. It was relatively difficult to make the appointments with organizations' representatives, and the justification of high level of workload was usually given. Almost all formal organizations were represented by board members (in one case a services manager was interviewed), whereas informal groups were represented by their leaders. Interviews were tape-recorded and fieldwork notes were taken. Research team members analysed the collected material separately and jointly discussed the findings and interpretations in order to check their validity.

11.2 Political Issues

The main values and political goals which interviewees presented as important for their groups and organizations showed a very low level of differentiation. Regardless of this, the formalization level of the group and its focus on service or policy, following three intertwined groups of values, were reported by most respondents. These are detailed below.

- (1) Social solidarity, collaboration, integration, networking, social capital: a group of values which can be broadly labelled as relating to cooperation.

All respondents referred to some of the above values, and in most cases these were the first type of value or political goal that interviewees highlighted. It must be stressed that this ethical category, which emerged from the interviews, has a strongly activity-oriented and relations-oriented dimension. No goals

such as combating poverty or promoting equality appeared here. On the contrary, a relatively technical and purely social aspect of cooperation was dominant. Indeed, some respondents said explicitly,

Networks themselves are our main value, or our goal is networking in the neighborhood.

(Interview FP4)

Moreover, the notion of cooperation as a value was based on the assumption that social diversity should be highly respected – the more differentiated and bigger the network of an organization, the more beneficial it is. So for example, it was very often expressed that:

We would like to cooperate with everyone [...] we are very tolerant.

(Interview FS1)

Thus, cooperation as a value clearly carries the notion of leaving behind one's own identity as an outdated and exclusionary platform from which to pursue societal goals. Respondents described their aim of such broad cooperation using the language of 'being anti-political', which clearly meant for them being 'non-particularistic' in their work.

- (2) The second group of values reported by the interviewees may be categorized as relating to civic participation. As well as civic participation being named explicitly, other related values were mentioned, such as: empowerment and empowering others, civic activism, having a voice, inclusion in decision-making processes, cultural animation. These values were emphasized both by the policy-oriented groups and those organizations which were focused on reaching specific political goals (e.g. in the local council), but also by most of the service-oriented organizations who understood their objectives as supporting excluded people and any emerging civic groups.
- (3) The third group of values, closely intertwined with the other two, relates to the change of relations between economy and natural environment. Thus, some ecological aspect of their activity was very important to most of the interviewed organizations.

A quite broad understanding of ecological goals emerges from the interviews. These encompass influencing city planning procedures, improving local spatial policy, fighting against air pollution, promoting small trade and local farmers in order to compete with large companies, or advocacy for global justice (FS2, IS1, FP1, FP3, IP1). We label these values and political goals as comprising organizations' focus on sustainable development in a broad sense. This feature is particularly meaningful in our sample: most of the researched organizations work on some redefinition of the dominant model of economy, with the aim of establishing or promoting a system which respects social

networks, human relations and the environment. Some of our respondents, in particular cooperatives and groups close to anarchism, expressed this feature of their activity straightforwardly, e.g. by saying:

We want to influence the condition of environment, because if products are grown ecologically, then this is because of the fact we have this shop and we create a demand for this [...] some of our members say: 'Let's depart from the system which is built on an economic profit.' We want to build sort of a political frontline, a common consciousness, or to contribute to a sort of new vision of trade [...] the trade has an important noneconomic value.

(Interview IP2)

Thus, the goal of sustainable development is closely related to the ideal of an alternative economy – combining social justice and care of the environment. Apart from an explicitly anti-capitalist and anti-system rationale, pursuing the goal of sustainable development often took a form of more ‘moderate’ approach presented by our respondents. This included such things as care of public space in the cities, collective self-defence against invasive developers, city social gardening, etc.

Some differences in the values and political goals expressed by the AAOs occurred between the formal service-oriented organizations and the informal policy-oriented groups. Organizations from the former subsample relatively often highlighted professionalism as one of the core values of their activity. One important feature of their identity was the difference between them and the ‘unprofessional organizations’. By professionalism, they meant in general using methods and approaches which do work and which still work, as opposed to strategies of doing what may be given financial grants, though is not in itself efficient. This concept of professionalism is closely related to ‘being alert’ by evaluating their own work, checking what works and advocating best standards.

The latter subsample – mainly the informal and some formal policy-oriented organizations – often underscored the virtue of refraining from formalism and being apolitical or even anti-political. These organizations often stressed that they didn’t have political goals (although many of them developed well-recognized and specific public policies and their members were elected to city councils), but only had pragmatic ones. One exception is the organization that states its main goal is to overthrow city’s president, who it sees as disregarding the city’s inhabitants.

11.3 Economic Crisis Effects

The majority of the researched groups and organizations underscore the fact that after 2008 there was no such economic crisis in Poland, as in some Western and Southern countries of the EU. Accordingly, this crisis had no or insignificant influence on their work. It also needs to be noticed that for about one

third of the researched organizations, it was suggested that they haven't been functioning long enough to reflect on change. Surprisingly though, the issue of crisis and the problem of crisis turned out to be meaningful to our interviewees. In most cases, our respondents could easily reflect on the relations between crisis and their functioning. We found the following the most prevalent understandings of this relationship in our sample:

- (1) Some organizations, in particular formal policy-oriented ones, stressed that funding – in particular the EU funding – had become less accessible due to economic crisis. One foundation which had been using the US endowment fund before 2008 reported a significant reduction of resources which led it to opting out from the American structures and resulted with establishing a Polish fund. A group of organizations underlined that the level of competitiveness among organizations is growing. This also results in a threat to stability, and to some extent creates a higher workload for themselves.
- (2) Two organizations (both formal and policy-oriented) reported that the scope and vibrancy of their networks with some organizations from West European countries (the example of Great Britain was mentioned) diminished due to economic crisis.
- (3) One organization underlined that the global economic crisis led to a situation in which Poland is gradually becoming more dependent on investors from countries in which social and economic policy violate human rights. They stressed that e.g. Chinese investments in Poland make the socio-economic problems they want to fight against more acute.
- (4) Three organizations stressed that the alleged crisis has been serving as a smokescreen for cutting public subsidies and access to funding. This refers to both national and local institutions reducing grants and civil society support. Similarly, a change of priorities was highlighted. In particular, the organizations active in the field of culture stressed that at the same time, the demand for public policies and activities has shifted away from what they do. It must be noted though, that on this understanding it is not the factual crisis but rather the narrative built on the hypocrisy of politicians and the media (suggesting that a crisis has not occurred in Poland) which is a mechanism curbing the access to funds.
- (5) A few of our respondents stressed that macroeconomic indices tell us nothing about social reality. The fact that, according to official statistics, the crisis is absent in Poland overlooks the fact that many social groups in Polish society do experience poverty and social exclusion. In this regard, it was emphasized that: a) this is due to general poverty in Polish society, compared to Western countries. In one organization, it was stressed that they do respond to the crisis of Polish economic and political transformation which started in 1989 and still creates difficult consequences since the country's economy and society has to struggle with many problems; b)

it was pointed out that that contemporary Polish politicians at national and local level create or enhance the crisis – in this sense, crisis has a broader political meaning of particularism, permanent austerity and neglecting social needs. It is seen both as a problematic situation to which organizations respond, as well as the context making their work more difficult.

- (6) Informal policy-oriented groups and service-oriented cooperatives emphasized that they work in circumstances of permanent crisis, which is a general malfunction of any capitalist economic system. One feature of the dominant economic model is an unequal distribution of wealth, which imposes poverty on various social groups, as well as destroying social networks, mutual relations, natural environments and often including a violation of the basic rights of people – in particular, in the global South. Thus, as noted earlier, one of the main goals of some of the interviewed organizations is to create an alternative economic system based on an appreciation of social ties and ecology.
- (7) Two organizations stressed that economic crisis has positive effects because the level of invasive investments which destroy public space in the cities and destroy the natural environment is dropping. They emphasized that due to crisis, the negative processes they want to fight against are less acute.
- (8) One informal group developing the idea of social urban gardening acknowledged that some ideas (such as social gardening) became popular in Poland due to their popularity in West European cities. They were a reaction to crisis in West, but they are imported in Poland rather as a practice promoting sustainable development and a certain lifestyle, rather than as a solution to crisis.

11.4 Initiatives and Projects

The researched groups and associations reported that they organize a broad variety of actions and initiatives. Similar to those mentioned earlier, we could neither observe significant differences between services-oriented and policy-oriented groups nor between formal and informal ones. A focus on watchdog, advocacy and protest activities is present among policy-oriented entities; however, the differences between researched subgroups are relatively small. The following characteristics of organizations' initiatives are present among the researched groups:

- (1) Various alternative and innovative initiatives with close collaboration between beneficiaries were undertaken. Such initiatives were carried relatively often by the researched organizations:
 - Running community centers and social clubs
 - Providing co-working spaces or meeting spaces and places

- Advising and ‘coaching’ taking various forms, offered both to organizations and individuals
- Providing design, promotion and media services for social campaigns of other organizations
- Workshops for various social groups with a high potential of ‘bridging’ social capital
- Social economy initiatives to include vulnerable groups (e.g. disabled persons working as art merchants)
- Food exchange and social kitchens
- Education and media campaigns

Among policy-oriented groups and organizations, to accompany the above-mentioned initiatives, such actions were taken as:

- Watch-dog activities
- Advocacy
- Political protest
- Participation in local consultations
- Promoting specific public policy standards both related to procedural aspects and social services quality

None of the researched groups and organizations were recently involved in providing ‘standardized and ready-made’ services, such as traditional educational services or in-kind support.

No straightforward relation to economic crisis of 2008 was observed in the initiatives of the researched groups. This also refers to the absence of changes in the demand and the supply side of the presented initiatives. However, many of the mentioned actions are related to the crisis in a broad sense, as described previously (e.g. cooperatives distributing agricultural products aim at the farmers’ economic resilience building).

(2) Diversity of initiatives: a very broad spectrum of actions from each of the researched groups and organizations was reported. All our interviewees showed significant heterogeneity in the initiatives in which they were involved.

There was no service-oriented group or organization in our sample which is not involved in some aspect of policy-making or policy organization not leading some direct actions for the beneficiaries. In most cases, running a variety of initiatives was their conscious strategy. We call this, after one of our

interviewees, a *hybrid* model of action. It was often stressed by our respondents that one path to their success is compilation, e.g. engaging in professional actions based on specific knowledge (e.g. discussions with policy-makers and urbanists on spatial planning) along with ‘emotional actions’ (e.g. media releases showing a threat resulting from specific commercial investment in the city). Other organizations emphasized a strong focus on the networking of the neighbors combined with direct protest actions against local government, if needed. Other groups reported they both provide workshops for excluded people, as well as running a social public garden in the centre of the city to attract their neighbors.

- (3) A *hybrid* model of action is closely related to another feature of the reported initiatives. The interviewees emphasize they need to be constantly alert in evaluating their own work and checking ‘what works’.

The researched groups and organizations are characterized by proactivity and a significant level of flexibility in this regard. Such a self-evaluative approach refers both to their services and to their own strategies of development. One of our interviewees highlighted the need of being innovative in whatever they do. She said:

Well, we are taken by the idea of start-ups, we are creative and support of creative ideas.

(Interview FS1)

Another respondent gave the example of elaborating 50 preliminary solutions of social innovation in the sphere of community elderly care:

Then we were testing them practically and selected only a couple those which work best. That’s how we work – as in shipyard – we provide ships which float, if something sinks, we leave it behind.

(Interview FP2)

The same interviewee emphasized a shift in his organization from a focus on social, scientific foresight into a radical reflexive flexibility: this is because in the contemporary world, scientific foresight and rational planning does not work anymore; rather, you must rely on your intuition.

- (4) The consequence of the above is that the organizations’ general focus, in particular among the service-oriented AAOs, lies with providing ‘tailored services’.

Many of our respondents (Interviews FS1, FS3, FS5, FS6, FP2, IP1, IP2, IP3), highlighted their close relations to clients or beneficiaries, including: assistance, coaching, legal or organizational support,

readiness to practically change a place of working and living in order to meet specific needs of the beneficiaries.

- (5) One common feature of the researched organizations' work was providing inclusive spaces and places to citizens.

Eight organizations in our sample offered office space or meeting places to informal civic groups, individuals and other organizations. Offering inclusive space where civic groups can work and develop their activities was one of most frequent instruments used by the organizations. It was often stressed in the interviews that LGBT groups, emerging labor union members, refugees and so on were welcome by the organizations. Several of the researched organizations (Interviews FS1, FS6, FS5, FS4, IS1, IS2, IP1) were running community centers, neighborhood cafes, social gardens, fighting for an inclusive space in the public parks and squares.

- (6) As developed in a subsequent part of the report, a significant part of the work of policy-oriented organizations is related to advocacy building and networking.

Many of the researched organizations were strongly involved in bridging individuals, groups and organizations, which was perceived both as an independent goal and as a means of reaching some specific goals. Those organizations in our sample often explicitly refrain from politics and highlight that providing fora of public discussion to citizens is among their goals. These networks are mobilized occasionally, for direct action (protest) or bringing attention to specific problems, which is called 'making noise' (Interviews IS3, IP4).

- (7) A significant share of the researched organizations worked on the development of symbolic and cultural capital – either in the local community or in a broad sense.

Collecting local memorabilia, protecting oral history, bridging cultures, awareness-raising in the field of sustainable development, cultural animation, enhancing local (neighborhood) identity made for an important aspect of organizations' work.

11.5 Governance and Networks

Networking and working within networks was a particularly important aspect of the researched organizations' work. As noted, a few groups and organizations stressed that it is the networking itself which is their main value and field of activity: this was the case of an advocacy group, a local policy-oriented organization, as well as two cooperatives. With exceptions listed in the former part of the report, no specific connection to economic crisis and network change was reported by the interviewees. We

have observed the following main mechanisms related to organizations' networks and networking strategies:

- (1) In general, organizations stressed big size and heterogeneity of their networks.

All the AAOs actively look for new allies or supporters. Policy-oriented organizations tend to report bigger networks than service-oriented ones; formal organizations tend to have broader networks compared to informal groups.

- (2) In the case of some formal policy-oriented and formal service-oriented organizations, a strategy of networking and work within networks appeared, which may be labelled as 'targeted networking'.

This means purposefully including in a network certain groups of actors which may help to reach organization goals. Thus, an anti-pollution organization gave an example of doctors and doctors' organizations with which they cooperate closely. In a similar fashion, the organization active in the field of spatial planning is in favor of including urbanists and architects in its group of collaborators. The strategy of specific targeting is usually present in organizations working on a relatively narrow scope of issues (despite its huge heterogeneity, overall). This type of network often consisted of all regional actors active in a certain policy field. For example, one of our interviewees said:

For a long time we have known practically all organizations dealing with ecology in Poland. We know each other very well.

(Interview IS3)

- (3) A strategy of specified networking may be combined with an approach we label as 'untargeted networking', which prevails in informal policy organizations.

This strategy is built on a strong assumption that among the organization's members, a broad level of cooperation is a shared value. An openness towards wide cooperation is regarded both as a pragmatic solution and as a civic virtue that contradicts politicians' particularism. One of our interviewees expressed this idea in the following way:

Our goal is to cooperate in the neighborhood beyond political cleavages.

(Interview IP3)

This strategy is often accompanied by a collaboration which may be named as 'not branded'. Several of our respondents who used the strategy of unspecified networking pointed to the fact that they often join

various coalitions for various reasons and to further other organizations' goals, in which they don't disclose their own name, identity or interests. They explain:

We don't have to do everything in our own name, this is not important for us.

(Interview FP1)

- (4) Both of the above networking strategies are often developed by the internal approach of the organizations, whereby networks are primarily constituted of the private networks of the organization's members. A group of smaller organizations, including anarchist groups with a loose structure, reported using this strategy of networking.
- (5) One of the most significant features of the researched groups and organizations (explored later) is a strong connection to locality.

Thus, the networks of most of the researched organizations are geographically concentrated in their neighborhood, locality or region, although various links to national and supranational institutions are present in the networks, too. For one of the researched organizations, creating a dense structure of connections between the neighbors and inhabitants of city district is among its main goals. A similar approach was reported by two cooperatives in which establishing links with farmers or retailers and conscious consumers was central to the organizations' goals.

- (6) Policy-oriented subjects, including in particular informal groups, emphasized the role of the internet in their networking strategies.

This was particularly visible among the groups working in a way closely reminiscent of a social movement. They reported:

We cooperate broadly, there are also all those who give their 'likes' on Facebook.

(Interview IP3)

Examples of community Facebook sites or discussion groups were given, which gathered several thousands of registered participants. One of our interviewees pointed to the speed of information exchange and the integrational role of this tool (although, the example given also suggests a mechanism of social control):

It happened that someone's kid was bitten by a dog in our city district and it took us one hour [since posting a question on neighborhood website] to know exactly whose dog it was.

(Interview IP3)

Other respondents pointed to the significance of visibility on the internet when networking. They emphasized that they make professional videos for various organizations active in the field of ecology, because:

Then, even people from abroad get in touch with us, it really attracts attention to what we do.

(Interview IS3)

Other interviewees discussing the role of internet emphasized that, above all:

Discussion groups and community sites serve locally as a sort of agora for community, since we don't have it in public places anymore.

(Interview IP3)

11.6 Beneficiaries and Participants

The researched groups and organizations generally offered their actions to a broad and open range of beneficiaries. A very low level of targeting when defining the clients and beneficiaries is a significant feature of the whole sample. With two exceptions of specific services provided by organizations, no criteria delimiting clients were reported. No change of the scope and number of clients as a consequence of the 2008 economic crisis was presented. The following groups of beneficiaries were pointed to particularly frequently.

- (1) The inhabitants of a city or a city district and their neighbors.

All informal policy-oriented groups, two informal service-oriented groups, as well as many other organizations, stressed that it is primarily local citizens who benefit from their actions. The already mentioned characteristics of actions – focus on inclusive spaces and places, as well as local networking – result in neighbors being the main benefiting group of the researched organizations. Most of the organizations in our sample are deeply anchored in the locality and they emphasize this attachment: focusing on best local spatial policies and investment policies respecting the neighbors, organizing local feasts, providing mutual help in relation to ideas of changing the economic system, and relying on personal networks in economy and global justice. We may interpret this feature as a globalization of organizations' strategies.

- (2) Perceiving neighbors as the main group of organizations' beneficiaries is often accompanied by regarding group members themselves as a main beneficiary, too.

Cooperatives and policy organizations often responded that it is primarily ‘us’ who benefit from the actions. One of the respondents describes this in the following way:

Our group of beneficiaries are, of course, all inhabitants of the neighborhood, all inhabitants, as they are, so we try to reach all the inhabitants here, but they already know we are here [...] because we are visible at the streets [...] and thirdly we do all this for ourselves, I mean – us as participants also get involved, we participate, if we make a picnic here, we bring tables, cakes, sit and talk because we like meeting other people, we do it for ourselves, as a part of this community here.

(Interview IP3)

- (3) A share of the organizations, in particular those in the subsample of service-oriented organizations, reported that they reach vulnerable groups in their actions.

It should be noted that these groups were generally broadly named, such as: excluded people, those who need support, the elderly, those who can’t meet elsewhere. In a few cases, examples of workshops and services for the homeless, former inmates, refugees, and the LGBT community were given.

- (4) Since the goal of promoting sustainable development is strongly present in the researched sample of organizations, it was emphasized that organizations’ indirect but important beneficiaries are often geographically distant social groups.

These were farmers, small retailers and entrepreneurs, people living in the global South. The organizations’ strategies of action, based on broad networking and promoting sustainable development and solidarity, led to such a defined beneficiary group.

- (5) Service providers in our sample, and informal policy-oriented organizations in particular, were relatively often acknowledged by other organizations as their clients and beneficiaries.

This is, firstly, due to mutual help and networking, but also because of a developing sector of ‘organization-to-organization’ services in our sample. Almost all spaces and places providers stressed that they offer space for other civic groups and organizations which need to be supported. Two advanced service providers individualized ‘coaching’ to emerging organizations. One informal service provider deals primarily with offering professional media (graphics, webmastering, filming, etc.) support to other groups active in the field.

- (6) Two organizations (FP2 and FP3) pointed to business and local governments being among their main clients. One of them (FP3) emphasized their role in “knowledge brokering” which meant working for professionals, bureaucrats and university scholars.

Tailored social participatory research, evaluation and above all ‘tailored public policy ideas’ offered to cities and big companies allow this organization to reach even very big institutions.

11.7 Outcomes and Best Practices

All researched groups and organizations could easily prove the success of their work. In general, three types of positive result named by the respondents can be seen, with no significant differences between subgroups of the organizations.

First, the internal working methods of the organizations, their development, and adjustment strategies are in this category. Such examples were given relatively often but two interviewees said explicitly that their organizations methods evolved from a relatively traditional, passive or scientific approach (offering educational services, scientific foresights on social problems) into a ‘reflexive and flexible approach’ focused on close and individualized work with beneficiaries. Moreover, as noted earlier, a significant share of organizations pointed to a mix in methods used in their work, which we call here ‘a hybrid approach’, as a good method of working. Combining service, policy, formal, informal, knowledge-based and emotional-based activities is clearly regarded by our respondents as a good practice, which helps organizations to survive, adjust and thrive.

Second, outputs: both working methods and solutions developed and offered to the public as well as formal policies and those regulations passed are in this category. Examples were given such as:

- Developing of a local method of social consultations in the neighborhood (informal policy-oriented group)
- Contributing to several local projects funded from a participatory budgeting system (formal service organization)
- Developing a policy scheme on public deliberation, adopted formally by one of the ministries (formal policy-oriented organization)
- Developing a regional granting and simultaneously networking scheme in which applicants for grants evaluate all competing projects; this turned out to be trust-building and contributed to merging similar but complementary projects into bigger and more successful ones in the region (formal service oriented organization)

- Several examples of municipalities implementing solutions against air pollution, promoting social consultations, etc. (policy-oriented organizations)
- Significant contribution to passing national law on: spatial planning, social integration, social economy policies, etc. (formal service-oriented and formal policy-oriented organizations)

Third, outcomes: various examples social and economic change as a result of the organizations' actions were named. Most of the organizations, in particular smaller ones and those more anchored in the neighborhood, emphasized a significant change in the locality to which they contributed, reporting:

We have managed to get people out of their homes here.

(Interview FS6)

Now we have a really vibrant neighborhood here.

(Interview IP3)

We were successful in including foreigners living in this city into our projects.

(Interview FS4)

We have contributed to social capital here.

(Interview FP4)

Our interviewees also stressed in this regard that they have made the issues they work on (global injustice, air pollution, role of nature in the cities, developers destroying the city) significantly more present in the public discourse.

When discussing any problems and obstacles, our respondents were unanimous in expressing they saw a general threat resulting from institutional and legal instability. This referred to political life in general at both national and local levels. Such concerns were often raised:

New politicians and officials will come and we don't know what they will be fond of.

(Interview FS5)

By this politics changes, it's hard to foresee anything.

(Interview FP5)

From the interviews, a picture emerged of the researched organizations, though successful and innovative, being in a constant struggle. Since a struggle with social demands, problems and the need to

invent new solutions is perceived as fully justifiable by them, it seems that a high level of political conflict at national and local level, resulting with frequent changes in laws, policies, fiscal demands and constrains, puts additional unreasonable burden on organizations. It was often expressed that, e.g.:

Local government is not very helpful [...].

(Interview FS4)

We were involved in participatory budgeting in the city but realized quickly it's just a platform of political marketing for the local politicians [...].

(Interview FS2)

It's sad that they [local authorities] treat us not as doing essential tasks for the public but as some hobbyists doing something what they are interested in.

(Interview FS2)

The concerns of some interviewees went further in this regard. We were told:

With this political climate now, I'm not sure there will be much demand for what we do, it may happen that we will not be able to find funds for further activity, as social integration and protecting environment are not on the political agenda.

(Interview FP5)

Another respondent told us:

Well, for some time we have been rather working in order to prevent from the collapse in our field [social inclusion], instead of developing it.

(Interview IS1)

Two organizations gave us examples of direct protests against their actions, seen as violating Catholic morality. One of them in an interviewee related:

We were accused by radical right parliament members of 'promoting the ideology of multiculturalism' and 'sex and debauchery' and of promoting terrorism when or a person from Syria was attending our classes on martial arts."

(Interview FS4)

It needs to be noticed in this context that a generally strong anti-political orientation (in terms of not getting involved into political particularisms) and alternativeness of the organizations make them relatively immune to these influences. Moreover, positive examples were given of how to overcome these tensions:

When there were nationalists protesting in front of our building then, it's already anecdotal, an anarchist guy approached them and said 'you know, what you do like shooting into your foot. If you are against them [the organization represented by the interviewee, offering meeting space] then you won't find any place in the city to meet with your folks anymore', and you know, they quit the protest very soon.

(Interview FS1)

Thus, the hybrid approaches and broad networking strategies described help organizations to be relatively resistant to problems emerging from political conflicts.

11.8 Summary

The researched organizations referred most often to political goals and core values such as social solidarity, inclusive cooperation, networking, civic participation and protection of the environment. Professionalism and professionalization was perceived as a goal by most of the formal service-oriented organizations, whereas among informal policy-oriented organizations a focus on radical inclusiveness and refraining from politicization was visible.

The vast majority of organizations expressed there was neither a direct influence of the 2008 economic crisis on their clients' situation nor on their own strategies. However, what was pointed to was that it was more difficult to access EU funds, while shrinkage in the cooperation networks with other European organizations was reported. Moreover, a group of the researched organizations presented the opinion that despite there being no economic crisis in Poland, the crisis narrative serves as a smokescreen for austerity measures and cuts in public funding.

The main projects of almost all researched the organizations were characterized by close collaboration with clients or beneficiaries. No strategies of granting goods or services to 'passive' clients have been observed. Services were in most cases 'tailored' and designed to meet the specific needs of the clients and produced in a collaborative way. A hybrid model of a broad variety in projects run by the organizations has been observed. Each of the researched organizations accompanied service provision

with some policy-related initiatives, or combined specific expertise-based activities with protests, or ‘emotional’ social campaigns.

Networks and networking was one of the most important aspect of organizations’ work. Strong relations with civic groups and organizations were often regarded as a value and an organizational goal *per se*. Thus, strategies of broad and unspecified networking have been emphasized, as well as the building of organizations’ networks and the private connections of their members. Internet and social portals were important instruments of networking and spheres where social contacts were maintained.

The most often indicated groups of beneficiaries were local inhabitants, neighbors and the neighborhood of the organizations. It should be emphasized that beneficiaries were in general defined in very broad terms by our interviewees. Almost no addressed actions to e.g. children or the elderly were held by the organizations. Thus, we were often told that everyone, or anyone, benefits the organizations’ actions. The groups of beneficiaries were often people and social groups which are geographically distant, e.g., farmers in peripheral parts of the country, or inhabitants of the global South. A group of organizations was present in our sample for which other organizations are the main beneficiary. Meeting spaces, technical advice, design and media services were offered to them by our respondents.

Investigation of the outcomes of the researched organizations’ actions shows a picture of their success, struggle and flexibility. Various strategies, including reflexive adjustment, were reported by the interviewees as successes which helped organizations to survive and thrive. In terms of outputs, many examples of specific local, regional and national policies were presented, such as successful lobbying for law amendment or developing a strategy of local social consultations. In a broader sense, most of the organizations pointed to vibrant local communities and stronger social ties in the locality to which they contributed. Political instability, political conflicts and antagonizing public discourse, as well as often and unexpected law changes, were reported as main obstacles with which organizations need to struggle.

Although our sample consists of the four subgroups mentioned (policy-oriented and service-oriented, formal and informal organizations), our study has shown that in the case of the Polish organizations selected for the research, the distinction into service-oriented and policy-oriented as well as formal and informal organizations does not fit well with the organizations’ characteristics. What turned out to differentiate the organizations significantly though, is the group of features we label as ‘being alternative’. Such a feature is relatively more often present among the informal policy-oriented civic groups than among the formal service-oriented organizations, although it is broadly present in various

organizations in our sample. The following characteristics constitute to the observed feature of ‘being alternative’:

- (1) A reported *hybrid* model of action combining various types of activities, including providing services, advocacy, policy-making initiatives, protest actions, etc.
- (2) Very broad, usually untargeted networking and a strong focus on network, often being a value, an asset, as well as a method of action for the organizations.
- (3) A feature which we name here as ‘post-identity perspective’ – reluctance in defining both political goals and rationales of organizations, as well as their particular beneficiaries in terms of specific political identities or social categories – e.g. narratives of left-wing or right-wing, defining groups in terms of their poverty or age were rare, as our interviewees rather spoke of the necessity to work beyond cleavages, not being particularistic, everybody benefitting from their actions, etc.
- (4) Focus on promoting sustainable development in a broad sense: this perspective aims at redefinition of the relations between economy, natural environment and social ties.
- (5) Globalization of approach – broadly mentioned environmental goals were combined with organizations’ close attachment to neighborhood and locality – actions were taken primarily with neighbors and for neighbors who even if not participating were regarded as citizens obviously entitled to what organizations succeeded to achieve.

It should be emphasized that these features mentioned simultaneously constitute a significant ‘asset of resilience’. It could be assumed that the organizations in which the above listed characteristics are particularly present, are relatively immune to economic but also political crises.

As noted, the economic crisis which occurred in Southern and Western Europe after 2008 was not regarded by organizations as a circumstance which influenced their work. Such an effect was neither present in the demand for their actions nor in their working methods. Somewhat more difficult access to funding opportunities and competitiveness was observed in this regard by some organizations. The issue of crisis is, though, present in the organizations’ narratives. This refers to various aspects of socio-political reality in Poland, such as a still present crisis following the political transformation of 1989, along with a ‘crisis speech’ as a (hypocritical) politicians’ rationale for implementing austerity measures. It seems, though, that such understanding of crisis is perceived by organizations as a relatively stable context of their work, rather than as a specific calamity of recent years.

12. Spain



12.1 Introduction

This report forms part of the qualitative work developed within the European Research Project LiveWhat. This research section focuses on the analysis of 20 qualitative personal interviews with organizations' representatives in Spain. The aim of the WP6.3 qualitative interviews is the identification of new forms of resilience among the organizations and the effects of the crisis on the work of organizations and vulnerable collectives, such as women, children, the elderly and minorities.

In this research (WP6), 23 people were interviewed in 20 interviews. All of them were interviewed as representatives of their respective social advocacy organizations. In agreement with the consortium, beneficiaries of the organizations were not included in this sample. The choice of organizations was based on the categories proposed by the LiveWhat WP6 coordinators. However, after having completed the interviews, in most cases the division of the categories was unclear. Most of the organizations combined the provision services to specific populations with advocacy projects and efforts to influence politics. The following list tries to show the organizations according to their daily tasks and missions.

- Services, advocacy, formal: four organizations
- Services, formal: six organizations
- Advocacy, services, informal: six organizations
- Advocacy, informal: two organizations
- Advocacy, formal: two organizations

Of the organizations, eight came into being during the financial crisis and 12 already existed but underwent some changes. The interviews were conducted in Catalonia (7.516.254, inhabitants, Idescat 2016⁴⁹) where the university is located, and most of the organizations had their main headquarters in Barcelona, the Catalan capital. Of the organizations interviewed, some centered their actions in the city

⁴⁹ Idescat. Institut d'Estadística de Catalunya (2016) *Xifres de població 2016* [online]. [Accessed online: September 24th 2016]. Available at:

<http://www.idescat.cat/economia/inec?tc=3&id=d001>

where they were located (five in Barcelona and one in Girona), some were active throughout Catalonia (six), and others active throughout Spain (five) and in developing countries (two). Of the organizations active in Catalonia, four were closely coordinated with Spanish partner organizations.

In terms of scheduling the interviews, formal organizations were easier to contact since all of them had employees who answered our invitation to participate in the interview. Although some of them did not have time available, they were easy to contact by e-mail. In the case of informal organizations, e-mails took more time to be answered and they had difficulties finding the right person to be interviewed. In all cases, if it was possible to contact someone directly on the phone, or if the interviewer could be introduced personally by a common contact, the process was quicker and easier.

The interviews were unproblematic, and interviewees felt comfortable answering all the questions. However, the questions related to evaluation, efficiency, and even those that asked about mission were answered more clearly by formal organizations. This was due to a more structured methodology consisting of plans and objectives, as well as a formal process of periodic evaluation that could be consulted in an annual report.

Although informal organizations did not have established mechanisms for evaluation, all the organizations stated that they have spaces to evaluate the work being done and to reflect on new projects. The informal organizations coincided in stating that planning new projects was dependent on the needs of the moment, the amount of people available to pursue a campaign and other context-dependent circumstances.

Some organizations, both formal and informal, voiced objections to the term ‘efficiency’ as a measurement of their organization’s work, because it was too economic a concept, and said that the impact of their work needed to be understood using different criteria.

Finally, only two interviewees (WP6.3_20) – from a community center squat – had some concerns about being recorded or having to sign the informed consent form. They said that they had had bad experiences with being recorded or signing documents from institutions. However, after we carefully explained the purpose of both the recording and signing the documents, they signed the documents.

12.2 Political Issues

Among the interviewees, the positions held were the following:

Project managers (five), directors (seven) and volunteers (twelve). Among the volunteers, there were three presidents, four spokespeople, and five members without specific positions. These two last

categories – spokesperson and volunteers without a specific position – belonged to informal organizations, because most of the informal groups interviewed did not have structured positions or a hierarchical internal organization.

All the interviewees had been in the organization for at least one year, with some of them being founders of the group. They had been previously or concurrently working with other organizations, so they were used to participating in associations. Most of them formed part of other movements, organizations or other campaigns but they pointed out that they could not be active in them, since they had to use their time for the organization that they were being interviewed for.

In the previous section, it has been already mentioned that the division of formal/informal and services/advocacy did not work clearly for most of the organizations, since most of them combined both services and advocacy. However, according to their core ideals and their objectives, the organizations could be described as follows:

On one hand, for 12 of the 20 organizations interviewed, the main objective was to assist the most vulnerable groups in society. These groups were undocumented immigrants, victims of racism, poor people, victims of domestic violence, people affected by mortgages that they couldn't pay, vulnerable children and young people, residents of run-down and marginalised neighborhoods and refugees. Among these organizations, there were three NGOs, four private foundations (two of them Catholic), one cooperative and four informal organizations.

Although they had different projects and systems to support these vulnerable groups, all of them tried to empower their beneficiaries and give them the skills to define their life and escape the social exclusion that many of them live in. As we have said, the support systems employed by the organizations were different. For example, WP6.3_1 is a cooperative that works running organic vegetable gardens projects with vulnerable people chosen by the social services. Their objective is to give some training in organic agriculture while they work on the beneficiaries' social skills and emotional health. The long-term goal is to create organic food cooperatives formed by the beneficiaries. However, they pointed out that while some of the beneficiaries can escape social exclusion, others remain in a vulnerable position for many years.

A different example is the social movement WP6.3_2, an organization that emerged in 2009 in defence of the right to housing. The WP6.3_2 social movement main actions are through collective counselling, protest, and popular legislative initiatives. Every member can get involved and lead the projects, as the organization has a horizontal organizational structure. The campaign to stop evictions -one of the

WP6.3_2 social movements' main activities- consists of gathering people together in front of a house whose occupants are to be evicted in order to prevent the court workers and the police from carrying out the eviction.

The WP6.3_6 foundation provides food to vulnerable people in every town and neighborhood in Barcelona and its surroundings. They mainly obtain the food from social funds and from supermarkets that donate it. They also organize workshops about good nutrition, cooking healthily, etc. All the organizations interviewed pointed out that they were not just providing relief. Rather, they aimed to help people while also empowering them to gain skills to become more independent and avoid perpetuating poverty.

On the other hand, the remaining eight organizations had as their main aim the creation of an alternative to the current economic system and its consequences, and the promotion of new forms of social relations and community ties in form of campaigns, actions, and advocacy. The organizations were of three types: two cooperatives, three NGOs, and four informal groups.

An example of the various projects pursued is the WP6.3_9 cooperative that has 27.416 members and was founded in 2010. WP6.3_9 offers to supply electricity to homes that is produced with renewable energy from all around Spain. This project is a service for its members but at the same time, it has working groups that work on political analyses and campaigns to revolutionise the electricity system in Spain. WP6.3_9 has its basis in a critique of the current fossil fuel generated electricity system and the accumulation of power by the fossil fuel energy companies. They work towards reducing consumption, replacing fossil fuel energy production with renewable energies, and promoting local energy production based on small companies to avoid the current monopolistic energy market. They have a steering committee that is made up of experts and volunteer members, which meets every month and takes into account the experts' and the working groups' opinions. They also have an annual general meeting, which all members are invited to attend.

A different example is WP6.3_3, a community center run by the residents of Barcelona and located in an old factory. After several decades of the residents demanding the space for cultural and community activities, in 2011 the city council finally listened to them and granted them part of the space. The campaign to take over the building involved residents and community organizations, as well as taking part in the political context of the 15M movement.

They offer activities to everyone for free or almost free, and house ethical and social cooperatives, spaces for artistic creation, etc. There are more than 30 projects and 300 people involved, all not-for-profit.

WP6.3_3 community center gives groups the opportunity to use the space for their free activities, and they also provide a ‘social library’: a center for remembering and valuing the history of social movements and struggles in the city. Their tenets and practices are based on ideas such as the right to the city, the value of the industrial past of Barcelona, citizens’ empowerment and the promotion of non-economic community relations.

12.3 Economic Crisis Effects

In order to begin an evaluation of the effects of the economic crisis on the organizations and their networks, we must first mention that eight of the interviewed organizations emerged during the crisis itself. The crisis created situations that caused new groups to emerge, some aspects of which included: anger about the increase in inequalities; the impoverishment of the population; the beginnings of widespread job insecurity; the enrichment and accumulation of power of some actors, such as banks and multinational companies; cases of corruption and public budget cuts. These factors led to a context that made people predisposed to work together to cover some of their needs, to work for an alternative system and to create new support systems. For example, the informal organization WP6.3_18 emerged in 2012 when the Spanish Government passed a law that excluded undocumented immigrants from the public health system. This led some people to organize themselves into a group to offer medical services for these excluded people. Later these people became an association, which took on more advocacy work, and service projects, such as workshops, which gave people a chance to debate and reflect about the construction of immigrants’ identity in Barcelona. They also provided services such as legal counselling and Spanish lessons.

After a while, the project has grown and we are facing new challenges centered on the construction of immigrants’ identity. We have created a space where we value the knowledge immigrants bring from their homeland, their artistic skills, political and organizational practices and cultural knowledge. We create new identities that break away from the western stereotypes of immigrants.

(WP6.3_18)

The other 12 organizations emerged before the crisis but all of them could point out the effect of the crisis on their work. All organizations interviewed that received public funding (ten) mentioned a decrease in the amount received; moreover, the criteria and process for asking for funding became more complicated and bureaucratic. The funding they received was mainly from the City Council and the autonomous Catalan Government (*Generalitat*). A few organizations (four) received some funding from the Spanish Government and the European Commission. The fall in funding and the increased

complexity of the bureaucracy involved made the organizations think of alternatives to get funding, mainly from private foundations or donations from companies.

Moreover, the organizations (WP6.3_10; WP6.3_15; WP6.3_17; WP6.3_19) that had been receiving fees from members for the past few decades identified a decline in the number of people that paid a fee and also in its amount. This led the organizations to search for alternative funding from the private sector or from micro financing.

As a consequence of the reduction in the amounts that organizations received, some organizations (WP6.3_19; WP6.3_19) had to lay off part of the staff they had hired before the crisis. In two cases, they had to lay off 75% of the workforce. These were both organizations for international cooperation in developing countries with campaigns for awareness in the developed world.

Conversely, three of the organizations increased the amount of projects they managed (WP6.3_4; WP6.3_6; WP6.3_14). Two of them (WP6.3_6; WP6.3_14) focused on helping vulnerable people and they received more money from the government as well as the private sector. Both were large, established organizations before the crisis and had a network throughout Spain; they were able to capitalize on the public/private funding available for developing social welfare projects, whereas smaller organizations in the same sector pointed out that they had more problems funding their projects.

We form part of a European network that gets together the same kind of organizations. We are the organization that manages the biggest volume of food.

We have increased the reception of donations from private companies. Many companies have raised their consciousness and their social responsibility during the crisis. We also have received more money from public institutions, because they realised that we are efficient and that we can manage the service even better than they can.

(WP6.3_6)

The third organization (WP6.3_4) that experienced an increase in its activity was a credit cooperative, based on ethical and social finance.

The organizations also spoke about the evolution of the work they developed, saying that the economic crisis had created new realities, to which they had adapted. For example, WP6.3_12 (Private Foundation) mentioned that young people who lived in families with economic problems felt more discouraged from continuing their studies.

We try to give support to those teenagers that had a bad experience with the educational system and feel discourage to keep studying. They suffer the tensions at their homes due to socioeconomic crisis and we try to be mentors for them, giving them positive referents to look for a formation that keeps them on the educational system.

(WP6.3_12)

Both groups named the price of going to university and the low expectancy of subsequently finding a qualified job as reasons for dropping out school or university. In addition, some young people dropped out of secondary school before finishing compulsory secondary education. In accordance, WP6.3_12 was implementing new projects to try to give support to young people to prevent them leaving secondary school, or to help them return to school if they had dropped out.

All of the organizations interviewed – those that emerged with the crisis and the existing ones – stated that the onset of the crisis had made networking more crucial. The reduction in funding, the lack of resources, the chance of having more impact, and the need to share expertise and knowledge were pointed out as factors that brought organizations to cooperate more closely.

Some organizations (8) mentioned that the profile of their volunteers has changed during the crisis. They received more applications to help, particularly from people who had part-time jobs or were unemployed. Even so, their participation was more temporarily and unstable than years ago, due to people's working lives becoming more insecure. They often moved for work or to save money or they found a job that made it more difficult for them to volunteer. Moreover, some organizations experienced that people's engagement was different too, in terms of paying a fee, or having a constant and committed participation in an association; they observed that people tended to participate sporadically.

Furthermore, some organizations (WP6.3_15; WP6.3_20; WP6.3_10; WP6.3_19) felt that there was a change in the topics that mobilized people. WP6.3_15 – an organization that emerged in 1989 that publicly condemns discrimination on grounds of race and helps the victims – stated that with the crisis, racism was not seen as priority and seen as less important than it had been in previous years. Furthermore, some racist opinions such as 'immigrants are taking the subsidies and the welfare payments' became popular and were not seen as so politically incorrect as previously.

Finally, the two developmental NGOs (WP6.3_10; WP6.3_19) interviewed also experienced that cooperation with developing countries mobilized fewer people. In addition, people were not willing to pay a stable fee, and when people were told about the situation in developing countries, they answered that people in Spain also had a lot of job insecurity and low expectations for the future.

12.4 Initiatives and Projects

In this section, we talk about some of the most significant recent projects and their characteristics.

First, *the associations' assertion that in working with vulnerable people, as well as helping people, they try to give them the skills for improving their living conditions*, including their household economy, their nutrition, and psychological help.

The reason given for working on empowerment rather than dependency on subsidies is that whereas at the onset of the crisis their campaigns and projects were mainly to cover the increasing material needs of people, after some years the organizations observed that people did not improve their living conditions and relied on the subsidies. Thus, working on people's skills is seen as an investment to allow people to find a way out of poverty. For example, the Catholic organization WP6.3_14 used to just have a service to help people to find a job, but four years ago they introduced some changes to their employment advice projects. Apart from helping people to find jobs on offer, they also teach them new skills, such as IT, perseverance in tasks and assertiveness. They also have a small company where people can do work experience and practice their new skills, giving them more chances to keep a job in the future.

Second, *organizations have developed new projects based on the increase in the population's economic needs*. Six organizations (WP6.3_10; WP6.3_11; WP6.3_2; WP6.3_9; WP6.3_1; WP6.3_14) worked with the concept 'energy poverty' that consists of not having the capacity to pay for basic utility services: water, electricity and gas. The increase in poverty means that some families/individuals can no longer afford these supplies, causing a sharp deterioration in their living conditions. WP6.3_9 is a cooperative that offers electricity produced with renewable sources of energy. They signed an agreement with some city councils that families whose electricity supply was about to be shut off could receive electricity through WP6.3_9. Another example more based on advocacy, is the official energy poverty petition (Popular Legislative Initiative) that involved many associations (three of them were interviewed by us: WP6.3_2, WP6.3_10 and WP6.3_11). They worked to understand the extent of energy poverty in Catalonia, then worked on collecting signatures, and finally they defended and negotiated the law in the Autonomous Catalan Parliament, which they saw passed. They are currently working on the application of the passed law, because of some problems with the Spanish Constitutional Court and the development of the law in some public policies.

Third, *the importance of networks and alliances between the organizations* has been already mentioned in former sections. An example that illustrates this importance is the case of WP6.3_20 (Community Center) a bank squat in the city of Girona. The reason for taking over this former bank was to create a

common space for alternative social movements in the city: anarchist groups, anarchist unions, feminist groups, etc. The interviewees stated that since the opening of the Community Center, new projects have emerged from the different social movements working together, such as a collective Labor Day in May, or International Women's Day; these occasions were already celebrated but were not as popular nor as well-coordinated as now.

Fourth, *the rise of the concept of 'social and solidarity economy'*. This consists of an economy that is developed under the criteria of democracy, equity, respect for the environment and collective rights. Four of the associations (WP6.3_4; WP6.3_7; WP6.3_19; WP6.3_3) interviewed mentioned the concept and they had some projects related to it. The NGO WP6.3_19 has the mission to create a fairer economy, which is more respectful with people's rights in comparison to the current capitalism, and they believe that a social and solidarity economy is the best option. Currently they have projects to explain the social and solidarity economy to young people and children. Another example is the WP6.3_4 credit cooperative, which gives loans to associations' or cooperatives' projects that promote the 'social and solidarity economy'. Some criteria in terms of gender equity, scale of salaries, etc. have to be fulfilled by organizations in order to ask for the loans, and the funded project has to fulfil some criteria of the social and solidarity economy as well (democratization, respect of collective rights, the environment, etc.).

Fifth, WP6.3_4 cooperative observed an aspect of new economies and forms of support structures; *the promotion of the self-organization of citizens to provide services* to the population. This is due to two main reasons. On one hand, that the organization wants to provide some services under their criteria, for example the organic production of cereals to sell at markets or to social and solidarity economy networks. On the other hand, the service is provided under their alternative criteria but is related to the dismantlement of the welfare state. For example, a group of parents form a cooperative to provide education to their children. They have their own criteria in terms of education, but one of the reasons that they organised themselves is because of cuts in public schools. Therefore, this warns us that sometimes the self-organization of people is as a response to the cutbacks of the state, rather than a fight against them.

12.5 Governance and Networks

The relationship with the public administration and the political institutions was a long question to answer since the interviewees could describe many aspects.

First, ten of the organizations interviewed received funding for some projects from political institutions. As previously mentioned, the funding was provided by the City Council or the Autonomous Parliament (in this case, *Generalitat de Catalunya*); in just a few cases organizations received money from the Spanish Government or the European Commission. The emergence of the crisis led to a decrease in the money received from public institutions and an increase in bureaucracy.

Moreover, two organizations (WP6.3_15 and WP6.3_17) pointed out that the public funding they receive does not allow them to pursue innovative initiatives, since they have to show concrete results to justify the money received. For example, WP6.3_17, which supports homeless people, explained that they wanted to offer homeless people some shared housing with special characteristics, such as fireproof walls. They were not sure that homeless people would adapt to the new housing and thought that more investment on health and safety issues would be valuable. They felt that with public funding they could not risk the possibility of not having positive results, and were looking for private sponsorship.

With reference to political independence limited by public funding, organizations that received money from institutions did not consider that they had changed their policies or their actions because of the money received. However, there were seven organizations that declined to apply for public money in order to preserve freedom of speech and action.

Second, and separate from any funding, none of the interviewed organizations, except one community center squat (WP6.3_20) had any relationship with the public administration to coordinate projects or actions.

We don't have any relation with the political institutions. They have never been interested in us, neither have we been interested in them. We chose to squat because we don't want to have a relation with the political institutions, our project can't be included in the political institutions sphere or interests.

(WP6.3_20)

Also, all organizations (except one) had relationships with the public administration when they carried out activities in public spaces, since they had to ask for special permission or the use of council equipment, for example. In addition, the relationship of the organizations with some public service or facilities belonging to the city council or the autonomous government – such as public schools or the social welfare department – should be considered and was mentioned often by interviewees. For example, WP6.3_19 – an NGO whose aim was to report and raise awareness of inequalities and their causes in the capitalist system in developed and in developing countries – ran campaigns to raise

awareness about the social economy, particularly among young people. They were therefore in contact with the city council in order to present the campaign and develop some workshops in secondary schools in the city of Barcelona.

During the crisis, coordination between organizations and public institutions increased; the reason given was the lack of resources and the need to interact with other actors to develop programs. For example: the social movement WP6.3_2 mentioned their participation in the same coordination spaces organized by city councils that try to get together all bodies with information about housing emergencies. Finally, the community center squat that did not want to have any relationship with political institutions affirmed that their political project was outside political institutions' interests and spheres.

Third, since many of the interviews were held in Barcelona, where many organizations had their headquarters, the recent political change in Barcelona City Council was mentioned by all the organizations located in the city. In 2015, a new political party formed by activists and headed by Ada Colau (a well-known activist for the right to housing with the social movement WP6.3_2) won the elections with 11 out of 41 local councillors, and the victory let them govern with the support of some other political parties. The victory of this new political party (*Barcelona En Comú* – Barcelona in Common) made a difference to the content and slant of new policies put forward by the old parties that had been in the city council previously. The organizations located in Barcelona pointed out different aspects that they had perceived with the new local government, such as the change in the priorities for funding, particularly the promotion of the social and solidarity economy. Second, those interviewed perceived an easier dialogue and a closer relationship with the current local government. However, three of the organizations (WP6.3_13; WP6.3_8; WP6.3_16) brought up the willingness of the new government to be closer to the organizations but noticed no real change in policies.

Furthermore, one NGO (WP6.3_10) reminded us that the new government in Barcelona has attracted social capital from the organizations and social movements in Barcelona, leading to depletion in the capital of these organizations. In their case, two senior members and one specialist had left the NGO to work for Barcelona City Council.

Finally, nine organizations pressured political institutions to change public policies. WP6.3_5 organization its aim was to denounce the budget cuts in the public health system; they defended patients in the face of the failures of the public health system, as well as the promoting a new concept for health which was more holistic than the one currently used by the public system. In order to maintain political independence, they preferred not to receive any money from political institutions. Their relation with political institutions was to provide advocacy to their cause; thus, they had meetings with the Catalan

health minister and hospital managers, to press them to stop cutbacks. A different example is the WP6.3_2 social movement's Popular Legislative Initiative that proposed new laws in the Catalan Parliament and the Spanish Parliament to protect the right to housing.

12.6 Beneficiaries and Participants

The target groups of the organizations interviewed are these ones:

Table 12.1 Spanish Organizations and Target Groups

Organization	Target groups
WP6.3_18 (Informal organization)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Immigrants and undocumented immigrants - General public (raising awareness)
WP6.3_1 (Cooperative)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - People affected by the economic crisis, particularly those older than 45
WP6.3_2 (Social movement)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - People that can not pay their mortgage or rent - Governments // Politicians
WP6.3_4 (Cooperative)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cooperatives, associations that want to develop social projects - People that want to use their savings to be consistent with their ideals
WP6.3_3 (Self-organized Community Center)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - People from the neighborhood
WP6.3_5 (Platform of organizations)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Patients of the public health system - Associations and NGOs that form part of the group
WP6.3_6 (Private Foundation)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - People whose economic situation makes it difficult for them to buy food - Associations in towns or neighborhoods that deliver food to those that need it
WP6.3_7 (Private Foundation)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Children and young people from run-down neighborhoods
WP6.3_9 (Cooperative)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - People who want to consume renewable energy at home - General public (raising awareness)
WP6.3_11 (Organization and people platform)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - People whose collective and social rights are being violated - Governments // politicians
WP6.3_10 (NGO)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Citizens in some communities in developing countries - People in developed countries (to raise awareness) - Governments // politicians
WP6.3_12 (Private Foundation)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Vulnerable people that do not have their basic human rights guaranteed
WP6.3_19 (NGO)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - General public, trying to raise awareness
WP6.3_8 (Neighbours' Association)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - People living in a marginalised neighborhood
WP6.3_17 (Private Foundation)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Homeless people - General public, trying to raise awareness
WP6.3_20 (Cultural and Community Center)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - City residents and groups that are working towards creating new economic and social relationships
WP6.3_15 (NGO)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Victims of racism
WP6.3_13 (Informal Platform of NGO and people)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Economic and political refugees
WP6.3_16 (Informal organization)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - People living in a marginalised neighborhood
WP6.3_14 (organization with Catholic foundations)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Vulnerable groups

All the organizations understood the relationship with their targets as one of supporting their immediate needs while also empowering them to improve their situations. In a situation where poverty is becoming chronic, organizations take on the challenge of promoting people's autonomy and their capacity to decide their futures. For instance, the WP6.3_14 organization, which promotes social action as part of the Catholic Church, has been giving economic help and providing for people's material needs since 1944. In his interview, the director of social action in the Girona province emphasized that they had changed their vision to a holistic perspective of individuals and their problems. For instance, they had included emotional health as an important aspect for helping people to look for a job and improve their futures.

We understand that poverty is caused by many factors. We try to cover the multiple consequences of poverty. One of the projects that have succeeded tries to work with the emotional sphere of people from a psychosocial perspective. Participants don't need to have a diagnosis of mental health illness to participate; they just need to be psychologically affected by the economic crisis. We have been working self-esteem, mutual support, and social bonds. We want them to be active in the group. We also use these groups to detect new needs and try to engage them for future projects.

(WP6.3_14)

Interviewed representatives that worked directly with people affected by crisis mentioned the following aspects as the dimensions most affected by the crisis: housing, unemployment and psychological health. The last was emphasized by the representative (WP6.3_1), who talked about people feeling discouraged; not being able to cope with the situation; not feeling valuable for society since they were unemployed; and not feeling useful either for society nor for their families. This feeling was particularly common among people over 45. Four of the interviewed organizations warned that children and young people in vulnerable families were seriously affected in terms of nutrition, feeling psychological tension at their homes and not having hope for their future. Finally, two of the organizations also mentioned that job insecurity has become the norm and that people felt that an unstable job was better than no job at all.

Two of the organizations (WP6.3_14 and WP6.3_12) that worked directly with vulnerable collectives in society pointed out differences between the groups they supported. First, people who were already poor before the economic crisis, whose problems increased with the crisis; these people were used to hardship and depending on welfare projects. The second group were those people who were middle or working classes before the crisis. They used to earn a living and the economic crisis made them lose their status. This group had to learn economic survival skills and the workings of the welfare services,

but also needed to cope with the feeling of economic failure and guilt. The head of social intervention in WP6.3_14 stated that members of a family helped each other out economically; without this, people would have found themselves in a serious situation since the beginning of the crisis. However, after some years the economic support from families has become scarcer and within families, tension has intensified.

The third group that the head of social intervention at WP6.3_14 talked about – and that was also mentioned by two other organizations (WP6.3_15 and WP6.3_18) – were immigrants, who are even more vulnerable to the effects of the crisis. Immigrants do not have the same family networks or the economic support networks to withstand the crisis. Moreover, if they lose their jobs, they can lose their legal status after a certain time, and become undocumented immigrants.

Finally, the two NGOs (WP6.3_10 and WP6.3_19) interviewed that worked directly or indirectly with developing countries stated that people are less affected by the plight of those in developing countries. They feel that the conditions at home in Spain have become harsh; thus, people prefer to focus on their immediate context rather than thinking about countries further away.

It's more difficult for us to engage people in projects developed in peripheral countries. There is less money to spend; and the international cooperation sector has a crisis in general. We need to reconsider the projects and their goals. It can be a great personal experience for volunteers (to participate in international cooperation). But we have observed that people want to have an impact on their own environment. Due to the economic crisis people raise awareness and personally experience inequalities, so we think they are more prone to form part of collective action. However, they want to see the results in their context rather than in further countries, they feel more satisfied.

(WP6.3_10)

12.7 Outcomes and Best Practices

This section describes some of the successful and unsuccessful projects developed by interviewed organizations, and those aspects that organizations stated as factors determining success and failure.

The chance for everyone to participate and the small victories won in each eviction that was stopped were identified by the WP6.3_2 as two of the factors that made the campaign successful and helped it continue throughout the years. Moreover, being part of an organization with a horizontal internal structure, where one could express one's opinion and be listened to, helped them to be more involved and to feel personally responsible for the campaigns. The WP6.3_2 social movement pointed out the

factors of success in two different successful campaigns: ‘Stop evictions’ and the Popular Legislative Initiatives. The first campaign consisted of bringing people together in front of a house where an eviction was to take place, and impeding court workers’ access to the home, making it impossible for them to execute the eviction.

The second campaign mentioned, the Popular Legislative Initiatives, was developed twice, once for the Spanish Parliament and again for the Catalan Parliament. It consisted of a proposal to modify a law or the proposal for a new law. This mechanism requires the collection of a minimum amount of signatures from the general public. Afterwards, the politicians can accept a debate of the topic and the proposals. For the first proposal, more than 1,500,000 signatures were collected in Spain asking to change the mortgage law. Despite some political groups being in favour, it was not passed in the Spanish Parliament. Conversely, the Popular Legislative Initiative for the solution of the housing emergency and against energy poverty presented in the Catalan Parliament was passed and had collected more than 140,000 signatures in Catalonia.

The WP6.3_11 researches social and collective rights in Catalonia. Their representative pointed out that *focusing on few projects and having time to reflect on them are key aspects to ensuring that projects have the greatest impact; if this is not achieved, some projects are left unfinished or not carried out optimally*. She explained her last comment by highlighting the diagnosis of housing emergency situations and energetic poverty in Catalonia. This research helped the social movements that were gathering signatures for the Popular Legislative Initiative, since they could show data regarding some families’ serious vulnerability.

Attracting the motivation of volunteers to be involved in campaigns is more important than having a high budget was a factor stated by the director of the WP6.3_15 organization. Although this organization has project managers to develop campaigns, they rely on the mobilization of volunteers and the public in general, since part of their mission is to raise awareness of different types of racial discrimination in Catalonia. A similar situation was mentioned by the Platform of organizations and individuals set up to defend health public system (WP6.3_5). They said that the more you mobilise health professionals and patients the more chances you have to achieve your goal.

WP6.3_14, an organization with Catholic foundations dedicated to supporting vulnerable people, identified *the holistic perspective* that their projects have taken as a successful change. They used to have divided departments with their projects, each focusing on one of the aspects that affected people. Some years ago, they started to design projects that took into account several aspects of poverty; in this way, they reduced the number of projects undertaken while giving a more personal and wide-reaching

service. They had a service where people were supported on several fronts, such as energy poverty, housing emergency and food needs. Another service tried to work with emotional psychology and create mutual support links between vulnerable people.

A totally different organization WP6.3_16 identified *the welcoming of people and making people feel comfortable* as a crucial factor. WP6.3_16 is an informal association that had existed for many years in the WP6.3_16 (a high density, ethnically diverse, low income neighborhood that has recently received some public investment). This assembly was reinforced and restructured when the 15M protests started acting in various neighborhoods and new people engaged with them. They have been working with residents' social problems, particularly with foreclosures. They squatted on a neglected site and built a vegetable garden, with playing spaces for children and young people. They have also been active with some campaigns that affected the neighborhood, such as the trial concerning the death of a resident, who dies presumably due to police brutality. As an association, they organize assemblies every week to talk about social emergencies, to plan activities such as video forums, local festivals and art shows, and meetings between the neighborhood's various social movements. The interviewee indicated that:

In this diverse neighborhood the organization has to give the appearance of openness and welcome people who come for the first time, to make them feel comfortable in order to assure that they will come back.

(WP6.3_16)

Another informal organization, WP6.3_18, is located in the same neighborhood, the *Raval*. They explained that they have organized many campaigns for immigrants' rights, which did not succeed in terms of number of people mobilised nor impact on citizens. However, *the engagement of new people in the planning and development of campaigns sometimes encouraged these new members to keep involved* in the association, regardless of the success or lack of success of the campaigns.

Finally, *the political agenda and the topics that are expressed in the media raise awareness and encourage people to join the cause*. The informal association WP6.3_13 decries the situation of economic and political refugees across the Mediterranean and tries to help them with documents and official procedures. In their case, they took advantage of the awareness created by the media to publicise their aims.

12.8 Summary

After 20 interviews with 23 people and pertinent analysis, we can describe some effects of the crisis and some differences experienced by the organizations. This section is a summary of the main findings, as

well as an exposition of issues suggested the main findings, and future issues to be analysed. It must be mentioned that the onset of the crisis in 2008 caused some reactions and effects on the organizations that hit immediately in the first years of the crisis, such as the decrease in funding, the mortgage crisis, etc. After some years, an evolution of these effects was observed in the form of reactions and proposals to the new situations created.

In terms of how the crisis has affected the beneficiaries of the interviewed organizations: the results showed that two main groups were badly affected by the crisis: immigrants, on the one hand, and people from middle and working class backgrounds, on the other. Immigrants found themselves in an extremely vulnerable situation due to the weakness of their social networks, a greater increase of unemployment rates among this collective, and the risk of jeopardising and losing their legal status in the event of unemployment.

The second group, mostly formed by middle and working class people with socioeconomic problems resulting from the economic crisis (e.g. unemployment, foreclosures, and social welfare cutbacks), had to deal with feelings of blame and frustration for accepting their new socioeconomic situation. Although the main coping mechanism of these two collectives has been individual and personal resilience, with the support of social welfare organizations, there are some examples in which collective action and protest have been chosen as mechanism to improve their situation.

Then, in reference to organizations, all of those which emerged during the crisis (eight) identified the economic crisis and the political context as the factor that most influenced their coming into being. Some of them (WP6.3_2; WP6.3_18; WP6.3_16) noted the urgent needs of people as the main cause for getting together and using self-organization and collective action to improve their situation. In other cases (WP6.3_1), the perspective was different and urgent needs were seen as the reason for creating a cooperative of professionals to give response to people's needs in tandem with the political institutions. Other organizations (WP6.3_9; WP6.3_3; WP6.3_20) pointed to the political moment, in terms of protests: anger about the impoverishment of people, the dismantling of the welfare state, etc. facilitated the emergence of and people's support of some initiatives that promoted alternative: supportive working relationships, community centers run by neighbours, cooperatives, etc.

The 12 organizations that existed before the onset of the crisis were affected by the economic crisis in several ways. All of them began new projects based on the context and the situation of the people they helped. Recently, the organizations that work with the most vulnerable collectives (WP6.3_14; WP6.3_6; WP6.3_7) have included new perspectives in their projects, to fight against poverty becoming chronic, teaching skills and empowering people rather than only delivering material aid.

Many changes in organizations were a consequence of the decrease in funding received from members' fees and political institutions, leading to the creation of new projects with reduced budgets, less personnel and using alliances with other associations. At the same time, organizations started looking for alternative funding resources, such as private foundations or micro financing. Three of the older WP6.3_10; WP6.3_15; WP6.3_19, organizations interviewed also stated that the topics people feel like mobilising for have changed as well. In these particular cases, the issues were international cooperation with developing countries and racial discrimination in Spain. Both NGOs centered on international cooperation before the crisis had developed new projects based on Catalonia/Spain, since people felt more inclined to help caused closer to home.

Formal organizations – unlike the informal organizations interviewed – had an internal structure based on job positions, different responsibilities and hired personnel. The mechanisms of year planning, evaluation and funding within the organization were also more established and permanent in formal organizations rather than in the informal ones. In most cases, formal organizations received some public money, although some of them were not happy with the bureaucracy and impediments to innovation involved. Informal organizations have to be self-funding, and relied on donations, fees, fund-raising events, etc. and some of them appreciated the value of not receiving money from political institutions in terms of freedom of speech and advocacy.

The most significant findings are the variations within organizations and the rise of social and solidarity economy. Due to the decrease in funding, organizations, which relied on public funding or members' fees gave more importance to volunteers to develop projects. At the same time, the political context made people more willing to participate in campaigns and actions. However, the profile of volunteers has changed, their commitment is more sporadic and temporary, especially due to the instability of the labor market. Therefore, the organizations interviewed were trying to adapt to this new reality in their day-to-day.

The second significant finding is the rapid rise of the 'social and solidarity economy', a new concept shared by several organizations. This concept is conceived as a reaction and alternative to the current economic system that caused the crisis, to increases in inequality, to the accumulation of power by banks and multinational corporations, to the lack of respect for collective rights, etc. The social and solidarity economy is understood as economic activity that is respectful with the environment and collective rights; a local economy which takes the form of associations or cooperatives, etc. Even so, some social and solidarity economy projects can be planned and developed from public funding using credit cooperatives, such as the credits given by one of the interviewed organizations, WP6.3_4. Some political

institutions that are giving support to these kinds of projects. In this respect, the interviewees mentioned the new government of Barcelona City Council.

Finally, some of the future issues to keep analysing could be the relationship between welfare cutbacks and the self-organization of society to offer the services that used to be offered by the state. This future analysis could include a comparison of the characteristics of the services offered by organizations and the services offered by the state, in terms of quality, labor conditions, profile of beneficiaries, gender equity, and mission of the organization. Furthermore, the research could consider an analysis of the emergence of self-organised projects and citizens' empowerment; the rise of protest movements; the beliefs and declarations of the members that belong to self-organised projects regarding the state and its role in offering services.

12.9 Annex

Organization	Interviewee's role	Category	Target groups	Date of the interview
WP6.3_1	Project Manager	Formal, services	✓ People affected by the economic crisis, particularly those older than 45	28/06/2016
WP6.3_2	Member (volunteer)	Informal, advocacy, services	✓ People who cannot pay their mortgage or rent ✓ Governments // Politicians	30/06/2016
WP6.3_3	Member (volunteer)	Informal, advocacy, services	✓ People from the neighborhood	01/07/2016
WP6.3_4	Project Manager	Formal, advocacy, services	✓ Cooperatives, associations that want to develop social projects ✓ People that want to use their savings to be consistent with their ideals	06/07/2016
WP6.3_5	Member (volunteer)	Informal, advocacy	✓ Patients of the public health system ✓ Associations and NGOs that form part of the collective	06/07/2016
WP6.3_6	Member (volunteer)	Formal, services	✓ People whose economic situation makes it difficult for them to buy food ✓ Associations in towns or neighborhoods that deliver food to those people that need it	08/07/2016
WP6.3_7	Project Manager	Formal, services	✓ Children and young people from low-income neighborhood	11/07/2016
WP6.3_8	Member (volunteer)	Informal, advocacy, services	✓ Residents of a low-income neighborhood	11/07/2016
WP6.3_9	Project Manager	Formal, advocacy, services	✓ People who want to consume renewable energy at home ✓ General public (to raise awareness)	12/07/2016
WP6.3_10	A member (volunteer) and a project manager	Formal, advocacy, services	✓ People in some communities in developing countries ✓ People in developed countries (to raise awareness) ✓ Governments // politicians	13/07/2016

WP6.3_11	Project Manager	Formal, advocacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ People whose collective and social rights are being violated ✓ Governments // politicians 	13/07/2016
WP6.3_12	Project Manager	Formal, services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Vulnerable people that do not have their basic human rights guaranteed 	15/07/2016
WP6.3_13	2 Members (volunteers)	Informal, advocacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Economic and political refugees 	20/07/2016
WP6.3_14	Project Manager	Formal, services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Vulnerable groups 	21/07/2016
WP6.3_15	Project Manager	Formal, advocacy, services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Victims of racism 	27/07/2016
WP6.3_16	Member (volunteer)	Informal, advocacy, services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Residents of a low-income neighborhood 	11/08/2016
WP6.3_17	Project Manager	Formal, services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Homeless people ✓ General public (to raise awareness) 	22/08/2016
WP6.3_18	Member (volunteer)	Informal, advocacy, services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Immigrants and undocumented immigrants ✓ Citizens to raise awareness 	27/08/2016
WP6.3_19	2 Project Managers	Formal, advocacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ General public (to raise awareness of capitalism inequalities) 	06/09/2016
WP6.3_20	2 Members (volunteers)	Informal, advocacy, services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Residents and city group that work for creating new economic and social relationships 	09/09/2016

13. Sweden



13.1 Introduction

This national report describes how we have selected the twenty representatives of the Swedish Alternative Action Organizations (AAOs) for interviews and summarizes the major findings in respect of the political issues important for these organizations, the effect of economic crisis on the work of these organizations, lists the major groups of beneficiaries, the initiatives AAOs have and the best outcomes of their actions. Although it is known that Sweden did not suffer of the Great Recession of 2008 as much as the countries in Southern Europe, our aim is to investigate how the Swedish civil society organizations that focus on vulnerable societal groups are organized, work, and have been affected by the economic crisis. As our work was done after the refugee crisis of autumn 2015, we also examine the effect of this event.

The Swedish team conducted 20 interviews with representatives of AAOs. We followed the list of the coded AAO websites as presented in WP6.1 and strategically looked for a variety of organizations – representing formal and informal AAOs on the one hand, and those focusing on services and policy advocacy on the other hand. There are not very many different types of AAO in Sweden and therefore it was reasonable that we did not choose equal number of formal and informal organizations as has been done in other countries (e.g., in Greece or Italy). We focused on a 7:3 division, while contacting the organization and these had to be located in the four locations – *Gävle* (a small city in north-east), *Uppsala* (a large university town in the east), *Malmö* (a large city in the south-west with the significant population of coming outside Sweden), and the capital Stockholm. The majority of the Swedish civil society organizations state that they are not related to any political party, and therefore we did not aim to balance between right and left-wing organizations.

We contacted 43 different organizations via e-mail and phone, and eventually 21 of them agreed to participate in the interviews. It should be noted that it was harder to find respondents from informal groups. Twenty of the organizations are clearly focusing on the most vulnerable groups in the society, while one has somewhat broader goal to protect environment via citizens' cooperation for transport. This is an interesting alternative action organization, but it has no focus on vulnerable groups and not

clearly related to the economic crisis either. Therefore, the following report mainly focuses on the comments of the twenty other groups. We have not conducted any interviews with the beneficiaries. Twenty of the interviews were recorded, but one phone interview was not. From this unrecorded one, we have detailed notes. Table 13.1 shows that the examined organizations are mainly formal and this picture is representative for Sweden where such organizations also dominate the civil society in general.

Table 13.1: Distribution of interviewed AAOs, based on their orientation, Sweden

Process orientation	Formal/informal Orientation of AAO	
	FORMAL	INFORMAL
SERVICE	9 (40%) Social work (soup kitchen, housing, social supermarket) for all kinds of vulnerable groups in society (3), Second-hand shops, <i>cafés</i> (1) Community education and handicraft (1) Larger humanitarian organization (1) Social development for unemployed and refugees (1) Social work for homeless and victims of drug abuse (1) Educational projects for integration (1)	3 (13%) Soup kitchen (1) Environmental cooperation (1) Social center providing food, clothes and info about mobile health-care (1)
POLICY Advocacy	8 (40%) NGO for victims of stress (1) Social work (soup kitchen, housing) for all kinds of vulnerable groups in society (1) Housing agency (1) Organization for single parents (1) Unaccompanied young refugees (1) Youth organization for tolerance (1) NGO coordinating women’s shelters (1) Center for victims of trafficking (1)	1 (7%) Street-journal (1)

The table also shows that there are almost equal numbers of groups focusing on services and political advocacy. All groups that noted that their goals include policy change and that they actively work with policy advocacy are listed under the category of ‘policy advocacy’. The majority of these have some or a lot of service oriented actions as well, but these are still different from the purely service focused organizations. The division between service and advocacy AAOs among the interviewed AAOs is almost equal – nine versus 11.

All respondents had been working in the organizations for some time, some of them had been founders of the AAO, other had been long-time volunteers and some had worked and been activists in the organizations for many years. Almost every respondent was employed by the organization (board-members, responsible for communication). As none of the AAOs has a political position, the respondents also did not talk about their own political position and the discussions focused rather on

organizational activities. There was a slight majority of women among respondents; several have background in religious organizations while others emphasized the independence from all political and religious views.

Interviews lasted between 30-70 minutes and were all conducted in June 2016 in four locations: Uppsala, Stockholm, *Gävle* and *Malmö*. Interviews were conducted by two LiveWhat Swedish team members, who were also part of the coding-team of the Swedish AAO websites (Phase 1 of WP6) and therefore well-aware of the project and its aims. Each interview followed the general guidelines, but allowed respondent to raise additional issues and encouraged further elaboration of topics particularly relevant for Sweden. These topics are mainly the recent increase of ‘EU-migrants’, which refers to the people coming from the EU member states such as Romania and Bulgaria, and the recent refugee crisis. The first group includes many Roma-people who are mainly visible in the streets begging for money, the second group is mainly composed of people from Syria, Afghanistan and Africa.

13.2 Political Issues

The main political ideals and goals of the examined AAOs do not differ from the aims of the social work focused civil society organizations. The mission of examined organizations is to help all humans in general even though they might have specific groups of beneficiaries. Some organizations clearly state that their goal is to work with integration, victims of drug abuse, or single parents, but there are also a few groups with a broader set of beneficiaries (see more below). The main goals of the examined organizations could be summarized by the following:

The aim of our organization is to fight and make visible poverty and alienation in the society.

(Interview 19)

The core ideal for the majority of the organizations is equality: people should be helped regardless of their social, political, ethnic, religious or sexual background. Thus, it could be said that these are all left-leaning organization, but none of the groups is directly related to any political party. One states that they will never cooperate with the radical-right party Sweden Democrats even though they have several posts in the national parliament (Interview 19).

There is one clearly feminist organization, focusing only on women and having only female volunteers (Interview 18). The majority of organizations also make clear that they are not related to any religious organizations (e.g., Interview 1, 9, 12), some cooperate with church in their social work and one is clearly related to the (protestant) church (Interview 2). Equality is emphasized even when groups mention that their aim is to guarantee the rights of different groups, for example the children’s rights or

the right for accommodation. Five of the organizations operate also outside Sweden for the benefit of vulnerable groups in developing countries.

As noted above, all twenty organizations provide services to vulnerable groups, but some of the organizations are more service-oriented (e.g. Interview 7). Some organizations combine social work with distribution of information and even helping other organizations in their social work (e.g. Interview 5, 17). The third group works actively with the authorities, mainly via participation in the various advisory networks of city councils (e.g. Interview 1, 13, 20).

While many of the organizations talk about beneficiaries as a group, one of the examined organizations had somewhat different perspective as they particularly emphasize the “individual choice” (Interview 20) of the beneficiaries. They suggest that beneficiaries should themselves say what kind of help they need, ask it from the organization and then this particular help is also provided. Therefore, their actions – which mainly aim to help the victims of human trafficking – are more diverse and the process probably empowers some of the beneficiaries as well. Considering the perspective of the beneficiaries, which was also emphasized by other organizations (e.g. Interview 169), Interview 20 was clearly different in their perspective of focusing on ‘individual choice’.

In addition to aiming for equality and social work – solving the basic problems of food and accommodation, the respondents also noted that it is important to work with political advocacy – to educate public and policy-makers about the problems their beneficiaries have and the reasons for these problems. This can work via writing the ‘letters to the editor’ in the main newspapers, participating in larger public opinion campaigns (e.g. ‘World Aids Day’) or responding to various requests for information about beneficiaries from the state actors.

Some (e.g. Interview 15) participate in the lobbying actions such as the annual *Almedal*-week which facilitates contacts between civil society and politicians. Others are frequently included into the municipal or state discussion groups about social problems. Some respondents noted that the recent economic and refugee crisis have increased the need for organizations’ knowledge and information for the state and regions. So, one representative noted:

We have an important role [in the policy process] [...] especially now when municipality wants to know more about our beneficiaries (homeless people) and invites us to participate in several of their panels.

(Interview 12)

Some of the organizations, especially the informal groups working with refugees and EU migrants, expressed some distrust towards the municipal institutions, because they think that these public institutions do not take their responsibility. This is well expressed by one respondent:

We [have to] do things that the society and state do not [for example providing places to sleep for refugees and a soup-kitchen].

(Interview 10)

There was also some critique towards the entrepreneur-like activities of the state. The Swedish Migration Agency is arguably renting housing for refugees from private owners for very high price, but provides no funds for individuals' daily-activities and therefore there is increasing need for the actions of civil society organizations.

In addition to the service and policy related goals, some of the informal organizations also have a goal to achieve broader social and cultural change via empowering people and providing them opportunities to participate in various cultural activities. This is well described by Interview 10:

We work with the culture as a tool for engaging people in the society and achieve the social change.

(Interview 10)

From a political perspective, many respondents see that their organization has influenced politics via specific policy changes (Interview 15, 18). On the other hand, it was also noted that organizations can educate, talk and point out to politicians what are the main problems in the society, but the major social change should be decided by political decision-makers (Interview 17). Some groups working with the services for EU-migrants are slightly more pessimistic than the ones focusing on other vulnerable groups.

13.3 Economic Crisis Effects

Sweden did not suffer the economic crisis of 2008 as much as the Southern European countries, although unemployment and need for social security benefits have increased over time. The Swedish welfare state provides rather large direct help to vulnerable groups via social service system and low-cost health-care, and therefore there is less need for the actions of AAOs. Obviously, there are still several groups of people who need help – long-term unemployed, homeless people, drug – and alcohol addicts, victims of crime or trafficking, and more recently the increasing groups of the EU-migrants and asylum seekers.

One group is particularly focused on people suffering stress in relation to unemployment or health-problems.

While the refugees are mainly helped via the state system of housing, this is not applicable for the EU-migrants and therefore this group forms a large part of the homeless people.⁵⁰ The majority of the respondents noted that their actions and organizations have not been directly affected by the economic crisis of 2007/8, but there several indirect effects:

We as an organization have not been affected at all, but probably some cooperation partners [...] our membership has increased but this does not have to be related to the economic crisis in Europe, but we might be more known.

(Interview 14)

These indirect effects of the economic crisis could be divided into two major trends:

First, the groups of beneficiaries have changed as a result of immigration. Many respondents noted that while previously they were focusing mainly on beneficiaries from Sweden (homeless, poor, drug-addicts), nowadays the beneficiaries are often from other countries like the EU-member states (Romania, Bulgaria) or the refugees from Middle East and Africa. It was often noted that Roma-minorities, who previously resided in Southern Europe (Portugal, Spain), have moved to Sweden as a result of the economic crisis and thereby the organizations have new groups of beneficiaries. As described by one respondent:

Until 2000 our beneficiaries were elderly Swedish homeless people with a drug-problem, but since 2007 or 2008 we have young migrants from Africa, who might not even have a drug-problem. Since the last three years, the number of homeless EU-migrants has increased among our beneficiaries.

(Interview 12)

Another respondent refers to the recent policies of welfare-state retrenchment in Sweden:

There has not been a direct effect of economic crisis on our organization [...] we can see it on the streets. [...] As we talk about the vulnerable groups dependent on state-benefits, [the change

⁵⁰ According to the social service (*Socialstyrelsen*), there were about 34000 homeless people in Sweden in 2011. The number has probably increased a lot since then. In Malmö there were 1333 adult homeless people and 675 homeless children (<http://malmo.se/Huvudnyheter/2015-11-02-Kartlaggning-2015-klar---okat-antal-hemlosa.html>).

of their situation] has not much to do with the crisis in Europe, but the political decisions made in Sweden [reference to retrenchments].

(Interview 19)

Secondly, the number of people in need has grown (or become more visible) and they seem more desperate. Some respondents noted that the increased numbers might not be the result of crisis and rather reflect the fact that the organizations are more publicly known and people find them more easily. There is a need for more diversified initiatives, as noted by one of the respondents:

Before, beneficiaries [mother, who was a victim of trafficking] needed primarily financial help, but now they need help with everything [housing, food, clothes].

(Interview 20)

In relation to the refugee crisis one group summarized the situation well:

It was just even more chaos than it used to be – there were so many people who needed help.

(Interview 16)

Some organizations noted that there was even a ‘positive’ effect of the refugee crisis due to the increasing financial support via donations since the autumn of 2015 (the peak of the refugee crisis). It was easier to get donations and help form volunteers (e.g., Interview 3, 10, 16, 19).

13.4 Initiatives and Projects

The majority of the interviewed organizations work directly with the beneficiaries and help to improve their everyday life via various services or work with lobbying and political advocacy. The services could be divided into three groups:

- (1) Daily actions for basic needs
- (2) Activities for empowerment and employment
- (3) Political advocacy and public opinion campaigns

First, the typical daily actions are mainly related to social work and providing help in terms of basic human needs of food (soup kitchen), shelters (overnight as well as long-term), security (shelters for

those who have experienced sexual violence) and health (mobile clinics, information about medical services,⁵¹ transport to and from the places where one can get clean needles for drug addicts).

Programs against homelessness should be seen in two levels as there are organizations working for providing direct place to stay for those living on the streets today (e.g. Interview 1, 13) and those which drive information campaigns for mobilizing municipalities and cities to build more cheaper housing (e.g. Interview 14). Groups working directly with homeless people are not only offering the place to stay for a night, but are also actively looking for a contact with this group and inform them about infectious diseases like HIV.

We have a special searching initiative five days a week, where we look for homeless people in various locations in the city [...] we do it because many do not come directly to us.

(Interview 12)

Organizations focusing on the problems of sexual harassment have own shelters, but have recently also opened special divisions inside asylum housings for informing women about their rights and increasing their security (Interview 18).

Some of these activities for remedying basic needs are funded via various state funding schemes as Swedish organizations can and usually apply for state or municipal support every year. There are also some organizations which collect funds and goods (food, clothes, etc.) themselves or via economic activities such as selling journals (e.g. journals focusing on the issues of EU-migrants or homeless people). One organizations does not depend on any municipal or state funding nor the donations, but sells their social services to other organizations and municipalities or state agencies (Interview 6). They do not earn any profit, but are a kind of social (work) enterprise.

Other groups emphasize that it is important to be independent from the continuous search for 'project-funding' and that sustainable actions need more long-term planning (Interview 10). The project applications to state-funds dominate the actions of the organizations and it is hard to be unique (e.g. not only invest ball-games as activities for children).

⁵¹ Asylum seekers and those without any documents have a right for a free emergency care (including dental care) in Sweden, but people often do not know about it. However, people from other EU members states who do not have a health-insurance card, including Romas coming from Romania or Bulgaria, have had to pay for health-care. All migrant children have a right for exactly the same health-care as the residents in Sweden (See more in <http://www.socialstyrelsen.se/vardochomsorgforasylsokandemedflera> and <http://www.redcross.se/vart-arbete/e/eu-migranter/>).

Second, there is also a wide range of actions aiming to provide beneficiaries' meeting points with other people in soup kitchen, cafés, second-hand shops and social supermarkets (Interview 3, 7, 13). It is also important to provide contact-points for those who are new in the country – migrants and asylum seeker (Interview 16, 19). Organizations provide also legal aid for homeless people and EU-migrants (Interview 12), special educational programs such as language courses for non-Swedish speakers or courses which help to improve reading skills in general (Interview 4, 17, 19).

Organizations working with the immigration emphasized the importance of language courses and help with homework a lot. This is noteworthy as state also provides free language courses (Swedish for Immigrants), but this is not considered as enough (Interview 19).

Empowerment initiatives also include training opportunities for unemployed, traineeship, workshops and just meeting-rooms for groups such as unaccompanied young refugees (Interview 16). For example, one of the groups uses an innovative way to teach letters to illiterate (women) – they teach letters during the workshop for textile production (Interview 4). Other groups provide their premises for cultural activities such as small theatre groups (Interview 19).

One group combines various sets of initiatives depending on the needs of the beneficiary – providing judicial help or helping the beneficiary in his/her contact to authorities. Much of this direct and interactive work could be done via internet:

We try to make our website more interactive, as people ask for it [...] Things are clearer when these are explained in the YouTube videos.

(Interview 11)

The empowerment of vulnerable groups is considered important by several organizations and thereby they facilitate their active participation in these same organizations, and more importantly also help initiatives for small-business (via small loans, judicial help etc.) (e.g, Interview 20).

Third, political advocacy works mainly via two channels: direct contact with policy-makers and public campaigns. There is also some significant networking with other groups, which could be seen as a part of organizational development and capacity building. One example is telling here:

We help to put important questions to the national agenda, we represent their [women's] voice, we tell to politicians that these women have these particular problems – they cannot say that to the Minister of Equality themselves - they never meet him.

(Interview 18)

As a contrast to this, there are groups which are directly avoiding such activities:

We have never gone to politicians and lobbied and demanded for a change.

(Interview 4)

13.5 Governance and Networks

The governance of the formal and informal AAOs is probably different, but in general the Swedish civil society organizations which aim to receive state or municipal funds should follow the similar structure. Some groups noted that their leadership is very horizontal and this is important for allowing them to make fast decisions and react to the need on the ground (Interview 10). All formal organizations have an elected board which makes major decisions; they need to have some accounting officer who takes care of the reporting etc., and majority of them have also some paid employees. Financial transparency was emphasized by some groups (Interview 4), while others mainly pointed to the problems with funding and lack of interest from public funding institutions (Interview 11).

The proper network analysis of the organizations would require more quantitative data, but it is clear from the interviews that all organizations have tight networks with other voluntary organizations in the country and also with state institutions. We cannot indicate any radical change, but there is a tendency that the refugee crisis of 2015 encouraged state and municipal institutions to seek for more help from the civil society organizations, as they themselves lacked knowledge and experience for working with these groups (Interview 1, 2, 12).

Looking at the typical partners of cooperation – we see some cross-reference to our interviewed organizations, but there is also cooperation with the larger NGOs such as Salvation Army, Red Cross, Save Children or BRIS (Children's Rights in Society). Above it was already noted that several AAOs have close cooperation with various churches and their social activities. For organizations working with the language education, the premises provided by the ABF (the Workers' Educational Association) have been very important. Similarly, the owner of the house the organization is working at is seen as an important partner of collaboration – something which is not so usual according to the respondent (Interview 10).

State institutions are very important cooperation partners for the Swedish organizations and only one informal group noted that they have no relations with the municipality (Interview 10) and a few noted that they have very little funding from the state (Interview 7). The organizations which collaborate or cooperate with state institutions work at three levels – national, regional and municipal. The large nationwide groups such as Interview 16 or 18 work direct with the political elite, being participant in

parliamentary committees or advisory groups for particular state agencies. Those groups which mainly work with the health issues (Interview 12, 20, 5) cooperate with various hospitals which are organized at the regional level in Sweden.

Finally, the majority of the examined AAOs have close contacts with various municipal agencies such as those working with the issues of social services and city planning. While in general organizations commented the contact with authorities as something positive, state authorities are not always seen as very constructive:

We cooperate with three municipalities and previously they have provided some financial help for paying our rent, but this year they halved the support, and next year we are promised nothing.

(Interview 6)

Cooperation could also be seen as something which takes time from the major goals of the organizations – social work:

All different state authorities want to meet us, get information from us or that we participate in seminars [...] problem is that we do not have time or resources for it. Now we have asked to get paid for it, but there are not many who will pay for it.

(Interview 16)

Even other organizations note that they actually have some fees state authorities will pay when they invite them to participate in conferences etc. – just to finance the main activities (e.g., Interview 4). There is also some cooperation with universities, as students come and provide legal aid or volunteer in activities (Interview 3).

Finally, the informal network such as friends of friends are emphasized as very important by groups who engage people who have been beneficiaries themselves (e.g., Interview 16).

13.6 Beneficiaries and Participants

The interviewed AAOs have a long list of beneficiaries and often people represent several different groups such as the homeless and unemployed, EU-migrants, refugees or asylum seekers, unaccompanied young asylum seekers (under 18), victims of human trafficking and/or sexual harassment, drug or alcohol addicts, people with psychological problems (stress, depression etc.), single parents and children whose parents are in jail or children suffering with cancer. Two interviewed organizations focus solely on women and one representative motivates this choice with the following words:

We help women not only for their own shake, but for their children. [...] I think that if women or mother can make it, then can children also do it. Otherwise one inherits social exclusion, dependency on social benefits and unemployment.

(Interview 4)

The AAOs only working for unaccompanied young asylum seekers (under 18) are also specific in the way that those who have arrived just some years before are now active in the organizations. This is important, as larger organizations often do not get direct contact with these young people while this organization can manage it (Interview 16).

Many of the groups note that the beneficiaries have changed over the last years – either indirectly due to the economic crisis or directly due to the refugee crisis. While in the 1990s the beneficiaries were often Swedish homeless people with drug problems, today there are many migrants outside Europe (Sub-Saharan Africa), from the EU (Roma people and other groups), and refugees from war-zone countries (Syria, Afghanistan). The organizations previously working with drug and alcohol problems note that they are now focusing on a broader group of people who are in some kind of ‘chaotic situation’.

There has not been so much increase, but we are meeting different groups [...] alcohol and psychological diagnosis, people using new types of drugs, EU-migrants.

(Interview 2)

Even the need of retired people has become more severe, as they have become in need for low-cost apartments and the organizations so far only focused on helping young have now started to focus also on elderly (e.g. Interview 14). One respondent characterizes the beneficiaries in a following way:

Many people do not want to meet state authorities or politicians [...] they maybe hate social services and therefore are organizations like ours very important link.

(Interview 12)

Building trust between social service and beneficiaries is seen as a very important action of organizations working with the most vulnerable groups. At the same time, as noted above, some organizations perceive that state is not doing enough or has not necessary know-how. One respondent notes:

The homeless are tossed around like ping pongs between the official administrators.

(Interview 1)

13.7 Outcomes and Best Practices

It is hard to ‘measure’ the success of the AAOs social works activities and there are some self-critical voices:

We are not good in following up our actions.

(Interview 19)

On the other hand, the organizations’ goal is to help vulnerable people and all the examined organizations report such activity – either directly via social work or indirectly via coordination, cooperation and political lobby. When we asked them to mention the most successful practices, they often noted the same things they were currently doing – the functioning of the soup kitchen, meeting points, shelters, and spread of information about their activities as well as the rights their beneficiaries have. Many of the respondents who came from older organizations and were focused on a broader group of beneficiaries were pleased with the actions so far:

After 20 years, I can look back and say that we have done something good.

(Interview 4)

The interviewed organizations do not measure their success or effectiveness in terms of numbers, but rather emphasize the importance of sustainable actions and the fact that they have managed to reach out to more people. One of the respondents questioned the idea of measuring the outcomes of initiatives in one specific way by stating the following

We have a program for teaching the Swedish language here in X and there are many women from Arabic countries, who have participated in the program for a year, but they still cannot speak much Swedish. Is that a failure? [...] Or maybe we should see that they have built a sense of community in this specific meeting-place.

(Interview 19)

One could divide the outcomes of the practices into three similarly to the initiatives done above – looking at mainly social services, educational and empowerment promoting actions, and organizational work and political actions.

First, none of the social work organizations provided any specific numbers about their ‘outcomes’, but all of them noted that more work has to be done in terms of helping the increasing number of those in need. Almost all AAOs noted that they have reacted to the increasing influx of EU-migrants and the refugee crisis of August 2015. Many have opened new shelters for refugees (Interview 2, 6, 20), others

have broadened the focus of their social services (Interview 12). While the majority of the groups have enlarged their activities so that they are able to give help to new groups such as EU-migrants, one noted that such a process has not been so successful as they have not had the competency (Interview 20).

Second, the meeting points as such were considered by many groups as something important. For example, even though the Swedish first social supermarket burned and was eventually closed, it did not only serve the purpose of helping people in need with food, but also demonstrated to the society how much food gets wasted (Interview 13). One really successful method is the involvement of prior beneficiaries – both in terms of knowledge about the beneficiaries - information and the help they need. From 2011 to 2015, there has been a significant change in terms of information and contact with help-organizations for asylum seekers, thanks to the experience and cooperation with different organizations (Interview 16).

Education and empowerment are also provided and encouraged via several Swedish language courses, helping people to learn read and write or providing the traineeship in various enterprises or inside the organization. For example, beneficiaries can be part of cooking in the soup-kitchen, can help in the social café and social supermarket, as well as cultural and handicraft practices. One of the respondents (Interview 4) recalled a comment from one child:

My mom is working in X.

This idea and experience of ‘working’ rather than studying or participating was considered as something very important for the self-esteem of the beneficiaries by several respondents (Interview 3; 4; 7, 10).

Several of the interviewed organizations proudly noted their trainee-programs have helped people to find a permanent job (Interview 20). Social enterprises have been important for fighting the unemployment (Interview 6).

Third, the outcomes of political lobbying were already noted above and several groups indicated their influential role in the policy process, especially in promoting several legislations regarding women’s rights and asylum issues. Changing public opinion and policies is obviously a hard task and organizations do not really discuss which of their actions are the most effective, but emphasize the combined set of actions such as media campaigns and direct meetings with politicians. These last are also typical for any civil society organizations in Sweden.

Some of the groups also note that their voice does not make any addition due to the weak position of their beneficiaries.

We do not have so many resources and therefore we are not so effective [...] newspapers do not include our letters [...] this should be changed as we represent an important but weak group of people.

(Interview 11)

As several of the examined groups also act as a sort of umbrella organization helping other smaller groups, the issues of cooperation and collaboration are emphasized as crucial. One success story, which according to the respondent is unique in Europe, is the founding of an organization for unaccompanied young asylum seekers in 2011.⁵² The organization is fully functioning today in several Swedish cities and plays also an important role in educating the public about this particular group of asylum-seekers, which is often described in the media from a negative perspective. Other social innovation projects which have become popular Sweden-wide is a non-religious self-help group for the victims of substance abuse and criminality.

Finally, several groups provide judicial help and help their beneficiaries to write official letters or appeal to court after negative decisions from, for example the migration authorities. One respondent noted happily:

We often write letters to authorities [...] Last week we actually won against the Migration Agency!

(Interview 6)

On the other hand, there are also more pessimistic voices:

[Our work] is frustrating during the days when I question everything we do [...] because the challenges are gigantic [...] we can only hope that we do something useful for people.

(Interview 19)

13.8 Summary

The Swedish welfare state is functioning relatively well – the majority of people who become unemployed can rely on unemployment benefits; the majority of the sick can rely on health-insurance system and municipalities provide housing allowances for poor. Still, there is a large group of people who do not receive the help they need either because they do not qualify for the benefits due to the rigid rules of eligibility or the fact that they have not lived or worked in Sweden. These groups have not just

⁵² Here we cannot indicate the Interview number without revealing the organization.

appeared in Sweden. There have always been such groups of vulnerable people – homeless, people with drug and alcohol problems, the long-term unemployed, victims of trafficking and crime, children and youth from families with a single-parent, and immigrants. Recent years have added new groups, EU-migrants and refugees, but also young people with the need for accommodation.

The twenty civil society organizations interviewed in the frame of this project work very hard to respond to the needs of these groups. The interviews revealed several interesting and important findings regarding the political issues important for the organizations, the effects of economic crisis on their actions, organizational character and networks, the beneficiaries and initiatives of the organizations.

First, our analysis suggests that some service-oriented organizations, especially the ones which have been established more recently and are more informal in their organization, are also more critical towards authorities and their (in)capability of helping vulnerable societal groups. The major critique relates to the insufficient response to refugee crisis, but even general work concerning integration of the non-Swedish population. The state is also criticized for its new public management style of funding of the civil society organizations, which are expected to apply for new funds and several groups see it as an unsustainable process.

Second, the organizations did not feel any direct effect of the economic crisis, but noted that there might have been indirect effects as people, especially Roma, who were previously residing in the Southern Europe have moved to north and formed a new group of beneficiaries in Sweden. This group is often labelled as ‘EU-migrant’ in the Swedish media because these groups are EU citizens and an entirely different legal framework regulates the possibilities and opportunities of this group.

Third, the organizations working with vulnerable groups in Sweden are strongly affected by the trends of migration, especially the refugee crisis of 2015. This has led to the establishment of new organizations such as the organizations for unaccompanied young refugees. It has also changed the work done by the several existing organizations, which have seen the need to broaden their regular initiatives and be innovative.

Fourth, the examined organizations have a broad set of initiatives from the traditional social services such as shelters and soup kitchens, to innovative projects such as learning (Swedish) language in the handicraft programmes, or traineeship programs in the social cafés and supermarkets. While the majority of the groups emphasized the importance of focusing on the basic needs of their beneficiaries – refugees, victims of trafficking, unemployed, homeless or drug-addicts – many of them also pointed to the importance of providing beneficiaries with the space for social interaction. While respondents often

noted that information campaigns and distribution is important, they also noted that these special social spaces in a form of cafés, soup-kitchens, social supermarkets, second-hand shops or meeting points were crucial for their beneficiaries. These initiatives might be particularly important in the Swedish context, as the country is labelled in international comparisons as one of the most individualistic countries.

Fifth, the interviewed organizations in general perceive that their work has some positive outcomes as they really manage to provide help to various groups of vulnerable people – especially refugees, Roma families (EU-migrants), women, and young people. On the other hand, the respondents also noted the obvious – more (financial and human) resources would help them to work even better and authorities could do more by listening to these organizations which represent the vulnerable people. While a few groups could report about the successful political change as a result of their lobbying activities, others felt somewhat more powerless. There is a close cooperation between the civil society organizations themselves, as well as the state authorities and civil society organizations, but this was sometimes seen as not mutually beneficial.

Further studies are needed for analyzing the state-civil society relations even further, especially from the perspective of the funding schemes provided from the state. The current project has not managed to include the perspective of beneficiaries, but it would be highly important to examine how well the innovative initiatives provided by the organizations are actually perceived by the beneficiaries and what they consider as major obstacles for solving their problems in Sweden.

14. Switzerland



14.1 Introduction

The aim of this national report is to analyse through Alternative Action Organizations (AAOs) how Swiss society faced the 2008 economic crisis. Firstly, we investigate if Switzerland was impacted by this crisis, and, if so, how people coped and created alternative forms of resilience.

While the first phase of WP6 used a quantitative method to analyse the different AAOs, in the second phase a qualitative method is proposed: this gives to the AAO the chance to play an active role in the analysis. As a result of the interview, the AAO member is able:

- To express himself/herself and explain his/her perception of the economic crisis;
- Speak about the way he/she perceives how the beneficiaries had to cope with economic crisis.

A more individual level analysis offers the possibility of obtaining a better understanding of the consequences of the economic crisis on actors; doubtless, these are less detectable on women, minorities, children, the elderly and other vulnerable groups.

The Swiss team conducted thirteen interviews. Ten interviewed AAOs are based in Geneva, one AAO in Ticino – the Italian part of Switzerland and one in Bern – the German part of Switzerland. Even though the German part of Switzerland was initially considered in our poll, our team preferred to focus on those AAOs based in Geneva. This decision was mainly dictated by the limited available time and that we favoured a face-to-face interview over a telephone interview. As consequence, eleven out thirteen AAOs have their headquarters in Geneva and they are AAOs that mainly operate at the local level with the exception of one AAO that is engaged at international level.

The sampling has followed the main findings of the first phase of the WP6. Considering the formal/informal axis of the AAO, the composition of our sample is the following:

- Seven interviews have been conducted with formal cooperatives and NGOs;
- One interview has been conducted with a labor union and two with citizens' groups; and,
- Two interviews have been conducted with protest group.

If we consider the beneficiaries of the AAOs, the result can be summarized as follow:

- One AAO targets employees and their rights;
- One AAO deals with environmental issues;
- Seven AAOs target towards citizen-consumers and at the same time the local community;
- Three AAOs target towards vulnerable people (migrants, precarious workers or the unemployed, young people potentially suicidal).

Unfortunately, it was difficult to have a representative gender poll: only three women are interviewed. Concerning age, the average age is around forty-five years, except one case who was twenty-two years old.

Twelve of the thirteen AAOs interviewed by our team were conducted in the association headquarters; only one AAO was interviewed over the phone, since they were located in Ticino. In one case, an AAO delegate was met at her house. Every AAO was initially contacted by email. However, we rapidly found out that emails were not the right way to convince most of the AAOs to set up a meeting, we contacted each AAO headquarters by phone. All interviews were conducted between September and November 2016.

Apart from one AAO who was personally linked to one of our team members, only two out of thirteen AAOs directly answered our email. Eight AAOs were contacted by phone frequently, in the attempt to persuade them to join the qualitative survey poll. The bigger difficulty for us was to convince them to sacrifice part of their time to meet us, probably because they didn't see a personal benefit to the AAO.

The interview lasted on average two hours. One of the interviewed spokesman told us in advance that she/he was available for a maximum of fifty-five minutes, so we tried to concentrate the interview in this short period.

Despite expecting each interview to last for around one hour thirty minutes, and having informed participants of this, we observed that after breaking the ice with small talk (brief personal presentation, talking about Geneva University, our faculty work domain and so on), the interviewed were disposed to open up and be more talkative.

Even though the interviewee knew it was possible to not respond to some questions, every question was answered in detail. Whenever the questions were considered too vague or too morally engaging (e.g. "How is your group enforcing specific socio-political values?" or "Do you think that alternative organizations and networks can offer new ways for social changes?"), the interviewees dissociated their

personal opinion from their AAO. In fact, phrases like “I personally believe” or “I cannot talk on the behalf of others members or in the name of the AAO” were more often used in this section.

If on one hand we encountered lots of difficulties in convincing AAOs to participate to the project, on the other hand when we finally met them, perhaps thanks to the small talk, we found no element of suspiciousness.

14.2 Political issues

The position and experience of representatives of the organizations are the following:

1. Five out of the thirteen spokesman we interviewed defined themselves as founders (three out of five of those founders are also president of their AAO, the other two are members of their AAO’s committee), three as president and three as members of the committee of their AAO. It is important to point out the difference between the role of founder and the role of president from the point of view of the interviewees: when the distinction was made, these AAOs consider the president as a mere formal role. In fact, even in the case where the founder is also the actual president of the AAO, they prefer to use a more symbolic status such as founder.
2. Seven out of thirteen had on average ten years of experience in that specific AAO and six out of thirteen are also members of others associations. In nine cases, the experience accumulated by the interviewees was field-specific, contributing to make them a necessary jigsaw piece in their AAO’s life. The remaining two AAO’s interviewees tried not to specialize themselves in a specific domain for the following reason:

This criterion of non-specialization is important, because it avoids accumulation of knowledge which could produce power in a Foucauldian way of thinking.

(Interview n° 9)

3. Seven out of thirteen spokespersons have also a part-time job inside their AAOs (in all of these cases, the part-time practice is dictated by the AAO’s willing not to monopolize the worker’s life, taking them from family, personal and social life), but only in one case the interviewee’s job inside his AAO is his main source of income. The other four interviewees actively contribute to the AAO’s activities without being payed.
4. None of the AAO’s spokespeople explicitly mentioned the name of a specific political party with whom they collaborate or in which they recognize their values. Specifically:

- Two out of thirteen AAOs haven't linked themselves to any political party nor any political values.
- Two of them haven't directly talked about the Green Party but their values could be positioned in the green current.
- One of them linked his organisation to the anarchist movement.
- One out of thirteen linked the AAO to a union.
- The last five organisations could be positioned more towards the left-wing.

As mentioned above, most of the AAOs, specifically eight out of thirteen, express their neutrality and independence from some sort of political pressure. In fact, in these cases, when our team asked if they collaborate with any political parties, the issue that most often was brought up was the concern of their independency and neutrality “from any political game” (Interviews n°1 and n°6) or from the influence that some political parties, that could “credit the success of the AAO” (Interview n° 6).

You never forget when the elections are: politicians pop out as marvellous mushrooms in our public events. smiling and thanking us for the great job we are doing. It's such a pity that time of elections is just once in a while..!

(Interview n° 3)

This quote underlines the delicate relation that some of the AAO have with the political parties. On the other hand, five out of thirteen collaborate with the *Ville de Genève* and receive financial aid. Just one case out of thirteen, the AAO to prevent any political pressure of any type, doesn't want to receive any kind of financial aid nor be a part of any group.

An important element to emphasize is that seven out of thirteen AAOs insisted on the importance of the militant aspect of their AAO. In fact, according to the interviewee n° 11:

The militant aspect is not only necessary but also fundamental to the creation and to maintain an ethic aspect of an association. [...] The militancy is very important not to fall in the misery of technocracy.

(Interview n° 11)

As this quote points out, the militant factor is seen as a form of “guidance” of the “ethic aspect of an association”. Four out of thirteen AAOs employed the militant element as a characteristic that in one hand to dissociate themselves from the formal political institutions that are seen as “too much disconnected from the reality” (Interview N° 5); and, on the other hand, distinguished them from:

Big NGOs that become slaves from their own success: they are incapable to manage the huge amount of money they receive, creating fake needs to keep alive the purpose of their NGO.

(Interview n° 11)

Our group identified a broad spectrum of motivations pushing the interviewees to join their AAO and engage themselves in the AAO's activities, despite those differences, we found out that they have three main elements in common:

1. Very often the interviewees have a career in political militancy (seven out of thirteen) and throughout their life they were engaged in some sort of association or group working on political issues. For those people the "associative life" is a personal objective to pursue and the social environment they live in is very "associative-centric".

Since I was young, I always have been engaged in associations and I truly believe that militancy is an important part of my life.

(Interview n° 1)

2. Secondly, the motivation of the associative activity could also be a way to achieve a personal goal. If we consider the cases where the interviewees were also the founders of their AAO (five out of thirteen), they created the AAO to fill an existing gap in their society that wasn't already filled by others political institutions or AAOs, but also in order to satisfy a personal need. It necessary, though, to underline that this correlation is above all present in cases where the founders of the association led of the AAO.

When I arrived in Geneva I noticed that this city tries to hide the problem of job insecurity, especially concerning economic migrants. I so decided to create a space where those people could find a support.

(Interview n° 11)

With some friends we were working as assistants at the University and we were happy about it but we felt like not being part of the society in a practical way. [...] At the beginning, when we talk about our project, people told us that we were too utopian and it was impossible...but look at us now!

(Interview n° 5)

Altruism is an important element when you want to engage yourself in something like an association, but it cannot be the only thing. In fact, I think altruism has some limits, you also need to answer to your personal needs.

(Interview n° 6)

3. In the end, we discovered a strong relation between the motivation and the personal time that a person has. In seven cases out thirteen, the person mentioned explicitly the importance of the time she/he had to dedicate to something else.

I always loved this place [referring to the headquarter of the association], to me is like being in paradise. I usually came here when I had some time, but I actually decided to get involved once I had the time. Probably the moment when I lost my job, I actually figured out what I wanted to do and I became a part of it.

(Interview n°6)

14.3 Organizations' missions, core ideals and political aims

It's important to recall that except from two AAOs, most operate at a local level. As consequence, the primary and direct beneficiaries are individuals who live in Geneva's canton, with the exception of the AAO based in Ticino. Note that mission and political aims could also be influenced by the level which one AAO operate.

Two out of thirteen AAOs defend rights for farmers by means of better salaries and better working conditions. These two AAOs are involved in alternative agriculture trying to reinforce crop products from the local market against supermarket and buyer companies.

They also highlight the opposition to the anonymity of the supermarket and the promotion of rational consumption:

People need adapt their personal consummation to the rhythm of nature, in others words, the consumer must adapt to vegetable feed and not the reverse.

(Interview n° 10)

Even though their aims are quite similar, these two AAOs are distinguishable with respect to the way they operate and the target of their public. In one case, the AAO, which is a formal cooperative, it mainly

focuses at local level and the provided services are for the local community. The second AAO is a labor union.

Five out of thirteen AAOs promote an anti-capitalist and self-managed way of business at the local level. Even though they don't promote their values directly, they hope to make a social change by showing that is possible to do self-managed and ecologically business successfully. In addition, these AAOs are willing to create a suitable environment for people creating ties, regardless of their class or religion. As a matter of fact, thanks to the organization of conferences and cultural events, they are establishing an environment where people can discuss from ordinary daily life to political issues.

People can come here and receive an adequate service knowing that our first goal is not a cold calculation from the cost and the benefice, but it's human one, it's an ecological one. Due to the fact that people can come here and also collaborate with us, I like to believe that we are able to bond with them and we that there isn't just a relationship between consumer and producer, but between people who care.

(Interview n° 5)

We are creating an environment where people can come here and feel like home. It's not important from which class or religion you come from. Here you are welcome. It's funny, here you can find a broad spectrum of people, from the business man / business woman that is enjoying his meal as the young student who is drinking a coffee.

(Interview n°6)

Three out of thirteen AAOs are dealing with vulnerable people. One of the two AAOs operates at regional level, whereas the others two are working at local level. The ultimate goal of these AAOs is to educate the local community on the increasing number of people living in precarious situation and the escalation of suicide among young people: both themes are still considered taboos in Switzerland.

Switzerland is known as a country where everybody drives porches and lives in luxury villa. All these stereotypes are problematic because in one hand, Swiss politicians and citizens don't want to face the fact that in Switzerland there are a growing number of working poor and homeless. On the other hand, we are facing migration flows from all over Europe that aren't aware of the real cost of life and they risk to find themselves on the street without nothing.

(Interview n°11)

In addition, these AAOs give, in their words, “an ad hoc but concrete help” (Interviews n° 5 and n° 11). In fact, two AAOs support – mainly but not exclusively – immigrants with languages courses, while an AAO offers law consultancies to immigrants. Concerning the AAO which focuses on the suicidal of young people, its peculiarity is that most of the members are young people. In fact, one of the main goal of the association is to:

Maintain the contact with young people through young people. It's necessary to speak the same language, share similar experience.

(Interview n°3)

Finally, one AAO focuses on the development of a network facilitating the exchange of skills and experiences within the local community. The main purposes are in one hand to develop a link between individuals who don't know each other, and on the other hand, to give the opportunity to members to share their passions and skills.

Our aim is to connect people who would not necessary meet... It's another kind of creating ties in our community.

(Interview n°2)

14.4 Economic Crisis Effects

At the beginning, when our team approached the various AAOs and we explained the purpose of our work, we were surprised to receive a popular feedback, namely that they didn't perceive any direct consequences of this crisis. As consequence, most of the AAOs didn't feel suitable to take part in this project. Only in a second round were they convinced that their interview would be relevant. It is worth mentioning that this was not about avoiding taking part of the project. In fact, they seemed truly concerned that their testimony was “useless for the purpose of the research” (Interview n°2).

Eight out of thirteen AAOs don't see any direct impact of the economic crisis on the organisation or their networks. During the interviews, the question about the economic crisis had to be asked several times and using different perspectives before the interviewee opened up. In particular, in six cases out thirteen, before the interviewee talked about the impact of the crisis on their network or on their association, there was a general introduction where the interviewee started to talk about the impact of the crisis on the national level. It seemed a general leitmotiv that the economic crisis was felt more as a consequence experienced by “others European countries”. In six cases out of thirteen, the economic crisis was linked with European Union. It was difficult to isolate the two issues. Sentences like “The economic crisis was ‘real’ in the European Union” or “Switzerland had some problem, but not as much

as in the European Union” (Interviews n° 1, n° 3, n° 5, and n° 11) were often used in the first approach of the subject.

Another relevant element is that often when the interviewee approached the effects of the economic crisis, jokes or the use of irony were used (four out thirteen). For example:

The effect of the economic crisis? [Laugh] I can't tell. We didn't see any direct effect. You know, when you don't have anything, you can't lose anything. Probably the effects had more impacted big enterprises. Now they can't go anymore on holiday at Maldives, but they will probably just go to Seychelles.

(Interview n° 6)

A preliminary conclusion is that the AAOs don't see any direct relation between the economic crisis and the situation they experience. Nine out of thirteen AAOs indicate that the sector in which they are engaged doesn't have sufficient support from political institutions and from public opinion, and, finally, that there is a lack of resources. Although, in these cases, they do not link the lack of resources or of attention with the economic crisis. Three out of thirteen AAO affirm that the association has been directly affected, particularly through the decrease of the canton's subsidies.

The economic crisis has impacted our resources. Now the Canton requires for a decrease of 5% of the subsidized associations. As consequence, we had to reduce our budget in order to save money for keeping low course fees.

(Interview n° 7)

This specific AAO is involved with migrant people and wants to increase the chances of reaching a more democratic education.

Generally speaking, if AAOs didn't talk about the direct effect of the economic crisis, whereas they did point out the indirect effects the crisis has had on their association, above all they referred to the problem of the capitalistic system nowadays. In fact, if the economic crisis didn't seem to be the core issue for them, they blamed the effects of a liberal market as the main problem for their networks and associations.

I can't tell if the economic crisis affected us. Our main problem is the “food tourism”. Since we live near the border, people prefer buying their food in France or at the supermarket ... and we can't afford to sell our vegetables at a competitive price.

(Interview n° 8)

We have seen a decrease on our selling, although I don't think that there is a link with the economic crisis. Our AAO suffers from the competitive prices that bigger shops have or from huge companies where you can buy your book for nothing.

(Interview n° 9)

I can't say that we are suffering from the economic crisis of 2008, on the other hand, I can tell that living in a context where the market is more and more liberalized, we are stuck in a situation where we need to fight every day to survive ... as our beneficiaries that are transformed in slave product where they are sold to the best bidder.

(Interview n° 11)

This last statement came from the AAO which offers social services to migrants. According to three out of thirteen AAOs, if the AAO didn't suffer directly from the economic crisis, their beneficiaries have. Interviewee n° 11 observes that vulnerable people, among them migrants, are most affected by the economic crisis.

More migrant people are living below the poverty line. If before the economic crisis it was less visible in the public space, now, it's more difficult to hide it. You can actually SEE it.

(Interview n° 11)

14.5 Initiatives and projects

The key finding of this report is that, in general, there are no direct effects of the 2008 economic crisis for most – eight out thirteen – of the AAOs. The three AAOs who suffered from this crisis are involved in the domain of vulnerable people. In particular, one AAO focus on the prevention of suicide among young people and the others two AAOs deal with migrants.

Under these circumstances, the following section will focus on the projects that have been implemented by these three AAOs.

The common goal of these initiatives is the intent to: increase the number of volunteers, inform the local community about AAO's activities, and fundraising. It is worth mentioning that these initiatives are interconnected: in fact, the necessity to recruit more – in particular young – volunteers is linked to fundraising and on the communication of activities. Thus, it would simplify the daily work of others members of the AAO who are able as a consequence to focalize on other specifics issues.

As highlighted by a representative of an AAO engaged with young people (Interview n°3), the recruitment of young volunteers is essential for the existence of the association, especially after the

crisis. Moreover, the representative has remarked that the impact of events and manifestations is more effective if young people are present and if the event is carried out by young volunteers. According to the representative of the AAO, young volunteers are individuals who are “appealing”, (Interview n°3) especially when they are seen in the public sphere.

Usually young people are labelled as being passive and disinterested. So, when people notice them actively caring for an issue as it could be our association, in a certain way, they find it “cute”... so they “reward” them.

(Interview n°3)

A similar phenomenon has been observed for fundraising activities, where the young volunteers meet sponsors and persons in face-to-face meetings. This is crucial since:

It's vital to establish a physical relation with people who believe in us. Of course, everybody knows that these meetings are to raise money. On the other hand, the outcome is more effective when the person who is willing to support us see who we are. In other words, we are more trusted when people can put-a-face to the money that they are given.

(Interview n° 3)

One key activity is communication. A relevant example is given by an AAO – providing material and legal support to migrants – which highlights the difficulties that immigrants are facing in Geneva. Switzerland is often described as being one of the wealthiest nations in the world; however, there is the tendency to ignore “the actual real cost of life for common people” (Interview n° 11). In order to inform people about the actual situation of the migrants targeting Switzerland, the AAO supplies, in collaboration with Spanish and Greek associations, brochures translated in several languages explaining the various difficulties (for instance the cost of living, the most suitable period to find a job, where to live) that migrants are experiencing in Geneva. It is worthwhile to note that even though the two federal initiatives of 2014 and 2016 (minimum wage of 4,000 CHF per month and introduction of a basic income) were rejected, Switzerland remains an attractive country.

Thinking about a country where the population was called to vote for a 4,000 francs salary, is a super attractive element to migrate...The problem is that they aren't always aware of how expensive is Switzerland. For example, the cost of: insurances, the flat, the food...

(Interview n° 11)

As a result, through this particular project, the AAO tries to advice and warn about the cost of living; the ‘best’ period time of the year to find a job (especially for seasonal jobs); where to live and other practical advices.

14.6 Governance and networks

In the following section, we can observe three general tendencies. The first is that, according to the majority of AAOs their relation with political actors has remained unchanged. A similar finding is also observed between these AAOs and their networks. This tendency is mainly observed for eight out thirteen AAOs in particular, those who are formal cooperation’s or NGOs.

A quite different scenario is presented by three out the thirteen AAOs, those focusing on the support or the defence of vulnerable people. These organizations have intensified their networks. Since these three AAOs are also those which have mostly felt the consequences of the economic crisis, there has been a necessity to intensify the collaboration with other AAOs at the local level, at the national level and – in one case out of thirteen – with other Europeans AAOs.

Since the public founding had decreased, we had to find others solutions... for examples: reinforcing our entourage, building new relationships and getting through this difficult situation.

(Interview n°7)

We intensify our relationships with others AAOs, especially with some associations located in Spain and in Greece. Even though the situation and the context of these associations are different, we can learn much about them and voiceovers.

(Interview n° 11)

Another element is that these three AAOs focused more on working with other associations than with political actors. One reason given by an interviewee is that they prefer to collaborate with other associations because it is “from the bottom that you can actually give a real and direct answer to this problematic” (Interview n° 7). Another interview – n° 11 – had pointed out that even though at the present time there aren’t sufficient public institutions taking care of vulnerable people, public founding isn’t investing in associations who are doing this work. So, the AAO reacts:

[In] this illogical context that leave you with the bitter in the mouth, we try to do our best...so we try to put our energy on things that we can have an impact on...

(Interview n° 11)

The last association raises a different issue. The AAO that focuses on environmental issues has intensified their relations with political institutions. Over the last past five years, the AAO has increased their collaboration with the canton. According to the AAO's representative: "It's more convenient for them giving us the task then to them to manage the problem" (Interview n° 5).

14.7 Beneficiaries and participants

In general, with the exception of two cases, interviewees do not think that the 2008 economic crisis has directly affected their beneficiaries. Not taking into account the AAOs which offer social support for migrants, the AAOs do not verify either an increase nor a decrease in the number of their members or beneficiaries.

Two types of beneficiaries have been identified: the 'local citizens-consumer' and 'vulnerable people' such as young people or migrants.

1. The 'local citizens-consumer group': the main target of eight out of thirteen AAOs as beneficiaries. These eight AAOs offer formal services, from books, to food, to the reparation of bikes. The beneficiaries' characteristics are quite heterogeneous concerning age and the gender, although in one case there are more women than men (66 %).

I must say that I can see through the years, that there is a noticeable and constant characteristic within our beneficiaries: women are more active and present than men [...] I presume that women are more willing to meet new people and perhaps they suffer more the loneliness than men.

(Interview n° 2)

Another element worth mentioning is that 'local citizens-consumers' could be classified as mainly from the 'middle class':

Even though we don't target a specific public, I must say that our beneficiaries are in one hand very heterogeneous (for example regarding gender, age and the cultural aspect), but on the other hand, it's very homogenous. We mostly have a more or less wealthy group.

(Interview n° 5)

2. Concerning the second group, three out of thirteen AAOs have as beneficiaries 'vulnerable people'. Two AAOs focus on helping migrants and in these two particular cases, there has been a raising number of beneficiaries requiring their help in the past five years. Consequently, to meet the increased demand, there has been an increase of members, mostly volunteers. Volunteers play a key

role in these AAOs: their engagement helps firstly in a pragmatic way, since in the AAOs they accomplish a task that couldn't not been done without them. Secondly, new volunteers are seen as a positive and active response of civil society towards the AAO. Using the words of one interviewee, volunteers are:

A way to understand if we are still worth it and if there are people who are willing to spend their personal time for "us" ... In a way, they give us a refresh start.

(Interview n° 11)

Another common factor between these three AAOs is their networking activities in favour of the beneficiaries. In fact, all three AAOs promote an environment where migrants (in two cases) and young people (in one case) can meet each other and create relationships. According to these three AAOs, this is crucial, since vulnerable people tend to be isolated from the local community. As a consequence, initiatives like breakfasts at the headquarters – where these beneficiaries have the chance to: speak their mother tongue language without feeling as outsiders and share their daily life problems and roundtables discussions. French lessons provide on one hand a direct help to the beneficiaries, on the other hand, they allow AAOs members and beneficiaries to create relationships between them. According to an AAO, “we can notice if what we are doing is an answer of a real need or not” (Interview n° 3), while for the two AAOs offering social support for migrants, the fact that people have a common background helps building this kind of environment.

While these initiatives are relevant for the AAOs to understand and analyse the needs of beneficiaries and create relationships between them, an AAO notes there is also a “negative effect”(Interview n°11), since there is a chance that this environment remains closed to a broader community (Interview n°11). Moreover, according to interviewee n° 11, “The more the bond between beneficiaries is strong, the less are the chances for the person to ‘improve’ his/her situation”. Most migrants who approach this AAO *de facto* have a precarious job. People who the network have more chance of finding a job in a short period of time; nevertheless, he/she is more likely to remain within this environment, hence not improving his/her situation in the long-term. Thus, the life of these beneficiaries is mainly characterized by precarious jobs: it could be a good springboard for some people, but for others it could become a permeant situation.

14.8 Outcomes and best practices

During the interviews, our team noticed that the most challenging question was: “Tell us where, in your view, your organization is effective and where it is not?”. In general, interviewees hesitated or replied

in an ironic manner. Seven out thirteen AAOs initially said that they couldn't say if the AAO is or not "effective". The word "effective" took predominant importance, the question moved quickly to moral concerns, hence avoiding the purpose of the question. Often, expressions like "we are just a drop in the ocean" or "I hope that we are" were used, whereas, in some cases, the interviewee asked about the definition of the word "effectiveness" or "which indicators should we use to notice if we are or not effective?" (Interview n° 11). In one case the word "effective" was strongly questioned in terms of "just the product of the capitalistic system where the equation between cost and opportunity are the only rule who are considered" (interview n° 1). Finally, it is worth noting the remark of three of the seven AAOs – primarily involved in campaign's prevention – on how to assess intangible outcomes. It's challenging for them to quantify the concrete impact on their initiatives.

Even though in our constitution you can find written that we will exist as association until our main purpose will be achieved, unfortunately, I can't tell if young people killed themselves less during this period time because of our campaign ... I hope so ...

(Interview n° 3)

A complete different scenario exists in the others five AAOs, all cooperatives. They answered that they could consider the AAO as being efficient.

If at the beginning the association was considered as a group of 'idealistic' people, now, since the work is gaining on importance, our work started to be treated differently. We are no more longer seen as a bunch of naïve people, but instead as an efficient association.

(Interview n° 5)

In particular, these five AAOs had implemented different projects through diverse practices. For example, their work and projects are local. According to them, a project with a global connotation wouldn't be as compelling. There is a general trend to put in place projects with the "method a- step-at-a-time" (Interviews n° 1 and n° 2) since time and resources are limited. Secondly, raising the awareness of public opinion is another practice that has a positive effect on the association. Moreover, according to one AAO's representative, is necessary to inform the public, but this has to be done in a certain way. Specifically, since sensitive information could be easy attacked by opponents, it's vital that the information has solid sources and that penetrate the public sphere "frequently but not excessively" (Interview n° 11). In fact, if problems are too present in the public sphere, the effect could be the opposite. Public opinion could be "saturated" and become indifferent. As a consequence, the 'snowball' method is often preferred. Firstly, because the AAO can choose the target and adapt the language used.

Secondly, there is a bigger probability that the AAO can build a greater relationship with the target chosen, since there is a greater possibility that the person concerned is truly interested.

14.9 Summary

Thanks to the interviews, it was possible within this study to give civil society a voice. Furthermore, we had the opportunity to engage in a deeper conversation and touch on arguments that wouldn't have emerged in another form. The interviewees could explicate their perception of the 2008 economic crisis and how their beneficiaries have coped. Finally, since the most of the interviews were managed in their headquarters, our team also had the chance to understand the working context.

In summary, the main finding of this study demonstrates that the 2008 economic crisis didn't have a direct impact on the selected AAOs. Nevertheless, it should be noted that:

- Almost all interviews were located in Geneva. We should ask ourselves if these results are representative for Switzerland, since the German part has not been considered.
- Even though the majority of the AAOs were not directly affected by the economic crisis, there are AAOs which indirectly suffered from it, in particular, those working with vulnerable people.
- Generally speaking, there is the possibility of observing two types of beneficiary: the 'local citizens-consumer' and 'vulnerable people' such as young people or migrants. The second group comprises those who have most suffered from the economic crisis.

Moreover:

- The AAO active in the ecological sector is less affected.
- The role of volunteers in the organization is crucial.
- Finally, different AAOs underlined the importance of the relations between beneficiaries and among members. In fact, most AAOs aim to create an environment where their beneficiaries can feel safe, comfortable and develop feelings of belonging.
- Lastly, the positive and negative impacts resulting from the relationships between beneficiaries and AAOs, as highlighted by interviewee n° 11, have not been investigated in this study. The investigation of people's perception on the impacts of these organizations on society should be the subject of a separate study.

15. United Kingdom



15.1 Introduction

This section focuses on the analysis of 13 qualitative personal interviews of organizational representatives in the UK. The aim of the WP6.3 qualitative interviews is the identification of new forms of resilience among the organizations and the effects of the crisis on the work of organizations and on vulnerable collectives, such as women, children, the elderly and minorities.

The previous stages of research in WP6, focusing on the website coding in particular, suggested very few organizations in the sample could be classified clearly as either service-orientated or centred around policy advocacy. Furthermore, there was a very limited online presence in the sample of highly informal organizations. The UK landscape as reflected in the hub websites was a considerably formalized one, and, in particular, there was no strong online presence in the sample of informal policy advocacy organizations. Therefore, it was important to try to account for what variety was present in the sample and take something similar to a maximum variation approach, to try to account for the different types of organizations and beneficiaries as were present.

Furthermore, in terms of time and resources, the conducting of face-to-face interviews across the whole of the UK was not viable. There is a clear and very strong geography in the UK with the capital of London dominating in a way that is not apparent across the rest of the EU28 (see Figure 1 in Terzi 2016 for a stark demonstration of this, compared to all the other Livewhat countries, except Switzerland). London is also home to the financial industries which were most closely linked to the crisis of 2008-2009 and so it provides an important focal point of analysis. At the same time, it is not reflective of UK experiences as whole, and to counter this a geographical element was added to the sampling strategy and organizations were also contacted in Sheffield and the South Yorkshire region, where the research team was based. As a post-industrial, northern city with much more limited devolutionary powers in comparison to London, adding Sheffield provides an important counterbalance to the sample, and allows comparison to be made and examined between the two regions to draw out both differences and similarities.

Approaching and making useful contact in order to organize interviews with organizations turned out to be difficult. This is further reflected in the response rate from the survey part of WP6: in the UK, 500

organizations were contacted by email and asked to fill in a very short survey; only 26 replied, a response rate of 5%. In terms of interviews, over 85 organizations were contacted, via a mixture of methods including email, Facebook, Twitter, face-to-face, and in all occasions where possible, via phone. Many phone calls and emails were not answered and so it is difficult to judge why these organizations did not want to be part of the process. Other organizations which declined to be involved did provide some reasons, however. The most frequent was a lack of time, often because the organization was running on a 'skeleton team', especially over the summer months. Another reason mentioned by more than one organization was that they had an official policy of not helping with research because they had been overwhelmed with previous research requests. Another organization had the opposite issue – they wanted research that would only meet co-production criteria, which could not be met by the short engagement time of this project. Finally, of those organizations that did agree to be interviewed, all were especially cautious to be involved in a filmed interview, and all declined.

Most interviews were carried out face-to-face at the site of the organization involved; however, due to time demands some interviewees requested that they be interviewed over the phone. All the phone interviews were successful and featured a high level of engagement with the questions and were the same length as the face-to-face interviews, and so to try and increase the response rate, a phone interview was offered to organizations that were contacted later in the process. Interviews were conducted between 27th June and 25th October, 2016.

In contrast to some of the pitfalls outlined here, all those who were interviewed were at CEO level or working very high up in the strategy side of the organization, and all demonstrated very clear and deep understandings of their organizations not just in terms of service delivery but also in terms of strategy, management, the development of initiatives and also in terms of long-term vision for the organization.

The organizations interviewed fall into the following categories [L= London, SY = South Yorkshire]: community infrastructure support (x2, L, one based in a borough with a Labor administration, one based in a borough with a Conservative administration); homeless shelter and resource centre (L); private tenancy organization (L); city farm (L); community transport organization (L); financial advice and responsible finance service (L); child hospice (L); global tropical disease prevention (L); child safety refuge (SY); foodbank (SY); child literacy charity (SY); youth support (SY). Of the organizations interviewed, three came into existence from 2008, whilst many with longer histories had also changed structures in this time due to mergers or splits.

15.2 Political Issues

Many of the organization representatives described themselves as trying to develop what can be understood as an ‘insider’ status when it came to their political activity. They often saw their role, as more than one representative put it, as being a ‘critical friend’ to the structures of government, which in general prioritized a partnership model much more than a protest model (although see Craig et al. 2004 on why this is not always clear cut). The following quote from the director of a tenancy organization captures the mood of many participants:

One of the things that has fundamentally changed in the voluntary sector is that it's been depoliticized. It's more about commissioning service delivery. Those times of raising the political questions, I don't get a sense that people have much appetite for that.

(InterviewWP6.3)

Notable here is the sense that there has been a shift – a fundamental change – which has led to depoliticization. Trying to get a handle on the time frame of this change was tricky, but in general, it was often seemed that the politicized time was rather a long time ago – from late 1970s and throughout the 1980s – essentially coinciding with Thatcherism and the last Conservative, right-leaning government (1979-1997).

Potentially, the lack of political activity might be prompted by a fear of having any state funding cut – ‘biting the hand that feeds’. Representatives often acknowledged this notion, and the inherent tensions between third sector organizations and the public sector. However, the issue was also often downplayed. A large number of representatives sat on boards across local councils, police services, health services and regional bodies and this seemed to be a pragmatic way to ‘get things done’ and ‘raise the voice of our members/beneficiaries’. As an influencing approach, political protest was often dismissed (although sometimes only implicitly) as ineffective or inappropriate – ‘you wouldn’t get me waving a placard outside city hall’ (WP6.8). However, one organization (WP6.13) more explicitly discussed the important notion that in most cases political aims, such as trying to tackle youth unemployment, were aligned with the local authority, and so it was effective to work in partnership to raise these issues in campaigns.

Following on from this, most organizations were heavily involved in both service delivery and policy advocacy and the balance between the two varied. However, the mission aims of organizations tended to be discussed rather more broadly in terms of service delivery, and in rather apolitical language. The focus was on being the most effective representative/ providing the best care or service etc., as opposed to directly challenging the policy environment. This was perhaps because many organizations were moving away from state funding, and saw much more potential in alternative funding streams, including

more standard forms of fundraising but also more social enterprise activities, setting up of trading arms, and donations and links to the private sector. This last issue was especially prominent in London, where the location of the organization appeared to play a crucial role. A number of central boroughs in London stretch into and across large business districts, and organizations that were located here – regardless of their focus and type – often raised the importance of having some sort of corporate links. The following quote outlines this kind of thinking:

...we are on the fringe of the City of London, and within this area we have Canary Wharf, so we are sandwiched between two of the biggest business districts, two of the most important districts, in the world. I don't think those organizations invest in their communities enough. They do invest [describes some schemes] But I think compared to what they're turning over, they could give us a lot more.

(Interview WP6.2)

This kind of funding stream was not limited to those with access to ‘the City’ however – these opportunities were explicitly discussed by the majority of organizations which were not in the centre of London, and also those in South Yorkshire.

Much of the previous coding step of this analysis focused on the political values and core ideals as outlined on the websites of political organizations. And many organizations had discussions or bullet-pointed lists on their websites of the values their company strove to abide by. Yet it was rare for these to be expressed explicitly during any of the interviews, even when asked directly. To paraphrase one CEO: ‘Oh I can't remember, we've got loads, you'd have to check the website’ (WP6.5). But if a broad political value could be detected across the conversations, it would be that of ‘empowerment’, or, perhaps more specifically, the idea of ‘providing a voice’ for their beneficiaries. Voice is seen, at a broad level, as a principle part of democracy, and so it seemed like this democratic idea of providing a voice for beneficiaries and making officials aware of their particular needs, was key for many representatives.

Yet outside of this, in particular when discussing service delivery, much of the understanding of the organization and its projects was managerial in style, looking to work the most efficiently they could to provide the best service they could. Organizations focused a lot on ideas of ‘professionalization’ which for some was also ‘commercialization’ – a process that required a lot of data collection and beneficiary feedback, analysis, reputational and ‘brand’ management alongside organizational flexibility (some of which chimes with the sort of phraseology associated with ‘new public management’). There was occasional hesitation or reluctance to use such language; however, where one might expect wider resistance to what could be framed potentially as an encroachment of private sector values, for many

this ‘turn’ was welcomed. Some issues were problematic – the ‘payment by results’ approach for instance was not popular (see below) – but overall these kinds of approaches and processes were generally seen as improving the operational capacity of the organization, and the image of the sector.

Important to note however is that, according to participants, this professionalization pre-dated the crisis. Interviewees acknowledged that the crisis and austerity drive may have sped up the move to consolidate such a model, yet all of those who discussed this issue highlighted how this was a long time coming, and could be seen as having origins during the earlier era of New Labor especially, and should not be understood as being initiated by the crisis or the subsequent austerity policy.

15.3 Effects of the Economic Crisis

All participants acknowledged that there had been a financial crisis and that austerity approaches were the order of the day, particularly when it came to local government. For many, the state was notably contracting in size. Considerable emphasis from official channels was described as ‘doing more with less’. One representative noted that in the last few months his main contact in government had acquired another three or four titles on her email signature – he parodied this with a comparison to Soviet generals who gained more and more medals as their comrades around them were disappearing (WP6.3).

Many saw the impact of this on the service provision of the state, with a particular focus, as might be expected, on commissioning officers for those services which the state ‘outsourced’ to the third sector. Whilst the majority of representatives described their relationship with the local governments as positive overall, it was often pointed out that commissioning officers frequently lacked the expertise and capacity to do their job as well as organizations might like. One representative from an organization that worked across boroughs in London (WP6.7) noted how their best commissioning relationships were with the boroughs who had sent officials to see how the organization ‘operated on the ground’. This contact and relationship-building had then helped when it came to shaping funding and contract requirements – the trickiest and most inflexible relationship they had was actually with the borough in which they were geographically located, because no one had ever visited the organization. For this representative then, individual personality played too much of a role in the commissioning process, and it was felt that there should be more guidance to the officers so that they might work to better criteria when it came to the larger tenders.

An organization in South Yorkshire faced a related problem (WP6.11). In light of cut backs, the local council had considerably repackaged a funding offer from what was offered in previous years, and in doing so had taken very little (if any) guidance from the organization and those working in the area. The

resulting contract put out to tender was described as simply not viable, and in the end, no organization put in a bid for it. The representative pointed out that whilst they needed money, they couldn't afford to take on such a poor funding arrangement that would degrade the quality of service they provided and risk serious reputational damage, which would only lead to more problems in the future.

So, austerity measures in this example, when handed down from the state to the local government, actually came to, perhaps paradoxically, empower government individuals in the commissioning process, even whilst taking their resources away. In some cases, this inevitably led to a tension between the third sector organizations seeking state funding, and the commissioning officers tasked with that role. For many, the future of this process requires far more collaboration between the local authorities and local third sector; one participant very strongly noted how such 'co-production' would be easier if there was more trust from the state of the third sector (WP6.13).

Another area in which the economic crisis and austerity seemed to be having a considerable effect upon was the issue of core funding. This was raised by a number of participants across all types of organization. It was frequently recognized that to provide the best service possible, these organizations need good governance, not just direction from those in the CEO role, but also in the day-to-day running of the organization in terms of pay-roll, fundraising, volunteer co-coordinators etc. But funding for such roles was scarce, and for some, had shrunk. Trusts and grant providers were argued to want to fund new initiatives and innovative projects, which organizations all agreed were important, but couldn't be pursued without the foundational issues of staffing and management being reliable. Core funding was seen as 'unglamorous', 'unsexy', and 'overlooked', yet absolutely crucial. When it came to the closing questions on what the organization would need to better provide their services, core funding was frequently the first thing that participants mentioned.

For all the discussion of state contraction and core funding issues however, a notable trend in the interviews was for the participant to be rather reluctant to directly link austerity to the successes or failures of their organizations. It was frequently, if not outrightly dismissed, then at least considerably downplayed as a real driver of the organization's actions. Many noted that struggles faced by the organizations in the past had been down to bad managerial practice, which had been changed once the participant had taken over the job. This of course may reflect the sample's focus on senior management and their desire, despite the anonymity of the interview, to continue to present the organization 'brand' as sustainable.

A notable exception to this broad narrative was offered by a representative from a food bank in South Yorkshire – also notably the most 'local' and 'grassroots' organization in the sample (WP6.10). Here,

austerity was strongly linked to both the existence of the organization and the increase in the demands being put upon it by a rising number of beneficiaries who were struggling financially. Indeed, the issue of food banks constitutes an important part of the austerity narrative and it must be understood in this context – whilst food banks existed before the crisis, in the years since their numbers have exploded across the UK (see Dowler and Lambie-Mumford 2015; Lambie-Mumford and Dowler 2014; Lambie-Mumford 2013). Therefore, a large crux of the food bank narrative rests upon austerity policy, in contrast to other organizations with longer histories, which appear to see austerity as another development in their ongoing bid to improve the lives of their beneficiaries.

Even in the case of the food bank however, what was notable was that even when austerity took centre stage, they were also focused on trying to innovate and think forward and beyond simply being a reactive welfare ‘plaster’. For instance, the food bank organization was also clearly influenced by being a faith-based institution and located in a church. Therefore, beneficiaries were encouraged to do other activities, such as join the choir, reading groups or simply socialize and gain advice in the church building. Beyond that, the organizers were considering whether they could eventually shift the idea of a food bank into something far more positive and communal, such as a ‘open pantry’ where communities could get basic foods, as well as learn cooking skills. Whilst this particular idea was in its infancy, it demonstrated a considerable desire to move beyond the austerity idea of plugging a sort of gap in the welfare state towards a far more, positive and empowering notion of people gaining skills, social connections and advice in a community setting.

15.4 Initiatives and Projects

As a wide range of organizations was interviewed, there was a wide range of projects and initiatives being carried out, predominantly in the provision of services. Brand new, innovative projects were relatively rare; more likely to be discussed was the adaption, extension or deepening of existing services. When new projects came about, a strong theme was that much of what was developed and designed was pragmatic in nature.

Organizations certainly listened to their members, and ideas were acknowledged to organically trickle upwards, but this was perhaps as far as any kind of clear ‘democratic’ process was outlined by any interviewee in terms of working out or designing new approaches or strategies. No organization explicitly outlined any direct democratic procedures in any detail that might inform the direction of the organization – it appeared far more ‘ad hoc’ in this respect. And, rather, changes in focus or new projects were often inspired by a particular skill-set of staff. For instance, one infrastructure charity organization (WP6.1) was able to consider a new focus on ex-offenders, because a new member of staff had

experience in this area. The outreach side of work in the homeless charity (WP.6.2) was boosted as the interviewee brought with them expertise in this area from a previous job. Pragmatism was a key term for many interviewees.

In terms of beneficiary input into new initiatives and projects, part of what really seemed to drive this was the professionalization focus on feedback and data collection: at the children's hospice, a partnership with a nearby IT company had introduced e-feedback on tablets (WP6.7), which the parents were able to fill in; the homeless organization (WP6.2) used a national database (CHAIN) to collect data on rough sleepers; infrastructure and support agencies looked to survey their own members (WP6.1, WP6.8, WP6.18), etc.

Another focus area was on fundraising initiatives. As state funding was seen by most organizations as not something they should be reliant on, there were a number of funding initiatives being developed. Some of these followed models of typical fund-raising events, but alongside this were clear movements into areas of social enterprise (organization numbers are not listed in this immediate discussion as social enterprise schemes are relatively identifiable if linked to both type of charity and location). One small organization had its own shop, not in the model of a second-hand charity shop, but as an actual not-for-profit shop selling novelty items, stationary and similar items. This income stream however provided a very small part of the funding for the organization, and the participant noted that it required further developing. A similar scenario was found at another organization which had its own bakery, which provided skills to beneficiaries as well as making an income selling the baked goods. In these cases, such enterprises were usually seen as relatively small funding streams, but of considerable importance. In terms of the bakery:

There is a very clear business plan and very clear income projections going forward through three years, where we want the bakery to be so that it generates income for us and helps us re-invest into the organization, but hopefully employs people and qualifies people to go on and work in the catering sector.

A final focus for income-generation in this sense was room or desk hire, which was a scheme undertaken by a number of organizations, but was not a primary focus for any.

Aside from the obvious example of the foodbank, it was rare for an organization to explicitly link a new scheme directly to austerity. Schemes may have come under more pressure (more beneficiaries, less income, or both), or been tweaked slightly, but the financial crisis and austerity were rarely discussed in terms of being a catalyst for brand new interventions or projects. However, it was noted (as discussed

above) that the impact of austerity on the state had knock-on effects on commissioning work; this wasn't just in terms of 'doing more with less', but also with a raising popularity of 'payment-by-results' (PBR) models. Here an interview provided their understanding of these models:

PBR is by definition – 'we understand that we will only get paid if we get agreed outcomes'. Because that financial transaction is part of the project, the monitoring of those PBR services is very technically complicated. There has to be an awful lot of oversight of the data, because it's not just about 'oh that's interesting, I see you've worked with X number of people, that's good', but 'this is now a business' and someone's going to write a cheque based on how much work you've done.

(Interview WP6.2)

But, perhaps crucially, went on to add:

I thought it was going to take over the sector and it hasn't. I wonder if it's because it's administratively heavy on both sides.

(Interview WP6.2)

Therefore, when the austerity and professionalization narrative is taken to its extreme, the payment-by-results model, with its transaction and consumer-based ethos, fits very well into the picture. However, the reality is that the practical administration of these models is frequently too burdensome, not just for the service providers, but for the state as well. Interesting here is that this drawback is practical, and not ideological. Should the capability exist for such schemes (i.e. better IT infrastructure), this sort of model might be more widespread. Indeed, one participant did offer up the opposite perspective on these kinds of models, believing that they would be the future model for such service provision (WP6.13). Their own experience of such models was also very mixed, and they acknowledged that a large, current PBR contract required 'everything being thrown at it' to meet the contract requirements.

15.5 Governance and Networks

Strongly apparent across all the organizations was that links to other actors in the field was considered utterly crucial to operate properly as a third-sector organization. All organizations actively forged connections with other voluntary third-sector groups, as well as with the relevant state bodies, especially the police, MPs and local government, NHS and clinical commissioning groups, GPs, etc.

Often, it felt like implicitly, and in many cases explicitly, a large part of providing a service to people was actually in the bringing together of organizations to work more effectively, especially between the

state and the third sector. No organization thought they could operate in a vacuum and most stressed the need to be on good terms with the local authority and any relevant government bodies.

My personal interpretation of the situation is that in many cases the state and the voluntary sector, when dealing with the vulnerable or marginalized groups which were the focus of the service, provided two different types of safety net. The characteristic of the net depends on the group in question, but often the state provided the legal, rights-based protection, whilst the third sector provided frontline intervention (a homeless shelter, a refuge, a parcel of food), or, information and resources for the beneficiary to access state services better. In this sense, much of the third sector emphasis at a strategic level was to better weave these two safety nets together. For the most part, the closer they worked together, the more efficient it was perceived to be.

If austerity was perceived to have had an effect on this scenario, it was generally to make the role of networking even more important. With limited resources, organizations had to make sure they did what they did best, and did not overstretch themselves, or commit to delivering outcomes they could achieve. When working closely in this way, it did mean that the provision of services between more interdependent in a way, and reliant on processes carried out across all partners to achieve a goal. The problems of this were occasionally alluded to:

Local Authorities will frequently not meet their legal obligations to people. And so rather than working to the extent of their remit or mandate, they work well within it. Our local council can be guilty of that, like any can.

(Interview WP6.2)

At the same time, as the end of this quote highlights, organizations were also realistic about what could be achieved and how close they could actually work with the state bodies. The turnover of government, the whims of politicians, and changing priorities as issues become popular with the public, were seen as part of the process (if frustrating at times). Therefore, it felt like organizations understood there would never be a truly symbiotic relationship, because the demands on the different partners were different.

Further in terms of networks, as austerity was generally seen to restrict resources, one such knock-on effect was that certain wider networks and connections have become more difficult to maintain, especially in a small organization. The CEO of the children's literacy agency noted how being such a small organization meant that they couldn't always afford people to go to helpful events or meetings (WP6.12).

In terms of governance, as has been discussed, the interviewees often stressed the importance of pragmatic decisions made in the organization, but also the importance of their own role in providing direction and vision for the organizations. Most organizations also discussed their Board of Trustees as being rather crucial to the running of the organization, and made it quite clear that such boards provided a wealth of expertise, all for free.

15.6 Beneficiaries and Participants

The target groups of the organizations interviewed are these ones:

Table 15.1 UK Organizations and Target Groups

Organization	Target groups
WP6.1 (Voluntary services and community infrastructure organization) (L) [Conservative administration]	- Charitable and alternative action organizations within the London borough
WP6.2 (Homeless resource centre) (L)	- The homeless
WP6.3 (Private tenancy advocacy) (L)	- Private renters with housing issues - Local authority
WP6.4 (City Farm) (L)	- General public – emphasis on marginalized communities in the neighborhood - Schools
WP6.5 (Community Transport) (L)	- Those marginalized by lack of transport connections - Especially OAPs
WP6.6 (Financial responsibility) (L)	- Not-for-profit organizations
WP6.7 (Child Hospice) (L)	- Children suffering from terminal illness and their families
WP6.8 (Voluntary services and community infrastructure organization) (L) [Labor administration]	- Charitable and alternative action organizations within the London borough
WP6.9 (NGO fighting international disease) (L)	- Sufferers from disease, especially communities in global south - Government
WP6.10 (Food bank) (SY)	- People referred for food parcels by social security services, often benefit claimants
WP6.11 (Child refuge)	- Vulnerable children
WP6.12 (Child literacy organization) (SY)	- Marginalized children - Schools
WP6.13 (Youth support charity)	- Young adults - Marginalized communities

As might be expected, the sampled organizations focus on varying groups with varying needs. What unites the beneficiaries of the organizations is that they were all deemed to be marginalized in some way, and would benefit from having more of a voice in the political process. The impact of austerity was seen as rather uneven across the groups.

For some, austerity measures were clearly having a negative impact on those who were using their services. For instance, one representative (WP6.12) discussed feedback from teachers and the

organization's own volunteers that more and more young children were coming to school hungry, having not had an adequate breakfast. This was seen as an issue that was clearly on the rise, so much so that the organization had recently started putting aside part of their budget to provide drinks and snacks for school groups which were visiting them. Yet it is difficult to determine from this example the direct influences of austerity that were causing the problem, and indeed this was seen to be an area of interest for research by the organization. For the food bank (WP6.10), the link was clear – changes in the benefit system, and most especially delays in the benefit system, were forcing people to rely on food parcels. That's why the charity existed. This was a particularly contentious issue as the Conservative government and preceding coalition government were frequently at pains to deny any link between the two (Stone 2015). Research in the area frequently pointed to the likelihood of the relationship, but since the rise in foodbank use was so recent, the evidence base has struggled to catch up, and cause-and-effect still remains tricky to empirically nail down (Lambie-Mumford and Dowler 2015). The youth support charity also linked issues of mental health and anxiety with the weak job market and also the cost of higher education in the UK (WP6.13), with the suggestion that austerity was an important background factor.⁵³

For some, the impact of austerity was difficult to isolate, as it was compounded by other factors. In terms of homelessness (WP6.2), the picture was complicated by the longer-term effects of the accession of the A10 countries to the European Union in 2004, and the following joining of Romania and Bulgaria in 2007. In terms of the voice organization for those renting in the private rented (WP6.3), the vast increase in rental costs, alongside the lack of house-building, especially social housing, was an issue in the housing system that long preceded the financial crisis.

Talking across the organizations, it felt like austerity policy was seen as having the potential to 'tip' certain parts of people's lives from teetering on the edge to becoming problems that then required assistance, but it was not necessarily presented as a 'shove' in this direction, as might be expected in the case of Spain and Greece.

In terms of participants, the changing nature of the volunteer pool was something that was discussed and at times was linked to the economic crisis and austerity. For most organizations, the idea of an altruistic, well-resourced volunteer with time and willing on their hands was something of a rarity. These people did exist, and did help, but they were in the minority. Often, such conceptualizations of this kind of volunteer were linked to the problems of Conservative Party narrative concerning the 'Big Society'

⁵³ It is worth noting that these much stronger links of austerity to beneficiary problems are from the South Yorkshire organizations. However, this could also be linked to the type of beneficiary as well, and so it is not clear necessarily that we can say for certain this is a regional difference

– it was a nice idea, but didn't really have the substance (or scale) to translate into work on the ground (see Lindsey 2013: 113). In reality, what austerity has feed into is an increasing group of volunteers who see their role in much more instrumental terms, as the only way they could gain experience to try and get a job, or as a requirement for a job scheme. This was bluntly summed up by one respondent:

If you're living in the 'Shires' [affluent, rural areas] and you've got a bit of time on your hands and you live a quite nice comfortable life, then great, do a bit of volunteering, But a lot of people we get who want to volunteer with us – it now tends to be because they're desperate to get a job.

(Interview WP6.3)

This volunteering was still highly valued, but it did mean different management strategies were required to organize such a work force which might be less available, reliable, and more short-term. Volunteering then was crucial but not simply an under-utilized resource that was waiting to be tapped into, as some of the more criticized government rhetoric seemed to be suggesting. It was much more complicated than that. The same respondent further noted:

You run a volunteer project the irony is you're going to have to pay for it. It sounds strange but there's no volunteer project you can run for free because you have to support it.

(Interview WP6.3)

Some of these organizations then, which had very small numbers of staff, struggled to build up a volunteering base that was reliable and could utilized effectively, because they didn't have the core resources to support such a base. Whilst this pool of volunteers was becoming more prevalent, it was also noted that certain attributes of this pool were not new. For instance, the transitory nature, or 'CV-boosting' side of volunteer work is something very prominent in the student volunteer body. Austerity then, has potentially resulted in these attributes broadening out to the wider public at larger who might want to be involved in the voluntary sector, but who are also driven by their own needs to gain a form of work experience and strengthen their position in the labor market.

15.7 Outcomes and Best Practices

It is clear throughout these different sections that funding is a key part of the conversation, and more to the point, the diversification of funding streams, away from reliance on the state, is something that comes up time and time again. For the most part, this appeared driven by the desire to achieve a more stable funding base, rather than necessarily a stance taken for ideological purposes. For instance, such suggestions did not come alongside desires to work separately from, or at odds with, the state. Therefore,

new models of funding were important. The social enterprises mentioned in the discussion were innovative, but embryonic, and it seems to be too soon to judge how successful they have been. In narrative terms, they appear very desirable as income generators for organizations, but in practical terms, there seems to be a lot of ironing out still to be done in terms of them genuinely ‘paying their way’. At the same time, although not explicitly discussed in the interviews, it is interesting to consider where the line will be drawn between the business-ethos required to run an enterprise, compared to the need to focus energy and resources on the delivery of a social service.

Traditional fundraising activities were carried out by most, but not all, organizations. These were generally seen as ‘ticking over’; however, there were some issues. A scheme to move into a much more ‘high-end’ charity shop model undertaken by one organization in South Yorkshire (WP6.11) had to be wound down due to the limited availability of volunteers and difficulty in obtaining shop space – donations to the scheme however, did not seem to be a problem. Elsewhere, one participant (WP6.9) talked about his previous experience in a different, national-level green/environmental organization that was predominantly funded by member subscription – after the financial crisis, he noted, this model struggled to bring in the funding, and the organization undertook an internal downscaling.⁵⁴ In his new organization, funding was all from private sector organizations, and, due to the international nature of the work, also picked up a large proportion of its funding from a multinational trust. This seemed to be a very positive relationship.

Indeed, an unexpectedly large focus of the interviews was on gaining funding and support from the corporate/private sector. Whilst some organizations suggested they had come across resistance to the idea from other parts of the charity sector, the representatives I spoke to generally dismissed such qualms for their own organizations. Even the city farm (WP6.4), a rather grass-roots and informal organization in many ways, had active links to big businesses and was keen to generate more. Whilst this was a strong focus in London, it was present in some of the Yorkshire organizations; just before I interviewed them, the representative from the foodbank (WP6.10) – a very small and grassroots organization – had been in a meeting with a chain of superstores on getting a donations box set up in their stores. The children’s literacy charity was also cultivating partnerships with local businesses, and had received a lot of pro bono work during the establishment of their premises (WP6.12).

⁵⁴ When this organization was contacted for an interview, they declined, explaining that “We are a relatively small organization and unfortunately do not have the resources to accommodate the high volume of interview requests that we receive”

In terms of service delivery, the ‘professionalization’ of services mean that many were constantly monitored and so consistently assessed in terms of their effectiveness. This was flagged up as highly important, whilst occasionally burdensome. Many organizations seemed very confident, and also proud, of the degree of evaluation and analysis they did on their own schemes. This is perhaps one reason why out-and-out failures were not commonly discussed.⁵⁵ An area of best practice, or desired improved practice, flagged up on this topic was in terms of relationships with commissioners within local government. This is perhaps the area where guidelines of practice (for the government) and improved communication were suggested by organizations to be potentially most useful.

15.8 Summary

There is no denying the interviews featured occasional instances of complaints, negativity, pessimism and even expressions of despair. Yet, this was by no means the general tone of the conversations. Rather, there was a lot of optimism, energy and forward thinking. This might be expected of the sector in general, as many people volunteer a lot of their time, and see the organizations as providing a social good, but even so, this went beyond the sector, and also to the wider changes austerity might have brought in. Even when organizations had downsized or merged in order to survive, this was generally presented as something that ‘needed to happen’, with austerity only offered being offered as a catalyst, and not a cause of such decisions. In particular, the shift away from reliance on public-sector funding was constantly welcomed, even if it was seen to be tough. Anecdotally, as one participant was showing me out the building after the interview (and after the tape recorder was switched off) I hesitatingly said – and half-jokingly, too – “It almost seems like in some cases, austerity has almost been good for the sector,” to which I received the reply, “You could definitely say that.” The participant almost seemed relieved to be able to voice such an opinion, or at least agree with one.

I wish to be very careful to point out the limits of such a suggestion however. There are cases where austerity clearly appears to have prompted a welfare response from the third sector (such as foodbanks) which is arguably a failure of basic social security, or, has disproportionately impacted upon crucial services that are desperately needed, a well-advertised case being that of potential closures of Rape Crisis centers (see Sandhu 2015, but also the same issue raised eight years earlier, Ward 2007).

Clearly then, the impact of austerity on the third-sector has been uneven, as wider reviews of the sector has shown (Clifford 2016; Clifford et al 2013), alongside other comparative case studies (Jones et al

⁵⁵ Of course, it is also important to consider that, despite the anonymity offered to the organizations, they may also have been an attempt to manage reputation and ‘brand’ in the parts of the interview when these issues were discussed – this is discussed in the Summary

2016). And, for the most part, funding at this scale has clearly decreased. As Jones et al (2016: 2064) describe, the sector is one “whose resilience is being severely tested and one that is being forced rapidly to restructure and reposition itself in an increasingly challenging funding environment”. Yet Jones et al (2016: 2072) also mention in this picture that the impact of this restructuring and repositioning could, in certain circumstances, provide an opportunity for organizations to innovate their service delivery and diversify their funding streams, and in the organizations I interviewed, this framing of austerity seemed much more at the fore.

That this narrative seems rather backgrounded in much of the recent academic literature (Clifford 2016; Clayton et al. 2015; Jacklin-Jarvis 2015; Hemmings 2016) gives me pause for thought. One obvious issue could be that the sample is biased in some way, which is of real concern. It could easily be that those organizations willing to talk to me were those doing better than those who declined to be interviewed, who would likely not have the resources to accommodate a researcher in this way. However, this does not change the fact that this narrative is present in the data. I am not claiming this is generalizable across the whole sector, but it may be an understanding that is transferable to other examples.

Another concern is that, by interviewing those who sit at the very top of the organization, even when anonymity is offered, it may be that they are pre-occupied with reputational and brand management, and see it important to present a picture of an organization as succeeding or flourishing in some ways. Yet the interviewees were candid about other shortcomings of their organizations, happy to highlight areas requiring improvement, and were open about finances (indeed, most have full financial reports online, or provided me with upcoming, yet to be published versions). And a matter of interest is also perspective – for instance, after an interview, one representative (WP6.12) I discussed my sample bias fears with surprised me by genuinely replying, ‘but we’re not a “successful” organization, we’re a struggling one!’, which was at odds with my perspective on them successfully setting up in the middle of austerity and having developed their premises and grown their service delivery model considerably since they started.

In terms of the effects of these findings on the beneficiaries of the organizations interviewed, the picture is not clear. Those organizations which specifically worked with children/youth seemed to be the most pessimistic on what the future held, and the direction of change for this generation (WP6.7, 11, 12 and 13). When it comes to the public university system, England has the highest university fees in the industrialized world (OECD 2015). Financial support for the poorest students who wanted to go to college, the Educational Maintenance Allowance, was scrapped from 2011 (Department for Education 2011). Youth unemployment in the UK sits around third lowest of the LiveWhat countries (at 13.5% for

2015-2016), however in 2015 it was the worst figure for twenty years, and in contrast to unemployment figures overall, which are around 5.5% (Boffey 2015). It was noted (WP6.13) that the cost of education and uncertain job market was having an effect on the mental health of young people, and in particular those from lower-income families, for whom the idea of getting into debt was argued to be a much more fear-inducing situation than for those from more financially secure backgrounds.

Other target groups – such as the elderly, those with mental health issues, the homeless, etc. – are a focus of these organizations as they often face issues of marginalization in society. In terms of determining how this marginalization may have got worse, it is difficult to isolate strong causes and effects that are linked to austerity policy, and it was often a part of the conversation that turned rather vague. Perhaps many people in these organizations see the impact as relatively self-evident, and so the need to outline it in the interview was not focused on. Another angle to consider is that, with such a strong emphasis on data collection, monitoring and impact, it is difficult to significantly link one thing directly to another, and participants may have been reluctant or cautious to state such causal relationships when they couldn't 'back it up' in their data, despite their opinion being that austerity was having an effect.

As discussed, the main counterpoint to this narrative could be found from the food bank representative (WP6.10). Here, the austerity drive's design to reduce the scale of social security spending was seen as the reason for delays in benefits and the increase in benefit sanctions, which were then seen as the primary reason why people had to turn to food banks. Therefore, those who were reliant on benefits, especially single parents and families, were being directly impacted upon by austerity. For this organization, this pattern was clear, and there was a belief that this would certainly be shown once enough robust data had been collected – indeed, new research from October this year (Loopstra 2016) claims to robustly demonstrate this link.

This work could be extended by completing further interviews in order to better round-out the sample to better build two case-studies that are able to draw more clearly on the contrasting contextual differences between the locations. Further interviews and analysis should seek to build in particular on the reoccurring themes raised here, including:

- Diversification of funding streams and move away from state reliance
- Development of stronger third sector – corporate sector ties
- Changing attributes of volunteers and consequences
- Identification of better practice between state commissioners and organizations
- Ways to better alleviate the scarcity and unpredictability of core funding

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