Chapter 5

Solidarity and Survival: A Multidisciplinary Exploration of Volunteering during the Greek Crisis

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Introduction

Although there is no overall consensus on the meaning of the terms 'third sector' and 'civil society', most definitions of both include an element of volunteering as an important characteristic (e.g. Salamon and Anheier, 1997; Scholte, 2002; Kendall, 2009). As a contribution to the broader exploration of the effects of the crisis on the third sector and civil society in Greece, this chapter will therefore examine how volunteering has been affected by the turmoil of the past few years.[1]

The study of volunteering is, of course, subject to its own challenges of definition. In Greece, this has not been helped by a lack of legal definition or framework for volunteering, as noted by others (e.g. Afouxenidis, 2006; Polyzoidis, 2008). A recent initiative to promote comparable cross-national research in this field defines volunteering as '[u]npaid non-compulsory work; that is, time individuals give without pay to activities performed either through an organisation or directly for others outside their own household' (ILO, 2011, p. 13).[2] As Bourikos (2013) notes, this definition bridges the distinction that has frequently been made in the Greek literature between 'formal' volunteering within organisations and 'informal' volunteering in less structured contexts.

This chapter, however, will focus on volunteering within organisations. This is due to both the practical need to delimit the study, and because volunteering in established organisations has arguably received less attention since the onset of the

1 The title of this chapter was in part inspired by the article of Beyerlein and Sikkink (2008) entitled 'Sorrow and solidarity: Why Americans volunteered for 9/11 relief efforts', which is discussed below. I am grateful to A. Huliaras and D.A. Sotiropoulos for their comments on an earlier version of this chapter.

2 While the clarity of this definition is useful for analytical purposes, it should be kept in mind that, in practice, the boundaries of what is understood as volunteering are not clear cut (Cnaan et al., 1996). In the Greek context, as elsewhere, the definition of 'unpaid work' is particularly problematic, given that volunteering may be motivated by economic incentives (see below).

crisis than participation in the various informal citizens' movements and initiatives that have emerged (e.g. Ishkanian and Glasius, 2013; Pantazidou, 2013; Zambeta, 2014; Vathakou, Chapter 10). The boundaries between informal initiatives and established organisations are not always clear in practice, but the organisations included in this study were legally registered and respondents accepted the term 'organisation' as a description of the respective body.

Existing data on volunteering in Greece during the crisis is limited and ambiguous. One of the challenges to understanding this issue is that the relevant variables are notoriously difficult to assess quantitatively, given that measurements are highly sensitive to the way in which questions are structured (Frane, 2006). In this context, the aim of this chapter is to enrich our currently limited understanding of volunteering in Greece during the crisis, through presenting new qualitative data on this theme, gathered through semi-structured interviews with representatives of 21 organisations which work with volunteers. The significance of this data will be interpreted, drawing on the multi-disciplinary 'hybrid map' of volunteering of Hustinx et al. (2010) and on other scholarship from the rich and diverse body of research on volunteering.

The remainder of this chapter comprises of four parts. A brief overview offering an introduction to the subject of volunteering in Greece is followed by a summary of the theoretical framework and the methodology of the study. The subsequent section presents and analyses the findings of the study, whilst the final section discusses the implications of these findings, both at an empirical level and in relation to our conceptual understanding of the themes in question.

Volunteering in Greece: An Overview

Volunteering in Greece has been summed up as being 'anaemic' (Sotiropoulos, 2007; 2014). Over recent years there has been an increase in research in this field, although this has been hampered by the lack of comprehensive records regarding both volunteers and the organisations in which they work (European Commission, 2010; Greek Ministry of Education, 2012; Bourikos, 2013). Comparative studies have consistently indicated low levels of volunteering in the country. The first round of the European Social Survey (in 2002) indicated that levels of volunteering in Greece were amongst the lowest of the countries surveyed, along with those in Portugal, Italy and Spain (Jones et al., 2008, p. 180). Although their methodologies differ, both the 2006 Special Eurobarometer survey (European Commission, 2007) and a European Commission report on volunteering across the EU (European Commission, 2010a) also found Greece to have amongst the lowest levels of volunteering amongst EU-15 states. It is perhaps even more striking that Greece has been found consistently to have amongst the lowest levels of volunteering of over 130 countries included in the World Giving Index study (Charities Aid Foundation, 2010; 2012; 2013). The economic value of volunteering in Greece has

also been assessed to be amongst the lowest across the EU, estimated as less than 0.1% of the country's GDP (European Commission, 2010a, p. 11).

It has, however, been argued that participation in informal or ad hoc voluntary activities in Greece is somewhat higher than participation in formal organisations (Sotiropoulos, 2004; 2004a). Examples of informal or ad hoc volunteering include involvement with informal groups or networks, and spontaneous acts of volunteerism in response to specific events, such as the responses to the Athens earthquake of 1999 and to the forest fires of 2007 (Karamichas, 2007), and the participation of Olympic volunteers in 2004 (Polyzoidis, 2008). Research by the National Statistical Service of Greece has indicated that double the number of Greeks participate in informal volunteering compared to formal volunteering (Bourikos, 2013, p. 12).

Analysts have put forward a number of explanations for the comparatively low volunteering levels, amongst which two main groups of arguments can be discerned. These are mutually interlinked, but can be distinguished for analytical purposes. The first of these groups of arguments is predominantly 'top down' and relates to the ways in which specific characteristics of the Greek state and political system are seen to be 'obstructing the inclusion of citizens in public policy processes' (Roumeliotis and Jones, 2010, p. 28) and hindering the development of volunteering amongst Greeks. A number of historical factors relating to the clientelistic nature of the state and the domination by political parties of the public sphere are seen to have inhibited the growth of independent civil society organisations (Mouzelis and Pagoulatos, 2005). A number of policy-level factors are also seen to have hindered the development of Greek civil society, including weak tax incentives for charitable giving and limited civic education in schools (Huliaras, Chapter 2).

The second main group of arguments is predominantly 'bottom up' and relates to a lack of 'volunteering mentality' (European Commission, 2010, p. 18). Some analysts, noting similarities in this respect between Greece and other Mediterranean countries, have used terms such as 'Mediterranean Syndrome' (La Spina and Sciortino, 1993) to describe a 'lack of a civic culture that can translate into an interest in engagement with collective goods that do not directly impact on what is seen as the familial and local (Karamichas, 2007, p. 522). Another 'bottom up' factor is the consistently low level of trust reported amongst Greeks – both in institutions and in their compatriots – which is considered to have inhibited involvement with voluntary organisations (Sotiropoulos, 2004; 2007; Jones et al., 2008).

Several observers suggested that there had been a gradual increase in volunteering in the years prior to the crisis (Sotiropoulos, 2004, p. 24; European Commission, 2010a p. 8). In the absence of comprehensive statistical data, such observations have necessarily been based on estimates (European Commission, 2010a, p. 7, footnote 2). Moreover, there have been differences between the findings of studies of specific subsectors of Greek civil society organisations. For example, Polyzoidis (2008) noted a declining trend of engagement in welfare

organisations, whereas Karamichas (2007, p. 523) observed increasing levels of involvement with environmental organisations.

A frequently reported explanation for a perceived increase in volunteering prior to the crisis is the impact of EU policies and programmes, which stimulated the creation of third sector initiatives in order to absorb available funding (Sotiropoulos, 2004, p. 24, European Commission, 2010, p. 17). Some have suggested that such top down initiatives had little effect on the underlying volunteering mentality, however. Ziomas argues that 'it is only the minority of these [third sector] initiatives that base their strength on local solidarities, including voluntary work and civic commitment, elements which are still underdeveloped in Greece' (2008, p. 328). Others have cited the influence of the Athens Olympic Games in 2004 as having a positive impact on public opinion towards volunteering. It is notable that some 160,000 volunteers officially registered to help at the Games (Polyzoidis, 2008, p. 98), a response which has been described as 'perhaps the crowning moment of volunteering in the country' (Greek Ministry of Education, 2012, p. 34) [3]

Whilst it seems certain that the profound social shocks brought about by the economic crisis (see Chapter 1 for a summary) have had an impact on volunteering in Greece, the current data on this theme are limited and ambiguous. A comparison of Eurobarometer data from before and after the start of the crisis indicates that the proportion of Greeks who volunteer dropped from 18% in 2006 (European Commission, 2007, p. 36) to 14% in 2011 (European Commission, 2011, p. 6). According to the World Giving Index, the proportion of Greeks who volunteered their time to an organisation dropped from 5% in 2010 (Charities Aid Foundation, 2010) to 3% in 2012 (Charities Aid Foundation, 2012), but then climbed slightly to 4% in 2013 (Charities Aid Foundation, 2013). A small-scale volunteer survey (Human Grid, 2013) and other recent analyses (Greek Ministry of Education, 2012; Bourikos, 2013; Simiti, 2014) have reported an upward trend in volunteering, as have various media reports (e.g. Hope, 2012; Russo, 2012). This chapter aims to enrich our still limited understanding of this subject.

Theoretical Framework and Methodology

Research has shown that in everyday discourse 'there is a tendency to de-politicize volunteer work, and to emphasize its virtuous and compassionate nature' (Hustinx et al., 2010. p. 413). Indeed, a perceived increase in voluntary activity has sometimes been presumed to be a rare positive outcome of the Greek crisis (Zambeta, 2014). A normative view of volunteering as a desirable activity has also been widely promoted in political discourse, including at an EU level (e.g. European Council, 2009). However, as Wilson argues: 'the generic term 'volunteering' embraces a vast array of quite disparate activities. It is probably not fruitful to try to explain

3 I am grateful to the anonymous reviewer for his/her suggestion regarding the significance of the 2004 Olympic Games.

all activities with the same theory nor to treat all activities as if they were the same with respect to consequences' (2000, pp. 233–4).

Different academic disciplines have made diverse contributions to the vast body of scholarship on volunteering, which can be drawn on in order to explore the significance of volunteering during the Greek crisis. In particular, various studies from different countries have explored volunteering in other difficult contexts, such as after terrorist attacks and natural disasters, and amongst unemployed and socially excluded groups. In order to take into account the widest possible range of these insights, this chapter will employ a multidisciplinary framework for analysing the data. More specifically, the 'hybrid map' of volunteering of Hustinx et al. (2010) will be drawn on, which in turn builds on Wilson's work (2000; 2012) on synthesising some of the many and disparate branches of research on volunteering. This approach views volunteering as a 'complex phenomenon', and, amongst other things, highlights the 'different meanings and functions' (Hustinx et al., 2010, p. 411) of volunteering. The approach recognises the relevance of sociological, political, economic and psychological dimensions to the study of volunteering. These four dimensions will be used to structure the analysis below.

As stated above, this study adopts a qualitative methodology. In order to gain an overview of general trends, and taking into account the limited time and resources available, the study focused on gathering data through semi-structured interviews with representatives of a purposive sample of 21 NGOs that work with volunteers. This sample included 12 organisations based in the greater Athens area, and nine based in the northern region of Thrace, in order to ensure that the findings were not limited to the capital city. The organisations in the sample were selected to include a range of sizes, from small organisations with no paid staff to larger, professionalised organisations. They were also selected to include a variety of main areas of activity. These included working with children (three organisations), promoting volunteerism (three organisations), social welfare (three organisations), working with groups with special needs (three organisations), promoting culture (two organisations), protecting the environment (two organisations), working with young people (two organisations), international development (one organisation), mountain rescue (one organisation), and addressing addiction (one organisation).

The fieldwork was conducted between November 2013 and June 2014. Respondents were asked about how the crisis had affected volunteering at their organisation, as well as about the reasons for any reported changes. The interviews were conducted in Greek and the responses were translated in to English by the author. In order to facilitate the uninhibited responses of the interviewees, all participating individuals and organisations remain anonymous and are referred to only by the relevant interview reference number. The limitations of such a small-scale study are acknowledged. The insights that are gained are only indicative and further research in this area is certainly needed.

Presentation and Analysis of Findings

A clear majority of organisations in both Athens and Thrace – 16 out of 21 organisations – reported an increase in the number of volunteers. Three organisations reported that the number of volunteers had not been affected by the crisis, and only two reported that they had seen the number of volunteers decrease. The activities for which the numbers of volunteers had increased were diverse. They included activities that were clearly related to the crisis, such as distributing food and giving free medical treatment. However, they also included a wide range of other activities, including running recreational programmes for children with special needs, mobilising young people in environmental projects, organising traditional cultural events, and fundraising to support international development work in Africa.

This pattern supports the findings of other recent studies which have pointed to the emergence of a 'new wave' of volunteering in Greece since the start of the crisis (Bourikos, 2013). Drawing on the hybrid map of volunteering of Hustinx et al. (2010), the sociological, political, economic and psychological dimensions of the data will now be analysed, making reference to relevant literature in each case.

Sociological Aspects

A main focus of sociological approaches to the study of volunteering has been the exploration of how 'ecological variables', such as community characteristics and social networks, affect volunteering levels (Wilson, 2012, p. 178). Within this literature, particular emphasis has been given to the role of trust, due to its centrality to the concept of social capital, as conceptualised by Putnam and others, which has gained currency over recent years. Putnam (1993) highlights the positive correlation between voluntary involvement in various types of associations and organisations and levels of trust. He argues that features of social organisation 'such as trust, norms and networks' – by which he defines social capital (1996, p. 34) – can 'enable participants to act together more effectively to pursue shared objectives' (1996, p. 34). Other studies have similarly demonstrated a correlation between volunteering and levels of trust, both between people and in civic institutions (see Jones et al., Chapter 3).

In the light of such research, the reported increase in volunteers amongst Greek organisations is notable. In contrast to the positive correlation between volunteering levels and trust noted elsewhere, in the Greek context the apparent increase in levels of volunteering coincides with a sharp drop in reported levels of trust both between individuals and in institutions (Petrakis, 2012, pp. 145–7; Jones et al., Chapter 3). In order to understand this phenomenon, it is helpful to look beyond the general literature on volunteering, and to consider more specifically the research on volunteering in difficult circumstances.

As Wilson notes, although it has been somewhat neglected in volunteerism studies more generally, solidarity is a sociological factor that has been found

to be important within studies of volunteering in crisis contexts (2012, p. 179). A number of studies of volunteering after natural disasters such as hurricanes and earthquakes have shown that feelings of solidarity with victims of disaster increase the likelihood of volunteering, and that such feelings of solidarity tend to be higher amongst people who have themselves been affected or who live close to those who are suffering (O'Brien and Mileti, 1992; Kaniasty and Norris, 1995). In their exploration of the profile of volunteers in the rescue efforts in New York in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks, Beyerlein and Sikkink similarly argue that participation in volunteer efforts was related to volunteers' feelings solidarity with victims of the disaster. They find that '[o]ne of the strongest factors was personal identification with victims, which was built through personal networks such as knowing someone who was killed or in danger during the attacks' (2008, p. 190).

Whilst the nature of the Greek crisis is obviously very different from such disasters, its impact is such that many if not most people can identify closely with those affected. It is notable that several of the respondents in this study referred to increased levels of solidarity when explaining the increased numbers of volunteers approaching their organisation. For example:

> In general there has been an increase in solidarity (A8)
>
> Young people want to do something to help in the crisis (A9)
>
> The crisis has affected us favourably, because solidarity has increased (T1)
>
> Volunteers have increased because people want to help in some way (T3)

The responses of the interviewees are in line with much of the public discourse that has emphasised the role of solidarity, particularly in relation to participation in the various new citizens' initiatives, which have come to be known as 'solidarity initiatives' (Zambeta, 2014; Vathakou, Chapter 10). There is, of course, a possibility that respondents are reproducing this discourse in their interpretations of the increase in volunteering, and further research is needed with individual volunteers in order for firmer conclusions to be reached.

Political Aspects

Political science perspectives on volunteering have given particular emphasis to the relationships between volunteering and involvement in political processes (Hustinx et al., 2010, p. 419). Participation in voluntary organisations has been interpreted as an alternative form of political engagement, which has increased as trust in traditional political parties and institutions has decreased in many modern democracies (Inglehart, 1999). In line with such views, recent analyses of the informal citizens' initiatives that have grown in Greece during the crisis have emphasised their political character. For example, Pantazidou argues that the growth

of such initiatives reflects that fact an increasing number of citizens are moving towards 'anti-hierarchical, horizontal networks that resist the consequences of the economic crisis and create alternatives to the current democratic and economic model' (2013, p. 755, see also Vathakou, Chapter 10).

However, the majority of the representatives of the organisations interviewed within this study did not mention a political dimension to the engagement of their volunteers. The response of only one respondent can be interpreted as relating to such engagement. The representative of an organisation that cares for disadvantaged children stated that:

> The new generation have begun to realise that they need to get involved with changing society … The new generation of 17 to 22 year olds has started to get more involved and they have realised that they can change things through small actions. (A10)

Further research with individual volunteers is needed to gain a clearer picture of the relationship between political engagement and volunteering in the crisis. Nevertheless, the lack of evidence for the relevance of political engagement to volunteering within the majority of the organisations included in this study is in line with other recent research which found that fewer than 10% of young Greeks surveyed considered that participation in or support of an NGO was the most effective way for citizens to make their voices heard by policymakers (VPRC, 2013). A limited role of political engagement amongst volunteers does not mean that the act of volunteering itself is without political significance. Indeed, various commentators have noted that when volunteer activities relate to addressing social problems, they are linked the broader political context in which the problems arose whether or not the volunteers themselves are aware of this (Penner, 2004; Eliasoph, 2012). This issue is, however, beyond the scope of this chapter.

Economic Aspects

Economic approaches to the study of volunteering offer various insights regarding how volunteering relates to economic resources and rewards (Hustinx et al., 2010, pp. 415–16). These include the resources that volunteers have at their disposal, as well as the rewards they may gain through volunteering. Several studies from different countries have found that low-income earners tend to volunteer less than higher earners and that unemployed individuals volunteer less than those in employment (Pho, 2008, p. 233; Wilson, 2012, p. 187; European Commission, 2010a, p. 9). Within the present study there was little evidence, however, to suggest that levels of volunteering in Greece have been negatively affected by the widespread drop in income levels and sharp rise in unemployment since the beginning of the crisis. Only one respondent – a representative of one of the two organisations which reported a drop in volunteer numbers – made such a link, stating that:

> We work for the environment, and the environment has become a luxury. If someone has been fired, if they are trying to feed their family, I can't go and ask them to get involved in protecting trees. It's not a priority. (K9)

Conversely, another respondent suggested that falling income levels had contributed to an increase in volunteers, describing how, in many cases, people who had previously supported the organisation through charitable donations were turning to volunteering 'as an alternative for the financial support which they cannot give' (A3).

Other research has highlighted how volunteering can offer specific benefits to unemployed and socially excluded groups, including providing an opportunity to develop skills and contacts which may lead to employment (Nichols and Ralston, 2011). In line with such research, it was clear from several of the responses in this study that many of the new volunteers are indeed unemployed individuals who see volunteering as a potential route to employment. For example:

> [The volunteers] are usually young people, often looking for work. (A12)

> The number of volunteers has increased in some way as young people are looking for opportunities … There has been an increase in young people looking for volunteer programmes abroad. Before they were not so interested, now they are unemployed and looking for opportunities. (T2)

There was also evidence from the study that economic factors were playing an even more direct role in the motivation of some volunteers. The volunteers of several welfare organisations were simultaneously beneficiaries of the organisations' activities, who, though volunteering, gained preferential access to the welfare services offered. Such volunteers have been termed 'beneficiary volunteers' (Evans and Clarke, 2010). Thus the representative of an organisation that distributed food reported that:

> Half of our volunteers are beneficiaries. They take food donations themselves and they help us to distribute it to others … Partly it is an exchange rather than volunteering, but they don't have to do it. (A12)

Another organisation which distributed second-hand goods reported that:

> All of our volunteers are also our beneficiaries. Some of them are in a terrible situation. One of our volunteers doesn't have water in her house – it was cut off – so she always drinks a lot before she leaves here. (A1)

In such instances volunteering is at least in part a way of meeting the urgent needs of the volunteers themselves. Whilst this practice may not correspond to the common 'ideal type' of volunteering as not involving any form of compensation

(Cnaan et al., 1996), it can still be seen as falling within the definition of volunteering given above, since the work is not paid, non-compulsory and serves others, at least in part. Such cases do, however, highlight the permeability of the boundaries between what is understood as volunteering and what is not (Cnaan et al., 1996). Bourikos (2013) also gives similar examples of beneficiaries working as volunteers for Greek organisations. There have been few references (e.g. Evans and Clarke, 2010) to this practice in the wider literature on volunteering, however. Though potentially posing ethical challenges, as Bourikos notes (2013), it is a practice which is likely to be more frequent in crisis contexts, and which would merit further study.

Psychological Aspects

Psychological approaches to the study of volunteering have focused on exploring key psychological traits that effect the predisposition of an individual to volunteer, as well as the psychological impact of volunteering (Hustinx et al., 2010, pp. 418–19). Studies from a range of different countries have tended to link volunteering to a range of positive psychological dispositions. It has been found that individuals are more likely to volunteer if they have extrovert personalities (Bekkers, 2005; Omoto, Snyder and Hackett, 2010, p. 1719) or positive emotionality (Atkins, Hart and Donnelly, 2005). Given the correlation between the effects of the economic crisis and an increase in anxiety and depression-related disorders (WHO, 2011, Economou et al., 2011), it seems unlikely that extroversion or positive emotionality could have played a significant role in the reported increase in volunteering during the Greek crisis, and there was no evidence from the study to suggest this.

As above, it is useful to turn to the literature which deals more specifically with volunteering in difficult circumstances. Research into volunteering amongst unemployed and socially excluded groups has identified that volunteering can bring a number of psychological benefits, including a sense of job satisfaction that would be otherwise derived from paid work (Nichols and Ralston, 2011), or as a way of overcoming a sense of being 'undeserving' and 'parasitic' (Fuller et al., 2008).

Several respondents in this study indicated that volunteering had such psychological benefits for volunteers who were unemployed and/ or living in poverty. For example:

> Unemployed people often want to do something to fill their time, they might just want get out of the house. (A9)

> [Through volunteering] they feel that they are giving, not just taking. It changes them. They all come to us thinking that they are the only one in that situation. They come and see that there are others – and some that are worse off than they are … They become more positive, have more energy. (A12)

Although further study with individual volunteers is needed, this data suggests that volunteering may play a role in the psychological as well as economic survival strategies for individuals who have been adversely affected by the crisis.

Discussion and Conclusions

This study has added to the small but growing body of evidence that formal volunteering in organisations has increased during the Greek crisis. There is some evidence to suggest that that the biggest increase in volunteers had been seen by organisations which are directly involved in tackling the effects of the crisis. One respondent from an organisation which promotes volunteering and which has links with a large number of other voluntary organisations, reported that:

> NGOs involved with social welfare have seen a big increase in volunteering. Others […] are less affected. (A11)

Given the important role of solidarity, as noted above, it is understandable that many volunteers choose to become involved in activities that directly address the consequences of the crisis.

However, a more surprising finding is that the increase in volunteering has also been experienced by organisations whose work is not directly related to the crisis. A similar pattern emerged in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks in New York, whereby crisis intervention organisations registered an eight-fold increase in volunteer enquiries, but other volunteer organisations also registered a two to three-fold increase in volunteering enquiries (Penner, 2004). To some extent this phenomenon can also be explained by an increase in feelings of solidarity, which may lead some people to a general desire to help others, regardless of whether their needs were created by the crisis. A respondent from an international development organisation – which had no projects in Greece – explained the increase in volunteers in such terms:

> The economic crisis has led many of our fellow human beings to awareness of their universal identity as citizens and to the need for active solidarity. (A3)

Similarly, a respondent from an organisation which supports disabled people reported that numbers of volunteers had more than doubled over the past two years, due to the increase in people who want to help others (A8).

However, as seen above, solidarity is not the only factor which has contributed to the new wave of volunteering during the Greek crisis. In many cases volunteering appears to be part of an economic and/or psychological survival strategy for volunteers who have themselves been adversely affected by the crisis.

The reported increase in volunteering should be kept in perspective. Given the very low figures prior to the start of the crisis, the proportion of the population

involved in formal volunteering in Greece is still likely to be low in comparison to that found in other countries (Sotiropoulos, 2014; Huliaras, Chapter 2). The significance of the new wave of volunteering should not just be measured in quantitative terms, however. The above analysis suggests that that the impact of the crisis on volunteering is also qualitative.

One shift resulting from the changes noted above appears to be an increasing proportion of young volunteers, some apparently motivated by solidarity, and others by the need to find employment. There was also some indication that the increased involvement of young volunteers is contributing to new and innovative approaches amongst some organisations. A respondent from an organisation that promotes volunteering and has links with many other organisations stated that:

> I expected the increased activity in the area of welfare. But for me the big surprise was how many original and imaginative ideas there are now, coming from young people … The impressive thing is that it is the young generation with these original ideas … Five years ago I couldn't have imagined these types of activities. The crisis has brought out this originality, and has motivated young people to be active in these ways. (A11)

For example, a number of organisations are now using recent technology to map where volunteers are needed, to communicate with them, and to mobilise them. This contrasts sharply with Polyzoidis' earlier description of the typical social welfare volunteer organisation: 'Management is carried out with an outdated, traditional way, and the performance in using modern techniques is very poor' (2008, p. 101).

In conclusion, volunteering in Greece could be said to have become a little less anaemic during the crisis. It has been fortified by a new wave of crisis volunteering that appears to be both quantitatively and qualitatively different to previous patterns. Significantly, and largely in contrast to the patterns observed prior to the crisis, this new wave of volunteering appears to be driven by bottom-up factors. This is reflected in the fact that many organisations are apparently struggling to absorb the numbers of volunteers available, in a reversal of the previously observed tendency for volunteering to be driven by opportunities created by funding programmes. The representative of an organisation that links volunteers with organisations stated that '[a]t the moment there are more volunteers than there are places available within organisations' (A2).

In this context, an important question for the future development of the third sector in Greece is how this new wave of volunteering will affect the development of the sector in the longer term. Crisis situations have been associated with short-term fluctuations in patterns of volunteering that have little relevance to longer-term trends. Musick and Wilson (2008, p. 370) state that:

> We are not interested in short-term fluctuations in volunteering. People frequently respond to emergencies by volunteering. Many of them have never volunteered before and will probably never volunteer again.

It is indeed likely that the number of volunteers in Greece will drop again as the effects of the crisis ease. However, there is some evidence that the current wave of volunteering has been sufficiently sustained – due to the protracted nature of the crisis – to have a longer term impact on the development of Greek civil society organisations. At an organisational level, it seems likely that some of the innovations that have been introduced will continue to affect the organisations' way of working. Apart from the introduction of new technologies, noted above, the increase of volunteer numbers is leading some organisations to make changes to their approaches to managing volunteers. An organisation that promotes volunteering was overwhelmed by the response to a training session on volunteer management: over 100 applications to attend the session had been received, and further sessions were planned (A2). Another respondent noted that: 'We are just beginning to become more organised' in terms of volunteer management (A8). At a broader institutional level, it was suggested by one organisation representative that the increased visibility of volunteer initiatives had increased political support for the creation of a legal framework for volunteers – a longstanding demand of NGOs which until recently had received little attention by policymakers.[4] However, only time will tell what will be the longer term legacy of the current wave of crisis volunteering.

At a conceptual level, it is notable that Greek crisis volunteering appears to share a number of characteristics with volunteering in various other difficult situations. Arguably, one of the reasons that volunteering tends to be idealised in public and political discourse is that it is associated with a number of positive characteristics identified in the many studies of volunteering in non-crisis contexts, such as social trust, political participation, economic security and positive emotionality. By contrast, volunteering in situations of crisis and other difficult circumstances appears to be more closely associated with solidarity aroused by proximity to suffering and increased economic and psychological needs on the part of volunteers themselves. Without questioning the importance of the work conducted by volunteers in crisis situations, the significance of increased levels of volunteering in such difficult circumstances is clearly more ambivalent than is frequently acknowledged.

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4 At the time of writing, a draft law including provision for a legal framework for volunteering was at the stage of public consultation (available at: < http://www.opengov.gr/ypes/?p=2465>).

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