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**Acts of Solidarity during the Greek Crisis in the Area of
Education: the case of Corinth**

MASTER THESIS

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ABSTRACT

Solidarity is one of the most popular, widely used concepts, in sociology. However, it is not as conceptually straightforward as it seems; it is multifaceted, complex, complicated. Especially nowadays, under the heavy burden of the recent crisis, solidarity has taken new dimensions and needs to be redefined.

Under the shadow of the recent recession, the Greek welfare state has proven inadequate in providing institutional solidarity, in a period when it was mostly needed. Education was severely hit with cuts in salaries, staff dismissals, and school closures. Additionally, due to the rapid and violent decay of economic conditions, many families have failed to provide their children with educational goods such as extra tutoring. This has led to an increase of educational deprivation which in turn has added to social exclusion. Education is considered an important mechanism for social inclusion and a powerful generator for social solidarity.

This work examines an initiative of social solidarity that has emerged in Greece, during the crisis, in the field of education, namely, *koinoniko frontistirio* (social tutoring). The paper focuses on the volunteer teachers', local authorities' and students' perceptions of the nature of social solidarity and investigates the role of education in the empowerment of solidarity. It also seeks to explore the degree of success of this particular action in reducing educational inequality and in enhancing a culture of volunteerism and social activism at least in a local level.

The case of *koinoniko frontistirio* in the Municipality of Corinth will add to a deeper understanding of the complex nature of the social issues in question, but from a personal perspective. What new perceptions has the recent crisis imposed on concepts like solidarity, volunteerism, and education? Have the negative socioeconomic circumstances triggered positive changes in attitudes and consequently, through the particular activation brought a positive impact in social cohesion? The findings confirm the research hypothesis; feelings of solidarity seem to have been reinforced by the recent crisis which apparently boosted social activation. Education seems to be a crucial factor to that as well.

The findings, although cannot be generalized, are significant as they will add to the growing body of research in the field of social solidarity during the crisis. The contribution of the present study is a focused insight on the barriers and drivers within and towards a particular solidarity practice.

Keywords: Social solidarity, education, volunteerism, social activation, inequality, social cohesion, social tutoring

ΠΕΡΙΛΗΨΗ

Στην Ελλάδα της κρίσης, οι αλλαγές υπήρξαν δραματικές και ραγδαίες. Υπό το βάρος δημοσιοοικονομικών προσαρμογών, οικονομικής κρίσης που γρήγορα μετεξελίχθηκε σε κοινωνική, το κράτος αποδείχθηκε ανεπαρκές ως πάροχος της απαραίτητης θεσμικής αλληλεγγύης. Η εκπαίδευση δέχθηκε πλήγματα που αφορούσαν κυρίως περικοπές, απολύσεις και κλείσιμο σχολείων. Παράλληλα και η οικογένεια, ως βασικός πυλώνας κοινωνικής πολιτικής, δεν μπόρεσε να εξισορροπήσει την κατάσταση αφού επηρεάστηκε στην συντριπτική πλειοψηφία και εξαιρετικά βίαια από τα νέα οικονομικά δεδομένα. Μία έννοια που ακούγεται και χρησιμοποιείται συχνά είναι η κοινωνική αλληλεγγύη. Τι σημαίνει όμως; Ίσως από τις πιο αμφίσημες έννοιες που συνδέονται με την κοινωνική πολιτική, με πολλές προεκτάσεις και διαφορετικές εφαρμογές.

Η παρούσα εργασία εξετάζει μια νέα μορφή κοινωνικής αλληλεγγύης που εμφανίστηκε στην Ελλάδα της κρίσης. Συνδέεται με την εκπαίδευση και ονομάζεται κοινωνικό φροντιστήριο. Αντικείμενο της έρευνας είναι η περίπτωση του κοινωνικού φροντιστηρίου στην πόλη της Κορίνθου. Συγκεκριμένα αποσκοπεί στο να εμβαθύνει στον τρόπο που νοηματοδοτείται η έννοια της κοινωνικής αλληλεγγύης στον καιρό της κρίσης, μέσω της εκπαίδευσης. Επιπρόσθετα, να καταγράψει αν η συγκριμένη δράση κοινωνικής αλληλεγγύης υπήρξε επιτυχής στη μείωση των κοινωνικών και εκπαιδευτικών ανισοτήτων και στο να διαμορφώσει μία νέα κουλτούρα εθελοντισμού και κοινωνικού ακτιβισμού σε τοπικό επίπεδο.

Τα ευρήματα συνάδουν με τις ερευνητικές υποθέσεις. Η κρίση υπήρξε παράγοντας κινητοποίησης και διαμόρφωσης μίας κουλτούρας κοινωνικής αλληλεγγύης. Οι καθηγητές και φορείς τοπικής αυτοδιοίκησης δείχνουν να έχουν μία ποιο καθαρή εικόνα περί αυτού σε σχέση με τους μαθητές. Η συγκεκριμένη κοινωνική δράση επίσης δείχνει να έχει συμβάλει στη μείωση των κοινωνικών ανισοτήτων, παρέχοντας ίσες εκπαιδευτικές ευκαιρίες στους μαθητές, ενισχύοντας με αυτόν τον τρόπο την κοινωνική συνοχή.

Η συμβολή της παρούσας εργασίας, αν και δεν παρέχει γενικεύσιμα στοιχεία, κρίνεται σημαντική καθώς θα προστεθεί στον, ήδη αυξανόμενο, αριθμό ερευνών σχετικά με την κοινωνική αλληλεγγύη, κυρίως μετά την κρίση.

Λέξεις κλειδιά: Κοινωνική αλληλεγγύη, εκπαίδευση, εθελοντισμός, ανισότητες, κοινωνική συνοχή, κοινωνικό φροντιστήριο

INTRODUCTION

The financial crisis that hit Greece in 2009 has been one of the longest and most severe crises in the history of the country. Although it has affected all European countries, southern Europe and especially Greece have been the most wounded victims. The devastating results can be detected in every sector of our lives; economy, societal bonds, everyday life. The dramatic rise of unemployment, the severe cuts in wages and benefits very soon turned the financial into a social crisis.

Within this turmoil many solidarity initiatives have emerged in order to handle the immediate survival needs of citizens; some of them have been quite novel for Greek society. Solidarity initiatives seemed to subsidize the public sector which in some cases withdrew rapidly. The shared slogan in most of these initiatives was: *None will be alone in the crisis*. For many this implied the creation of a new social activation area, a new civil society. Alongside acts that aimed at relieving the sharp and immediate needs e.g. food, housing or health provisions, other kinds of solidarity, connected to more subtle, yet fundamental, sectors of social life and social cohesion appeared. One of these is the field of education. The educational system in Greece, both from the side of educators and students did not remain unscarred, either.

Within this hostile environment of the erosion of social structures, a need was formed to examine these newly developed forms of solidarity. In particular, it was considered a challenging process to probe into the role of education in social cohesion and the degree it has been affected by the current crisis. More specifically, we are interested in exploring the social practices that have been taking place in one of the major welfare state policies, that of education.

The Greek case is the core of our concern; in particular, this research attempts to investigate the new mechanisms of social solidarity that have emerged during the recent economic crisis that has so severely hit this country. Our interest focuses on the practices that developed in the field of education; my professional identity - a public school teacher - is one of the motives for choosing this particular topic; it is my strong belief that education is the cornerstone for a cohesive society. Education and society are communicating vessels.

The field of interest is called *koinoniko frontistirio* (social tutoring); it is a voluntary initiative which represents a form of social activism focusing on covering the needs of the

underprivileged students in extra tutoring. The objective is to investigate the context within which transformation in social solidarity took place; the tool for that is the views expressed by the participants i.e. educators, students and local authorities. For that purpose three hypotheses are formed to confirm or reject. The first is that social solidarity has acquired new meanings due to the recent financial crisis. The second states that social solidarity in education has been activated from the bottom at the same time that the public sector has receded. The third hypothesis says that social cohesion has been empowered due to the emergence of the particular educational initiative. The research questions that will be asked are the following: a) how is solidarity conceived by the various participants in *koinoniko frontistirio*? b) what is the degree of political influence of the specific action in e.g. change of educational policies which aim at strengthening solidarity and social inclusion c) what is the educational initiative's degree of social impact e.g. in combating educational and social inequality and strengthening social cohesion .

For this purpose, a qualitative research is going to be conducted in the Municipality of Corinth; the local initiative of *koinoniko frontistirio* (social extra tutoring) is going to be the case study. Data will be gathered through in-depth interviews. This particular method and methodology are considered the most appropriate in order to allow a deeper understanding of people's attitudes and values in a particular setting in regard to the issue under discussion i.e. solidarity manifestations in times of crisis.

The research paper is structured in two main parts: the theoretical and the empirical one. The first part, the literature review, is divided into two chapters moving from a broader to a more limited analysis of the concept. The first chapter offers a historical overview of one of the fundamental concepts in sociology that of social solidarity. Firstly solidarity is examined historically with respect to various social theories and ideologies. In a second more elaborate level, there is an attempt to shed light on the institutional conception of solidarity in the European community, especially through the Treaties, its official documents. Moving from there, the relationship of education and social cohesion is examined. Finally, the Greek case, the core issue in our research, is covered in the 2nd chapter. The Greek educational system is examined both in the pre and post-crisis context in order to identify the ways that its contribution to social cohesion has altered.

The 3rd chapter formulates the empirical part of our study. The methodology, method and tools are described, followed by interviews analysis.

The final part consists of conclusions and suggestions for further action based both on the theoretical framework and the empirical research. The relevant literature is cited at the end of the paper followed by an annex with the interview guides. The study is completed with the abstract.

PART ONE –THE THEORETICAL REVIEW

1. SOCIAL SOLIDARITY: CONCEPTS, CONCEPTIONS, FIELDS, POLICIES

1.1. Solidarity – a brief historical review

“The phenomenon of group loyalty and sharing resources existed long before the idea of solidarity developed” and “the term was in general use before its modern meaning had developed” (Stjerno, 2009:25). The concept of solidarity is quite general, and, thus is a highly ambiguous term. Overall, it suggests a link between individuals and society, and it is often seen as a way to maintain social cohesion. More precisely, solidarity supports the fellowship and the development of bonds and feelings of unity among people who share similar interests/goals or between classes; so, it can be seen as an act of reliance upon each other. Solidarity is a key concept in social studies and social research but is not a new term. Its roots come from the Latin word “*solidum*”, which means the «whole sum», stemming from the Roman law, and the neuter “*solidus*”, which means solid.¹

Traces of solidarity are found in the medieval European societies. In those circumstances it denoted provision of mutual aid. Societies followed the feudal order and the monarch’s rules were strict and absolute. Reciprocity was limited within family boundaries (Kantzara, 2014). Later on, peasants, during the 19th century used to help each other in feudal communities, organizing themselves in groups², in the emergence of market economy.

Later, solidarity, as a term, appears in French Revolution (1789) with the public demand for “liberte”, “egalite”, “fraternite” – liberty, equality and solidarity. The two prevailing ideologies –liberal and republican – stem from these principles and they offer a differentiated perception and interpretation of various social issues, such as citizenship (Dean, 2006). Freedom and equality were regarded by liberals as contradictory to

¹ In Bayertz, K. (1998). Solidarity and the Welfare State: Some introductory considerations. *Ethical Theory and Moral Practice* pp. 293–296 and in Kantzara, V. (2011). The relation of education to social cohesion. *Social cohesion and Development* 6(1), pp. 37-50.

²It was thought that details on the medieval development of solidarity exceed the purpose of the present paper. However, for further reading on this issue, Proserpi, (2008), in <http://www.resetdoc.org/story/> offers an extensive historic description of the situation in medieval Europe and the sequence of historical events that led into the transformation of the treatment of poor and deprived individuals.

solidarity.³ Nevertheless, through an alternative perspective, these terms could be complementary⁴. If freedom is perceived in a social sense, as interaction with other people, then a degree of solidarity is required in order freedom to be accomplished⁵. Moreover, “the provision of basic welfare services e.g. education, and the development of social protection can be seen as a means for free will and personal freedom” (Spicker, 2006:141).

1.2. Sociology and solidarity

1.2.1. Early developments

The 19th century marks the transition to modern societies and western social theories start emerging as part of social transformation under the influence of industrial capitalism. Solidarity becomes a key concept, substituting the French revolution’s “fraternite”. According to Christian socialist writer Pierre Leroux, solidarity denotes a sense of belonging (Spicker 2006); in other words the concept is examined within a social context. Rejecting the catholic perception of solidarity as purely an act of charity, in his book *De L’Humanité* (1840), he examined solidarity through peoples’ relationships in society attributing to it a quite broad perspective since it included the entire society. (Stjernø, 2004)

1.2.2. Classical social theories

Although Leroux’s ideas were very close to classical social theories, Auguste Comte uplifted solidarity as a key concept in sociology. He was opposed to the increasing individualism; instead he sought for an integrative mechanism in society. (Appelrouth & Edles, 2008)

³ According to Spicker, freedom depends on individual independence. When there is reference to solidarity it is done in the sense of social welfare and public intervention and redistribution; however, these are seen by liberal individualists as undermining independence.

⁴ Again according to Spicker, this notion is met in socialism; people are regarded as social entities and not merely as individuals. Freedom is often seen as “empowerment” – the freedom to act, to do things through collective action.

⁵ The whole argument draws ideas from Spicker’s book. More specifically it is based on his analysis of the socialist values of liberty, equality, and fraternity. Solidarity is conceived as Spicker says not as “standing shoulder to shoulder but as the creation of systems of mutual aid and support”.

The most acknowledged contributions to the field though, are the works of Emile Durkheim, Karl Marx and Max Weber. Despite their emphasis on different aspects of society, all of them attempted to shed a light on a better understanding of social world and human interactions (Coffey 2004, Kantzara 2014, Stjernø 2004) in a time that capitalism was the driving force of social change. The turmoil of the transforming western societies was reflected in their works and the search for social order became a core concept in classical sociological theories.

Durkheim, in his work “*The Division of Labour*” (1893), is preoccupied with the consequences of a complex and advanced system of division of labour on social cohesion and solidarity. He conceives social solidarity as a state of unity between individuals and groups, enabling collective interests to be served, but he was still preoccupied with the autonomy of individuals (Hughes, Sharrock, & Martin, 2003). To put it in his own words: “The question that has been the starting point of our study has been that of the connection between the individual personality and social solidarity. How can he become at the same time more of an individual and yet more linked to society?” (p7)

His most acknowledged contribution to the field is the distinction between “mechanic” and ‘organic” solidarity; the former stems from the idea of societal homogeneity, a common consciousness (people share the same identity as members of a collectivity), whereas the latter encompasses the idea of utility, the importance of social bonds (people need each other in order to realise their life opportunities) (Van Oorshot, 2000). In other words, “collective consciousness, solidarity and group identity are objectified as *collective representations*, symbols of shared cognitive and emotional meanings” ((Durkheim, 1965 in Hunt & Benford, 2004). He argued that in order for solidarity to be effective in promoting social cohesion, it should be based on shared values and norms. He also thought that solidarity shared strong bonds with equality and justice. (Stjernø, 2004:35)

On the other hand, Durkheim’s contemporary, the German sociologist, Max Weber put emphasis on social actors rather than social structure and made a dual division of solidarity through the terms “communal” and “associative” relations. In other words, his conception of solidarity is led by the direct relations among individuals on the one hand and the more distant ones e.g. those expressed in organisations and associations where e.g. people agree to cooperate in order to achieve a common goal (Coffey, 2004, Kantzara, 2014, Van Oorshot, 2000). Whereas Durkheim sees solidarity as a social element, Weber attributes to solidarity a political function. (Stjernø, 2004:41)

Although Marx is not directly preoccupied with the issue of solidarity, it can be argued that in his work the term borrows from the idea of French revolution's phrase "brotherhood or fraternity" (Stjernø, 2004:45) and thus carries a new –political- dimension. It was seen as a political struggle and, more specifically, a class struggle. The social world lacked the shared values of solidarity. Instead, it was suggested that classes clash, in order to pursuit common interests. The driving forces behind all these were the assumptions that society is unequal by definition and the overall aim is the possession of power. Relationships between men are shaped by their relative positions regarding to the means of production. (Hughes, Sharrock, & Martin, 2003)

1.2.3. Contemporary conceptions

20th century sociology, especially the American school of thought, was influenced by functionalism. The basic concerns revolved around "norms", "roles" and "social systems". Interdependence of the various systems and the ways they work together is what structural functionalists typically put emphasis on (Appelrouth & Edles, 2008). Like Durkheim, Parsons believed in the increased role of education in maintaining this function and achieving social order. He viewed education as a system of action that enables "integration" processes. Integration in his theory refers to social cohesion and solidarity, the feeling of "we-ness" that develops "in a social group as distinct roles are carried out; it depends on "interaction and the norms that guide interaction more so than abstract cultural values" (Appelrouth & Edles, 2008:361). In short, social solidarity is a basic component of society achieved through socialization.

Today the concept of social solidarity (re)appears in the works of contemporary sociologists with even greater force. New elements have been added to the old ones, namely, globalisation, the emergence of knowledge economy and most importantly the development of welfare state as the institutionalised provider of social solidarity. These processes along with the loss of homogeneity in contemporary societies enrich the concept of social solidarity as well. Yet it still is a matter of quest to find what it takes to bond individuals and communities together.

The historian Peter Baldwin examines how solidarity has appeared in modern western societies. Through his comparative analysis, he associates solidarity with risk, covering of needs and redistribution. (Baldwin, 1990). Three leading theorists in contemporary

sociology, Pierre Bourdieu, Jürgen Habermas and Antony Giddens, attempt to understand social life, making use of a “multidimensional theoretical approach” (Appelrouth & Edles, 2008:684). Giddens placed emphasis on the individual as a rational actor maximizing their interests; consequently he saw group solidarity as the sum of these actions (Appelrouth & Edles, 2008).

According to Habermas solidarity is” a political act, and by no means a form of moral selflessness that would be misplaced in political contexts “Solidarity” is not synonymous with “justice” in a moral or legal sense. In the same sense, “solidarity” is not synonymous with “philanthropy” either” (Habermas, 2013:6). Whereas philanthropy is associated with continuance of the existing status quo, solidarity is interlinked with notions of active citizenship or collectiveness, and requires a different kind of democracy, of a more participative type.

Nowadays, many scholars are attempting to reconceptualise the term by categorizing it. Social solidarity has been divided into various types according to its generating motives, or its relationship to formal institutions. Consequently, distinctions are made between “calculating” and “affective” solidarity and “formal / institutionalized”, namely, welfare state interventions and “informal” one, that involves individual activation (Paskow & Dewilde, 2012).

Solidarity is also presented either as the “result of interpersonal bonds” i.e. we recognize our similarities and are willing to contribute to the others’ well-being or is the “result of collective commitment to carry costs to assist others”. (Beer & Koster, 2009:15). A third category – a more slippery one – is the legal manifestation of solidarity. Examples of this type is the welfare state provisions, the social welfare and the legal documents e.g. Treaties (Prainsack & Buyx, 2012). Moreover, from a sociological perspective, solidarity is conceived as mutual interdependence. Communitarians emphasize on shared values as the predominant for solidaristic initiatives. Other opinions draw on war - related solidarity. (Mau & Burkhardt, 2007)

Although the above text is far from being exclusive⁶, it attempted to show that solidarity is a multifaceted, ambiguous concept that has aroused controversies from

⁶The presentation intended to include samples of the most acknowledged representatives of different social theories and movements in order to emphasise on the conceptual variety of the concept of solidarity. Other aspects have been left out because it was thought that they exceed the goals and purposes of the paper. For example the term “solidarity” acquires political significance when in Poland a party is named after it; Solidarity started as a broad anti-communist social movement and played a significant role in Polish political scene. (Ellison, 2012)

ancient times till the modern years of social constructions. It becomes clear from the quite broad literature, that there are a variety of perspectives and extensive theoretical frameworks determining the meaning and nature of solidarity. Although solidarity is considered a key sociological concern, it's far from being properly and fully covered and analysed. Therefore, it can be concluded that, solidarity is shaped according to the social, political and economic circumstances that take place in a specific historical period e.g. the 20th century development of welfare states.

1.3. Solidarity within the welfare state

The development of modern welfare states is closely associated with the advance of late 19th century industrial capitalism. Solidarity becomes a basic, “nuclear” component of the modern welfare state and the national social policies that follow. The basis of societal solidarity is protection against (shared) risks, towards those in need, having both inter and cross-generational characteristics (Sakellariopoulos, 2006). “Solidarity takes shape either vertically: The ‘strong’ help the ‘weak’ by redistributing benefits and burdens, or horizontally: The ‘strong’ and the ‘weak’ contribute to the common weal by risk-sharing” (Arts & Gelissen, 2001:285)

A dual form is apparent: apart from benevolence and mere moral obligation it also bears a more regulative nature. As Dean (2006:12) puts it, Social Policy “focuses on the nature of human interdependency; on the way in which people care for and about each other; on the part the “welfare state” plays in shaping the nature of caring; on ethical questions about principles of care and justice”.

As mentioned before, in the early years of industrial revolution social policies developed in order to offer assistance to the capitalist industrialization in the shadow of the decline of traditional social institutions like the family, church, and corporate solidarity (Esping-Andersen, 2006). However these early provisions can hardly be assumed to entail values of solidarity or humanitarianism. They mainly comprise a protection mechanism for the emerging middle-class, manipulate the poor and maximize industrial production.

The development of welfare state is interlinked with social solidarity in the promotion of wellbeing. Institutional solidarity succeeded in controlling social insecurity and its main purpose was to balance the inequalities that capitalism produced. This was mainly

achieved through the development of social security systems in order to combat social risks. Individual behaviour and failure were not the sole determinants of social conditions any more. (Rosanvallon, 2003). In other words, solidarity within the welfare state is based on the principle of redistribution which in turn requires the formation of a strong collective identity in order to be established. (Arts & Gelissen, 2001)

The end of Second World War marked for many the beginning of a new era for western society. It is true that crises often act as turning points and arouse promises for innovations for a better future. This is characterized as the golden age of the welfare state. (Esping-Andersen, 1990). So often the case is that devastating effects of a war serve as a motive for reforms in the social field and the expansion of the welfare state. In the 20th century environment we experienced a nationalization of solidarity. As mentioned before, solidarity had a territorial character – was formed within the spatial limits of a homogeneous nation – state.

Nowadays circumstances are changing, and welfare states are characterized as “active”. Solidarity is not related to reciprocal redistribution anymore; instead it is connected with the notions of responsible citizenship. The new challenges that welfare states face also change the concept of solidarity. Migration being perhaps the most urgent of the challenges since it affects the spatial framework within which the nationalised solidarity has been realised. It also affects the shared national identity. “Citizens are becoming more involved in networks that are not necessarily linked at state borders. For many sociologists the diversity is more important than the insiders/outside gap” (Mau & Burkhardt, 2007)

1.3.1. Solidarity and equality

Modern welfare states represent the “advanced society’s ability to treat each other equally” (Baldwin 1990). Solidarity is based on equality –all-inclusive risk – all citizens share equal chances of becoming ill, unemployed and generally deprived of basic survival goods. Although redistribution in its egalitarian characteristics is an inherent quality of social policy in the theoretical level, not all welfare states embodied it in the same degree. The first attempts of social insurance made by Bismarck had little to do with notions of equality in society. They aimed primarily in surpassing class reactions. The post-war

Beveridge report and the reforms in British social policy related to it reflect a genuinely egalitarian social change and a solidarity welfare policy ⁷(Baldwin, 1990).

The complex relationship of equality and solidarity in welfare states is obvious in Esping- Andersen's *Three Worlds of Welfare* (1990). He identifies three (ideal) types of regimes by examining the degree of equality and solidarity they provide to their members.

In the liberal type there is emphasis on the individualistic equity and solidarity is not a desirable quality. Solidarity in the sense of redistribution mechanisms and de-commodification is considered as a deterrent to personal progress. Instead, liberals are in favour of equal opportunities; "social positions are open to all" (Arts & Gelissen, 2001: 286).

Within the conservative regime, solidarity is mainly horizontal since emphasis is put on social hierarchy based on class and status and is restricted to labour market participants. Society is highly segmented and participation in labour market as well as the family factor largely determine the degree of de-commodification. Solidarity is achieved under certain circumstances and limitations.

It is in the social-democratic welfare regime that social solidarity acquires universal and egalitarian characteristics. The state is granted an increased right for intervention recognizing a universal need of every individual for solidarity which is based on full citizenship. This concept was primarily based on Marshall's vision of social rights. They supplement the earlier civil and political rights and are the basic elements of citizenship. They refer to equal entitlement to basic security and welfare, regardless of class or social status, denoting at the same time participation in social life.

Esping –Andersen's classification of welfare regimes, although seminal, is not exclusive. Another popular typology identifies the Mediterranean or Southern type as well (Leibfried 2001; Ferrera 1996). The welfare states that fall into this classification conceive solidarity mostly as family and community networks. Familiarism and immature social security systems as well as very generous targeted benefits are the predominant characteristics (Ferrera, 1996).

There is an extensive debate on issues of equality (Arts & Gelissen, 2001). It is a political issue not a privately determined one. Especially when the focus of attention is

⁷ In the sense that Beveridge report infused post-war European societies with the notion of collective public responsibility based on the existence of basic equality and rights common to all people. His five Giants showed that he conceived social solidarity as an institutionalized formation and not a matter of private or individual choice driven by philanthropy or altruism.

welfare states and the embodiment of solidarity, then substantial differences can be observed both in the interpretation and the practice of solidarity and equality (Esping-Andersen, 2006; Venieris, 2015). Following different paths of development, welfare states also determined the perception of solidarity and equality. They varied especially in terms of redistribution and in most cases it is significantly away from the egalitarian approach of all-inclusive risk sharing which was only exceptionally emerged in Scandinavian countries.⁸

It becomes obvious that equality and solidarity are strongly connected. There is a common misunderstanding, though; equality is not synonym to “sameness”. In the social context, especially in the egalitarian policies, equality or rather its counterpart –inequality - is associated with disadvantage; (Spicker, 1988). “Equality and freedom are the two sides of the same coin. Its value is determined through the granting of citizenship” (Venieris, 2015:180). Like solidarity, equality falls into various categories. The following distinctions are usually made: equality of treatment, namely, equal access to services e.g. the same chance of receiving medical treatment or the same educational facilities. A broader conception, echoing the middle approach in welfare ideologies, is equality of opportunities, which means the removal of disadvantage of competition (Venieris, 2015:145). Equality of result, means “the complete removal of disadvantage in practice” (Spicker, 1988:72). However, this was challenged as being highly utopical (Venieris, 2015). There is also reference to equality of resources, in that sense solidarity exists when people are provided with the same facilities in similar circumstances or even equality of life-chances (Weale, 1990). Equality of welfare and education seem more praisible. They include a minimum level of welfare provided by the state and participation in high level pre-schooling. That way there is essential improvement in levels of equality and justice and consequently enforcement in social solidarity is achieved (Venieris, 2015).

More current conceptions include approaches of “complex equality, differential equality and equality of obligation” (Fitzpatrick 2001 in Venieris, 2011:8). Once again equality has various extensions and implementations according to the ideology that lies behind; so equality of opportunity is mainly favoured in liberal thinking– the free market is considered as the main provider of opportunities of individuals (Venieris, 2015). On the contrary the egalitarian school of thought aims at equality of result (Spicker, 1988).

⁸ This mainly draws on Esping-Adersen’s welfare states classifications in “The Three Worlds of Welfare” (1990).

Basic element in all ideologies and a controversial issue, equality is a strong determinant of social solidarity; there are findings proving that “in more unequal countries people are less willing to take action to improve the living conditions of their fellow-countrymen” (Paskov & Dewilde, 2012:415). Wilkinson and Pickett (2009) claim that better societies are the equal societies.

In the light of post-industrial economies, welfare states are facing new risks and new constraints are put on them. Societies are changing fundamentally and solidarity is (or should be) put in a different perspective. There is much ongoing debate on their future (Leibfried, 2001). Although many words have been used to describe the changes ... “recasting”, “reforming”, “restructuring”, “recalibrating”,⁹ no one argues in favour of a total rejection of the welfare state. Putnam (2000) argues that it is “a loss of trust in democracy” (p.121) what we are experiencing and “a change in values” (p.274). Transformations in employment, family life and societal circumstances create new economic and social conditions. Increasing focus on individual choices and the effects of globalization contest social coherence and traditional welfare state solidarities¹⁰. The new era of studies is addressing the complex transformations and reinventions of social solidarity¹¹.

1.4. Solidarity in the EU

1.4.1. Pre-crisis European conceptions of solidarity

“Why is solidarity so contested? Arguably because it is used to characterize a whole range of relationships and patterns of behaviour connecting individuals and groups, with a family resemblance rather than a set of clear necessary and sufficient conditions at its core” (Nicolaidis & Viehoff, 2012:26). “Whereas “fraternity” draws on mutual aid and

⁹ G. Bonoli (2000), M.Ferrera (1996), (Scharpf, 2000)

¹⁰Beer & Koster (2009), Taylor-Gooby (2011), Veen, Yerkes, & Achterberg (2012),

¹¹ Contemporary studies of solidarity transformation include a sociological perspective: Ellison, (2012) *Reinventing Social Solidarity across Europe*, Sangiovanni,(2013) *Solidarity in the European Union*; Taylor-Gooby (2011) *Does risk society erode welfare state solidarity?*, the relation of economy and solidarity in Borger, (2013) *How the debt crisis exposes the development of solidarity in the Euro Area*, Paskov & Dewilde, (2012) *Income inequality and Solidarity*, Wilinon & Pickett, (2010) *The Spirit Level: How equality makes societies stonger*, whereas the relation of education and social solidarity in Greece is analysed in Zambeta & Kolofousi, (2014) *Education and Social Solidarity in Times of Crisis: the case of Voluntary Shadow Education in Greece*

responsibility, solidarity is a term which mostly appears in the language of EU” (Spicker, 2006:130).

Since its development, EU has not had separated solidarity from other values or policy areas. Solidarity was rather conceived as economic development of member states under a European umbrella (Raspotnik, Jacob, & Ventura, 2012). The goals and purposes of EU as perceived today differ from the original reasons that led to the founding of European Economic Community in the aftermath of WWII. Its founders thought that through an economic cooperation and interdependence, future conflicts would be avoided¹². Truly enough, one could argue that the primary goal has been achieved since Europe has delivered half a century with peace, stability and prosperity, as well as raising the living standards of its citizens. The expansion and transformation into EU has been accompanied with an expansion of the areas of policy which are not merely economic but have social objectives as well.

Yet the active role of Europe was primarily of economic nature whereas the solidarity in the social context was mainly nation –provided. The pan-European notion of solidarity involves the upward economic convergence and cohesion on the EU level; monetary union presupposes this specific form of solidarity. On the other hand, nationally defined solidarity includes social security, income redistribution and an overall balance of social rights and obligations (Vanderbrouke, 2015).

In most pre-crisis environments both in national and supranational level, the focus of attention was mostly on the economic nature of solidarity. Financial provisions were understood as benefits in national level or funds in European level e.g. the Cohesion Fund in the Maastricht Treaty. Social solidarity was presumed to be achieved through the economic path. Especially during the 90’s, under the influence of the Third Way politics, the communitarian form of solidarity prevailed through the development of “a *espace de solitaire* based on shared-values combined with activation in labour market and individual responsibility” (Ellison, 2012:18)

¹² Schuman Declaration (1950): "World peace cannot be safeguarded without the making of creative efforts proportionate to the dangers which threaten it."

"Europe will not be made all at once, or according to a single plan. It will be built through concrete achievements which first create a de facto solidarity."

"The pooling of coal and steel production... will change the destinies of those regions which have long been devoted to the manufacture of munitions of war, of which they have been the most constant victims."
retrieved from: <http://www.robert-schuman.eu/>

If we examine solidarity in the sense of kinship however in a transnational level, then it is obvious that it is interlinked with the ideas of European citizenship and European identity. It entails the necessity of developing or redefining policies that will go beyond abstract values and will strengthen the sense of commonality that will offer an increased tolerance to diversity and will form gradually stronger trans-national community bonds.

In that context two contradictory schools of thought have developed. The one in favour of the development of a social Europe through the European Social Model. (Vandevælde, 2014). Even before the recent crisis European community was facing with numerous challenges. Several new academic proposals took place. There is a group of social academics and social specialists that claim that the solution against the global pressures placed by neoliberalist ideals, especially on European nations and states, could be the development of European social movements, social investment in European level that would defend civilized values based on new European cultures of solidarity through the recognition of difference instead of its denial and rejection. It would then be necessary to invent a European civil society (Vandenbroucke & Rinaldi, 2015, Vandevælde,2014).

1.4.2. Solidarity in the Treaties

The most articulate form of solidarity is its formal manifestation through the Treaties (Maastricht, Lisbon). However, a big question among scholars is whether it is just a rhetorical device or is something of a heavier essence. By May 2003 the Convention by the Laeken European Council had produced more than 200 documents, speeches and contributions which included the word solidarity (taking into account all EU languages) (Nicolaidis,2003). The draft Constitution, presented by the Convention on 17 July, mentions the word solidarity twenty times: once in the Preamble, nine times in the first part, twice in the Charter on fundamental rights, and eight times in the third part. (Nicolaidis, 2003:3)

The most ambitious document though is that of the Constitution Treaty (Articles 1-2). Article I-3 of the Constitutional Treaty provides more specific objectives along with the general ones:

- The combating of social exclusion and discrimination, and the promotion of social justice and protection, equality between women and men, solidarity between generations and protection of the rights of the child;

- The promotion of economic, social and territorial cohesion, and solidarity among Member States. Especially paragraph 4 defines the values that (should) govern the EU and should also determine its relations with the rest of the world:
- Solidarity and mutual respect among peoples;¹³

Solidarity and mutual assistance become clearer in the Lisbon Treaty¹⁴. The central idea of Article 222 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), brought about by the Lisbon Treaty in 2007, is to allow the Union and its Member States to act jointly and to provide mutual assistance in case of natural and man-made disasters, as well as of terrorist attacks on the territory of a Member State. (Sangiovanni, 2013). It is clearly stated in the Preamble that it desires “to deepen the solidarity between their peoples while respecting their history, their culture and their traditions”.¹⁵

Additionally, it is stated in the Solidarity Clause that ‘the Union and its Member States shall act jointly in a spirit of solidarity if an EU Member State is the object of a terrorist attack or the victim of a natural or man-made disaster’ (TFEU Art. 222). As it can be observed though, solidarity in this context is restricted to extreme cases of danger and is far apart from social solidarity. However member states did not adopt it partially because it was quite unclear and general and also because the economic crisis added new data. On the other hand, due to these new facts and the emergence of new risks, “solidarity” from now on comprises in numerous formal documents and policy papers. The renewed “Social Agenda” declares that “its scope is extended to new areas of policy action structured around three goals:

- Creating new opportunities in the employment market;
- Facilitating access to education, social protection, health care and quality services for all;
- Developing solidarity at the heart of European society, so to foster social inclusion and equal opportunities for all¹⁶.

Unfortunately, in post – Lisbon agenda under the dominance of budgetary governance and financial regulation solidarity has been put aside once more. Europe 2020 gives

¹³ data drawn from: <http://europa.eu/>

¹⁴ Jacques Keller-Noellet “The Solidarity Clause of the Lisbon’s Treaty” Common Security and Defence Policy

¹⁵ <http://www.lisbon-treaty.org/>

¹⁶ data drawn from Eu- European law and publications <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?qid=1459280647160&uri=URISERV:em0010>

emphasis on investment policies and adds a new detail this time with regard to the actors responsible for accomplishing its goals: “The success of the Europe 2020 strategy depends on the involvement of all sections of society. The responsibility for action does not stop with governments. Everyone is needed to achieve the Europe 2020 goals:

- Businesses
- Trade unions
- Non-governmental organisations
- Individual citizens”. That way a link is attempted between Europe and organised civil society.¹⁷

Social solidarity appears in many directives of the European Court of Justice as well. (Sangiovanni, 2013). It becomes obvious that although there is a broad reference to the concept of solidarity in formal documents, this is not explicitly understood in social terms. Solidarity is mostly conceived as mutual support and intervention mostly due to shared problems and especially in the outburst of crisis. It seems to carry a soothing effect – mutual caring of after – crisis- burden – and not a normative character in order to shape a socially coherent European space. As mentioned before it is conceived mainly as economic solidarity but not in an environment of economic prosperity with reciprocity of gains but rather as a means to security and stability under insecure and unstable conditions. However in times of extreme economic crisis this is highly contested and questioned.

Generally speaking, under the pressure of neo- liberalism, and the current economic and fiscal crisis along with the permanent risks that European community and member states have been facing, it appears that the concept of social solidarity is still under construction. There are numerous attempts to reconfigure social solidarity and to establish a new balance between market principles and objectives of social protection. Despite the extensive reference to solidarity in formal documents however, it still remains a highly ambiguous issue and many questions are still waiting to be answered mainly concerning the very nature of solidarity or why individuals would “be particularly moved by an appeal to it” or even “what kinds of principles, policies, and ideals should an affirmation

¹⁷ http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/who-does-what/stakeholders/index_en.htm

of solidarity commit us to”. Also solidarity puts under scrutiny relative issues such as that of European identity and European citizenship. (Ferrera, Hemerijck, & Rhodes, 2000, Hemerijck 2002, Sangiovanni 2013)

1.4.3. Post - crisis European solidarity context

Currently we are facing a strong paradox. The more globalization takes over, the more the world seems fragmented and the sense of community, and the common feeling are being strongly contested. The economic crisis has brought serious blows especially to the idea of mutual European trust which apparently has not been standing on quite solid foundations (Raspotnik, Jacob, & Ventura, 2012). Especially after the burst of the global economic crisis in 2008, there was a boost in public – European – debates on solidarity.

As mentioned before solidarity, at least up to the break of the current bleak economic conditions, has mainly taken the form of economic support. Especially for those who are out of labour market either in the form of pensions or unemployment benefits. Another form of solidarity is the public provision of “merit goods” i.e. “those goods whose consumption is regarded to be a “right” or to be beneficial for society [e.g. education, affordable access to telecommunications and postal services]” (Hartwig & Nicolaidis, 2003:19). Both these understandings of solidarity are highly challenged nowadays due to the strict fiscal rules that are “enforced” to member states since everything is examined under a cost containment light. There is a shift from rights/needs towards a more individualistic social risk management approach to welfare (Ellison, 2012).

The sovereign debt crisis has hampered these solidarity goals. The member states have been forced to adapt their policies and adopt austerity measures. All policies were under financial cuts and solidarity took a different meaning. In national level, it was mostly a means of relief in cases of extreme financial straits with cost containment to emerge as a top priority. In European level, there has been a “transactional zero-sum approach: creditors will do this only if the debtors do that”. (Raspotnik, Jacob, & Ventura, 2012:3). This along with other problems -immigration the most urgent of all – has triggered new debates challenging the idea of (European social) solidarity. The so-called “Social Agenda” and the envisaged goals of cohesion and solidarity in the Treaties have ended a *dead letter* (Ferrera, 2014). Especially under the extreme pressures of modern, debt, fiscal etc. crisis, new debates and conflicts are launched about the European Social Model,

social rights, Social Europe etc. and in many cases there is rise of Euroscepticism¹⁸ – ESU is no longer desirable. (Vandeveldt, 2014).

On the other hand, core values of EU such as human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights are being “rediscovered” and the Union’s responsibility to promote the well-being of its peoples becomes a priority. More and more voices in the public sphere, especially since the emergence of the financial crisis in 2008, have been arguing in favour of establishing a new civil society and recreating the institutional conditions that make it possible for citizens to rebuild an idea of a society built upon solidarity¹⁹. It is argued that there is need to redefine the public in more inclusive terms which will allow for a variety of human engagements beyond the requirements of competitive individualism. The exit to the present day dead-end is argued to be a dual-use policy, promoting both pan-European and national cohesion (Vandenbroucke & Rinaldi, 2015).

The problem is that, especially in the EE level, solidarity has never had a concrete meaning. Although it appears in a number of political documents, Treaties, etc., yet its nature is not clearly and precisely identified. Up to now solidarity has taken mostly economic forms i.e. through the Structural Funds and the Cohesion Fund. Social solidarity is still set aside. The key challenge for Europe is to reinvent social solidarity in many

¹⁸ According to M. Ellison (2015) social solidarity is the fourth pillar of EU that complements the “indivisible values of peace, justice and freedom that constitute the vision of European integration”. This is achieved through a number of Directives and Programmes in the European context. Nowadays though, social Europe lies at the core of controversy with euroscepticism gaining ground and the same applies for issues social solidarity.

¹⁹https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/78927/building-stronger-civil-society.pdf

http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_FutureRoleCivilSociety_Report_2013

levels and to form a new vision of social solidarity based not on individual but on societal freedom (Ellison, 2012).

A new public discourse has arisen about activation and investment in human capital. Scholars propose the reactivation of state as an alternative strategy and the need to combine more efficiently economic goals with investment in – old and new -core social policy areas like education, health care and the environment that will reinforce social cohesion (OECD, 2011, Bonoli & Natali, 2012).

An example of bottom-up reconstruction of solidarity in European level is the OMC; the “soft”, non-compulsory elements could be argued that is evidence of the reinvention and reconstruction of boundaries of social solidarity. The role of third sector organisations, social movements and networks is of great importance to this new notion of social solidarity; “a notion of solidarity as a lived experience, a shared learned experience and a normative construct” (Ellison, 2012:11). The significance of the activation of civil society in promoting social solidarity is also stressed in the Europe 2020 goals. Public sector is no more the sole provider and advocate of social matters; labour unions, NGO’s, and even individuals bear a shared responsibility of implementing the various targets²⁰.

Summing up, EU solidarity is a multifaceted and multi-layered issue of national, international and transnational nature, with political implications especially as far as international and transnational issues are discussed. It arouses questions of European social rights, European citizenship and European identity. Under the pressure of current economic recession contradictory tendencies have emerged: those in favour of a deeper EU integration through a Political Union (Habermas, 2013), and those who consider national sovereignty as the only plausible way (Majone, 2012). Some adopt a pessimistic perspective, seeing the crisis as a deterrent for the implementation of a uniformed European social investment plan (Kvist, 2013). All in all, data shows that trust, both in EU Parliament and in national political institutions has declined especially in countries which suffer the most due to the crisis. This puts serious strains on social solidarity. Maybe it is time for Europe to ask what kinds of solidarity is necessary now and why. (Ellison, 2012).

²⁰ http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/who-does-what/stakeholders/index_en.htm

1.5. Education and social solidarity

1.5.1. Education and society – its role in social cohesion

Social cohesion is another term in sociology that refers to societal ties. In this paper social cohesion, will be used as a variant for social solidarity although these two terms are not identical. In general when there is reference to social cohesion or social solidarity it is done with regard to the community bonds. Education's role to create or safeguard the mechanisms that bind people together and cause feelings of togetherness, participation and inclusion is a matter of popular concern seen from various angles.

According to Spicker, welfare provision is about needs as well (Spicker, 2004). Currently, the term denotes "social needs", those that are necessary because they are part of societies within which people live (Spicker, 2004:74). Education and health cover fall into this category.

"(Public) education is one of universal social benefits with compensatory effects e.g. it creates "vertical" redistribution" (Venieris, 2015:27). Education from a sociological perspective it is either seen as one of the driving forces of social change or a key factor for retaining social control; yet there are many contested notions of the exact place that education should occupy in this process (Kantzara, 2011). "The tensions that exist –old and new ones – although belong to educational debate, reflect a broader notion, namely, the kind of society we have and the one we are aiming at" (Neave, 1988:273).

Education has served various purposes throughout history depending on the theoretical or political role that was attributed to social cohesion (Green & Preston, 2001). From the 19th century conception as a means to enforce social order, offering its service to the state–building, to the 20th century contribution to class or ethnic solidarism and nationalist and democratic citizenship (Green & Preston, 2001).

A systematic examination of the historical and social function of education, especially its role to social cohesion, was offered by Emile Durkheim in the late nineteenth century. Education was seen from a functionalist perspective – what purpose it serves. He claimed that the role of education is to achieve social solidarity. The way to do so is through the transmittance of society's values and norms. Additionally, by characterising school as "a society in miniature", he stressed the importance of socializing in the process of young people's preparation for joining society. These, he argued, are the primary paths for the achievement of social cohesion (Green & Preston,2001). According

to another leading theorist in contemporary sociology, Pierre Bourdieu, education is a mirror of society; education tends to reflect the wider inequalities of society (Appelrouth & Edles, 2008).

After WWII, economic development became a priority and education was used as a tool to that process. Emphasis was put in providing the necessary skills and knowledge for a successful entry in the labour market. It became a massively, publicly provided good through government polices (Kantzara, 2011). Education was seen “less as part of social policy, rather than as a sub-sector of economic policy” (Neave, 1988:3).

It has also been found that there is a positive correlation between education and political and social participation (Green & Preston, 2001). As mentioned before, solidarity in its normative conception, is interlinked with political awareness. An educational and political discourse about active citizenship has been reloaded. In that sense education contributes to social cohesion as it teaches students the “rules of the game” that is what the underpinnings of a good citizenship are but it is also expected to provide students with equality of opportunity (Heyneman, 2003:29-30).

However, since 1990, economy has undergone significant transformations and new meanings have been attributed to education policies as well. As the economy became more globalised, the free market became the motivating force and national sovereignty weakened in many fields. Along with the development of managerialism as a scientific instrument, new strains were added on labour markets and upon the social sphere generally. Education discourse followed this tendency (Ball,2008).

Education’s contribution to the formation of citizenship identity was overshadowed within this environment (Green & Preston, 2001). The acquisition of national identity through education was seriously put in question; a noticeable shift in public discourse concerning education took place (Brown & Lauder, 1996). From the acquaintance of knowledge to skills and competences, from education to training, from intrinsic to extrinsic values²¹.

Currently, the public discussions about education’s social significance have been renewed. It is considered a social good and it is widely accepted that everyone should have access to it at least “up to a certain level” (Coffey, 2004). The “Social Europe”

²¹One could argue in accordance to Gradstein & Justman, (2000) and Tomlinson(2001) that this is explained by the shift of emphasis from the development of social capital to a more instrumental notion that of building human capital. The OECD reports about education emphasise on the importance of human capital; education is conceived mainly as a device for economic growth.

model was the European Commission's attempt to shift concern to social solidarity and to explore how this can be achieved through education – the Life Long Learning Memorandum (EC 2001)²² serves this purpose. Nevertheless the prevailing political –and theoretical –discourse still emphasises the contribution of education in social inclusion in terms of entrance in labour market. The underlying idea is that the individual should be responsible for their own learning and the learning process should be a continuous process which will enable people to be flexible and acquire all the necessary knowledge and skills in an ever changing economic environment (Ball, 2008). “The role of education in shaping “social” outcomes is re-established, but the social is now conceived in a different – more individualised –way” (Green & Preston, 2001:7). The undisputed value of education to social cohesion is also stressed by the European Commission; it is claimed that poverty can be reproduced between generations and there is a correlation with low education attainment (Camilleri & Camilleri, 2015).

Summing up, education ensures social cohesion in two basic ways; in an individual level by inculcating people with core values of trust, tolerance, and justice. It also promotes a sense of belonging, and actually teaches cooperation with others. Also in a practical, institutional manner, by providing people with the necessary qualifications to enter the labour market which is the prerequisite for societal participation. It therefore fosters social solidarity. Education is seen as a form of capital in itself. (Kantzara, 2011).

1.5.2. Social capital theory and education

Very often solidarity is being confused with the term social capital. These two concepts are not identical but are closely interlinked. Social capital is considered a mechanism that generates solidarity especially in view to educational processes.

The development of social capital theory is attributed to the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu. He conceived more than one form of capital. In particular he wrote about economic, cultural and social capital (Appelrouth & Edles, 2008). His definition of social capital sees it “as the aggregate of actual or potential resources linked to possession of a durable network of essentially institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition” (Dika & Singh, 2002:33). In Bourdieu's theory social capital is the investment

²² Europa - Eu Law and publications, in <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EL/TXT/?uri=URISERV%3Ac11047>

of the dominant class to maintain and reproduce group solidarity and preserve the group's dominant position (Dika & Singh,2002).

Another prominent contribution to social capital theory was that of the American sociologist James Coleman. He added a functional characteristic to the term – he described it as “productive”, having the ability of producing “certain goals that in its absence would be impossible”. He defined social capital as the social networks; in other words the “involvement of citizens in both formal and informal social groups”²³. (Tzanakis, 2013). Coleman’s theory has had a great impact on educational research mainly on the area of educational attainment and generally the contribution of social capital on educational outcomes (Dika & Singh,2002).

The next most acknowledged contribution is the work of political sociologist Robert Putnam. According to Putnam ‘social capital refers to the features of social organization, such as trust, norms and networks that can improve the efficiency of society by facilitating coordinated actions’ (Putnam 1993 in Tzanakis, 2013:5). Social capital is also called “the cement of civil society”²⁴ the shared norms and values that bind individuals together, the source of formal and informal organizations that make it possible to cooperate in allocative interest. It is seen as the way people relate to their fellow citizens. It is described as the force behind the creation of collective identities, the sense of belonging to a community and sharing common interests, values and a sense of common good. In that sense it carries reciprocal qualities in which “good turns go around, and come around” (Putnam, 1995:4). Education, teaches young people these values, it teaches them to imagine themselves in the shoes of others; additionally the higher the educational level, the stronger the feelings of mutual trust and the broader the civil engagement (Helliwell & Putnam, 1999). Education, with its positive contribution to strengthening membership, trusting and political participation, regardless of age, gender, race and class is the most powerful generator of social capital (Green & Preston, 2001).

To sum up, social capital has to do with community networks, civil participation, access to formal and informal information nets, feelings of trust and reciprocity. On the

²³Like Bourdieu, Coleman puts emphasis on social networks. The new element is that he defines social capital through “measurable” characteristics, i.e. defined by certain outcomes e.g. the effective cooperation, or even tangible products like the raise of money or even shared facilities and resources (neighbourhood watch schemes, baby sitting circles, car pools or even street parties). In other words his notion of social capital entails positive characteristics of trust and reciprocity in community. In Clarke, Huliaras, & Sotiropoulos,(2015)

²⁴in Maraffi, Newton, Deth, & Whiteley, (1999)

whole, high levels of social capital are said to promote economic stability and equality; volunteerism is the most prominent expression of social capital in modern societies (Clarke, 2015). On the contrary, low social capital, namely, loose social ties does not enable people to work together in order to achieve what Putnam refers to as “mutual benefit”.²⁵ Education’s role is to infuse such values and attitudes to individuals, to socialize them properly and in that way account for greater levels of social cohesion.

1.5.3. Crisis effects on education

The recent gloomy economic environment and the outburst of severe financial and fiscal crises have cast a heavy shadow upon social cohesion. Communities collapse and societies are disorientated (Fábián, Matsaganis, Veliziotis, & Tóth, 2014).

As far as education is concerned, the recent recession has been a hindrance and has had a negative impact primarily in investments. According to data, cuts in education occurred in around half of the EU-27 Member States. More specifically, public spending on education in some countries fell below the 2000 level; in 2011, the greatest reductions were applied in Greece (24 %), Bulgaria (17 %) and Romania (13 %). The following year, there were no decreases greater than 10 %, except in Greece (19 %). As far as teachers’ salaries and pensions are concerned, Romania was the “leader” country in 2011 with 20% whereas during 2012, Greece was first (24%) followed by Slovakia (15 %), Croatia (8 %) and Italy (6 %).²⁶ Public schools have also been affected: in 16 out of 40 countries there have been staff dismissals, whereas in 23 out of 40 schools have either closed or been merged (ETUCE, 2013).

It’s interesting to note that at the same time lower educational performance was statistically noted²⁷. It is found that those countries where teachers are better paid, show better educational performance as well (OECD, 2013). Although there is a certain correlation between expenditure in education and educational performance, more spending does not necessarily guarantee a better performance, but cuts are not a sign of progress

²⁵ Putnam viewed social capital as a generator of civic engagement and volunteerism because it is connected to collective and not individual acts and bears characteristics of trust, and reciprocity. The role of education in all this is crucial.

²⁶ data drawn from Eurydice Report, 2013 in http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/documents/thematic_reports/147EN.pdf

²⁷ data from Caritas Europa, 2013, ETUCE, 2013

either (Vandenbroucke, 2014). The social investment model has suffered in many cases either. It is not followed by all Member States and it is not so “social” any more.²⁸

To sum up, although the value of education in social cohesion is widely accepted, yet the emergence of the financial crisis has put pressures on this policy area as well. The pressures have affected primarily public budgets and more specifically cuts in public spending. The continuing crisis has “forced” many governments to prioritize between education and other key public sectors such as health, unemployment, and social security. This in turn has had negative effects in social cohesion. Resources are scarce while demand for (more) education and training is increasing (OECD, 2013). The value of education lies both on its ability to teach values, principles, attitudes but also on its impact on the employability of individuals which in turn is connected to social inclusion and increased social cohesion.

2. GREECE IN CRISIS

2.1. Greek welfare state and solidarity provision until 2008

Greece has been one of the EU member states most violently affected by the crisis. According to some classifications, the country belongs to the southern welfare state which carries some special characteristics (Ferrera, 1996). Compared to the Northern regimes, the Southern –European welfare regime has had a slower development. High fragmentation is noted, especially in income maintenance, increased influence of church – especially the Catholic church-, clientism, low extent of penetration of welfare and insufficient welfare services administration are some of the distinct features among others (Sotiropoulos, 2015). So institutional solidarity was never fully developed in Greece.

Another special southern regime characteristic is the extensive familiarism. This term refers to the supportive and extensive role that family plays as a security net. The family has traditionally carried the burdens of providing for social goods in the cases that the state has proven quite inadequate. The family’s role covered areas like child and elderly

²⁸data from European Commission -Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, <http://ec.europa.eu/social>

care, or as it is said in Lyberaki & Tinios, (2014) the informal sector substitutes the formal one.

Alongside the public and the market sector a third source of a country's welfare provision the civil society also called the third sector (Sotiropoulos, 2014a). A basic feature is the voluntary nature of participation. In most European countries it is a fundamental part of social solidarity. The Greek case once more deviated from this norm. With the exception of Olympic Games in 2004 voluntary participation rates have never been particularly high (Sotiropoulos, 2014). Civil society mainly involves formal networks. There is also a fourth pillar or the informal social networks. These include the family (and the extended family), friends, neighbours and wider community ties (such as the informal relationships developed in work, education and neighbourhood settings and currently the ones formed on-line) (Bourikos, 2013, Sotiropoulos & Bourikos, 2014). In Greece even these ties were weak with the exception of the family as it was mentioned before²⁹.

Overall, the Greek pre-crisis welfare state entailed an ill-equipped system of social protection with a number of applied welfare policies that were not socially equitable (Matsaganis, 2012). "From an economic viewpoint, in times of expanding growth, solidarity is supposed to be associated with state interventions in the functional distribution of income with the aim to change it in favour of weaker income groups" (Giannitsis & Zografakis, 2015) – that was not the case for Greece though. Historically the middle and high classes were favoured, whereas the poor and vulnerable were not properly protected (Matsaganis, 2012). Moreover, the civil society was underdeveloped, with the exception of the family which bore many of the burdens for social provision.

2.2. The impact of crisis in Greek solidarity

The, already underdeveloped, welfare state in Greece underwent a tremendous stress in the outbreak of the economic crisis. Two factors required immediate attention: fiscal consolidation and structural reforms. The former were mainly translated into benefits and services cuts and the latter into reforms in social programmes (Matsaganis, 2012). What has actually happened is that the social safety nets have been rather unsafe leaving already

²⁹ in Bourikos, 2013, Kantzara, 2014, Sotiropoulos, 2004, 2014a

vulnerable and ill-protected social groups i.e., the outsiders and the low-income groups, in a worse position than before (Sotiropoulos, 2014b).

Another striking feature is that since 2010, the recipients of solidarity acts have been mainly immigrants or minority groups e.g. Roma, whereas after the crisis erupted, there was a swift of targeting towards natives. The two most significant effects of the crisis in Greece were the collapse of GDP and the dramatic rise of unemployment. The statistics show that in 2012 Greece had the highest rates for people at risk of poverty in Europe with as much as 35 per cent of the country's population running the risk of poverty or social exclusion, while the share of those who were severely materially deprived was 19% (Caritas Europa, 2013; Sotiropoulos & Bourikos, 2014).

After the onset of the crisis, social solidarity in Greece was perceived either in the forms of “special support schemes”³⁰ provided by the state or took the form of charity aid to the elderly and the extremely poor. Unfortunately in many cases negative actions took place in the name of solidarity e.g. the “Pensioners’ solidarity contribution” which in reality means pension cuts. (Matsaganis, 2012). Additionally, tax increases and cuts in public services, along with austerity, have had a negative impact on other social functions as well, e.g. educational equality. (Giannitsis & Zografakis, 2015, Elstat, 2015).

Moreover a worrying side effect appeared; as the Greek society became more diverse, feelings and acts of xenophobia rose threatening in turn social cohesion and social solidarity. An example is February 2011, on the helpful suggestion of the far Right in Parliament, a clause was added to the eligibility conditions for large family benefits, explicitly designed to exclude foreign immigrants (‘10 years of permanent and continuous residence in Greece’). (Matsaganis, 2012)

2.3. The Greek educational system before the crisis in promoting social cohesion and social solidarity

As mentioned in the first chapter, education is one of the fundamental welfare sectors aiming at social cohesion. It was not until 2001 though, that the term appeared in a Greek legislation text about education (Kantzara, 2011). Generally speaking, social cohesion was not given proper attention. Greek educational system underwent a significant

³⁰ e.g. “the Solidarity Card” which is a pre-paid card used for the supply of basic goods like nutrition, or “Electronic solidarity cheque”, data drawn from www.kathimerini.gr/

transformation towards democratisation through measures taken gradually in the 70s and 80s. This coincides with the general Greek welfare state expansion. At that time, a series of measures³¹ made public education accessible by all. This is a crucial factor that empowers social cohesion through social inclusion; everyone had access to public education (Zambeta & Kolofousi, 2014).

During the 90's social inclusion, equality of access, social cohesion and democratisation are no longer the prominent issues. As is the case of Europe, under the neo-liberal influence, emphasis was given in personal competence, productivity, performance, competence. Social cohesion was mainly conceived as labour market participation (Zambeta & Kolofousi, 2014). Subjects of formal educational policies were the minorities and small groups i.e. Muslim minority in Western Thrace, Roma minority as well as repatriated Greeks and foreign immigrants. These groups were given more attention instead of the majority of educational community. In this sense, maybe the most acknowledged contribution of Greek education to social cohesion is related to the development of multicultural or intercultural education³² aiming at the inclusion of immigrants and repatriated students in the Greek educational and social environment³³.

A public educational policy, serving as inclusion mechanism, that aimed at all primary and secondary students, was Remedial Teaching or Supplementary Tutorial. It is also known by the term, compensatory education, "enishitiki didaskalia"; it was a social policy attempting to provide extra resources to socio-economically disadvantaged and underperforming groups. Its primary aim was to reinforce students' school performance and reduce school dropout rates. The lessons were publicly provided in School Centres which were locally formed for that purpose, and were done by hired teachers.³⁴

³¹ The resolution of the language question, the expansion of educational system and the abolishment of the 16-plus examinations. In Zambeta, E., & Kolofousi, A. (2014). "Education and Social Solidarity in Times of Crisis: the Case of Voluntary Shadow Education in Greece". *Education Inquiry Vol. 5, No. 1*, pp. 69-88

³² Law 2413/96 – Organosi Leitorgia Sxolion Diapolitismikis Ekpedefsis (development and operation of intercultural schools) drawn from <http://edu.klimaka.gr/leitoyrgia-sxoleivn/diapolitismika/549-nomos-2413-96-organosh-leitoyrgia-sxoleia-diapolitismikhs-ekpaideyshs.html>

³³ Indicative examples of the extensive literature are: Damanakis, M. (1998). *H ekpedefsi ton palinostoudon kai allodapon mathiton stin Ellada – Diapolitismiki ekpedefsi (Repatriated and foreign students' education in Greece – intercultural education, in Greek)* Athens, Gutenberg, Govaris, Chr.(2001) *Eisagogi sti diapolitismiki ekpedefsi (Introduction in intercultural education in Greek)* Athens, Atrapos, Mousourou, L. (2006) *Pedia pallinostoudon kai alodapon sto elliniko sholio (Children of repatriated and immigrants in greek school)* in Ventoura, L. Mpagavos, Chr., Papadopoulou, D. *Metanastefsi kai entaxi ton metamaston stin elliniki koinonia (Immigration and inclusion of immigrants in greek society in greek)* Athens, Gutenberg, pps.211-245

³⁴Law 1824/1988 Article 4, (n 296 A'), Presidential Degree 462/91 (Article 4, no 171, τ.Α'), Law 3149/2003 (Bray, 2011)

2.3.1. *Frontistirio* as a non-state education provider

Despite the public provision for education and free access to it since 1974, there has been a great sense of mistrust to its quality and effectiveness; it has never been completely trusted by citizens (Dimou, 1999). As a result, Greek families -one of the supporting pillars of Greek welfare provision - were forced to turn to the private preparatory courses, the notorious frontisteria, a resource that, among other things, imposed heavy financial burdens on them and undermined the democratic principles of "free education for all"³⁵.

In many countries there are educational programs that bare similarities with the Greek frontistirio. They are widely known as cram schools. However, the Greek case carries some unique characteristics. The most important is, that although it not an obligatory "social institution", however it is both institutionally and socially established. This extensive network of privately owned, operating under market rules has become part of Greek culture as a necessary social activity and it bares equal importance as state-provided education (Dimou, 1999). A 2000 survey of first-year university students in Greece found that over 80% had attended preparatory schools of the 'cramming' type (frontistirio), 50% had received individual private tutoring, and one third had received both types³⁶.

The provision of education through frontistirio has been considered as a natural consequence of the inadequacy of public education; contrary to the latter, the provision of educational goods through frontistirio was characterized by a high level of "efficiency" and "productivity" combined with an effective "promotion of its products" (Dimou, 1999: 16). It was believed that it strengthened students' competitive abilities and contributed to equal opportunities. Although initially only the well-off were able to make use of it, economic growth led to higher standards of living for the lower social classes and enabled them to join this institution; it was regarded as an opportunity for upward social mobility.

Summing up, education is seen an important agent of social integration in Greek society. Its significant role to social inclusion became apparent through the public educational policies aiming mainly at minorities' integration. However, social inequalities

³⁵ According to Bray's report (2011:46), *The challenge of shadow education- private tutoring and its implications for policy makers in the European Union (NESSE)*: "In Greece, private tutoring was estimated in 2008 to consume €952.6 million¹¹. This represented 18.6% of all household expenditures on education and 20.1% of the government expenditures on primary and secondary education."

³⁶ Data drawn from Bray's report (2011) *NESSE: The Challenge of Shadow Education, private tutoring and its implications for policy makers*. European Commission's Directorate-General for Education and Culture

persisted especially as they were reflected in school attainment and drop out data³⁷. Consequently, in times of economic prosperity, equal educational opportunities were provided by public as well as private sector being part of the “shadow economy” under the name shadow education (Zambeta & Kolofousi, 2014).

2.4. Implications of crisis on education

The economic crisis as mentioned before, had a dramatic effect on the rise of inequality and poverty in Greek society³⁸. Education did not remain untouched either. The emergence of crisis put extra strains on the Greek educational system and its ability to secure or guarantee solidarity and social cohesion. The most obvious effects included financial cuts such as cuts in hiring of teachers, salary cuts as well closing of schools and increase in working hours³⁹. Although public expenditure for education has never reached the European levels, during the crisis it has further decreased. On the other hand, an increase has been noted in private expense due to the Greek family’s will to offer their children the best possible educational opportunities (Zambeta & Kolofousi, 2014). According to data from Educational Policy Centre, the cost for tutoring for 2013 was about 1, 05 billion euros. Even more surprising was the fact that despite the crisis, the family expenses on educational needs have only been reduced 5,4% compared to pre-crisis 2010 data.⁴⁰

Moreover, in such a hostile environment, due to fiscal adjustments, the practice of enishitiki didaskalia was suspended; the decision was taken at the moment when this program was most needed by the vulnerable and most severely hit groups.

³⁷ Ministry of Education www.epimelitesanilikon.gr/pdf/DIARROH.pdf
<https://www.minedu.gov.gr/eidiseis/17561-27-01-16-arithmoi-gia-tin-ekpaidefsi-apo-tin-elliniki-statistiki-arxi>

³⁸A detailed reference to economic and social effects of crisis on people’s lives can be found in the research note of the European Commission *Scarring Effects of the Crisis Research Note 6/2014* by Nicole Fondeville and Terry Ward. Also the recent OECD report (2013) *Education Indicators in Focus – December 2013* compares expenditures in education in several OECD countries in the emergence of crisis and afterwards. It is interesting to see that Greece is among the few countries which almost simultaneously with the emergence of the crisis resorted in squeezing teachers’ salaries which as the report argues has had a significant effect on the quality of education as a whole.

³⁹ References on ETUCE, 05/2013 – The continued impact of the crisis on teachers in Europe.

⁴⁰ *14,000 euros the “ticket” cost for University admittance* article by Lakasas Ap.,06.04.2014 in kathimerini.gr

Another side effect of the present harsh socioeconomic crisis that hid Greece, is the deteriorating psychology of students and young people. In a recent pilot study⁴¹ it has been found that students tend to “feel responsible for the current crisis in regard to wrong attitudes and mentalities inherited by older generations” (Tsekeris, Pinguli, & Georga, 2015:18). Additionally, and contrary at the same time, due to the high family interdependence, these individuals experience “intense and prevailing feelings of frustration, disappointment and guilt” (Tsekeris, Pinguli, & Georga, 2015:21). The family has been the strongest of the three supporting pillars of the Greek welfare state⁴². It becomes clear that since the supporting capability of the Greek family is affected, more aspects of personal or social life are affected too.

According to UNICEF⁴³ the rapid rise in parent unemployment, especially in the early years of crisis, has had dramatic effects in e.g. the nutrition and health status of students. Both have deteriorated significantly. There have been numerous mass media publications about incidents of students fainting during lessons⁴⁴. Moreover, families have largely failed to provide students with necessary school items (e.g. books, notebooks etc.) as well as extra-curricular activities, tutoring lessons etc. (Kantzara, 2014; Zambeta, 2014).

In short, a new producer of inequality is developed. Poorer children cannot afford resources like private tutors. What is being contested nowadays could be argued that is the

⁴¹ Tsekeris, C., Pinguli, M., & Georga, E. (2015). *Young People's Perception of Economic Crisis in Contemporary Greece: A Social Psychological Pilot Study Research Paper No 19*. Athens: Crisis Observatory.

⁴² As mentioned before, the welfare state in Greece bears some distinct characteristics which have often made researchers exclude it from the common types of welfare categorization. Starting from Titmuss's “residual”, “industrial” and “redistributive” categorisation to the widely accepted typology proposed by Esping Adersen (1990): welfare states are supported by three pillars – the state, the market and the family. Depending on which pillar is stronger than the other, and taking into consideration the degree of de-commodification they offer, welfare states are divided into corporatist, liberal and social democratic. Additionally Ferrera (1996, 2010) proposed another typology based on territorial divisions; consequently one can talk about Northern and Southern welfare states. Generally speaking, in the Mediterranean type of welfare state the dominant supporting role is played by the family. This serves as a safety net whereas state and market in particular play a secondary role. Although Greece is somehow classified into the Southern (or Mediterranean) model, yet it carries some characteristics that are rare to the rest of the countries belonging to this type. One is the high degree of fragmentation of social benefits with the core sectors of the labour force or “insiders” being protected generously as opposed to the rest of the workforce. Another characteristic, relevant to our research, is the extended role of the family as provider of social benefits in order to balance the inadequacy of social safety nets.

⁴³ UNICEF, “The condition of children in Greece, 2012”, Greek National Committee Unicef, March 2012, in <http://www.unicef.gr/news/2012/n120403.php>

and “Steep aggravation of standard of living and increase of poverty since 2010: Shocking data from ΕΛΣΤΑΤ”, in.gr, 02-11-2012, in <http://news.in.gr/economy/article/?aid=1231220484>

⁴⁴ Fydanidou Elena, “Children, the first victims of the crisis” To Vima, 18.11.2012 retrieved from <http://www.tovima.gr/society/article/>

Vassilakis Kostas, “Students faint due to hunger” CNA News 09.10.2014 retrieved from <http://www.cna.gr/crete/iraklio-mathites-lipothimoun-sta-scholia-apo-tin-pina/>

equality of opportunity thus “providing fair chances for each individual to develop to his maximum potential personal skills and capacities. Especially when we refer to students and educational aims it is urgent to “ensure a fair chance for all those who have been unfairly disadvantaged” (Venieris, 2011:34).

2.5. New forms of solidarity

“One has argued that people are more prone to solidarity with other individuals than with collective entities” (Vandeveldt, 2014). A recent issue that has intrigued many researchers’ interest has to do with the (re)appearance of civil society. This is particularly true in times of severe and unexpected catastrophes.⁴⁵ The recent recession has served as a catalyst in this mainly because of the severe retrenchment of the formal state and its mechanisms in the provision of social benefits⁴⁶. According to some views inequality in a society is negatively associated with the development of civil society.⁴⁷

2.5.1. A change from below : Voluntarism and civil society

In the conventional use, social policy is associated with state – provided social welfare (Coffey, 2004). But in this new era of - permanent - austerity, the process of globalisation and (new and old) social anxieties, there is the need to set new meanings on social policy and social solidarity and re-determine the providers.

The state has not always been the primary or sole provider of social protection and solidarity agent. Especially in times of uncertainty, people in their effort to cope with the increased risks often turn to mutual insurance. Historically, many systems of social protection were not initially formed by the state but by different forms of mutual organisations and occupational groups like trades, unions and employers. In some cases it

⁴⁵An extended survey on the (renewed) role of civil society as well as epistemological and methodological concerns that have emerged is given in Sotiropoulos, (2004) *H agnostic koinonia ton politon (The unknown civil society)* Athens: Potamos. The motivation for conducting this research was the 1999 earthquake in Athens with its devastating effects on the lives of so many people.

⁴⁶The Guardian Jon Henley in Athens Friday 23/01/2015; “Greece’s solidarity movement: ‘it’s a whole new model – and it’s working’ retrieved from

<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/jan/23/greece-solidarity-movement-cooperatives-syriza>

⁴⁷In Afouxenidis, A., & Gardiki, M. (2015). *Mapping Civil Society in Contemporary Greece: Problems and Perspectives*. Social Survey Review, 143.

was the “voluntary networks that preceded and the state followed either by replacing them (UK) or by extending the work they had been doing. (France)” (Spicker, 1988:128).

The new economic and social conditions probably are the consequence of or path to a change in values and the emergence of social activism (Pharr & Putnam, 2000:274). Moreover, nowadays due to the forces of globalization there is a transfer of social provision from the central to the local (Deacon, 1997). Since the traditional welfare systems are subjected to strong pressures and in some cases are withdrawing, the well-being can also be promoted from outside (i.e. family, voluntary sector and private market) (Coffey, 2001) and could also “lead to the strengthening of civil society.” (Deacon 1997:20). An asymmetry is noticed; the decline of institutional solidarity has led to the rise of social solidarity (Ellison, 2012)

An argument that could explain the rise of voluntary participation could be drawn by the work of Bills & Glennerster, (1988) who claim that, unlike the economic or political science theories that treat individuals as absolutely rational and completely able to seek self-interest, the development of voluntary or “third” sector could be examined through the focus on personal deprivation and inability to act for oneself. In other words: “In the first place individuals may have little or no money and find it difficult to survive. They may be financially disadvantaged, lacking the purchasing power to seek solutions in the market.” (Bills & Glennerster, 1988:10)

Apart from the controversies that the term has aroused, volunteerism in modern societies carries some characteristics which distinguish it from traditional philanthropic activities and presume it as a vital element of social solidarity. Unlike traditional actions of philanthropy, contemporary initiatives of voluntarism differ in respect to organizational matters, the ways they comprehend and deal with social problems, the areas of intervention, their motivation, the political dimension they have, the democratic functions and the economic significance (Anthopoulos, 2000).

The activation of civil society in Greece has been a surprising or even an unanticipated phenomenon. According to data⁴⁸, during the first period of the crisis more

⁴⁸data drawn from internet sources:

www.solidarity4all.gr,

<http://antidotezine.com/2015/06/22/greece-solidarity-mvt/>,

Greece Solidarity Campaign (GSC) (2012) in <http://greesolidarity.org/?p=292>

as well as from Bourikos (2013) *Social Solidarity in Greece during crisis* Reaserch Paper no3 (ELIAMEP)

and in Sotiropoulos, & Bourikos, (2014) *Economic Crisis, Social Solidarity and the Voluntary Sector in Greece*, *Journal of Power, Politics & Governance Vol. 2, No. 2,*, pp. 33-53.

than 400 social solidarity movements delivered a wide range of social solidarity services, food solidarity structures, healthcare solidarity structures etc. to people in need. These included

- local exchanging trading schemes
- community-supported agriculture initiatives
- time banks
- self-sufficiency projects
- commons movements
- local sharing economies
- a wide variety of community currencies

As far as the organizations involved are concerned, a number of agencies have been identified: the central government, the local authorities, political parties, the Church –both Orthodox and Catholic, NGO’s, private companies, foreign embassies, alternative networks of exchange, cooperatives, and citizens’ groups. These solidarity practices have taken various forms: subsistence (food, clothes, and shelter), health, education and economy (trade without merchants in between, cooperatives) and are addressed to whoever is “in need” (Kantzara, 2014, Sotiropoulos & Bourikos, 2014).

A first question that has risen though is what is meant by civil society.⁴⁹ When social solidarity organisations come into question, there is a basic distinction between formal and informal ones. NGO’s belong to the first category whereas individuals, self-help groups or networks form the second group. (Sotiropoulos 2004, Sotiropoulos & Bourikos 2014). In this paper our point of concern will be the informal organisations. One prevailing characteristic of these formations is that they are people-driven where the participants offer their services or their time for free on a clearly voluntary basis.

According to some studies, high inequality might result to social tensions, crime, and feelings of insecurity. It is argued that there is a negative relationship between income inequality and solidarity. Feelings of solidarity could also stem from the amount of generosity that is displayed by the welfare state. (Paskow & Dewilde, 2012).

⁴⁹ According to Sotiropoulos (2004) civil society is divided in two types: formal and informal one. The formal associations i.e. NGOs, political parties or social movements are more manageable since there is data to draw upon; on the other hand the informal civil formations are not measurable; these lack an institutionalized character or even a specific organizational structure. Their operation is rather fragmentary and they resemble the duality of other Greek situations (e.g. formal vs “black” economy, institutional framework vs informal, unofficial settings.)

To sum up, in the case of Greece, the rapid retrenchment of – the already insufficient - public social policies as it has already been mentioned could lead one to the conclusion that social solidarity was also negatively affected. However, almost immediately after the emergence of the crisis there has been noted an increase in the social sensitivity of citizens and new forms of solidarity emerged.

2.5.2. An educational initiative: koinoniko frontistirio

In the field of education in particular, a new form of solidarity has appeared: it is called *koinoniko frontistirio* (social tutoring that is free tutoring); it can also be found under the names of *solidary frontistirio* or *voluntary extra tutoring* (Εθελοντική Ενισχυτική Διδασκαλία). As it is mentioned in Zambeta & Kolofousi (2014:79) “the introduction of social frontistiria is either initiated by institutional political actors, such as the Municipalities, or it is the outcome of social activism at the local level.” According to Bourikos (2013:10), this initiative could be categorised under the umbrella term “informal welfare volunteering”. An explanation of the appearance of these initiatives seems to be the need to compensate for the state’s decision to cost-cuts that included the state supportive lessons – *enishitiki didaskalia*. According to other views, these initiatives “don’t aim at the substitution of the ailing public education but at confronting the inequalities of an educational system that is shrinking and is dissolving under the policies of austerity, which sharpen class distinctions and compromises the opportunities for the children of the lower classes”⁵⁰.

This new initiative covers a wide area and is offered by various agencies. Unemployed teachers, retired ones, university students or active teachers who are willing to work extra hours on a voluntarily basis offer their services. Also, parents through the PTAs contribute mostly in clerical duties. Koinonika frontistira offer lessons in many fields such as extra tutoring for compensatory education and foreign languages as well as extra-curriculum activities such as art or music lessons.

Municipalities are the main agencies of provision. The number is not specific since more and more municipalities are organizing free tutoring lessons for the students that live in the area. In collaboration with the local teaching associations (ELME) the lessons most

⁵⁰ source: www.solidarity4all.gr

frequently take place in the local schools during the afternoons or in the town's facilities. The Orthodox Church has also formed similar voluntary groups – the lessons usually take place in the local churches' facilities e.g. youth centres or again in local schools. Recently many local areas additionally are organizing free on-line lessons with the use of video. The admittance into the courses is dependent mainly on financial criteria. In order for a student to join the groups their family will fill in a form of participation either in the local authorities or in the student's school. The family status (e.g. single parent families) and other social problems that the family might face are important factors for the admittance of a student.

2.6. Conclusion of the theoretical part

Solidarity conveys different meanings to different groups or individuals depending on the analytical context it is examined. Although it is considered a key concept in social policy, yet it is hard to define. The first part of the paper offered a literature review on the notion of social solidarity from various perspectives and followed its historical development. The purpose was to gain an understanding of its ambiguous nature in order to determine which aspects the empirical part will be based on.

The first, broad, sociological perspective attempts to answer questions like *how is society realized?* and *what produces solidarity?* Questions like these led classical sociologists to transform concepts like *fraternity* into modern concepts of solidarity and make them fundamental issues in sociological theories. The question on what actually generates solidarity has been answered differently according to various sociological schools of thought. Summing up, the basic sources of solidarity can fall into the following categories: a) social ties that bind people together, b) shared norms and values, c) social struggle and d) informal contacts and interactions.

In more recent theories and from a different perspective, social solidarity is highly challenged. Echoing liberal ideas, the American school of thought sees society from an individualistic perspective. Accordingly, emphasis is put in personal achievements and interests.

The 21st century has posed new challenges to societies and asks for renewed perspectives. The most prominent is whether and in what form solidarity can exist in diverse environments both in national and transnational level. Social solidarity can no

longer account for societal homogeneity. Diversity is imposing new forms of trust and bonding among people.

Next the analysis of solidarity in welfare ideologies showed that the concept acquires different properties depending on the ideological context it falls into. Consequently it is interlinked with other social issues such as equality, freedom, justice. The different balance of these defines the attribution of social citizenship and the level and essence of welfare in a society. This is particularly important nowadays that welfare states undergo substantial transformations.

Solidarity is a core element in the EU context as well. It is more than a joint act on the basis of all belonging to the human race. Yet we cannot talk of a single form of solidarity. There is economic, social, moral, political etc. solidarity. It is a multifaceted and multi-layered issue of national, international and transnational nature with political implications especially as far as international and transnational issues are discussed. In the European level one could argue that it is about the role of EU as the defender of a common good, which creates feelings of shared fates.

Such a notion bears specific characteristics. A first characteristic would be the sharing of a common ground of cultural factors such as language, customs etc. and a common cultural inheritance, stemming probably from shared history. Also entailing a common idea about the future. Solidarity in such a context is interwoven with the creation or existence of a broader notion of identity far beyond the national citizenship and probably asks for a renewed notion of Europe as a community of values. This idea serves as a counterbalance to neoliberal politics that have contributed to both massive social inequalities and to the demoralization and cynicism on the part of ordinary citizens.

Up to now, though, solidarity is mainly realized through economic mechanisms aiming at compensation rather than redistribution. Yet this is inadequate. Solidarity in the social context is essential for the bonding of people –and member states in the case of EE - and a powerful generator of social cohesion. One obstacle is that solidarity has been based on a sense of societal homogeneity. Nowadays this is highly challenged both in EE and national level. One usual suspect is globalization and immigration.

Along with this, the new current era of austerity creates new social anxieties and puts pressure both on theories and practices. Therefore, basic notions, such as social solidarity, need to be reconfigured in order new strategies for action to be dictated. It is interesting to notice however, that there is a contrast between common challenges that all European

welfare states face, and the institutional variation across the European continent in dealing with them.

Seen from a normative perspective, solidarity involves mutual obligations and responsibilities. Then a question arises “does the European Union provide the kind of landscape or context within which citizens (directly or through their states) can or should feel more and more bound by relationships of solidarity?” (Nicolaïdis & Viehoff, 2012:41). Given the complex nature of European integration, a full account of EU solidarity could be redefined in three main contexts: in the national level, namely, through obligations among citizens and generally residents of member states, internationally, namely, obligations among member states, and transnationally, as obligations among EU citizens.

There is not a concrete answer to these issues especially now that the recent crisis has caused EU lose pace. However, the essential role of education is brought in the foreground in fostering citizen identities and a sense of shared trajectories.

Consequently, our next, further targeted, analytical context was the relation of education to solidarity. Does education produce solidaristic values and principles? Are these in turn being transformed into collective practices? For that purpose another sociological concept was analysed; social capital and its relation to education. Indicators of social capital are social trust, institutional trust and increased levels of collective activities especially in times of need. For the purpose of this research, the adopted perspective is that education is the most powerful generator of social capital, which in turn accounts for increased levels of social solidarity.

All the above led to the final part of analysis which is Greek society in crisis and the new forms of solidarity that emerged in the field of education. The review on the history of Greek welfare state and the Greek educational system, as well as comparison to the present day situation has denoted significant lack of social capital and broad social solidarity has never been the first priority. Crisis has put extra strains in society generally and in education in particular. However, even despite widely accepted expectations and predictions, almost immediately after the emergence of crisis, there has been a remarkable activation in order to face multiple straits.

To sum up, the first part of this paper attempted a conceptual clarification of social solidarity from early historical times until the current conditions of transformation through various sociological theories and perspectives. Two other social concepts were also

included in the analysis; a) social capital and b) volunteerism, the former being a condition and the latter a manifestation of social solidarity in modern societies as they are considered basic in our analysis of solidarity and in the results of our research. Additionally, different approaches to categorizing of solidarity have been presented either examining it from the motivation angle or the actors involved in its provision. This paper is mainly concerned with informal type of solidaristic actions, especially those seen through the private activation in times of need or in the sense of altruism.

This type is very often interrelated to volunteerism. There is not one way of defining voluntary sector though. This is because it covers a wide variety of organizations and associations that extend from profit to non-profit, national to small local, formal to non-formal ones. It is often regarded as a special form of civil society.

Concluding this part, this paper adopts Prainsack and Buyx's (2012) view who claim that "solidarity is understood as practice and not merely as an inner sentiment or an abstract value. As such it requires actions." Such actions belong to the field of education and will be the core of our empirical research.

PART 2: THE EMPIRICAL PART

3. RESEARCH QUESTIONS, RESEARCH FRAMEWORK, METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

3.1. Introduction

The previous two chapters offered the theoretical framework within which social solidarity is addressed. There has been a review on the various concepts of this issue based on different ideologies as well as the way that social solidarity is conceived by the EU. Our next point of concern is to find evidence how social solidarity is practiced in greek society under the burden of the recent recession. The following chapter is the empirical part of the research. The research questions are presented and the methodological process as well as the data analysis are described.

3.2. Research hypotheses and research questions

For the purpose of the research a semi-structured questionnaire guide was used⁵¹, adapted to 3 different groups of informants. The questionnaires were given particular attention in order to be relevant and explicit as far as our research hypothesis is concerned. Moreover, they should serve the general objective of our research, namely, the impact of education on improving peoples' living conditions and the conceptualisation of solidarity by the various participants.

Based on the theoretical inquiry, three hypotheses have been formed in order to be affirmed or rejected by data. Firstly, it is argued that social solidarity in the context of the recent crisis has aquired new perceptions for participants in the voluntary initiative of koinoniko frontistirio. the second hypothesis is that the recession has promoted social activism and solidaristic movements bottom-up. The third hypothesis is that the educational solidaristic initiative of koinoniko frontistirio has empowered the local social capital. Accordingly the specific research questions that will be answered are the following:

a) How is solidarity conceived by the various actors of the initiative of koinoniko frontistirio?

⁵¹ See Annex I

b) What is the degree of political influence that this specific action carries e.g. change of educational policies which aim at strengthening solidarity and social inclusion, ?

c) What is the educational initiative's degree of social impact e.g. in combating inequality, achieving social cohesion and social integration and forming a new culture of volunteerism?

3.3. Empirical measures of social solidarity – surveys review

Various surveys have been conducted in the European context in an attempt to define the notion of solidarity in a more explicit way (Rusu, 2012). The majority follows the quantitative approach, attempting to transform the concept of solidarity into observable and measurable indicators both in the cognitive level and in its perception through specific acts. Data has been mainly drawn from comparative surveys especially European Value Study.

Arts & Gelissen, (2001) examined the influence of the various welfare regimes on the preferred levels of solidarity and justice among people, drawing data from International Survey Programme 1996 and the European Values Study 1999. The Van Oorschot study (2006) focused on the conditionality on solidarity, drawing data from the 1999/2000 European Values Study. Using both quantitative and qualitative data there was an attempt to measure people's attitudes and beliefs based on concepts of trust in a local environment. Radtke's (2007) focus of attention is the practical perspective – in terms of money given to donations. A more recent survey of de Beer & Koster (2009) proposes a measurement of solidarity based on three aspects of the concept: a) the informal, voluntary participation of the individual, b) the degree of willingness to help others and c) the degree of preference of state-organized solidarity (Rusu, 2012:5). All in all, evidence shows an increased interest in defining solidarity. This justifies the importance of the concept in terms of both formal and informal welfare.

In Greek reality, social solidarity began to intrigue academic and scientific interest mainly after the crisis. Research papers have been written and surveys have been carried out examining the consequences of the economic crisis on social solidarity and social cohesion. Indicative examples are: Eurydice Report (2013), Fábíán, Matsaganis, Veliziotis, & Tóth (2014), examined the consequences of crisis on societal matters. Katsikas, Karakitsios, Filinis & Petralias (2014), focused of the economic consequences

on solidarity Kotroyannos, Lavdas, Tzagkarakis, Kamekis, & Chourdakis, (2013), attempted to compare pre and post crisis Greek welfare state. Bourikos (2013) and Sotiropoulos & Bourikos (2014) examined the activation of civil society. Zambeta & Kolofousi (2014) focused on education and solidarity.

A number of results have been drawn but it is not yet clear whether social solidarity was empowered because of the crisis or it was scarcely influenced by it.

3.4. Methodological approach

Our focus of attention will be the personal attitudes towards a particular concept and the meanings that individuals attribute to it. The qualitative approach is considered the most appropriate way to do so. Specially, in order for our research to be carried out, the case study method was used. The tools that were used were in-depth interviews. The adoption of this particular approach is believed to highlight the innovative elements of the initiative of koinoniko frontistirio. Additionally, it offers an in-depth analysis of how the concept of social solidarity is conceived by individuals, examines any aspects of difficulty and serves as a basis for further more systematic scientific studies.

As it is noted by Ritchie & Lewis (2006:3), there are numerous definitions of the term qualitative research since “it covers a wide range of approaches and methods. It is a naturalistic, interpretative approach concerned with understanding the meaning which people attach to phenomena (actions, decisions, beliefs, values etc) within their social worlds.”

Qualitative methodology was chosen as the most appropriate for the present paper. It will enable us to examine a particular “phenomenon” (Smith, 2003), namely, the provision of educational resources through the voluntary initiative of “koinoniko frontistirio”. Moreover, it will offer assistance in our effort to explain the development of acts of solidarity and volunteerism in the environment of the current crisis. More explicitly, the focus of attention will be to the subjective conceptual dimensions of solidarity during this particular time period of acute crisis and the strings attached to education. Our emphasis is to “unpack its meaning”(Ritchie & Lewis,2006:82) and gain a deep understanding of the inner motives of the specific group of volunteers in getting involved in such an action. We are interested in investigating aspects, such as participant’s knowledge, beliefs, attitudes or fears (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Specifically, we are

interested in understanding how volunteer participants conceive the current crisis, the meaning they attribute to solidarity and their future perspectives.

Generally speaking, there is no single, accepted way of doing qualitative research. Elements such as the researcher's beliefs, the purpose and the goals of the research as well as the characteristics of the participants and the position and environment of the researcher (Snape & Spencer, 2006) determine the process. It was decided that a case study with in-depth interviews would be the most appropriate method applied to the particular paper. According to Stake (2003:134), a case study "is not a methodological choice but a choice of what is to be studied". Additionally, since solidarity is an evolving issue, it was determined that the case study would be the most appropriate method as "the researcher is a teacher using at least two pedagogical methods. Teaching *didactically*, the researcher teaches what s/he has learned. *Discovery learning* provides material for readers to learn on their own, things the teacher does not know as well as those s/he does know. [...] From case reports we increase both proportional and experiential knowledge." (Stake, 2003:145).

The study was inductive; meaning that "unexpected themes that might lead to theoretical development were anticipated" (Willig, 2002). A case study can contribute to the improvement of theoretical assumptions and lead to further research on certain complex issues. Moreover a case study can be a "disciplined force in public policy setting and reflection on human experience" (Stake, 2003:156). Also case studies share common elements with any methodology used to "delve deeper" as they "allow for in-depth exploration and explore processes as well as outcomes" and can also "bring new understandings to the fore." (O'Leary, 2004:115-116)

Interviewing is probably the most common method in qualitative research especially in the fields of education and social studies. In-depth, semi-structured interviewing was decided to be the most appropriate method for the present study. This is because it offers a "detailed investigation of people's personal perspectives, for in-depth understanding of the personal context within which the research phenomena are located and for very detailed subject coverage." (Ritchie, 2006:37) It is considered a key factor in attempting to thoroughly examine and hopefully interpret complicated, multifaceted issues and procedures such as personal perspectives, impacts, motives, feelings, beliefs or even outcomes.

Prior but also during the interviews, a documentary analysis was conducted. This is an additional method part of qualitative research. Moreover it was considered essential part of the process since “private” as well as “public” accounts of solidarity acts were needed. Written communications were thought to be central to our enquiry as “public awareness” of the issue in question is also sought. (Ritchie 2006) A variety of documents were revised:

- ✓ multimedia: web and social media posts, newspaper – written and electronic – columns/articles, news reports
- ✓ historical documents: organisation records, policy documents
- ✓ relevant surveys, journals, books, reports

The objective was to gather further information of the characteristics of Social Frontistirio and the impacts of this programme on improving people’s lives as far as education, social inclusion and civil engagement are concerned.

3.5. Realibility and Validity

The collected data account not only for the specific initiative which is examined through the case study; they offer an evidence “bank” with data that could be used in any relevant, future studies as a means of comparison. The use of more than one method for data collection would add to the validity of our research. It would allow for comparison and cross-checking of the empirical findings; thus a *methodological triangulation* would be achieved along with a *data triangulation* which is achieved through the comparison of information given by different respondents to the same –factual- question.⁵²

The scientific and methodological paths that were chosen have been proven legitimate and justified as well as useful for conducting the research. Nevertheless, under no circumstances should the empirical outcomes be regarded as statistically sufficient. The primary concern was to open the path in examining how basic concepts like solidarity, volunteerism and education for social inclusion are interlinked and transformed in times of extreme crises like the one we have been living in nowadays. The above mentioned

⁵²Although many scholars stress the difficulty of validity in qualitative research yet many writers mention the necessity of triangulation in order to gain validity; the specific terms are found in (Atkins & Wallace, 2012).

concepts are all, from a scientific point of view, ideologically charged⁵³ and carry by definition a heavy burden as far as merits, values and principles are concerned.

3.6. Sampling

The research focuses on the programme/initiative of Social Frontistirio in the city of Corinth. In our sample there is a representative of the public sector – since it is a combined public/private initiative, teachers in the Frontistirio and students in the frontistirio; the first two groups can be referred to as the stakeholders whereas the latter are the recipients of the act. The vast majority of the interviewees belong to the second group – volunteer teachers – because the main objective of our research was to draw on the – new – meaning that solidarity and volunteerism carry particularly for the providers during the recent economic crisis. The volunteers belong to two categories: young, unemployed (which are the majority) and retired teachers. One objective was to investigate whether people’s perception on solidarity and volunteerism alters depending on their employment status. A second objective has been to identify whether a new solidarity culture has emerged due to crisis.

Interviewees’ profile:	
Volunteer Teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 retired public sector teacher (male, the informal headmaster) • 2 retired public sector teachers (one male, one female) • 3 young teachers employed in private education (all female) • 5 young unemployed teachers (2 male, 3 female) • 1 young teacher employed in other sectors (not in education –male)
Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 Gymnasium student • 5 Lyceum students

⁵³For an extensive analysis of the processes and underpins with regard to choosing a scientific project and elaborating on the sub-issues such as developing research questions etc one could turn to the elaborate analysis of Stylianidis N. (2004) (drasis tis koinonias politon se periodous krisis: “h epistimologiki diadromi enos erenvitikou enhirimatos” (Civil society activation in times of crisis: the scientific route of a research project). The chapter also offers valuable information on the topic civil society.

Representative of the Corinth Municipality	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Employee in the Centre of Social Policy
Total number of participants: 19 individuals	

A chart follows with the characteristics of the participants in the study.

3.7. Procedure

Initially, the Headmaster of koinoniko frontistirio was contacted and informed about the research. He contested and also guided us through coming in touch with volunteer teachers. He also provided us with the necessary background information about the initiative.

The interviews were conducted over a three-month period (December 2015 – February 2016). Data analysis (interviews and document analysis) followed; it took place between February and March 2016. All the participants were interviewed in their work place as this was considered their natural context which would enable them to relax and be more receptive. Additionally, it was much more convenient for the participants to be in their work place. All interviews were conducted in a spare classroom or in a private place so that no interruptions would occur. It is worth mentioning that all informants accepted to be interviewed and were very cooperative. The interviews with the students were conducted after the parental consent, in a place chosen by the interviewees; in one case the parent was present as well.

The interviews were recorded with the interviewees' permission. The tapes were then transcribed and the recordings archived in order to maintain confidentiality. A pilot interview was conducted in order to detect any questionnaire inconsistencies, and correct any practical or technical problems. A noticed drawback was the available time in order to conduct the interviews. Unfortunately, there was a time limit since the interviewees had eventually had to follow the schedule and do their lessons. Informed consent was obtained verbally and recorded on tape.

4. PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS OF THE INTERVIEWS DATA

4.1. Introduction

In this chapter the findings of the qualitative research will be presented. In particular, there will be a presentation of the data elicited from the interviews with teachers, students and the municipality representative. Data presentation is grouped in seven axes, following the development of the questionnaire guides. An analysis based on the findings follows and some basic points of concern are emphasized.

4.2. The profile and background information of the case of koinoniko frontistirio in Corinth

Koinoniko Frontistirio in Corinth operates within the domain of Social Policy Centre of Corinth Municipality. This is a public legal entity, which is entitled to serve as a provider of social policy, solidarity and social cohesion. The main responsibilities are the coordination of the local public nurseries and the open protection centres for elderly citizens (KAPI). It is also responsible for organizing information seminars, and initiatives of social, medical or cultural interest. It also collaborates with the Culture, Sports and Environment Centre and NGO group “Pireus and Islands Unesco group” for organising cultural and social events.⁵⁴ It becomes clear that the local authorities have an active role in exercising social policy. The initiative of social frontistirio was the former center head’s inspiration in collaboration with a retired teacher.

The initiative began its operation on October, 2012 and it was the first active practice. During the first year of operation (2013-14) it employed 48 teachers and 277 students and occupied 65 classes. In 2014-15 there was a significant rise: 338 students, 53 teachers and 77 classes. During the present year (data until 15/11/2015) 244 students and 43 teachers have joined in 47 classes. The success rate in exams for the first year was 77% , whereas in 2015 it reached 68%. Six of the teachers are retired and the rest are either unemployed or

⁵⁴ Data provided by Social Policy Centre of Corinth Municipality

active in labour. The operation hours are 4:30 – 6:00 a.m every day. It is located in the building of the 1st Corinth Public Primary School.⁵⁵

4.3. Data presentation

A) Action background information/ ways of participation / meaning of the solidarity

The first thematic area aimed at identifying the actors involved in the initiation of Social Frontistirio in Corinth and the way its operation has become known to the participants. The initiative in the city of Corinth has mixed characteristics. It is in a great extent the outcome of an individual's activation in collaboration with the Municipality of Corinth. Although the local Department of Social Policy had the intention to form a Social Frontistio, it is deducted by the majority of interviewees that the driving force behind this initiative was a retired Headmaster; he was the one who contacted the person in charge and in most cases he was the one who recruited the personel.

"I was the first who dreamed of (the Social Frontistirio). Everything fell into place .. and I heard him saying "We are willing to create the Social Frontistirio here in Municipality of Corinth." I "rushed" immediately. I went to the Municipality and I found the staff in the center, saying "I'm called...and I can help you create the Social Frontistirio ..".(Interview 9, 18/1)

"Although I had already been aware of the existance of Social Frontistia since I have been living nearby, I had not shown any personal interest until I got this phone call from the person in charge of Social Frontistirion at some point." (Interview 2, 18/1)

" This particular initiative has been conceived and came into life by Mr A. (Interview 4, 18/1)

Apart from the Headmaster, a second source of knowledge for many volunteer teachers and students as well has been the informal network of friends or teachers formally employed in the frontistirio. There seems to be a relative absence of formal and organised prosedures by local authorities. Only in two cases it was mentioned that the volunteers got

⁵⁵ Data retrieved from kfg.gr

informed about the existence of the frontistiro either by an announcement or through a site. In both cases though, it was described more as a random incident. This is not the case for students. As far as the students' participation is concerned, their schools acted in most cases as agencies of information. There is dissemination of information through posters, leaflets and announcements from the part of municipality in collaboration with the public gymnasia.

«The truth is that I had previously seen an announcement in a site of the Municipality and some local ones, but I was not interested at that time as I had already had a job and when I was unemployed I happened to get a phone call from here. It was great luck for me to get involved in something» (Interview 7, 21/01)

“Purely by coincidence; from a poster in OAED[...] I had gone there in order to renew my unemployment card, I saw the poster and I thought to myself that's a good way to enter teaching” (Interview 1, 19/12)

“...initially I learnt about it from my school because we get informed in the beginning of school year that lessons in koinoniko frontistirio start and from announcements in the classrooms so that we can also see what it takes to join it and later from some friends of mine who were already here.” (Interview 17, 16/02)

The next element under question was the motivation. As far as the participants' background is concerned all of them are teachers – except for the secretary - since the particular action is purely educational. They are divided in two categories: a) young, unemployed or privately employed teachers and b) retired educators⁵⁶. The majority (39 out of 44) belong to the first category. When asked about their motives for participation in this initiative their answers differed depending on the above mentioned status. The dominating motive for the first category was primarily entering the teaching sector and gaining teaching experience. However the solidarity element was also apparent in their answers. In many cases it was mentioned that a kind of reciprocity was expected even not in an obvious way.

“ I'm interested in teaching professionally and there was no other way to so since I have no experience at all and initially I went there in order to get more information (about the action)” (Interview 1 19/12)

⁵⁶see Table 1 “Participants' profile” p. 47

“...I am very interested in the subject and found it interesting. As a matter of fact it was a challenge, basically, for me!

Question: Regarding the teaching?

Answer: Yes. Both teaching and also the fact that there were many retired teachers, from whom we can learn many things, we the younger ones ... Like me, but even younger.”(Interview 2, 18/01)

“...First it “filled” my time, which is something essential that is to pass your time with something you love. Mainly when you offer something special ... Let me say at this point that I have done voluntary work in the past, as part of my Master[...] Therefore, I was familiar with that (i.e. voluntary work) and the time was just right. When you're unemployed and you have a chance to work and this takes for a while your mind away from the problem that's pleasant. That's why I said that the time was right for me. Because when you get involved in an action the truth is that other things come to your mind... As long as you don't participate, you don't think, either...” (Interview 7, 25/01)

“..the experience is very good. I do not get paid, but the fact that I enter a classroom and teach a large number of children is a great experience. It's as if I'm in a (private) frontistirio, a (public) school ... I gain great teaching experience” [...] Also, there are other older teachers here .. many of them are retired, and their experience helps us the younger ones. It is what they call "the urge of the new and the experience of the elder", so apart from teaching we can also consult them in order to see how to teach something...” (Interview 5, 25/01)

“ ...it was “low”, “selfish”, “personal” (used in a teasing way) (laughing)... [...] I simply stress that (the chance to gain teaching experience) was of great importance to me .. Because I have an incredible passion for this job.”(Interview 4, 25/01)

One the other hand, the element of social offer through volunteering based on the concept of social solidarity, becomes much more obvious in the answers of the retired teachers. Their answers justify their decision to participate in Social Frontistirio as driven by a humanitarian duty of helping those in need. Moreover the conception of solidarity for this category carries the political element as well as sensitivity and intolerance towards inequality. It is the case that this is not the first act of volunteerism or social activation for these people:

“I think some things are self-evident. When someone is in need and can not meet the life requirements and the rest of us can offer something, then I believe that everyone should do so. We, of course, those who have been involved, we have the urge to offer ... We also love children ...[...] I do not know if this could be regarded as a voluntary action ... In the past I used to cooperate with the Corinth Municipality”.(Interview 3, 18/01)

“I was led (to the decision to participate) because I saw the needs that existed with the children and this is the result of what I say ... It got to the point where I said, "we must help." I, as a teacher, did the obvious thing, I helped the children in their lessons.” [...] *Even in our neighborhood we will need to create some institutions, where each one is responsible for something. Someone could be responsible for cleaning, someone else for informing fellow citizens about the problems our society is facing...”* (Interview 9, 18/01)

Through the majority of responses –both by younger and older volunteers – respect and trust towards the leading individual has emerged as a crucial factor of the operation and success of the particular initiative.

“[...] this man has worked incredibly for this [initiative] and still works till today. He comes every day, although he is retired and he has no problem in doing so ... He is the most praiseworthy of all. [...] he is the personification of solidarity” (Interview 4 18/01)

“I see Mr. V. who is anxious, is struggling ... he’s been striving under harsh conditions and many obstacles, so that we lack of nothing so that we are able to offer something to children [...]He has helped usconsiderably. His struggle has actually paid; we have benefited and by extension children have benefited too” (Interview 9, 21/01)

B) Spatial -Territorial scope

The second axis attempted to identify the nature of this particular solidarity action – its targeting and whether its operation could continue even after the present emergent situation is dealt with. Social Frontistiria are initiatives with local characteristics. They aim at helping the students of a certain community; that is a particular Municipality serves as their boundaries.

The participants were further asked whether they considered that the introduction of the initiative of Social Frontistirio was a result of the current crisis and whether this programme could continue even if the country managed to “recover”. Their answers showed that most of them are positive in the existence of a similar form regardless crisis. They justified their answers on the basis of egalitarianism in society and the active role that education should play in facing inequalities.

“Question: Could this Social Tutorial act as a model for similar actions, even if there was no crisis?”

Answer: Well...that would be ideal.

Question: Would you like to participate?”

Answer: I would like to participate. Of course! That's why I have not left this place so far. I would like to participate in the future,too” (Interview 2, 18/01)

“My feeling is that it should be preserved. Regardless crisis. Because anyone that has something to offer they should do whether there is a crisis or not. I feel that this institution (the Social Frontistirio) should have pre-existed and be preserved after the crisis. Of course, not as extensive as it is now, but at least it should be an intergrated, parallel action to the public-private education.” (Interview 3, 18/1)

“I believe that even if tomorrow everything was different and and in place again I still believe that such actions should exist. It has to do with society and certainly there is some inequality in society. Even if tomorrow we were all better again some of us will still be excluded. Even if the number would be smaller it would still exist ... And these people should be given an opportunity, a service, a lesson, an entertainment ... everything through a social activity. It is necessary that there is something out there.” (Interview 7, 25/1)

In one case it was suggested that a similar initiative could be developed for adults this time, so this could serve as a model for different actions in the future regardless of the crisis.

“ [...]and you know what? I would like to add something here, a new proposal that we thought ... and this was an old colleague's suggestion "eh V., you shouldorganise a Social frontistio for adults along with the Social Tutorial for kids.” (Interview 9, 27/01)

The majority however do not conceive the crisis as a crucial catalyst either for public intervention against inequalities or for strengthening a culture of solidarity among citizens. The current crisis is primarily seen as a deterrent against a wider public provision

of social goods and a way for creating a new form of civil cooperations and a change of attitude:

“we should form institutions in our neighbourhood where each one is responsible for one thing[...].....no, no, no I do not expect anything from the part of public sector because I can understand that the state can not offer us any help.....” (interview 9, 18/01)

“Now that we are experiencing this crisis, the concept of the state should be abandoned, in my opinion. It's up to the individuals. Anything that bothers us all around us, even something on the sidewalk outside our house, we can blame the municipality, for example, because they didn't clean the place! Do it yourself. End of conversation. For me there's neither the Municipality, nor the Mayor, the Prime Minister, or even the State... Unless we start taking action, nothing will change” (Interview 7, 25/01)

Additionally a feeling of mistrust and weariness towards political control was detected.

Question: “Would it be a good idea to have this action (even if the crisis is solved?)...”

Answer: Of course. And of course, it should be dealt with appropriateness. What I mean is that it shouldn't be nice when we have no (economic) problem any more to allow "ours"(heterogeneous) to intrude and let it become a bureaucratic formation and, perhaps, a state of a "bad school" because it would not make sense. We would lose students that way.” (Interview 12, 21/01)

“...we are used to statism, state intervention

“I believe that each one has to confer with themselves, their family and provide solutions to the problems first within their family. Then we have to look at our neighborhood, in the district ... to make "local councils" that had once existedbut we shouldn't allow for political parties to be involved [...] if we follow this path we are lost! lost! I personally believe that is this the reason why we fail in solving the problems: because we say “we shouldn't help this mayor since he won't be reelected ...” (Interview 9, 18/1)

Although the initiative started in a limited basis it has expanded and it is made clear that there are plans to broaden its scope. One interviewee mentioned that although similar initiatives had previously introduced in different Municipalities this is the only successful one. This expansion is attributed once more to individual initiatives:

“[...]During the first year I taught high school kids, I remember, for two hours ... last year and this year I taught for twelve hours and this years I have again many hours. I do secretarial support as well. I am one of those who come here at 16:00 and leave at 21:00 each day.” (Interview 8, 25/01)

“...I didn't believe it myself that it would expand so much. That is to have a whole school at our disposal and yet the fifteen (15) rooms not to be enough! On Mondays and Tuesdays there is need for fourteen (14) classrooms! I did not see it coming ... I had not realized! ...” (Interview 9, 18/1)

In one case increasing participation was attributed to the circulation of information by the children themselves who act as a non-typical network.

“ That is, children want to be together and each one urges the other to come. And for this reason, more and more children are coming ..” (Interview 2, 18/01)

C) Organisational aspects

The next field of inquiry attempted to examine organisational aspects of the initiative and probably any elements of democratic implementations. This initiative seems to operate as a hybrid democratic formation. There is a person in charge who organises and monitors the operation of the institution as a whole; however this person although is referred to as the “Headmaster” refuses the official title himself. According to his sayings decisions are –or should be- the outcome of collective actions on egalitarian basis where everyone can speak up for themselves and are free – or even “oblidged”- to share ideas for further development of the institution.

“This specific program is the "offspring" of Mr. A. our informal headmaster. He started it, he set it up.” (Interview 4, 18/1)

“Nowhere is mentioned that I am the director! We are all equal! I have the experience, expertise, and will make certain things ... [...] we shape the conditions to do so. All together, though! How shall we do it? This way or otherwise? Let's put everything down and we'll decide how we want things to be done.” (Interview 9, 18/1)

Through the majority of responses –both by younger and older volunteers – respect and trust towards the leading individual has emerged as a crucial factor of the operation

and success of the particular initiative. This is supported by the ideas expressed in Goodwin, Jasper, & Polletta (2004) that “we tend to believe the statements of those individuals and organizations toward whom, at the emotional level, we have positive effects: we trust those we agree with, and agree with those we trust; the affective emotions often come first”.

D) Education and solidarity

A central issue that was sought in our research was the relationship of education and solidarity. When asked to describe how education has contributed (or not) in the increased sense of solidarity most answers were positive:

“by definition education is about socialization. It’s not impersonal. You’re dealing with people! This is amazing!” (Interview 12 ,31/01)

“..I believe that students are having a positive attitude towards us and towards each of us. Now it is somewhat difficult to distinguish the institution in relation to us, in relation to teachers. However we receive, at least I personally, and I believe it applies to the rest of the teachers too, we can notice sympathy and love from the part of the children. We help them escape a dead-end they might have reached,”[...]They might not otherwise improve and complete their knowledge or something ..” (Interview 3, 18/1)

Additionally, the long-term contribution of education in the development of solidarity and social cohesion was stressed.

“You can not say that you will help someone by giving him some material things and be "satisfied". You learn some things [...]and according to the Chinese proverb that says "I won't give the poor, the hungry, the fish instead I'll teach him how to fish" to be able to do something ... the essence of education lies on that. That is, you must educate him to face reality, without relying, of course, in others, namely solidarity in general, because this will end eventually,. You can't rely on solidarity for ever.”(Interview 12, 31/01)

“I qualify them... that’s how I see it. They get the necessary qualifications. And this is what I try to get through the students. I do not care so much whether the knowledge passed is actually "very good", as it is to realize that it is necessary, essential to be

able to cope with reality. understood? That is, actually that they need. Not just to pass the class.”(Interview 12, 31/01)

An interesting aspect that emerged, is the public conception of private tutoring (shadow education). In two cases –both by a teacher and a student- a distinction was made – through the choice of words - between a private tutoring where fees are required and social frontistirio which is free. It seems as if there is a fixed, however unconscious, conception of the market as the provider of effective education.

“it’s like a normal frontistirio”

“I can not imagine that the same parents, if they had registered their children in a formal tuition and would actually pay handsomely would not press their children to come every time, or would not come themselves here frequently to get informed about their children’s progress”(Interview 4, 18/01)

“Since children since do not pay and “their pocket doesn’t hurt” let’s say, do not show the same interest that they would in case they paid” (Interview 6, 18/01)

However in one case it was stressed that the initiative of social frontistirio offers participants a chance for the development of social relationships unlike the private tutoring which is presented as more competitive and focused primarily in the achievement of goals.

“.....beyond any doubt. You get a completely different experience through teaching in a classroom. There is no comparison to the private tutoring. You come into contact with children, you see the children, you know what they want ... nothing in comparison.....” (Interview 8, 25/01)

E) Good practices/barriers in achieving the goals

As mentioned in the first group of questions all participants attributed the success of Social Frontistirio to the commitment and enthusiasm of its –informal -Headmaster. One participant also considered that the state –through the local authorities - had positively attributed to the successful operation of the action:

“The state, at least in this case, has shown a good will and indeed has offered this building, because the buildings are the property of Corinth Municipal ... and if not

there was consent by the City of Corinth, it could be set up that the social institution of Tutoring ..” (Interview 3, 18/1)

However in many cases an absence of organised state participation in the initiative was detected through the answers –public sector insufficiency due to the recession was stressed. It was widely acknowledged that individual activation is more important:

“I feel satisfaction because apart from everything else, I do something good for society, because I think if everyone does something good, the only way to change society. Not governments I work with kids, I have no problem ... ” (Interview 6, 25/1)

“I wish it were more organised, better structured” (Interview 7, 25/1)

“[...] We offer exactly what we offer to other children (i.e. in private education) and even more. We do not do anything "less". We don't see it as something menial . This effort needs paper, books ... there are some expenses, which are not met by the state in a great extent. They (the local authorities) will be here mostly in case they want to show themselves ... this is what I've noticed during these years. Beyond that, everything is the result of the effort and struggle of Mr. V.” (Interview 10, 18/1)

Mass media was used as a means to engage volunteers to work in the program.

“I said “and now...what?” ... I talked with my son, who is in England, and I said "I can't go any further..." he asks me "What's the matter, father? I said “this is how things are” he is telling me "and that's why you worry so much?" "Yes, my child, that's the reason." He says, "Look, you and the Mayor will make an announcement appealing to unemployed graduates!". That really scared me and I said "My child, these people are facing their own problems" it was back to 2011 when the crisis was culminating ... "... they have no money, not even for a coffee, how are they supposed to join us ?[...] Father, "he says," trust me. " And we went out the very same day to the (local) channels and we made the announcement and here we are! 39 out of a total of 44 volunteer teachers are unemployed....” (interview 9, 18/1/2016)

There are also plans for further use of the mass media especially electronic means in an attempt to expand their “visibility” in society. The “enrichment” of the act with the creation of website could be seen as an act of political impact. This will serve as an electronic platform where all the participants can upload documents of interest such as CVs, research papers or write opinion articles. It is estimated that this can strengthen

social cohesion and create social bonds at least to the members of the initiative through a novel development of virtual educational community.

“I have the experience, the expertise, and will make certain things ... and now we are planning our homepage (in the internet)... we are planning to form new conditions. And you will see that when you visit our website how nice it is ...” (interview 9, 18/1/2016)

In one case the need for openness to local society and the need for diffusion of results was emphasized; this role should be played by local authorities which seem somewhat absent or at least inadequate to carry this task.

“It came as a great surprise that there is such an activity in Corinth, admittedly. And I think there should be other similar acts. And all these programmes that are organised by the Municipality, that is through the Social Policy Centre should be more “visible”. [...] It's in the small print and you have to look hard in order to learn about it. What I'm saying is that what's happening in this city is positive but I think more actions should take place or at least the existing ones should be “open” to society! They should gain more publicity” (Interview 7, 25/1/2016)

F) Social/ Political impact

The next group of questions had to do with the social and/or political impact this initiative has. The participants were asked about the solidarity bonds that might or even hopefully have existed / created among the participants, the teachers—the *stakeholders* – and the students – the *end-users*. Although most interviewees mentioned positively the bonds that were created among the former, there are mixed messages concerning the latter – the recipients. Although many teachers noted that children have responded positively in the initiative, many seemed rather disappointed by the scarcity of solidarity displayed by students.

“...In any case, there's something nice going on. I like it. We've been friends with other teachers, whereas this was not the case in the beginning. That is to say, I used to think "where am I going? what will I meet? what kind of people?" but everyone was very good.” (Interview 6, 25/1/2015)

“We have met so many new people ... I would say, I've become a different person because I had experienced a bad phase in my life when I stopped working as a teacher and I could not stand it , I can tell ... ”

“Question: ...That is, the teacher helps and the child accordingly receives and reciprocates. Is there at any level this relationship? In social terms, let's say?”

Answer: I do not think so. This message has not got through ... Despite our efforts it has not passed. I am not at all happy with this part, because they (the children) only want to get. Only get! They do not want to give...” (interview 9, 18/1)

“At least the young ones that I teach, who have just left primary school... and have not yet matured enough.. I do not think that they can understand even if you tell them. I think, they will get to see what we offered them when many years will pass and they'll become more mature.... how important it is to get something for free...” (Interview 7, 25/1)

“ I believe that they (the children) are preoccupied with economical issues. This view follows a hierarchy and it is taken for granted ... that is, since we have economic problems, our parents are unemployed ..., the state should take care of this (education).” (Interview 11, 18/1)

“Okay ... some do not respond at all. Others appreciate what we do here. Namely, they show it in action. Some not .. I'm happy for what I do ...” (Interview 8, 25/1)

Another question involved the relationship between solidarity and crisis. All of the interviewees mentioned a change of attitude and an increased tendency towards volunteerism as well as a feeling of social solidarity; they were attributed to the current crisis. It becomes clear through the answers that these acts of social activism have had a positive impact in the lives of the volunteer teachers especially against social isolation. This is especially true when it comes to young teachers who run the risk of social exclusion because of lack of employment.

“ People are more available. At least those who can. And we can't always. That is, we have Because I have two small children and at first I hesitated a little, but afterwards, as I said before, I saw it as a challenge. And indeed I was right! It was something that had a positive influence in me, but I see that the children "gain" something out of it too! (Interview 2, 21/1)

“Yes, I think that the number of such actions has risen. It is a fact. People have come closer to each other” (Interview 3, 18/1)

“Certainly they change. Social sensitivity has increased. And our sensitivity should aim primarily at the kids .. Yes, of course we have become more socially aware. It becomes clear in this environment; by all of us who work here. By me but also by all teachers.” (Interview 2, 21/1)

“When you're unemployed and you are given a chance to work this takes your mind a bit off your troubles and it is pleasing. [...] Because when you participate other things occupy your thoughts as well, the truth is ... As long as you are excluded, you are not able to think [...] That is since I started working here, I included other activities as well in my everyday programme that I wasn't thinking before... that was because I was too occupied with the fact that I was unemployed [...] It helps you have a positive attitude.” (Interview 7, 25/1)

“the special relationship of lack of fees makes, I believe, the parents, and this is not only my opinion I think, to be unwilling to force things, not to want to learn more about the progress of the child .

In some cases scepticism whether the Greek society's perspective towards more solidaristic and socially activated attitudes has fundamentally changed.

“I do not think that Greeks would be socially sensitive in the absence of the crisis, because we are in favour of fast, easy and ready solutions and if we can support something with money, we will support it..” (Interview 7, 26/01)

On the other hand, almost all interviewees felt disappointed about parental participation.

“Parents are required, to come here in the afternoons at school, in the evening, as guards, for their children to come closer to their children and us teachers, but they do not come.. We ask the children why don't their parents come and the answer is "our parents work, Mr. A., and they can not come here," "ah, then, my children," I said "why have you brought zero IRS clearing?" (interview 9, 18/1)

“I believe, and this is not only my opinion, that because of lack of fees, parents, do not wish to push things further, do not wish to get informed about the progress of the child ... Only in rare cases do they take the initiative to come in order to learn about their child's progress! And if we suppose it's not a big deal for a Gymnasium kid what about a Lyceum student? Not a single parent has appeared asking "What's my kid's progress? How are things?" before Christmas holidays... Their children are preparing for national exams! it's unbelievable to me ... I guess this would not be the case in a private tutoring (with fees).” (Interview 4, 18/1)

Question: How have parents responded to the existence of the Social Tuition?

Answer: Not very well .. There are very few parents who have come here to ask about their children's progress and generally to see what happens here. It's as if they are left in a kindergarten, just gave them away for keeping and left ... I do not know why ... Maybe because they do not pay ... I do not know what's wrong, but there is no participation!" (Interview 8, 25/1)

"...It is as if a message is carried that "you (the teacher) have the obligation to offer. Because you can, you are in a better condition than me." (Interview 12, 31/01)

An interesting detail appeared/is underpinned through/in the sayings of several interviewees (teachers and students): that the participation in a koinoniko frontistirio could create a societal disadvantage (Bills & Glennerster, 1988), that is the recipients might carry the stigma of poverty.

"[...] I'd like to suggest they(children) come and try it; why say 'it's free, so it's no good?...' " (Interview 13, 9/02)

G) Future perspectives

Most participants were sceptical about the future. The unemployed ones focused on the importance of participating in the labour market and presented it as their primary goal. Volunteerism has changed their perspective but it has not become clear that this practice will continue and the same applies for the initiative of Social Frontistirio.

"It is about society and there is definitely social inequality. Even if things improved for everyone tomorrow still there would be some who would be excluded. Maybe they would be fewer, but there would be still a number of them...Even they should be given a chance, a service, a lesson, an entertainment facility...anything provided through a social action. It is something that should always be there."(Interview 7, 26/01)

" I hope I have enough free time for a duty like that"(Interview 5, 26/01)

" as soon the country's situation and the parents' economic situation improves, things will change immediately...There will be reactions like "I have (the money), I can so I attend the external, organised (tutoring) I face no difficulty" ...

"we need to reach the end (of the line) so as to do things" (Interview 8, 27/01)

Question: so social solidarity depends on...

Answer: ...the financial circumstances and the temporary needs. (Interview 12, 31/01)

“And of course, there should be a good treatment. No, that is, because after you escape the problem, to let "our guys" enter and make it a state bureaucracy and, perhaps, a state of a "bad school" because there would be no point. No student would come.” (Interview 12,31/01)

However it is not clear that a new culture of volunteerism has been created especially in the younger generation.

“ I might wish to participate (in voluntary actions like that) but in the future if I have many responsibilities (work etc)...eh...this is a big responsibility [...]some might want but won't be able because of many responsibilities” (Interview 14, 09/02)

“why not? If I don't work at that time” (Interview 15, 10/02)

4.4. Conclusions of the empirical research

Koinokiko frontistirio emerged as an answer to the acute crisis and the inability of families to offer their children the necessary educational resources. Extra tutoring is still regarded as an essential mechanism of children's inclusion in the educational process. The specific initiative in the city of Corinth, which is the first that actually operated in October, 2012, is the outcome of mixed activation on the formal level – the public sector (the Social Policy Department of Corinth Municipality) and the informal level - the vision of a retired public sector educator. It operates on an informal and personal basis and carries characteristics of a hybrid democratic formation. There is a person in charge who organises and monitors the operation of the institution as a whole; however, this person although is referred to as the “Headmaster”, refuses the official title himself.

It has become clear that the present crisis has strengthened public opinion for the inability and inadequacy of the public sector to improve people's lives. The majority of informants are convinced that only individual activation, like the participation in this initiative, will induce broader changes in societies. The first step towards a change in attitude is the person, then their close surroundings. Most answers emitted a suspicion towards public intervention which stems from the proved inefficiency of the state to provide with the necessary social solidarity measures.

However, a paradox appears to lie here. Although volunteer teachers were very positive towards their participation to the initiative, as a collective solidaristic act, yet, the deeper thoughts and beliefs show a strong and persistent tendency towards personal activation. So it has not become clear whether a new culture in favour of civil society and voluntary participation has emerged.

Koinoniko Frontistirion nonetheless, as an initiative in the field of education, has positive impact in strengthening feelings of social solidarity. Firstly, in terms of bonding, it contributes positively in reinforcing a sense of interdependence both in teachers-teachers relationships and in teachers – students ties. It is a vital generator of socialization of individuals . It also plays an important role as a mechanism against social exclusion from the part of young, unemployed educators. They have been given the chance to participate in educational process, gain experience and generally feel part of society. In that sense the societal bonds have been strengthened. The initiative also serves as an informal “employer” – unemployed teachers can add to their employment experience as a formal qualification in their CV, they are given a certificate of participation which accounts for working experience. It has already proved useful to some; it enabled them to find a job abroad. In that context, koinoniko frontistirio has an increased accountability and seems to have achieved social improvements to a local level.

As far as students are concerned, the initiative has played an important role in providing them with equal educational opportunities. The success rate in exams is over fifty per cent. It also plays an important role in combating social exclusion. These children, coming from deprived lower or middle-class backgrounds, have a feeling of belonging, of being able to take part in a function of the society they live in. Contrary to the private lessons – cram lessons –, it is not strictly exam oriented; the absence of pressure in some cases has a positive impact in binding students and teachers together.

Yet, koinoniko frontistirio has not succeeded in all fields ; Teachers considered a major drawback the lack of parental participation –parents do not feel obliged to participate in the operation. In many cases this has been attributed to the lack of fees as is the case of regular cram lessons, denoting the dominant position that cram lessons possess in society. Joining koinoniko frontistirio might also carry a kind of social stigma, stressing the economic disadvantage of some families.

Overall it can be argued, that the answers of the interviewees largely coincided in considering solidarity, cooperation, and volunteerism as crucial factors towards social

transformation. The positive impact of the initiative to local society becomes apparent from the participation numbers. However, not all have actually participated in any other voluntary actions (5 out of 11 said that this was their first voluntary act) and there is a distance between their will to participate and their actual voluntary activation.

5. CONCLUSIONS – SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

In this final part we will attempt to combine data both from the theoretical and empirical part, present the scientific findings of this study, and draw on possible implications in theoretical or practical levels.

The research paper examined the issue of solidarity as it is conceived and realised in time of crisis in Greek society. Scientific interest focused on a particular initiative in the field of education – it is called *Koinoniko Frontistirio* (Social tutoring lessons).

Although it seems as a straightforward issue, a closer look reveals that social solidarity covers different levels; it carries various conceptions, involves different processes and is categorized accordingly.

First and foremost, solidarity is connected with community development, social life, and social cohesion. People do not live in isolation and cannot be examined outside the social context they live. The way social ties are created, the interdependences that develop and the purposes that these bonds serve, largely determine the dimensions and nature of social solidarity. So solidarity is about the binding relationships that keep society together, but it also denotes the bonding among individuals and groups, the offering of mutual help through the sharing of resources. It exists both in the sphere of values but also in the practical, everyday level as a lived experience, an action. In that sense it has been a core concern for scientists but also, more recently, for policy actors.

The institutional form of social solidarity is deeply rooted in European communities. Despite this, solidarity had not been perceived as a core value per se; it is seen through its relation to economy, mainly understood in terms of compensation rather than redistribution. However, as our western societies are changing fundamentally so is the concept of solidarity. Nowadays there are many who speak about the “fourth pillar” of the European integration; along with justice, freedom, peace. Since the emergence of crisis in many European societies a rise of individual initiatives and (re)activation of civil society are noticeable.

Although part of the European community, Greece has always been a distinct case both before and after the recent crisis. Solidarity as it is realized in the European context never seemed to apply in the Greek state. The social, economic, political pathologies that have been part of Greece for many decades seem to persist even under these new very hard circumstances. The state’s fiscal consolidation measures seem to have further eroded

the social foundations. Social solidarity is seriously challenged especially its institutional, formal provision. In such a hostile environment the development of informal solidarity acts appeared as a counterbalance for the prevailing retrenchment of public sector especially during the first period of the economic crisis. It was shown especially through mass media and web publications that there was a remarkable “awakening” of informal civil society. In other words solidarity emerged as an aspect of crisis.

The role of education in the empowerment of social solidarity and in retaining social cohesion is fundamental. Values and principles of democracy, tolerance, trust and social justice are transmitted and pursued through educational practices. Especially in European level, there is a rising discourse to that matter. It is undeniable that education policies have achieved much in maintaining social cohesion through policies that aim at inclusion and integration. However it is yet under doubt whether education manages to serve social purposes especially in the recent environment of neoliberal notions of individual achievement. Investment to human capital seems to undermine the contribution of education to the creation of social or even cultural capital. At the same time, partially due to the recent crisis, new agents gain ground in order to assist the public sector. The informal sector, the civil society, the voluntary sector. Emphasis is also given to bottom-up provision of solidarity.

In search for renewed conceptions of solidarity in the educational area, an empirical research was conducted. Our point of interest was the initiative of Koinoniko Frontistirio in the city of Corinth; this was our case study in order to investigate whether there has been a change in individual perceptions of solidarity and voluntarism, the role of education to that, and also the level of success of this particular initiative in reducing educational inequalities and empowering social ties.

Three research questions were formed in order to examine the above mentioned elements. The first question concentrated on the way solidarity is being conceived nowadays by the agents involved in the initiative. The major findings in this field is that from the teachers’ point of view, solidarity is a crucial and necessary value in our society. However, it is not conceived in a simplistic way as an act of “altruism” and certainly not as an act of “philanthropy”. It was stressed, in all teachers’ interviews, that, from respect to the students’ dignity, they acted as if they were giving lessons to any private tutoring or school with fees. There were the same obligations and the same rules applied as far as attendance, homework etc. is concerned. All the teachers take their work in the initiative

seriously and are deeply committed to what they are doing. Their primary concern is to properly equip students and not to do a good deed simply out of compassion. Solidarity in that sense is conceived as a generator towards change; in this particular case, a source of balancing or combating educational inequalities. It is regarded as a conscious act of solidarity, carrying though the element of individual activation. These findings are in line with both Bourdieu's and Coleman's studies on social capital in the form of social networks and its contribution to the enhancement of social solidarity, as it was mentioned in the first part of our study.

Moreover, the younger teachers especially, perceive solidarity as a reciprocal practice and not only a vague, utopian value. Their basic motivation to participate was the personal gain. They gain working experience, and they actually receive a diploma both for voluntary participation and working experience. In one case, it was used in order to find a job abroad. So, this informal initiative acquires a second quite important perception of solidarity act since it serves as an "employer" to the young educators who wish to enter the labour market.

On the other hand, the local authorities view the provision of solidarity as their main responsibility. Especially in the recent context of recession the central provision of solidarity is faced with skepticism especially in regard to the state's inability to provide for social goods. This is counterbalanced by municipal initiatives; however the lack of sufficient financing is mentioned as a hindrance towards a further expansion. To sum up our first hypothesis is affirmed as there is evidence that social solidarity in the context of the recent crisis has acquired new perceptions for participants in the voluntary initiative of *koinoniko frontistirio*.

The second research question that was posed, concerned the degree of political influence that this action carries. It is hard to notice change of educational policies stemming from a single initiative. The state's presence and effectiveness in dealing with extreme situations is regarded with skepticism since the state's efficiency to deal with extreme crises is seriously put under question. Many interviewees still bear in mind the characteristics of Greek clientism and feel suspicious towards any state intervention. On the contrary, they are infused with trust towards individual potential. However, the interrelation of local authorities and volunteers in the particular practice, tend to support the argument that public sector makes efforts in including welfare volunteerism into a general public policy. Especially under the recent negative conditions of fiscal

consolidation measures, this seems to be a crucial mechanism of social integration in the local community both for teachers and students. So as far as the second hypothesis is concerned there is evidence that the recession has promoted social activism and solidaristic movements bottom-up.

The third research question investigated the degree of social impact that was accomplished through *koinoniko frontistirio*. The effects are multidimensional. The degree of social impact that this initiative has had in the local community becomes obvious both for the teachers and for the students. The benefits for the teachers are twofold. It is a vital mechanism for social integration and labour participation. It serves as a means to achieve, at least partially, their goals of entering educational community and practicing teaching. This is particularly important nowadays that social inclusion is almost identical with inclusion in the labor market.

Koinoniko Frontistirio's innovation in that area is that it has taken the role an informal employer. The volunteer teachers are provided with certificates of voluntary participation and a letter of recommendation. It can be characterized as an act of political significance since this provision is done with the collaboration of local authorities. So in that case solidarity is conceived in a more instrumental way.

Deficit in social solidarity exists from the parents' side. *Koinoniko Frontistirio* has not achieved much in activating parental involvement. It seems as if parents take the existence of such initiatives for granted. This lack of participation can, partially, be explained by the hard conditions that most families face; the Greek family, has been severely hit by the crisis and in most cases fails to act as the mechanism of social solidarity that has been up to now. It is also a common case that parental participation in educational process is limited in Greece. *Koinoniko Frontistirio* has not succeeded in strengthening the bonds among all members of this educational community.

Overall it appears that the educational initiative has had positive impact both in the creation of a solidarity culture and in ensuring social cohesion in a local community. It has helped transcend individualistic characteristics and, partially, activated civil society. Furthermore, it has positively contributed to the creation of educational equality. Economically disadvantaged students are offered equal educational opportunities though the provision of the same educational resources. There seems to be an increased degree of the initiatives accountability. So the third hypothesis that refers to the empowerment of the local social capital which in turn promotes social solidarity is partially affirmed.

However, these should be considered as initial deductions. The study did not aim at extracting conclusions that could be generalized; consequently, there is need for further studies using both quantitative and qualitative methods in order to provide thorough and valid data on the topic of concern. Hopefully the outcomes could be used in comparative studies in the European level dealing with the “transformation” of societies and welfare policies and the mechanisms that are being exploited for this transformation in a new, changing and quite unstable environment.

In conclusion, social solidarity is a complex, elusive issue and has become even more complicated in the present-day extremely hostile circumstances. However, it is interesting to notice that apart from its devastating consequences the crisis has brought some positive changes as well; it has acted as the vehicle for new forms of solidarity. Education’s role is still crucial in this. Or as John Dewey said “Education is the primary method of social progress and reform.”

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ANNEX

A. INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR VOLUNTEER TEACHERS

Question axes

1st Axis: Information/dispersion of the action – solidarity perception

- a. How did you learn about the existence of koinoniko frontistirio? (Friends, internet etc.?)
- b. What were your motives for participation in the voluntary action?
- c. Could you describe the experience so far?
- d. Have you taken part in other voluntary/solidarity actions?
- e. What does solidarity mean to you?

2nd Axis: Education and solidarity

- f. How does education contribute to the empowerment positive attitudes to social solidarity?
- g. Do you feel that you are given a chance to change society? What's the role of koinoniko frontistirio in that?
- h. What changes would such initiatives bring to our lives if they were permanent? Do you feel that a new social bonds are created?

3rd Axis: Future perspectives

- i. What was the impact of this initiative? How has it attributed to positive changes in your personal life, the students' life, their families, local community? What barriers did you face?
- j. If there is improvement of the current situation, are you willing to continue participating voluntarily? In the same initiative? Do you think this will continue?
- k. What are your future perspectives? What future challenges? What are the barriers that you must overcome?

Would you like to add anything else?

Thank you for your time

B. INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR LOCAL AUTHORITIES

Question axes

1st Axis: institutional framework / action background

- a. When was the initiative established? How did it start?
- b. What is the communication / dissemination policy? What strategies are followed in order for the initiative to attract students and volunteer teachers?

2nd Axis: Territorial / Spatial scope

- c. Who are the recipients of this solidarity act? What's its territorial targeting?
- d. Does it have a long-term perspective or is it just reacting to this particular crisis situation?
- e. The data indicate that it expanded. To what do you attribute its up scaling? Policy change? New needs?
- f. Why do you think educational initiatives should be part of the local authorities' responsibilities?
- g. How does involvement play a role in facing the current local educational and social inequalities?
- h. How are the targets organized? Who is involved in the planning?
- i. Is there a hierarchy in decision making? What mechanisms exist in order for the dialogue among various participants to be encouraged?
- j. Is there a methodological framework for the program's evaluation?

3rd Axis: Social / Political impact

- k. How has this initiative improved the lives of the participants? Are there available data / examples?
- l. What is the degree of success for the particular initiative? Which strategies are considered successful? What are the obstacles / problems? (Lack of financing, resources, political will, individual participation etc.?)
- m. Are there any available data for the social impact in local community?
- n. What mechanisms are used in order for the initiative to achieve its goals ?
- o. What is the role of mass media in the awakening of local civil society? How do you use the mass media: to raise awareness and/or upgrade your achievements?

C. INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR STUDENTS

Question axes

1st Axis: Institutional framework / action background

- a. How did you learn about koinoniko frontistirio?
- b. Can you describe the programme? Who is in charge? How are the teachers?
What about the lesson schedule? The facilities? The relationships?

2nd Axis: Social impact

- c. Describe some of the gains / benefits that your participation here brought. What aspects of your life or your family's life have changed? Do you feel that there are barriers that prevent you from gaining more?
- d. Are you willing to participate in the future? How about when you grow up?
Would you like to take part as a volunteer?
- e. How do you see your future? What are the difficulties that you face?

Would you like to add anything else?

Thank you for your time