

**EXCHANGE NETWORKS & PARALLEL CURRENCIES ON THE MAP OF GREECE:  
GEOGRAPHICAL PATTERNS AND SCHEMES' ACTIVITY**

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**ABSTRACT**

This is a working paper which belongs to a greater ongoing field research project concerning economic activity in Greece which is performed without the use of any official currency. The scope of the paper is to present the geographical dispersion of the schemes studied within Greece and to discuss the issues raised by the connection of the schemes to the locality of their users.

Several patterns already emerge, concerning which schemes work or develop in which areas and which areas seem void of any working initiatives. Big urban centres seem to attract most of the schemes or at least, cities provide the base for a scheme to develop. The nature and structure of each scheme seems to affect its geographical expansion or its localisation.

Therefore, several questions are raised: What makes the scheme members' decide about the localisation or the expansion of a scheme? How do geographical conditions affect those decisions and how does economic activity within the schemes affect their function in space? How the scope and structure of a scheme might influence its geographical picture?

**Keywords:** exchange networks, parallel currencies, free bazaars, geography, localisation.

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**Acknowledgements**

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## I. INTRODUCTION: MAPPING AS A METHOD BETWEEN QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE

This paper has been prepared in an attempt to create pictures about the dispersion in space of schemes and initiatives which exist in Greece and permit their members not to use official currency for their transactions. The data gathered have accumulated within the framework of an ongoing research project titled “Exchange networks and parallel currencies in Greece: Theoretical approaches and the case of Greece”.

The project comprises fieldwork which is divided in two parts; the first one has been mostly concluded and it consisted of ethnographic methods (observation, observation by participation, text analysis, free interviews with scheme coordinators or members who have a global view about the scheme they take part in) so that we could point out some major themes that would explain the theoretical background or views of the scheme members. The second part of the project consists of an investigation by the use of questionnaires on the social characteristics and whenever possible, on the volume and nature of the transactions themselves.

Between the first (qualitative) and the second (quantitative) part of the project, there stands the geography question. Given that the project covers the entire geographic area of Greece and many of the schemes also have a country-wide dispersion, it seemed interesting to put the information we have gathered so far on the map.

We chose this approach as we could not ignore the importance of space. Moreover, literature on parallel currencies often uses space and geography as an analytical tool<sup>1</sup>. The problem in our case was that it is not only parallel currencies we are studying. This has several implications in terms of literature and methodology (how one should study a free bazaar or an exchange network?) but also in terms of possible comparison among schemes of different structure. The first indicator we used was membership. Of course, membership does not reveal much about real function of a scheme<sup>2</sup> – however, as a participant pointed out a scheme might also have among its aims to create “little by little a social web who might believe in exchange” and to ensure “someone, feeling that there exists something like this, that I can at any moment to send an email and exchange services with someone else, might have more inner balance”. Therefore, we kept the membership as an

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<sup>1</sup> See for example, Barnes, T. J. (1989), Bates, L. K. and J. Lepofsky (2005), Danson, M. W. and M. Pacione (1999), Gelleri, C. (2009), Haughton, G. (1990, 1998), Kennedy, M. and B. A. Lietaer (2008), Lee, R. (1996), Leyshon, A. and N. Thrift (1997), North, P. (1996), Pacione, M. (1997a, 1997b, 1999), Soder, N. T. (2008), Williams, C. C. (1996, 1997), Williams, C. C. and J. Windebank (2003). Actually, the most difficult part of using this literature was to think what questions should one raise concerning geography of Greek schemes. At the end, the choice made was to create the maps and see what questions emerge from them afterwards.

<sup>2</sup> Hodges, J. and M. Stott (1996), pp. 266.

important indicator, even if we have no data yet about the real, material activity within the schemes and about the economic safety the schemes might provide their members with.

Therefore, the paper presents the geographical dispersion of schemes and their members in Greece compared to the population dispersion of the country. At the last unit, we also compare the geographical dispersion to the unemployment rates for each region during the last five years.

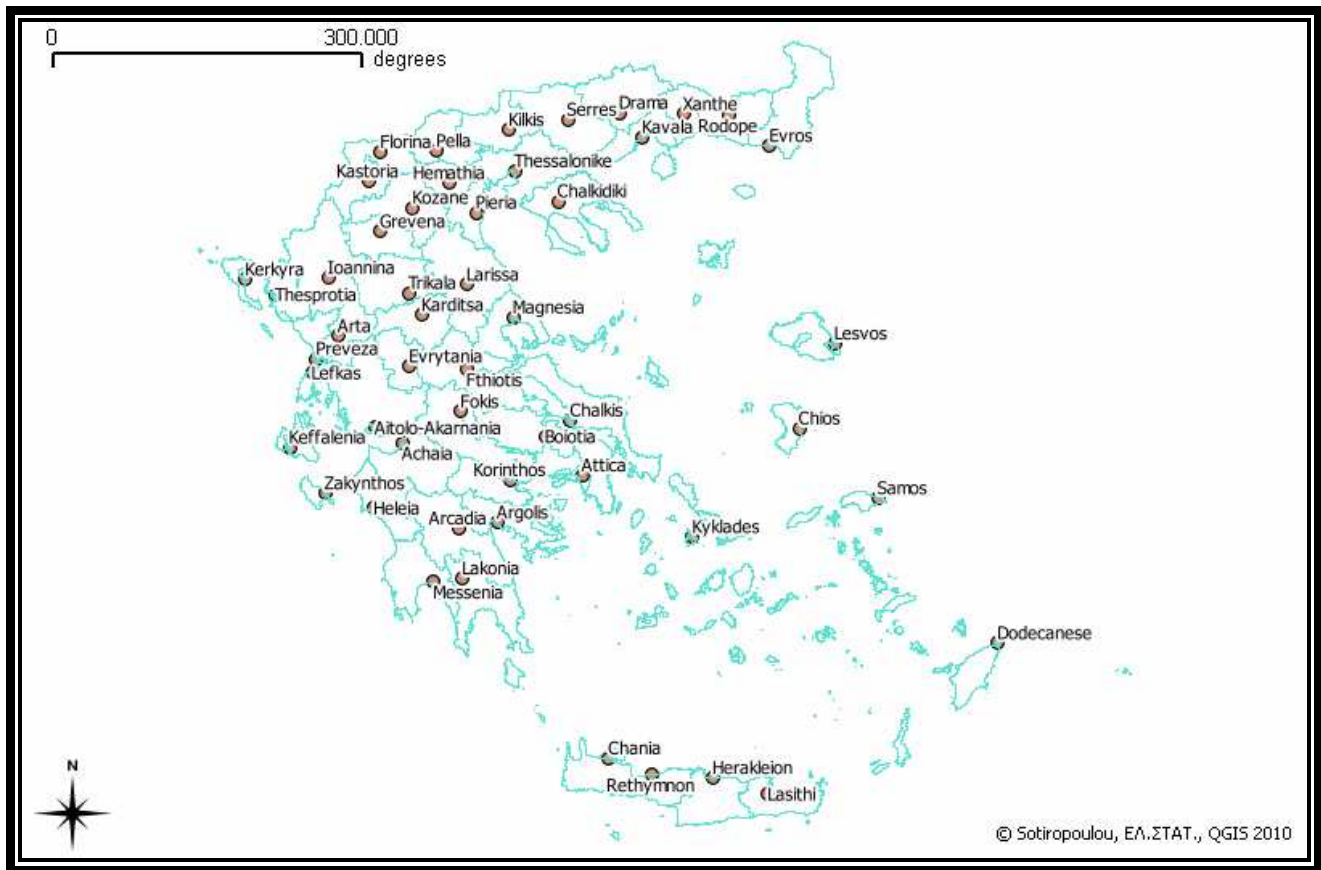
To prepare the maps, we used the Quantum GIS Software and the maps of locating villages, towns and cities as well as the boundaries of the first grade counties as are available online by the Hellenic Statistical Authority. We also used the population data as of the census of 2001, again available by the Hellenic Statistical Authority. The data about the schemes have been either available on the web or provided by the schemes themselves. In some cases, the data were pretty raw, so the author had to work on accumulating information in quantitative way from membership lists. More details about the data of each scheme will be presented below.

## **II. THE MAP OF GREECE**

There has been a major change in local and regional government in 2011 in Greece, given that many municipalities have been unified in terms of management and administration, and several counties were integrated into larger administrative areas who can elect their local council instead of having this appointed by the central government. However, given that villages, towns and cities have not changed at all in terms of geography, boundaries and population we use the maps of the Hellenic Statistical Authority as they are available, e.g. keeping the geographical boundaries for local counties as they were a year ago. So, we study the map of Greece as having 52 counties, each one with its own capital city.

In unit IV, quantitative data is presented on regional basis according to both the old and new regional division of Greece.

Below one can see the map of Greece with the county borders, the name of each county and point where the capital city of each county is.

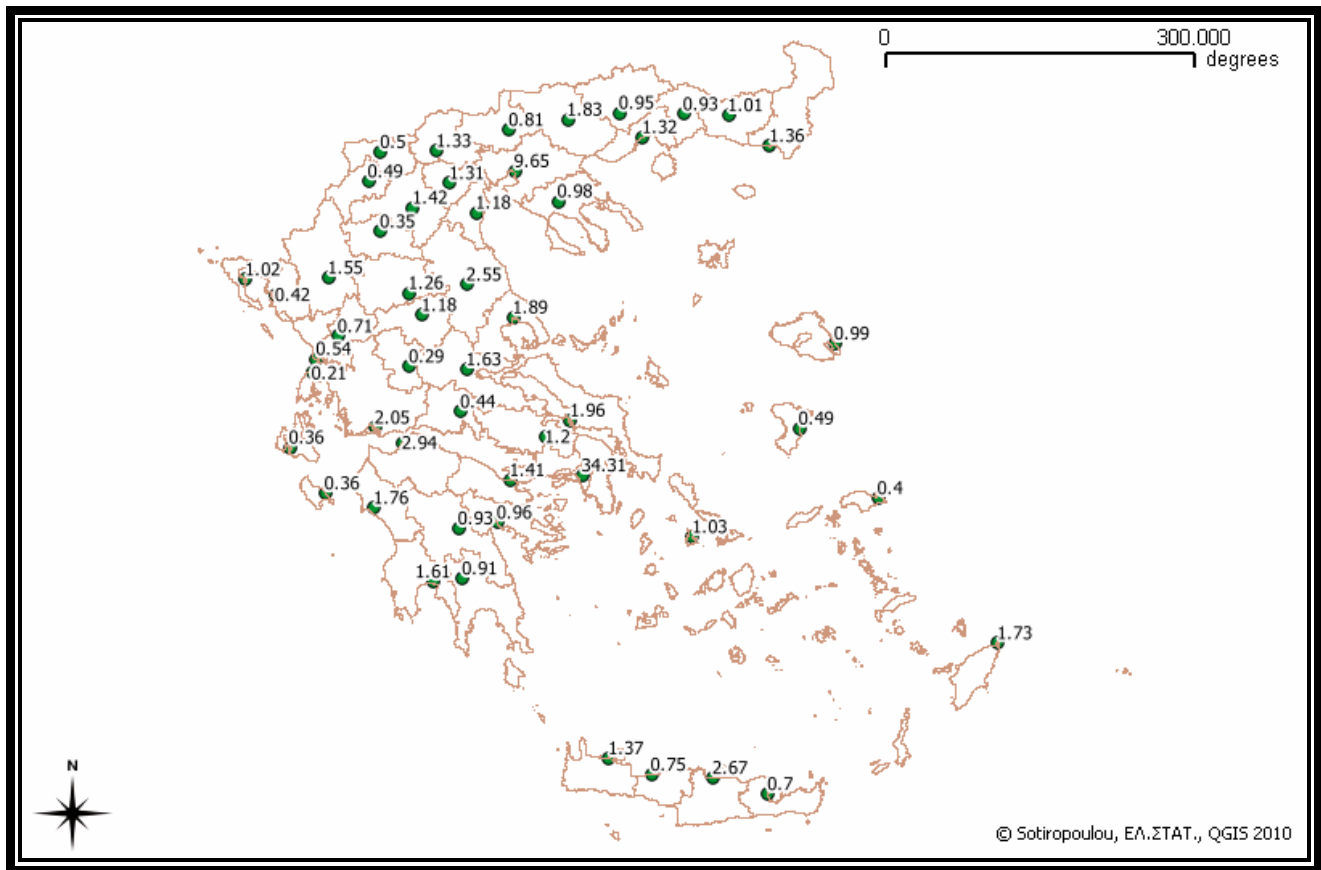
**Map 1: Counties of Greece and their names**

A major difficulty was to create maps that could be more or less comparable with the population dispersion but also comparable among each other. Given that according to last census held in 2001 the population of Greece is 10.964.020 people, comparing total membership of a scheme, even if that membership consists of some thousands of members, to the overall population would not help much. Moreover, it would not be fruitful to compare just the number of members for schemes of different nature, structure and scope.

Thus, we created maps where we can see a) the geographical points a scheme might have members at and b) the percentage of membership on county level, as this was the simplest way to compare the general population dispersion with the membership dispersion of each scheme. To this, we have the exception of free bazaars, where there are no members, but just... visitors or users. Free bazaars have been mapped with a different method, described in the related unit.

Below one can see the map we created by calculating the percentage of total population who live in each county of Greece according to census of 2001 as they have been provided by the Hellenic Statistical Authority<sup>1</sup>:

<sup>1</sup> The website of Hellenic Statistical Authority is [www.statistics.gr](http://www.statistics.gr). For easier access to population data, as well as to GIS maps created by the Hellenic Statistical Authority, one can use the website <http://www.geodata.gov.gr/geodata/> where the Hellenic Statistical Authority has published main statistical data and GIS maps.

**Map 2: Percentage of total population in each county of Greece**

The peculiarity of Greece is that it has about half of its population in the Greater Athens and Greater Thessalonike area. Generally, big urban centres attract major part of the population, therefore the simplest question we could raise is whether the schemes we study follow this general pattern.

### III. THE SCHEMES

To study the schemes and initiatives, we still follow the draft typology we created for the project<sup>1</sup>. The typology obviously is used for analytical purposes only and not as a fair description of reality. The main criterion for this is the object of each initiative – by the word “object”, we mean the transaction aimed by the scheme participants. Therefore, we distinguish those various grassroots initiatives in a) parallel currencies, b) exchange/barter networks and c) free bazaars and free networks. To those categories, four (!) sui generis schemes can be added, also described below.

[http://www.geodata.gov.gr/geodata/index.php?option=com\\_sobi2&catid=21&Itemid=10](http://www.geodata.gov.gr/geodata/index.php?option=com_sobi2&catid=21&Itemid=10) . In English, the same data is published here <http://www.statistics.gr/portal/page/portal/ESYE> .

<sup>1</sup> Sotiropoulou, I. (2010a) pp. 1-6.

### **III. A. Parallel currencies**

By “parallel currencies” we mean any currency used by people in their transactions, without this being official in any country. A parallel currency might have only a virtual or digital appearance (f.ex. units credited in a computer database) or it might take a physical appearance in notes, issued by the currency users. In Greece, parallel currencies are digital or virtual and there is a recent attempt in Magnesiá county to create material coupons that will be used along with the virtual local currency. There follows a brief description of the parallel currencies which are now running in Greece.

#### **II.A.1. The Ovolos currency**

The Ovolos is based in Patras city<sup>1</sup>. The effective launch of Ovolos currency was done in late March 2010 and despite the expanding membership (already more than 5000 in November 2010, although only a part of them are actually exchanging), its organisers consider the project to be still in beta-phase.

Moreover, Ovolos is used by several people who do not live or work in Patras and Thessaloniki, but they prefer to transact with parallel currency. This has created a peculiar situation, where locality of transactions is not linked necessarily to the “base cities”. The Ovolos organisers see this as a positive feature, which will turn Ovolos to be an online technology platform available to all people living in the country, enabling them to experiment using parallel currency while transacting locally no matter where they live.

The main idea of the Ovolos scheme is that the members can use the Ovolos currency (which is virtual) instead of euro currency for their transactions with scheme members. The Ovolos currency is managed by a non-profit association (Σωματείο) based in Patras city and named “Ovolos Research and Documentation Center for Social Currency” which supervises the entire scheme. This association structure has created the peculiar situation where most members of the scheme keep their participation online, but they have not become official members of the Association. The Association has also members located in other countries, like UK and Cyprus.

For the purposes of this research, Ovolos Association has provided us with data concerning the location of the official Association members, who are 332 in Greece only. We did not count the members located in countries other than Greece. Below one can see the members of the Ovolos Association. We have no detailed data about the dispersion of members within greater Athens and

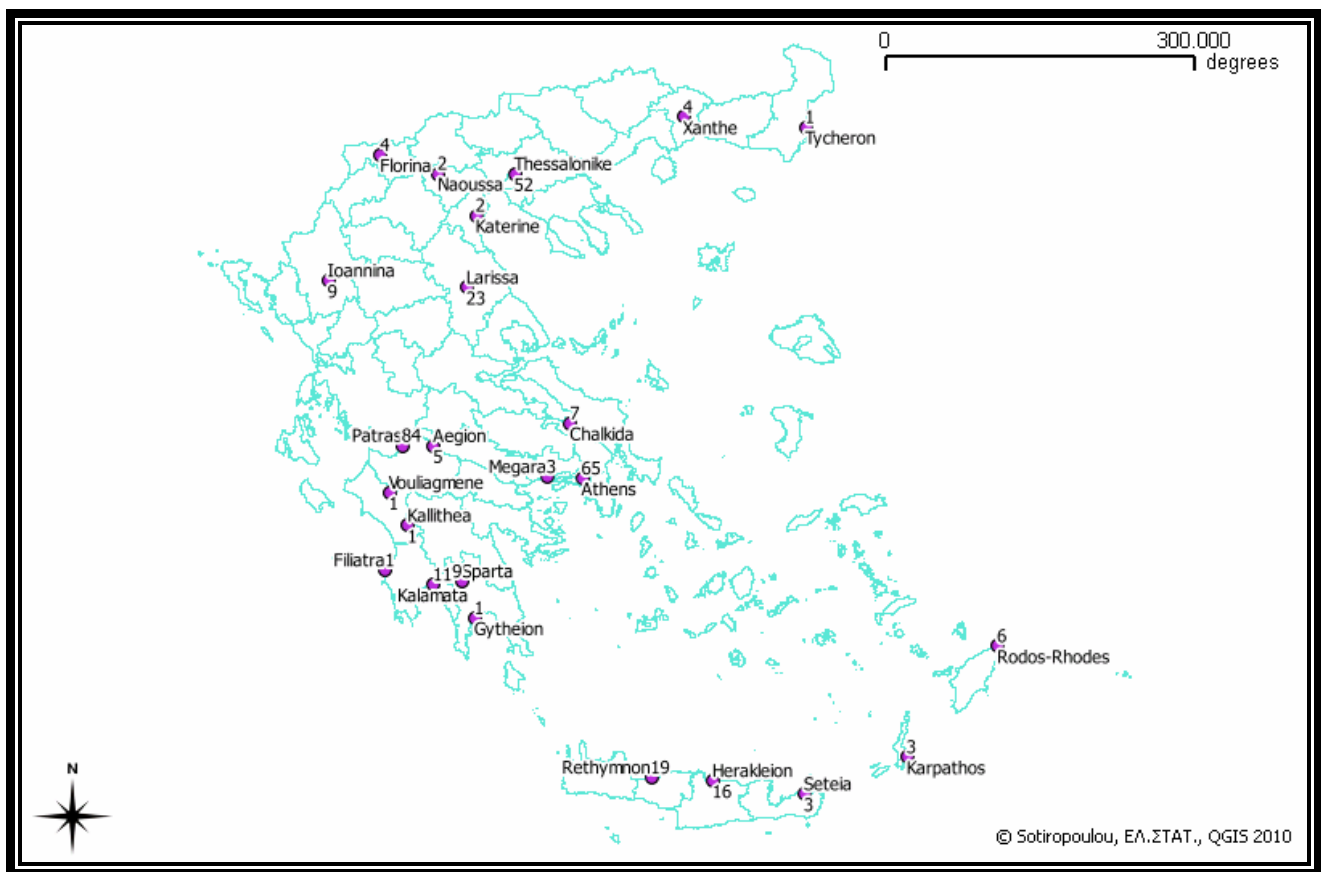
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<sup>1</sup> Information in this unit that is not attributed to written sources, has been provided by personal communication with Ovolos founders. See the website [www.ovolos.gr](http://www.ovolos.gr). There is also a group with the same name at Facebook, where the members discuss issues about their currency. All texts are so far in Greek only.

Thessaloniki area. Moreover, we have not any data yet, concerning the dispersion of all Ovolos members throughout Greece.

The curious thing in this map is that there are no members in the islands apart from Crete and Dodecanese. In Crete, there are no members in Chania city, which is the second major city of the island. There are no members in the central part of mainland Greece neither in the northern counties. However, given that we have no data on all members of the currency, we cannot reach any safe conclusions yet. Especially about areas where Ovolos Association has one or very few members only, one could ask the question whether there are any other members for the official member to transact with or this membership has ended up to be practically non-active.

**Map 3: Members of the Ovolos Association as of November 2010**



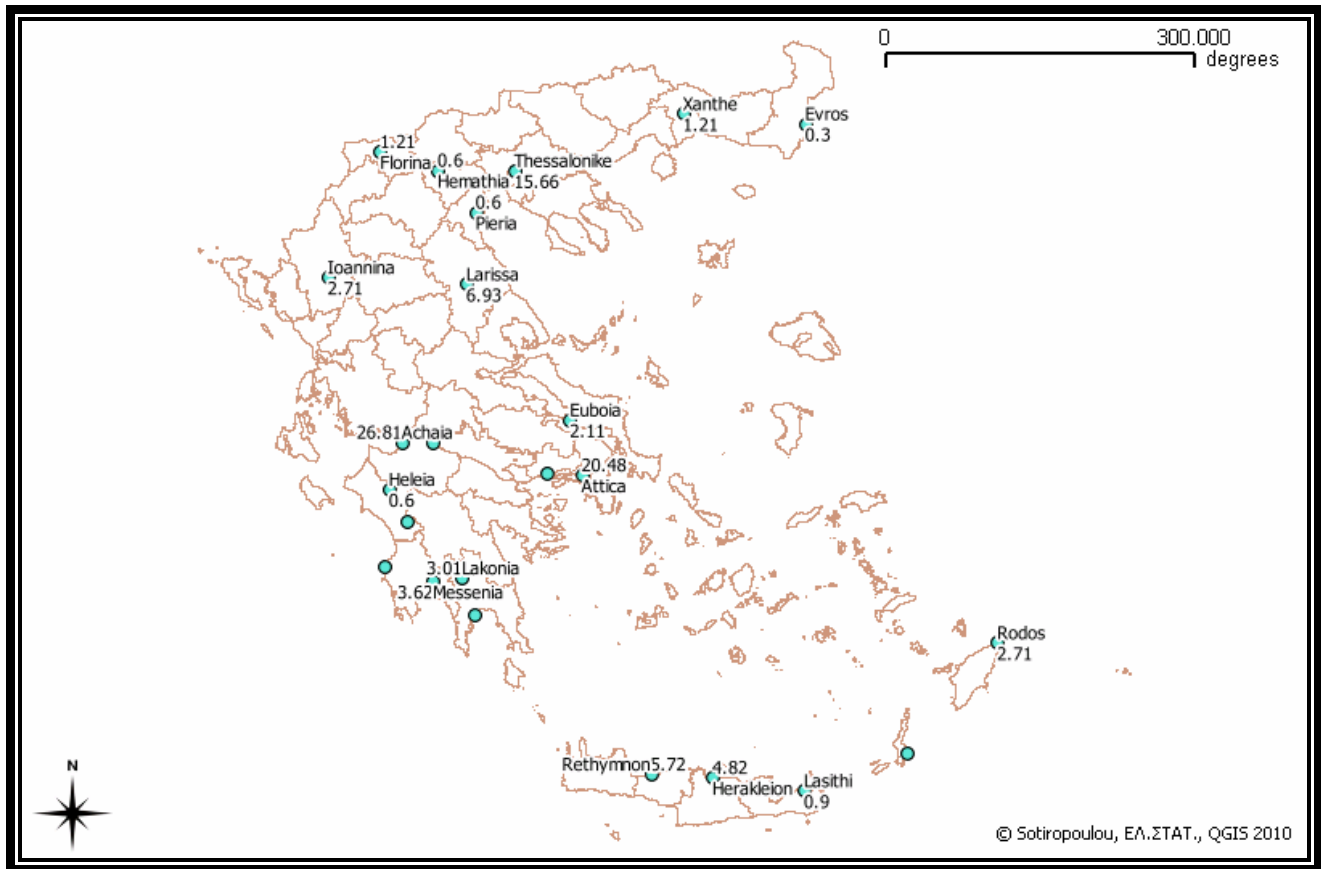
The percentage of members in each county is shown below. The geographical points which have no percentage are those that belong to the same county.

It is obvious that urban areas attract the majority of members. The interesting feature is that the general population pattern is not followed at all: Thessalonike and Patras attract more members than their share “should” be. This is connected to the fact that Ovolos currency is based in Patras and has as a second basis the city of Thessalonike. The major surprises have been Larissa and Rethymnon cities. Especially about Rethymnon, one could say that participation in Ovolos currency



might explain the weird situation where we have no data about Rethymnians' heavy participation in any other scheme.

**Map 4: Percentage of Ovolos Association members in each county**



### III.A.3. The Local Alternative Unit of Volos city

The Local Alternative Unit (Τοπική Εναλλακτική Μονάδα – TEM) was formally launched on June 15<sup>th</sup> 2010 in the city of Volos, on the East Central coast of Greece. The Unit will be used within the framework of the Exchange and Solidarity Network<sup>1</sup> which covers the entire county of Magnesiá. Local businesses are also welcome to participate and actually it is a local business that offered to host the server of the network.

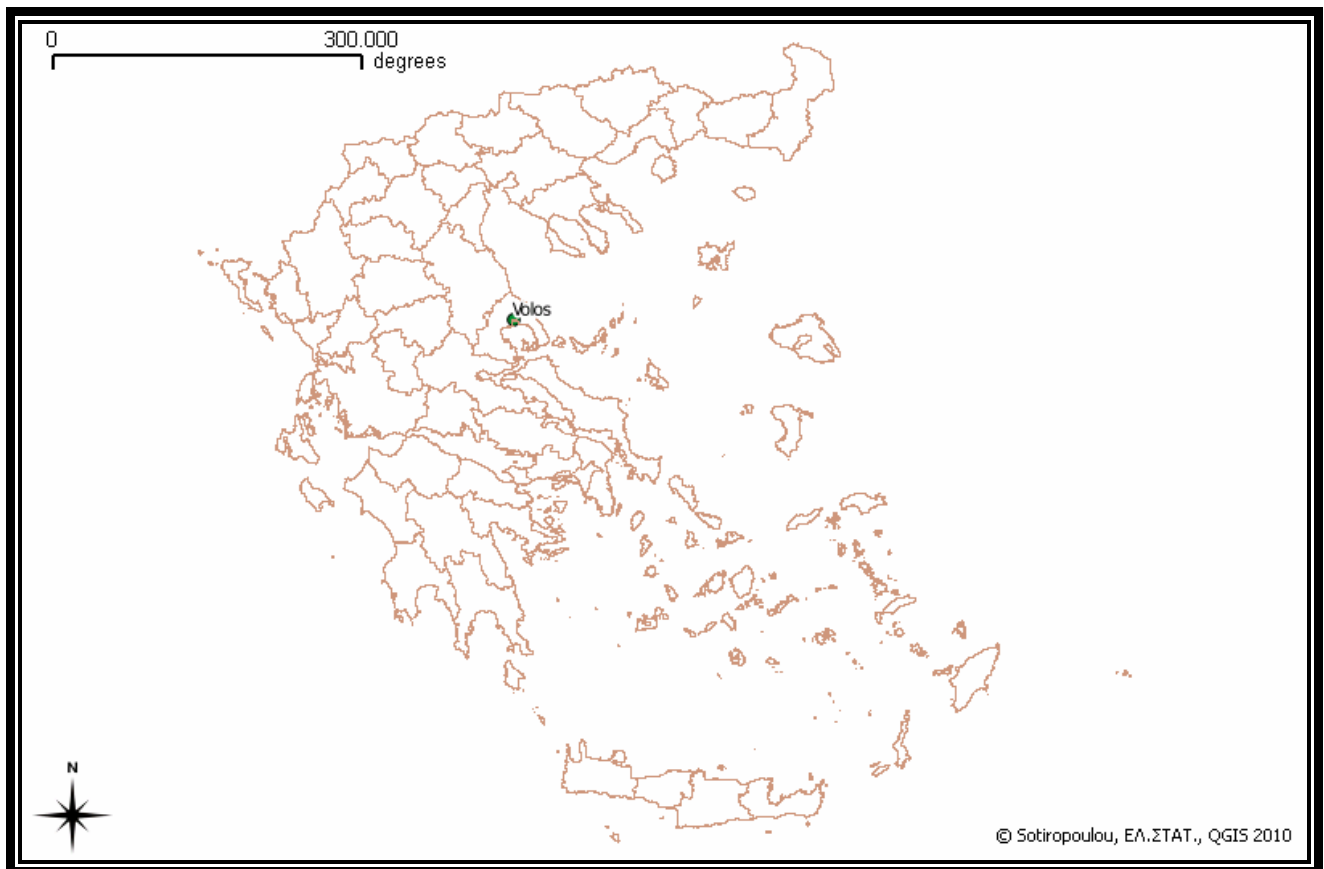
However, its membership is still limited (about 70 members in November 2010) due to the fact that the coordinators have not proceeded with heavy publicising yet, given that the scheme is on the process of resolving several practical issues. The most important problem has been the practicality of the digital currency. Many people do not feel comfortable with using personal computers and internet for their transactions. One solution had been so far to keep several TEM

<sup>1</sup> [www.tem-magnisia.gr](http://www.tem-magnisia.gr)

trading points hosted in the city's Social Centres where people can ask for support in order to register and trade within the network.

The solution they are currently working on is to issue “order for payment” bills, so that transactions are made easier and handier, without the use of a PC being necessary. The map shows below the location of the TEM scheme, although we have no data concerning the exact dispersion of the scheme members in the entire county of Magnesiá. What is sure is that Ovolos Currency Association has no members in Magnesiá whatsoever.

**Map 5: The TEM currency in the county of Magnesiá**



### **III.A.1. The Athens Time Bank**

This is the oldest parallel currency in Greece is a Time Bank based in Athens and run by the Greek branch of the European Network of Women<sup>1</sup> and started working in October 2006 following the general structure of time banks: it is a “network” of individuals who are offering services to other members of the group. In reward, each member gains “time” so that he/she is able to ask for the other members’ services.

<sup>1</sup> [www.enow.gr](http://www.enow.gr)

The Time Bank covers the entire Greater Athens area (county of Attica), e.g. the port of Piraeus is included as well all suburbs of the main urban area. We have not received yet all data necessary for the purposes of mapping the Time Bank's membership. There are also other Time Banks or affiliate Time brokers in other Greek cities, for which the data we have so far is not possible to be processed in order to construct a map.

### **III.B. Exchange networks**

By the term “exchange networks” we mean structures which facilitate non-monetary exchange for their members and they are either of general nature or specialised in one sector of activity. To this type of activity, there belong several groups of exchange which have not assumed any network or any other “form” of structure.

#### **III.B.1. The Peliti network**

Peliti is the biggest and oldest network<sup>1</sup> and covers the entire country, both urban and rural areas. Founded in 2002, its structure consists of two separate but intertwined networks: the first, is a general network for exchanging goods and services, while the second, is a specialised network which enables its members but also anyone interested, to exchange or just find for free traditional varieties of plants<sup>2</sup> (either fruit or decorative trees, vegetables, flowers, etc) and to acquire (at the cost of breeding only) several traditional species of domestic animals.

The data we gathered from Peliti were in raw format, e.g. we had access to the public lists concerning the members of both networks. Particularly, we used the list of the general exchange network named “From hand to hand” (Από Χέρι σε Χέρι) as it has been published online in November 2010 on the Peliti website, and we used the information for the specialised network named “Localities of Farms” (Κατά τόπους αγροκτήματα<sup>3</sup>) from the annual journal of Peliti network as it has been published for years 2010-2011. The data we processed concerning “Localities of Farms” include all farmers as enlisted in the network, without distinction between agriculture farming and domestic animal breeding, although Peliti journal gives information as if it is about two networks, one for plants and one for animals. In many cases, same farms undertake both activities, so we avoided double entries.

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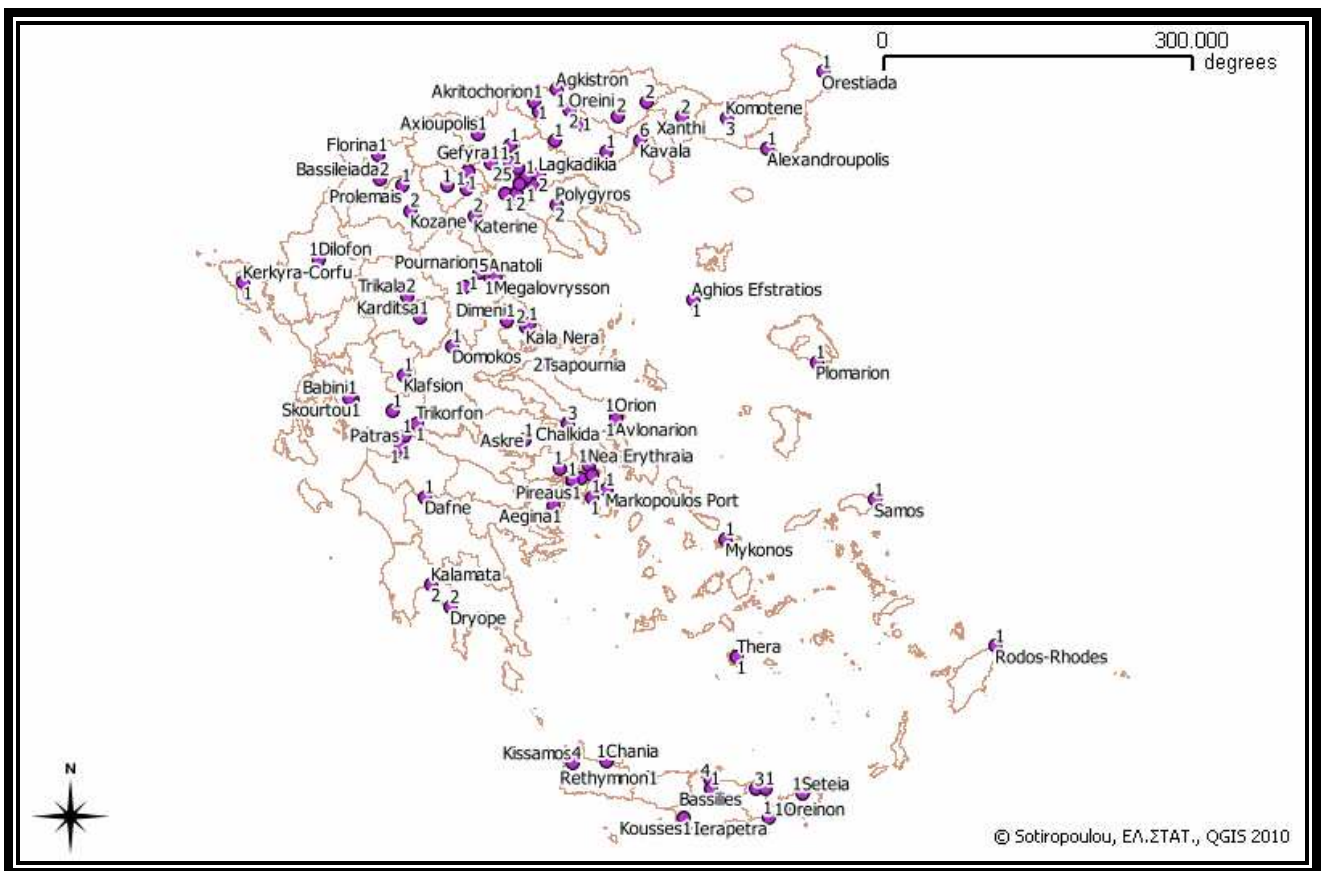
<sup>1</sup> [www.peliti.gr](http://www.peliti.gr)

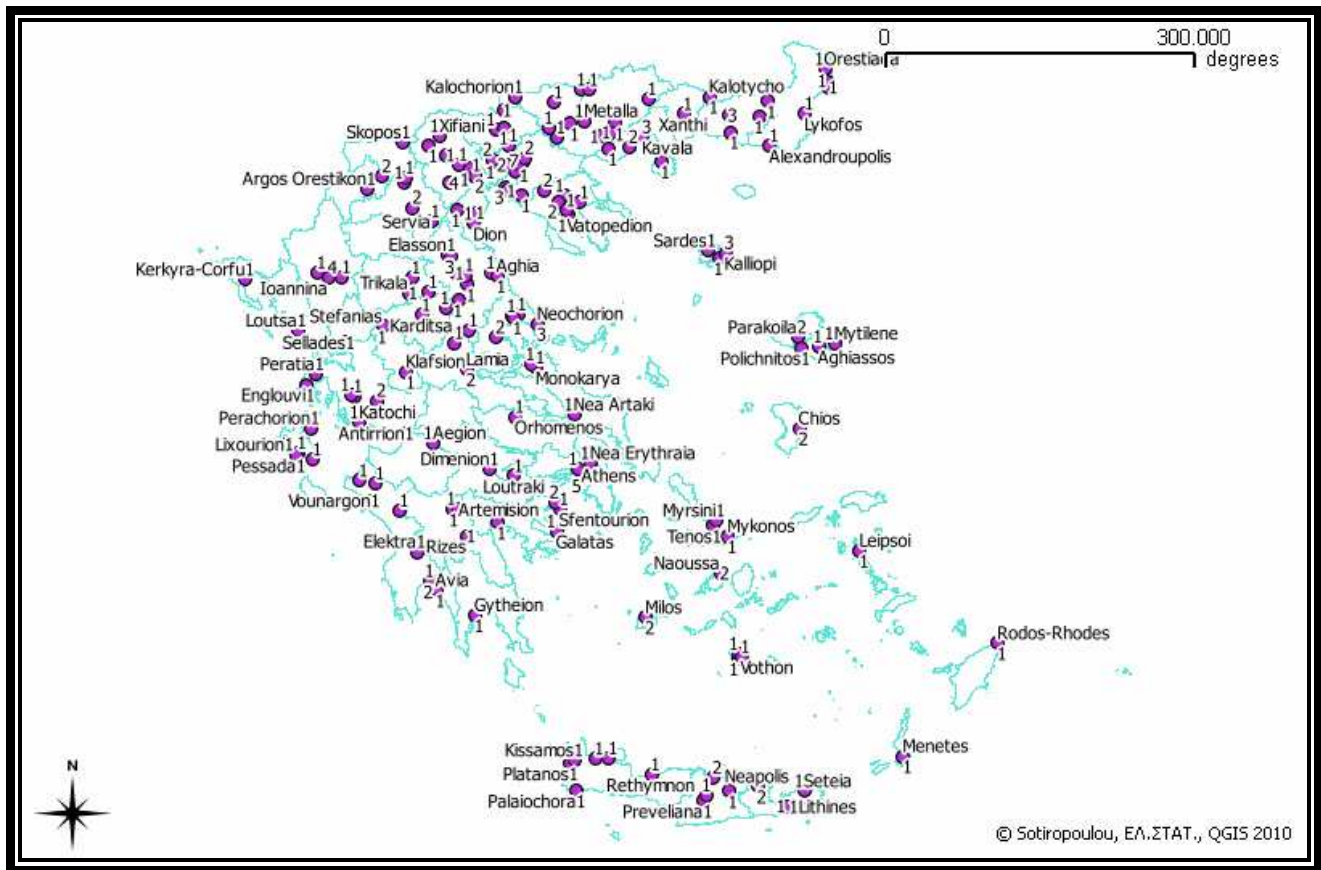
<sup>2</sup> Another term already used for them is “landraces”.

<sup>3</sup> Translation of network names is done according to publications of Peliti in its English website version.

Below we can see the locality and number members of both networks in Greece. The general network “From hand to hand” has 177 members in total and from the map it is obvious that in each locality members are very few. The specialised network “Localities of Farms” has 213 members in total. At this point, we should note that in both networks, we kept data concerning farms and members as given by Peliti. In many cases, a member does participate with its entire household; in other cases, both husband and wife of the household are members of the network. We count names of members as appearing in Peliti lists, so we did not researched the household participation through one member only.

**Map 6: Membership of “From hand to hand” network (general exchange network):**



**Map 7: Membership of “Localities of Farms” network (specialised network)**

It is obvious that comparing absolute numbers in both networks shows only that the general exchange network tends to attract more members in greater urban areas or around them, while the specialised network for preservation of traditional varieties of plants and traditional species of domestic animals has a more dispersed membership. Of course, one could also say that the data we have is limited as a sample, so we might not have same patterns if members were more numerous.

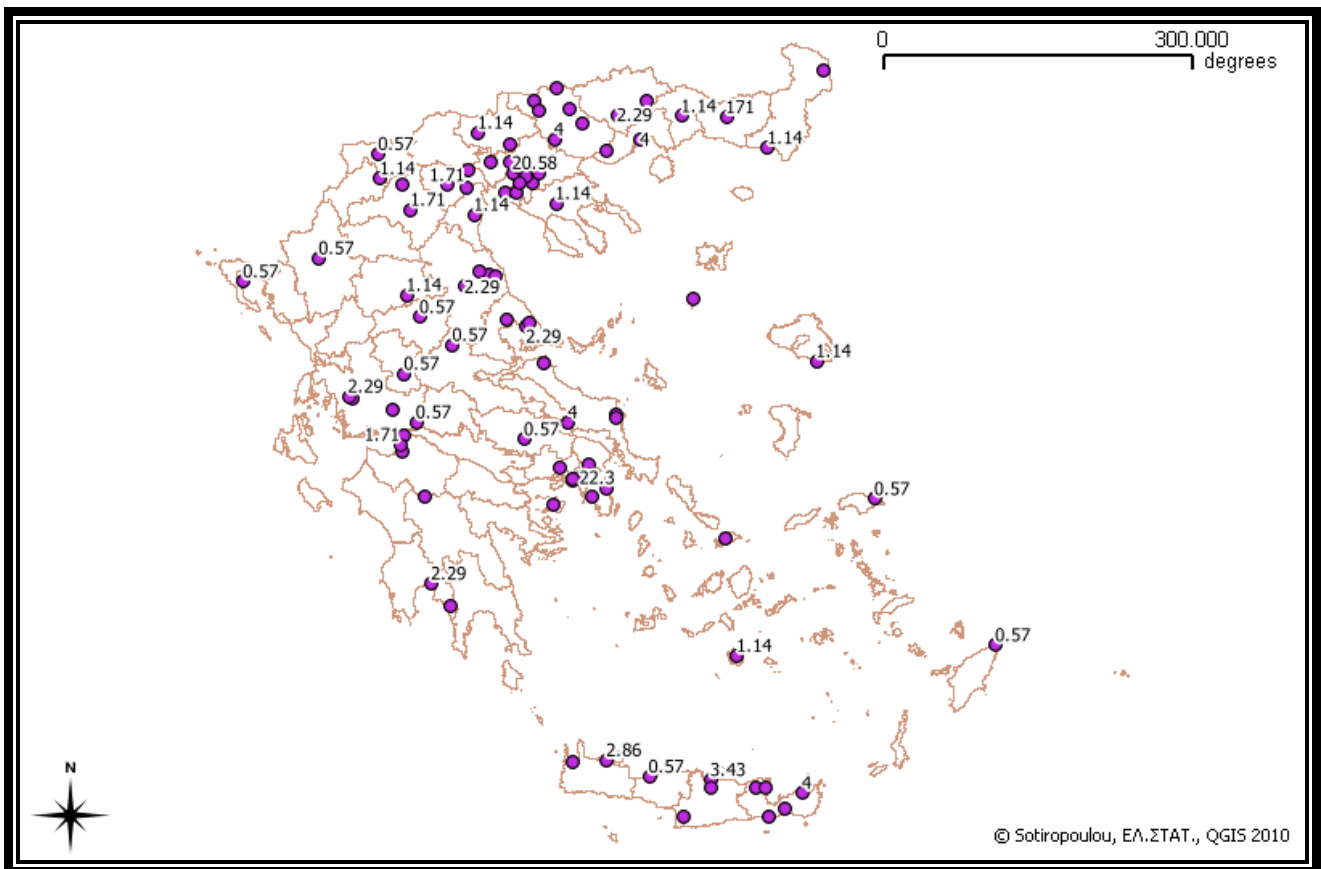
Moreover, from observation and free discussions with members and non-members of Peliti, we know that many people use both networks without being official Peliti members. This works in a more or less practical way: an official Peliti member lets his or her relatives and friends know about Peliti and then they exchange through the official member's contacts and "name". In addition, I have also met people who have exchanged through Peliti network facilities for their own activities, without ever registering as official members of the network. So, membership might be fairly indicative of the real activity or of the real numbers of people involved.

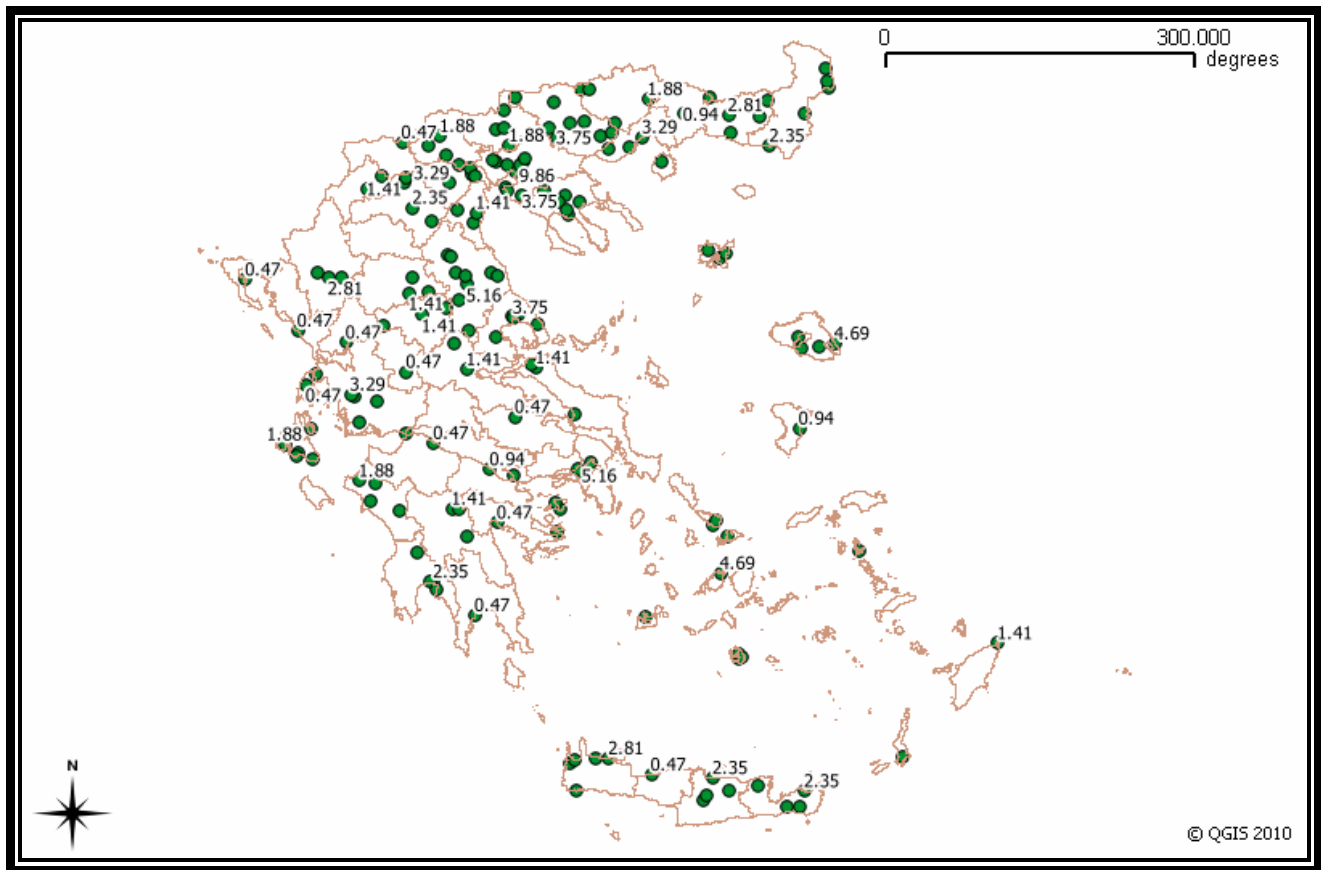
In some cases, same people participate in both networks. However this is not as common as we expected. Membership disparities are more evident when we compare the maps of membership percentage as dispersed in each county. The following two maps show that the specialised network does not follow at all the general population pattern. The general exchange network, does attract more members in Athens and Thessaloniki area, but percentage in Athens is still low (22,3%) instead of 34,31% of Athens population, while Thessaloniki county attracts far more members

(20,58%) than the general population concentration number (9,65%). Therefore even in the case of the general exchange network, population dispersion patterns do not match the general population pattern of the country.

It seems that particularly the specialised network attracts members in the islands, and in the Northern part of the country. The county of Thessaloniki attracts a percentage (9,86%) near the general population percentage, while Athens, despite its population, attracts only 5,16% of the specialised network's membership.

**Map 8: Percentage of “From hand to hand” network members in each county**



**Map 9: Percentage of “Localities of Farms” network in each county**

### III.B.2. The Logo-Timis network

The Logo-Timis network<sup>1</sup> (Λόγω Τιμής – by word of honour, in Greek) which started its function on June 4<sup>th</sup> 2010 is based in Athens and covers the Greater Athens area (county of Attica). We have not received yet the necessary data for mapping membership of this network.

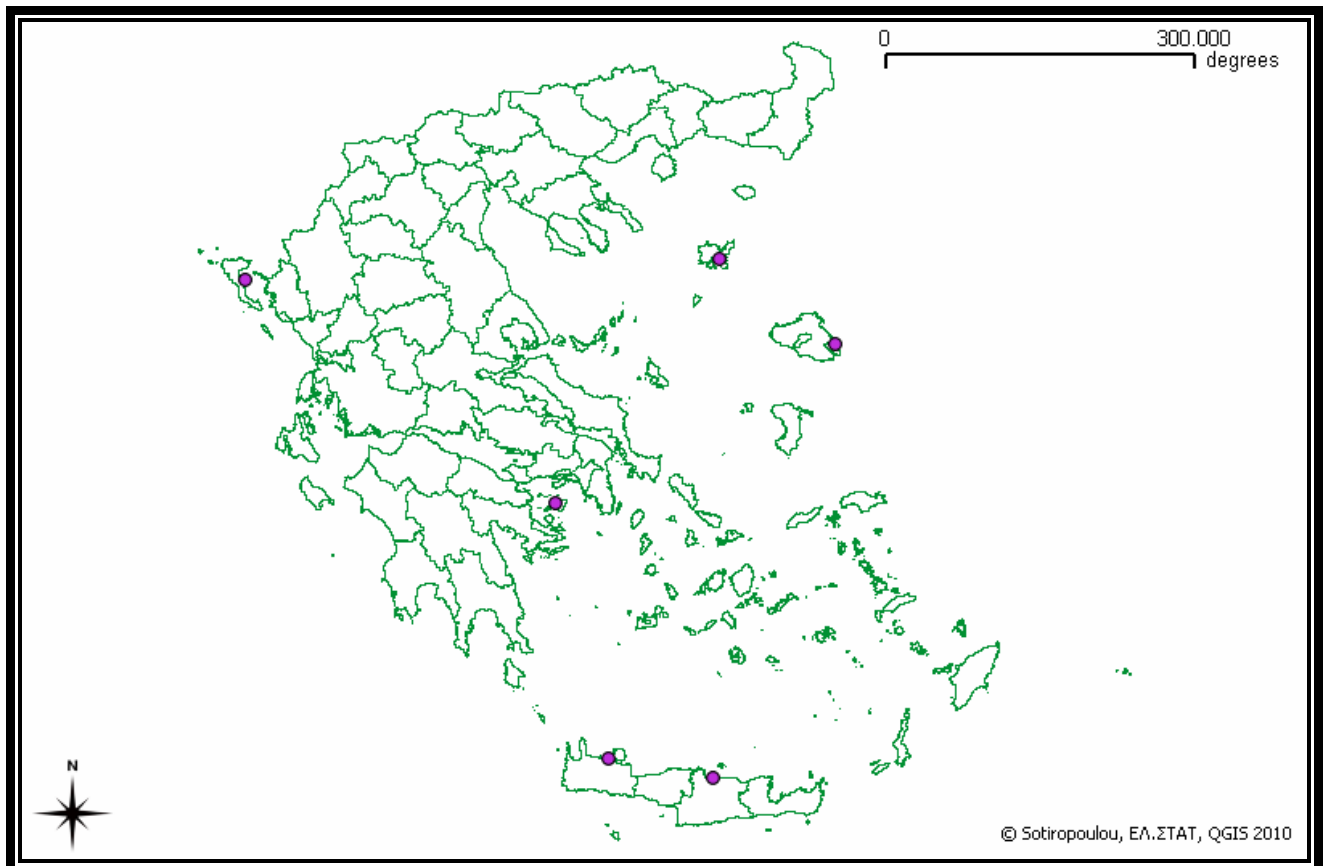
### III.B.3. Other exchange groups and networks for preservation of traditional varieties

Apart from Peliti, there are several (actually at least 6 active) schemes and initiatives for preservation and dissemination of traditional varieties throughout Greece. Most of them cooperate with Peliti but some have opted for acting locally only. Some of them are not even networks, but they just use local proximity of their members to create an unofficial group of people who are able to find traditional seeds whenever they need any. All of them provide the seeds for free and there is only a (loose) obligation of the receiver to cultivate the seeds, renew the variety for next year and provide any other person with seeds for free.

<sup>1</sup> [www.logo-timis.gr](http://www.logo-timis.gr)

The schemes are the following: the Association of Active Citizens of Aegina; the Association for Protecting the Environment of Kerkyra/Corfu; the Spori Lemnou group (Seed of Lemnos); the Network for Exchanging Native Varieties of Lesvos; the Group coordinated by the Park of Preserving Flora and Fauna at Chania (Technical University of Crete); and finally, the Group of cultivators in Herakleion county. This Group will be presented in detail in a following unit<sup>1</sup>, as they have more to tell us about non-monetary transactions. The map does not comprise membership data, but locations only.

**Map 10: Local groups and networks for preservation of traditional varieties**



What is important in the case of independent groups and schemes which exchange traditional varieties is that they are all located in islands; not really very small islands, neither islands that rely mostly on tourism (although one would ask the question, why small islands are not that active, so that they are able to cover better the needs of both their habitants and visitors). At the same time, the mainland country has no such groups. The answer that Peliti covers their needs in information and varieties-exchange is not enough as an argument, given that the islands also participate with high membership in the specialised network of Peliti. What is happening, then?

<sup>1</sup> See Unit III.D.2 of the present paper where the sui generis schemes are presented.



### **III.C. The free-exchange bazaars (χαριστικά-ανταλλακτικά παζάρια) and free networks (χαριστικά δίκτυα)**

#### **III.C.1. The free-exchange bazaars**

The term free-exchange bazaar (χαριστικό-ανταλλακτικό παζάρι) is the one used by bazaars where people can bring things (clothes, petty machines, shoes, toys, books, CDs, etc) to exchange them or just give them away and take anything they believe it is useful to them. To bring something is not obligatory, but we learn that there is an “unwritten” rule in one-day bazaars that to participate, you should bring at least something. This rule does not hold in permanent bazaars, because a person can bring something one day and take something else after several months. However, in no case is it necessary to equalise the value of what you offer and what you get, which means that you are free to take as many or as valuable things as you can carry with you. It is very common that free-exchange bazaars are organised within the framework of other activities, like feasts, festivals, concerts, workshops, etc. Even the permanent bazaars do connect this main activity with other activities of the organising groups<sup>1</sup>.

For the purposes of this research and given that bazaars have no members, but just visitors or users and the only regular participants associated with them are the organising groups, we decided to study bazaars in a different way than networks. First, we created a draft typology, e.g. a set of categories, just for analytical purposes only and for being able to trace “quantity” in space, without needing membership data. Therefore, we distinguish free-exchange bazaars into a) permanent, e.g. those which have a stable place where stuff for free provision and exchange is stored and displayed for any visitor or bazaar user, b) regular, e.g. those which are repeated by the same organisers, not necessarily at the same place (but usually within the same area); repetition does not require an tight event schedule, but only the act of repetition itself, and c) occasional bazaars, e.g. bazaars that are organised once by their organisers and they have not been repeated by the same organisers within the last two years. Obviously, bazaars might turn from occasional to regular or permanent and vice versa – which means that some of the bazaars might belong to another category after six months from now.

Second, we created individual maps for each one of the above categories, in order to see which type of activity is concentrated where. In that sense, we have collected data from the “official” announcements about the free bazaars and from observation where this was possible to be done.

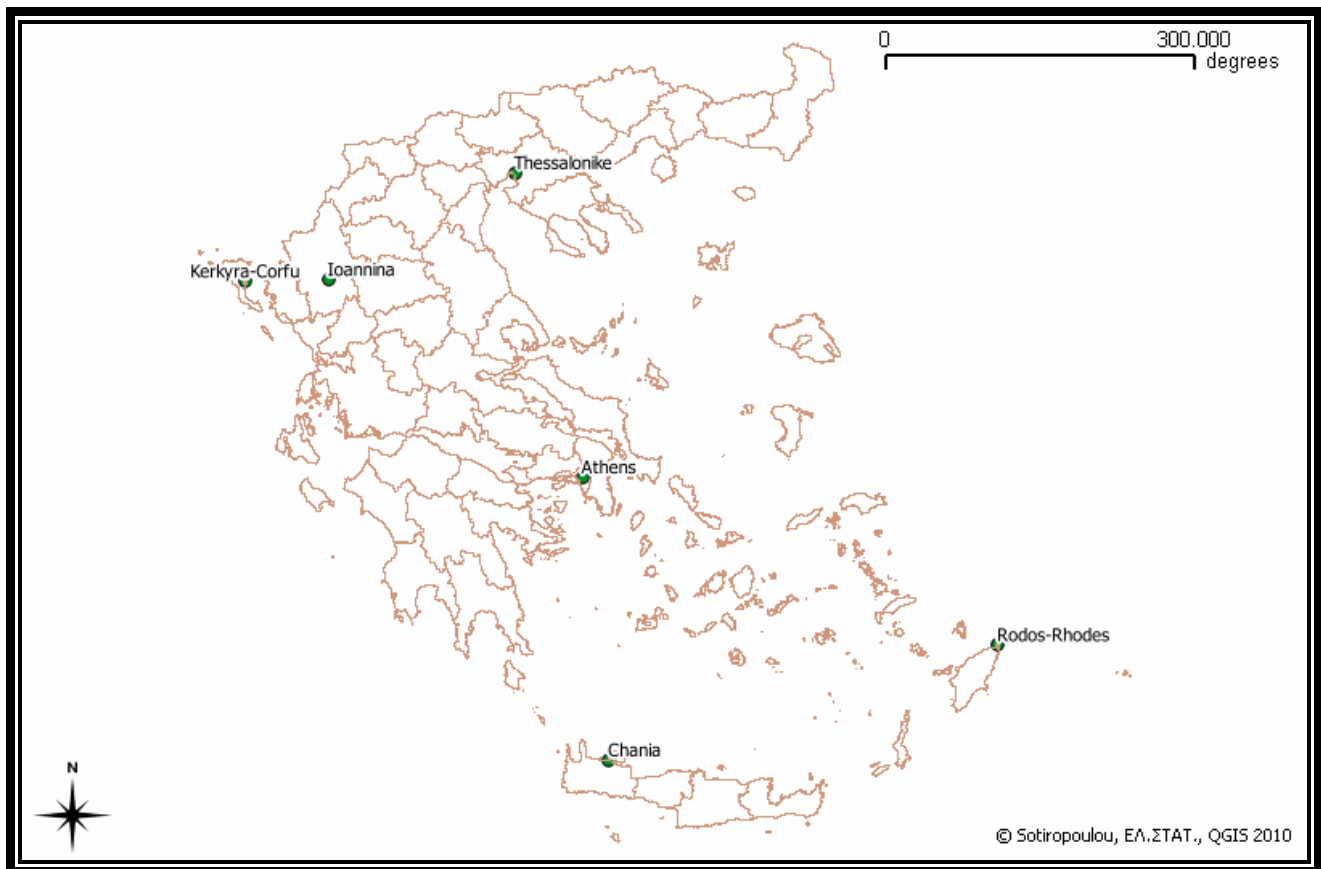
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<sup>1</sup> For more information on this, one could see Sotiropoulou, I. (2010b), pp. 5-7.

### III.C.1.a. The permanent free-exchange bazaars

The first free-exchange bazaar in Greece has been organised by Sporos Cooperative in downtown Athens since 2003 but now, while still being part of the same cooperative, it has moved to its own place and is named Skoros<sup>1</sup> (Σκόρος, moth, in Greek). There are other four permanent free bazaars in major cities of the country (Thessaloniki, Chania, Ioannina and Rhodes). Below, the map shows the points (all urban areas) where the bazaars are located:

**Map 11: Permanent free-exchange bazaars**



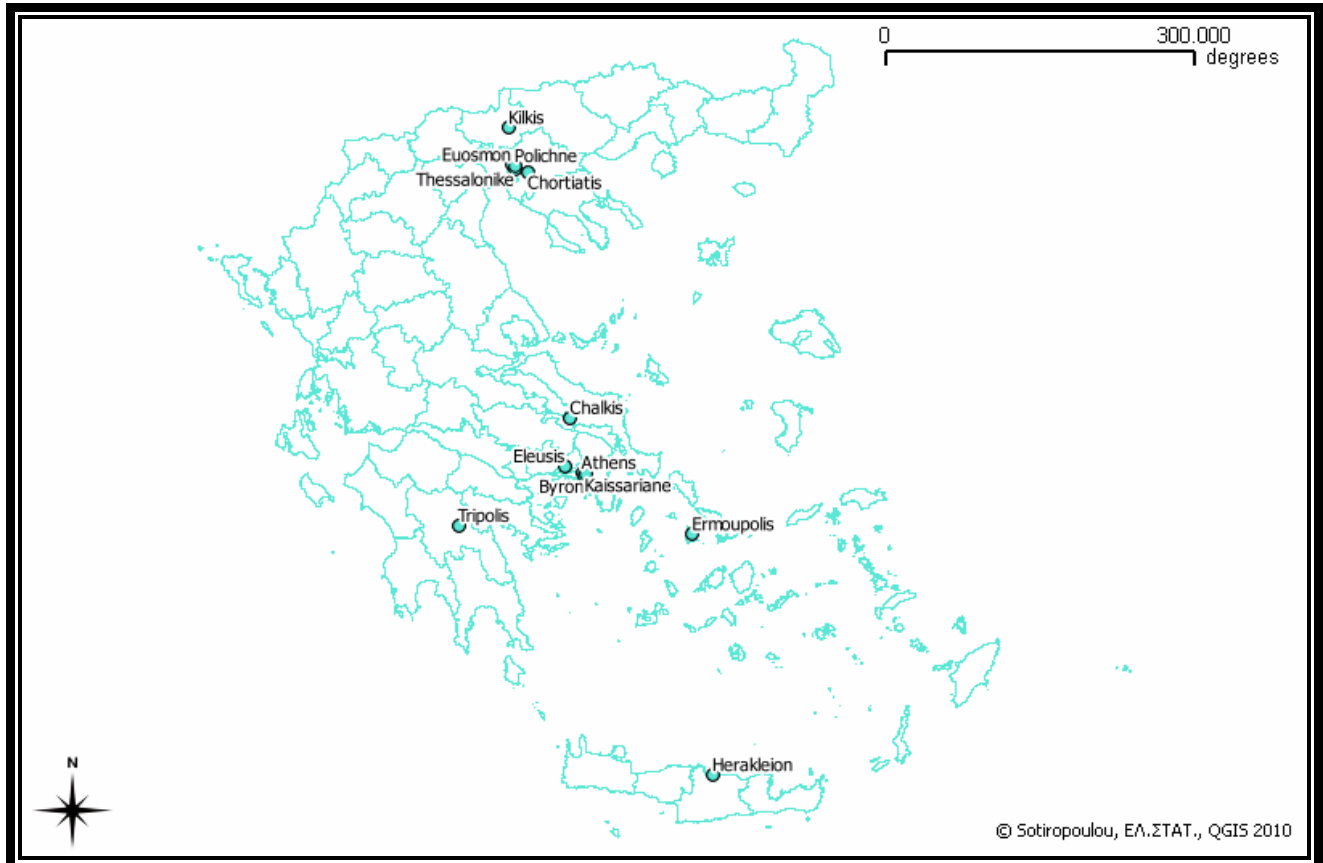
### III.C.1.b. The regular free-exchange bazaars

Free bazaars are regularly organised in several neighbourhoods of Greater Athens area, but also in many other cities of Greece. Their dispersion, volume and regularity have greatly developed since 2009. Among the regular bazaars, there is one in Kilkis city, well supported by the local municipality. Support from local authorities is also given to the regular bazaars organised by Charise-to free network (see unit III.C.3 below), in several points of the Greater Thessalonike area.

<sup>1</sup> <http://skoros.espiv.net/>

A special type of regular free bazaars is swishing parties (πάρτυ ανταλλαγής ρούχων) which emerged in Athens<sup>1</sup> since 2009 and Thessaloniki<sup>2</sup> in 2010. Swishing is a term created out of swapping and shopping to describe parties where people bring their clothes, shoes and accessories and can take other clothes, etc for free. It is like a free-exchange bazaar, focusing on clothing. For the purposes of this research, all regular free bazaars (organised with or without support by local municipalities, swishing parties, etc) have been included in the same map.

**Map 12: Regular free-exchange bazaars**



### III.C.1.c. Occasional free-exchange bazaars

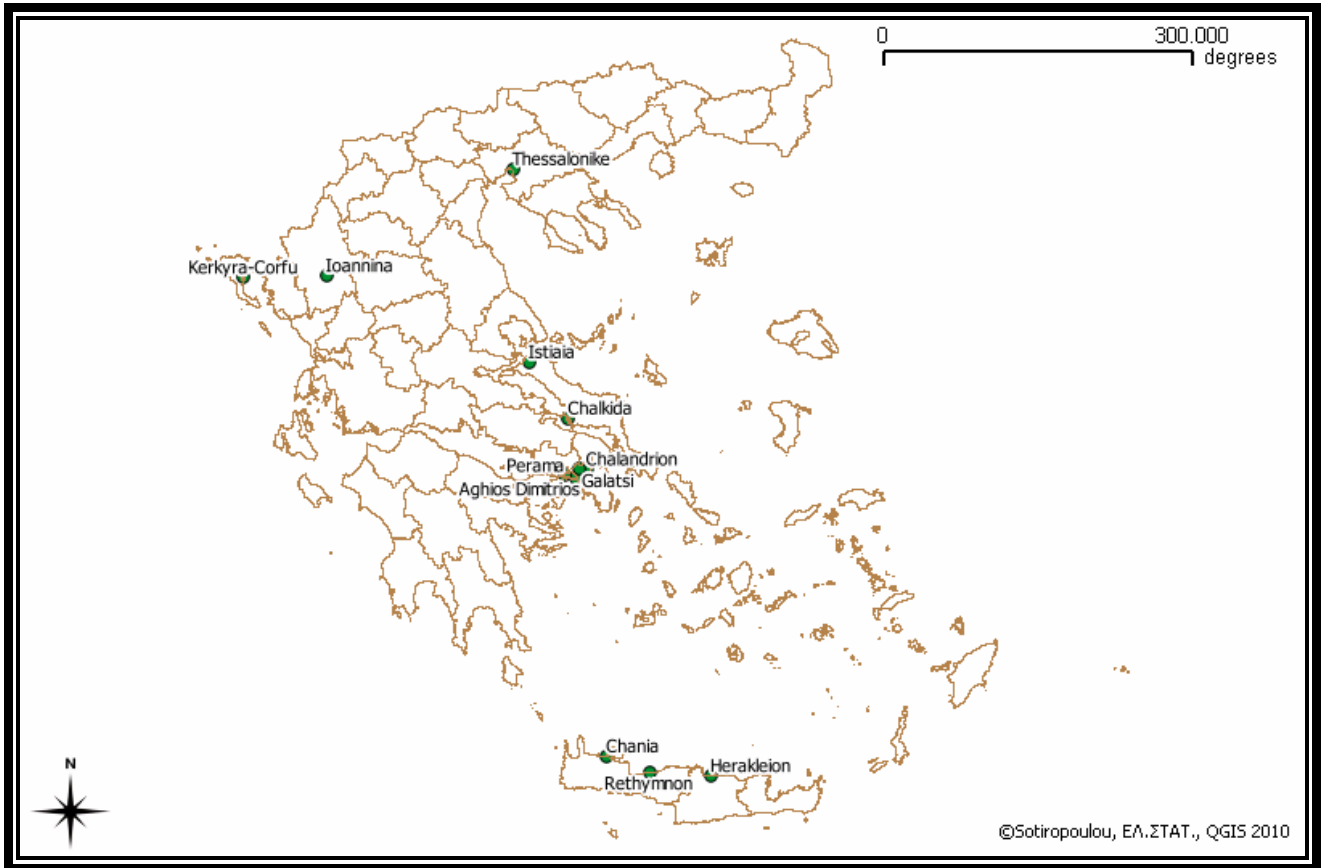
However, most free-exchange bazaars are organised for an afternoon or a day, usually combined with other activities (like collective cooking points, handicraft fairs, etc). Moreover, there are cases where the free-exchange bazaar is directly related to an event which is a social protest, f.ex. the bazaar is organised by people who have been left unemployed after massive firings in a company or when they have been left unpaid for months by a public institution. The most curious thing is that the people who are supposed to be in the harshest economic situation are those who are

<sup>1</sup> [www.swishing.gr](http://www.swishing.gr)

<sup>2</sup> <http://swishing-thess.blogspot.com/>.

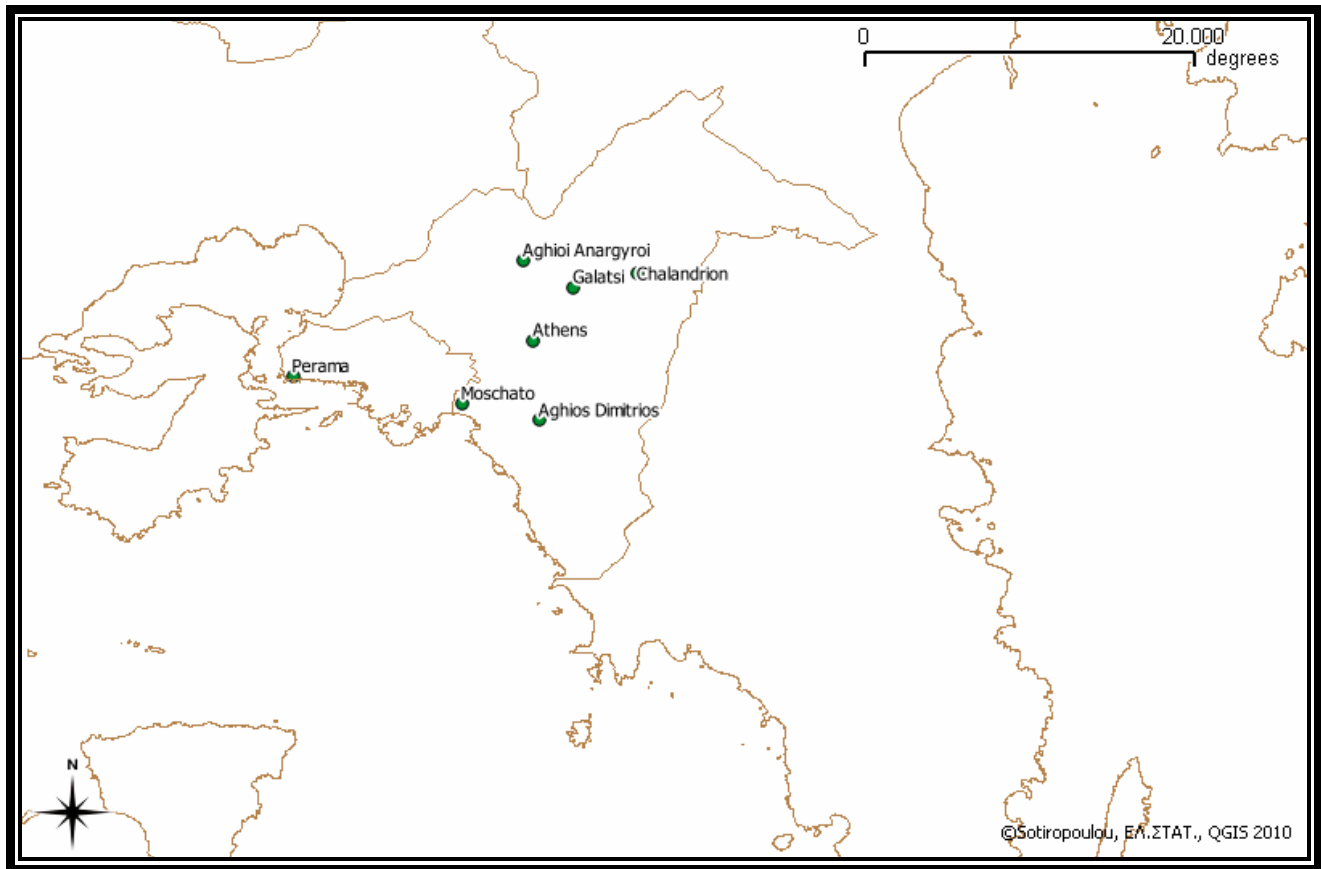
going to offer for free from their stuff (although mainstream economics would think this as an irrational action). The map below presents occasional bazaars that have taken place the last two years. Each point on the map shows one occasional bazaar; the exception is the main urban area of Athens, where we count eight occasional bazaars the last two years.

**Map 13: Occasional free-exchange bazaars**



To see better the activity in Greater Athens area, there is a detailed map

**Map 14: Occasional free-exchange bazaars in Attica county**



One can easily see that free bazaars are a feature of urban areas – actually, the greater the urban centre, the greater the free-bazaar activity which emerges there. Moreover, regular and occasional bazaars tend to concentrate in big urban centres (Athens prevails in that sense), following the general population pattern, despite the fact we have no information about the visitors and participants on all bazaars.

However, one could note the following:

- a) Bazaars usually have a lot of visitors, originating in all age groups, purchasing-power groups, gender and ethnicity (this information is based on observation done by the author in several bazaars).
- b) Given that the bazaar organisers do not keep any records about the bazaar visitors, a bazaar may attract visitors from a larger area than the neighbourhood or the city the bazaar is located in. Therefore, to label free bazaars as a strictly urban phenomenon would obscure the fact that bazaars in smaller cities might attract visitors from semi-urban or rural areas as well.
- c) The location of the bazaar does really show something, probably the urban or urbanised perception of free giving and taking. This is important especially for the Greater Athens area, where most free bazaars are located in the main Athens city area (and actually not in the richest

neighbourhoods) and in suburbs which usually both face economic hardship (in terms of per capita income). The project has not accessed yet the detailed geographical data about income as processed by the Greek Ministry of Finance, so this remains a hypothesis to be checked during the following months.

d) The distinction made by Masoudi Nejad<sup>1</sup> between commercial and social bazaars might be very useful in this case, especially if one takes into account research results from observation and participation of the author in several bazaar activities<sup>2</sup>. According to Masoudi Nejad's distinction, free bazaars are social bazaars. However, given that research has not been concluded yet, it would not be wise to stick with such distinction only, as we do not have full and clear picture of the free bazaar activity in Greece.

### **III.C.2. The free networks**

The free networks have a different pattern: they are online networks, the members of which can notify when they want to give something away for free or when they need anything that might be available but not yet announced online, or they get instantly notified when something is disposed by any network member. There are three free networks in Greece, but all of them cover the entire country: one is Freecycle<sup>3</sup> in Greece, which actually is member of the international Freecycle network that has started in USA several years ago; the other is Χάρισέ-το<sup>4</sup> (pronounced Charise-To, Give-it-away) network, which is based in Thessaloniki; and the newest of all three is Dosse-Pare (Give-Take)<sup>5</sup>.

#### **III.C.2.a. The Freecycle network**

The Freecycle network is structured in a way that is more or less decentralised. Apart from the main node in Athens, there are several online nodes and coordinators in other major cities of the country. The network had 7807 members on December 12<sup>th</sup> 2010. The data used for this research have been acquired from the online available information on total numbers of membership in each node, which means that we have no data on members' dispersion within counties or big urban centres, nor any information about members from areas where there is no local node (Do they

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<sup>1</sup> Masoudi Nejad R. (XXXX).

<sup>2</sup> See Sotiropoulou I. (2010b), pp. 5-7.

<sup>3</sup> [http://freecycle.wikispaces.com/freecycle\\_gr](http://freecycle.wikispaces.com/freecycle_gr)

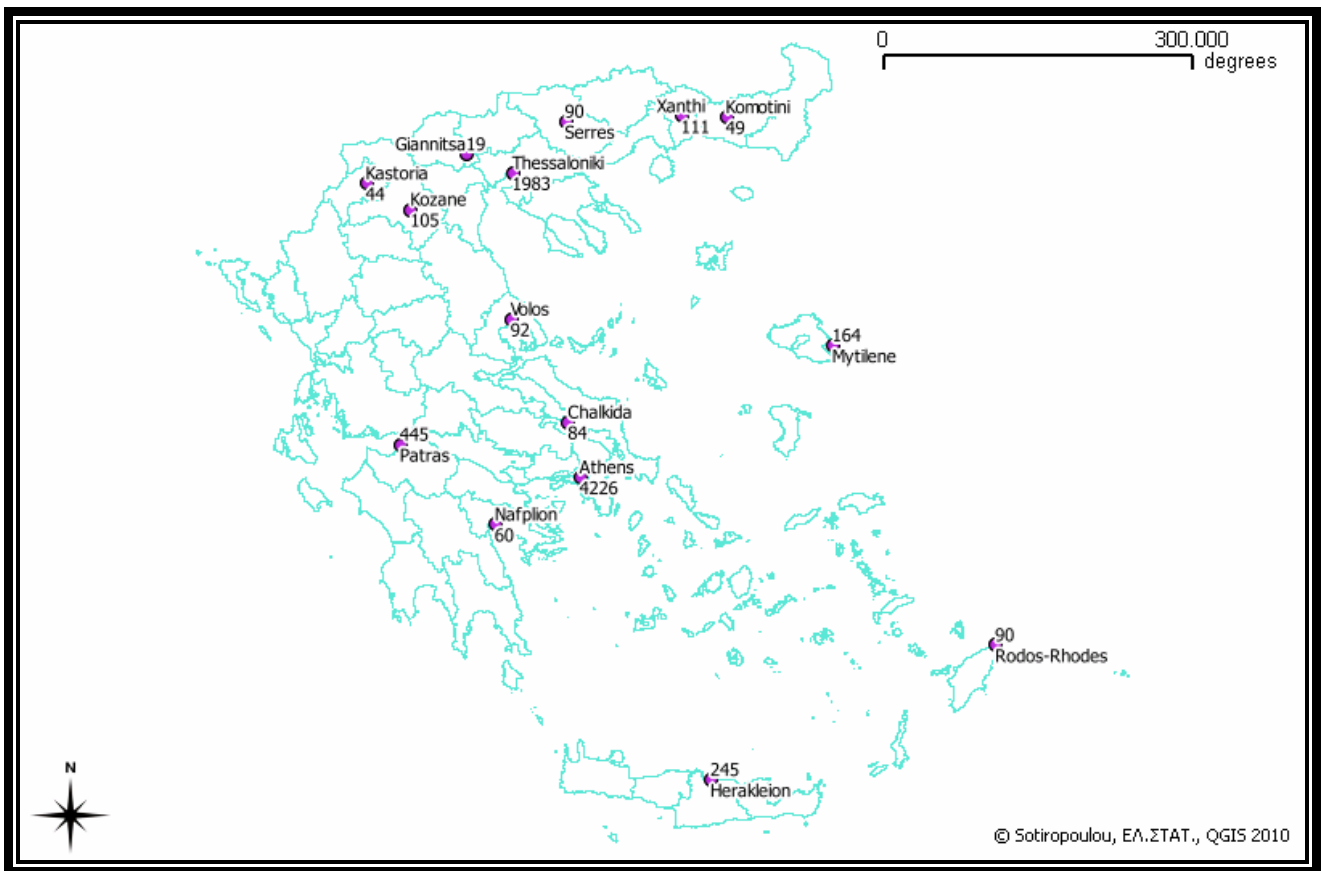
<sup>4</sup> [www.xarisetto.gr](http://www.xarisetto.gr)

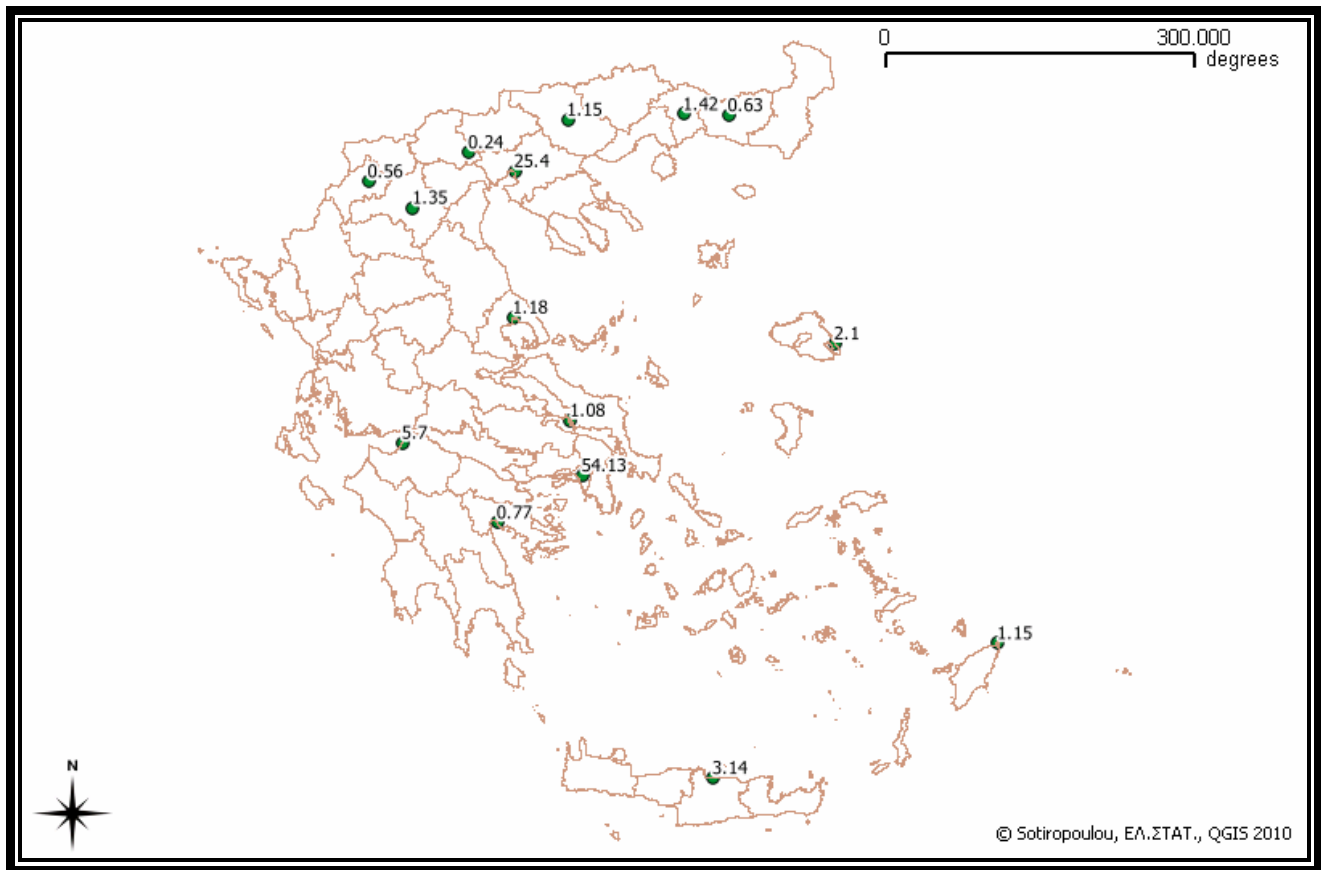
<sup>5</sup> <http://dwsepare.ning.com>

register with central node of Athens? Do they register with the closest node to them?). The map below shows the membership dispersion according to the data on Freecycle Greece website.

It is obvious that Athens gets the greater share of Freecycle membership. To compare the membership dispersion pattern with general population dispersion patterns, one can also see the map of the percentage of membership in each county. Although we do not know where the members from areas without local nodes register with the network, one can have some first picture about this free network's geographical dispersion.

**Map 15: Freecycle Greece network members**



**Map 16: Percentage of Freecycle members in each county**

### III.C.2.c. The Charise-To free network

The Charise-To (Χάρισέ-Το, Give-it-away) free network works also online. However, it organises regular free bazaars in the Greater Thessalonike area. The bazaars have been included in the maps of Unit III.C.1. However, we have not yet any data about the network membership.

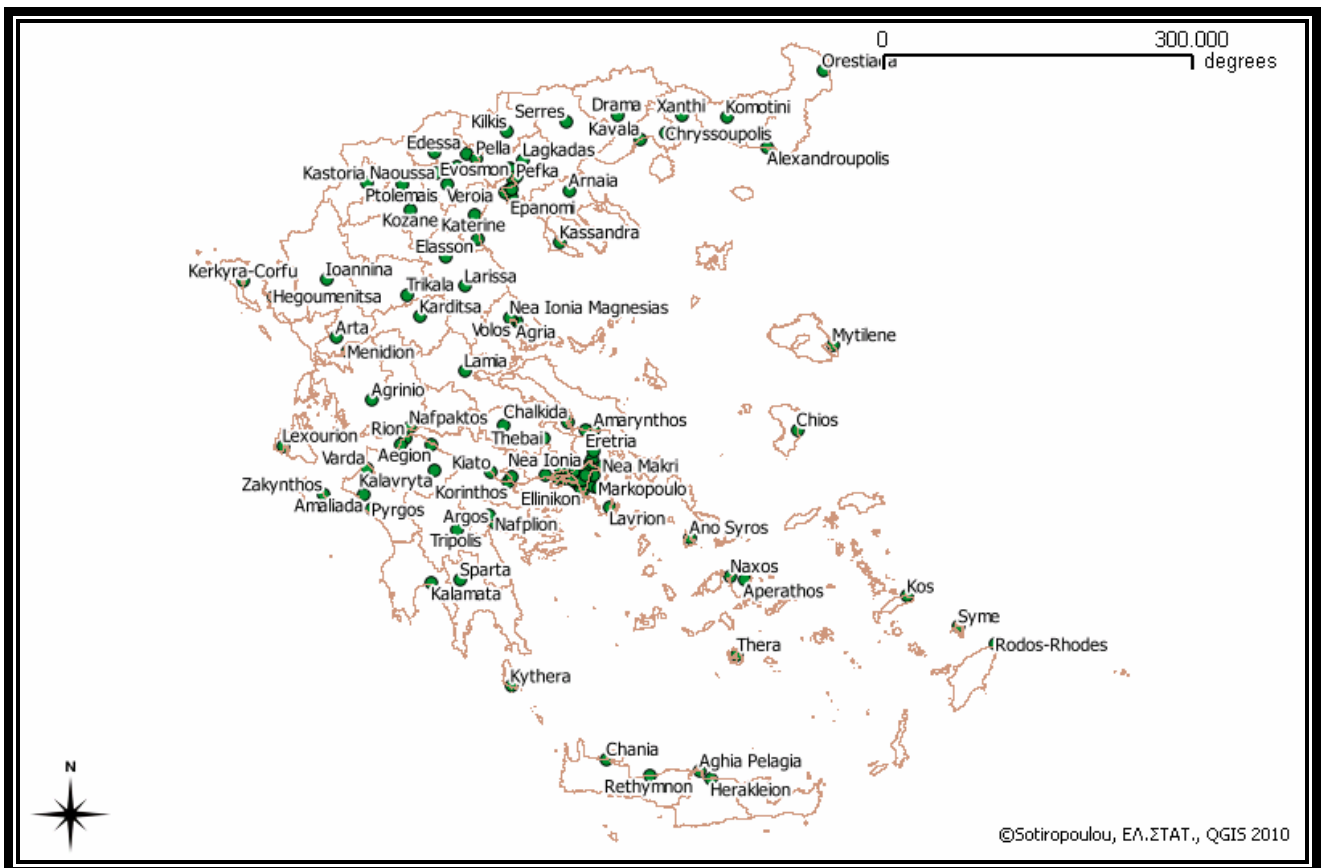
### III.C.2.c. The Dosse-Pare network

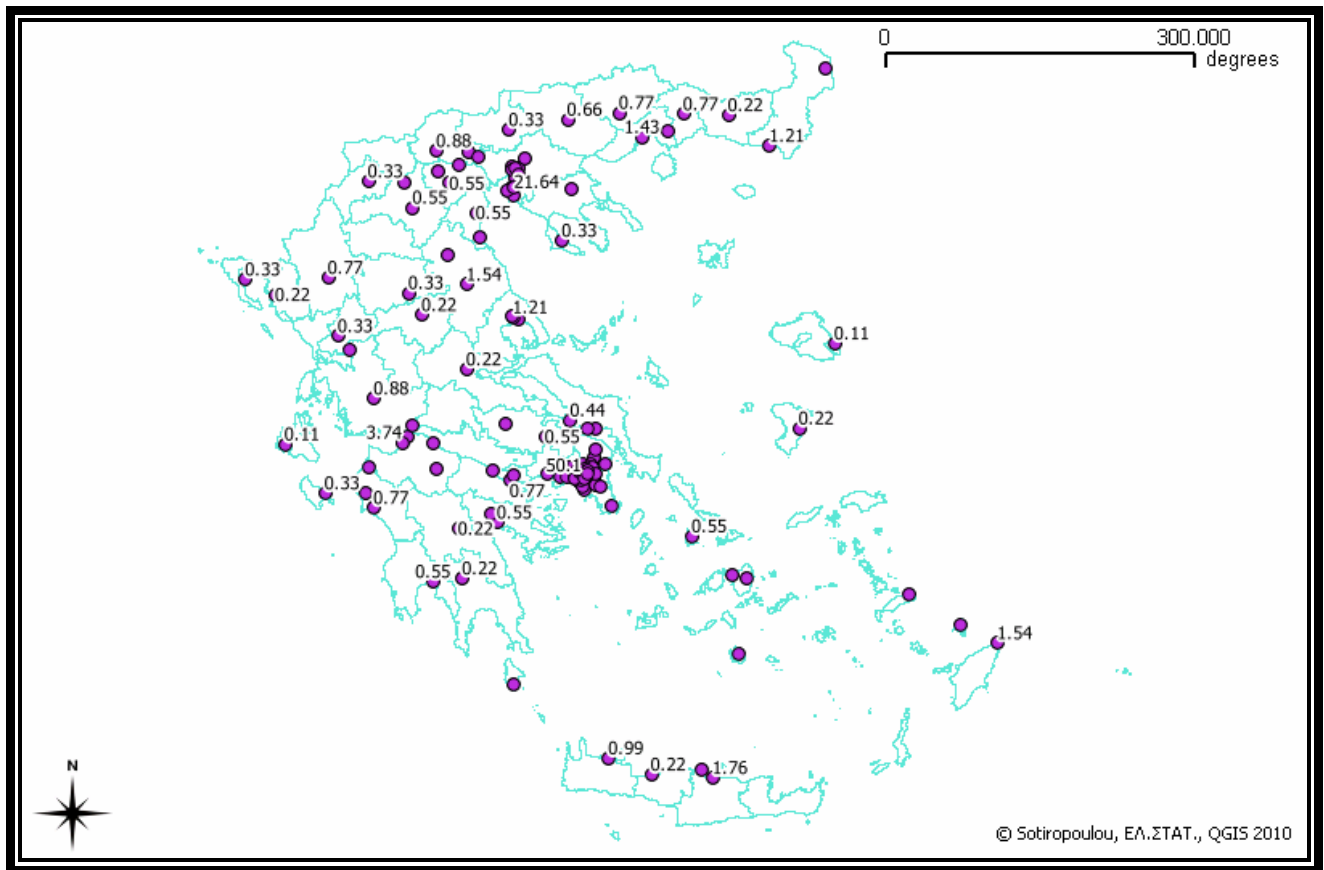
Dosse-Pare network is not only the most recent among all three, but it is also the one to have offered first the chance to its members to exchange services/work. We have no further information on this for the moment. This network has accepted that the author registers as a network member, so I had access to information about membership numbers. However, given that the data collected was in raw form, the difficult part was to process the data while not all of it was available (actually some members do not announce publicly their location and they have not replied to the researcher's message asking for this information). However, according to the data, the network had on December 5<sup>th</sup> 2010 918 members, of which 910 could be located on county level. The members were located in the areas as depicted on the map.



Some points should be made about this network. First, we do not have any detailed data yet on exchange of services and work done by members. Second, membership seems to be concentrated in big urban centres. However, the network permits free provision of stuff disposed by members to other members throughout the country. Therefore, we might see most members in urban centres, but a part of the stuff disposed within the scheme is transferred to small urban centres. We do not have data on those transfers yet.

**Map 17: Dosse-Pare network membership location**



**Map 18: Percentage of Dosse-Pare network members in each county**

It is obvious from the last maps in this unit III.C.2, that both networks (Freecycle and Dosse-Pare) not only follow, more or less, the general pattern of population dispersion in Greece, but this pattern is quite enhanced in favour of the greater urban centres, which receive a share quite bigger than the population they have. The other urban centres attract several members, but they usually do not keep up with percentages near their general population percentage.

### **III.D. The sui generis schemes**

#### **III.D.1. The MoneyBackSystem<sup>1</sup>**

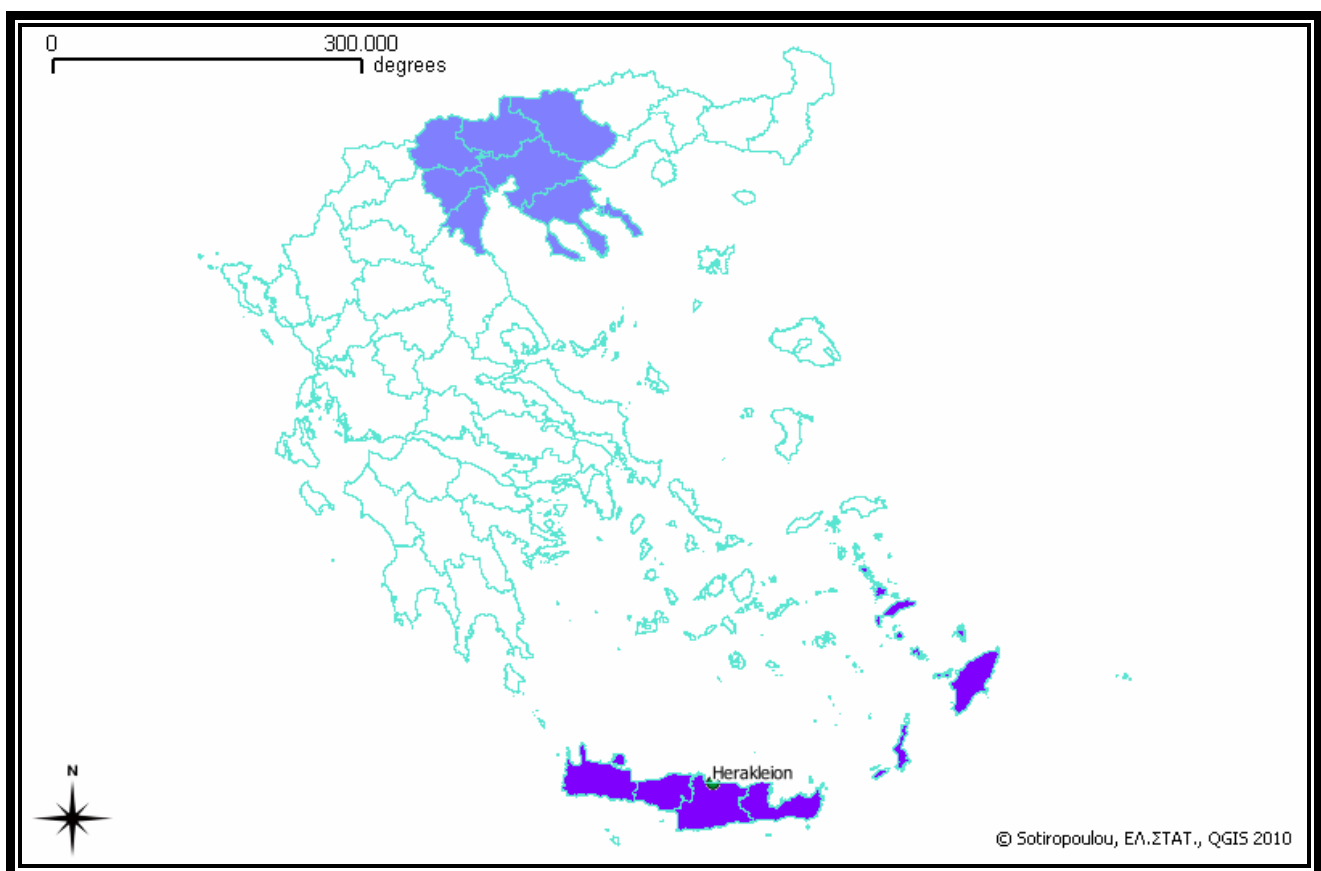
The Money Back System is a network created by a private company, which also own the intellectual property rights of the system. Mass transport companies cooperate as sponsors of the system while other local companies (super markets, pastries, clothing stores, cafés, furniture stores, cinemas, etc) are by contract commercial partners of the managing company.

<sup>1</sup> More information (but in Greek only!) can be found on the website <http://www.moneybacksystem.gr/home.html>.

According to the project, the used tickets of mass transport means, no matter in which part of the country have been used, can be re-used at their nominal value to buy goods and services from the participating companies, but of course, they cannot be used again for public transport. Each enterprise announces in public which part of the price a customer pays can be paid in tickets (from 1/4 to 1/20 of the price<sup>1</sup>). The only prerequisite is that the value of the ticket is written on the ticket and it does not matter when the tickets have been issued or used for transportation.

Till November 2010 the map of the partner companies (which accept used tickets as partial payment) included the areas of Crete and Dodecanese, although the tickets could have been issued and used in other areas of Greece. In December 2010 there has been announced the expansion of the scheme in Central Macedonia region, which includes the Thessalonike county and the counties around it. For the purposes of this research, and given that there are no data about the companies' customers and their geographical dispersion, we use the information published online on the system's website and concern the location of partner companies. Most companies are concentrated in the Herakleion city. We have no detailed data yet about the supermarket stores in other Cretan counties, nor about the stores which will take part in the system and are located in Central Macedonia region.

#### Map 19: MoneyBackSystem in Crete and Dodecanese



<sup>1</sup> The list of the price shares paid in tickets for by each participating company can be accessed at <http://www.moneybacksystem.gr/epixeiriseis%20July%202010.pdf>.

### III.D.2. THE SCHEMES IN HERAKLEION COUNTY AND ARTBANK

The following three cannot be added to any other category but the sui generis one.

One of the schemes lies in Herakleion county, and, despite its functions for more than two years, has not a formal name yet. It consists of more than thirty (30) households in Herakleion and in villages around the city, who produce their food the traditional way and they use the goods they produce the traditional way. That means, that they not only use traditional seeds for the cultivation, but they also work all together in the fields. Each household, however, has the ownership of the land.

The expenses (seem as) being undertaken by the owner of the land (f.ex., water), the seeds are free<sup>1</sup>, fertilisers and pesticides do not exist. The work performed by all members together concerns every household, e.g. it is performed by all alternately for the production of each household. Work is not done with conditions of an 8-hour working day, nor does it belong to the classical notion of volunteering. Harvest is also done in groups, but the sharing of food/harvest is a decision made by the household who owns the land which gave the harvest.

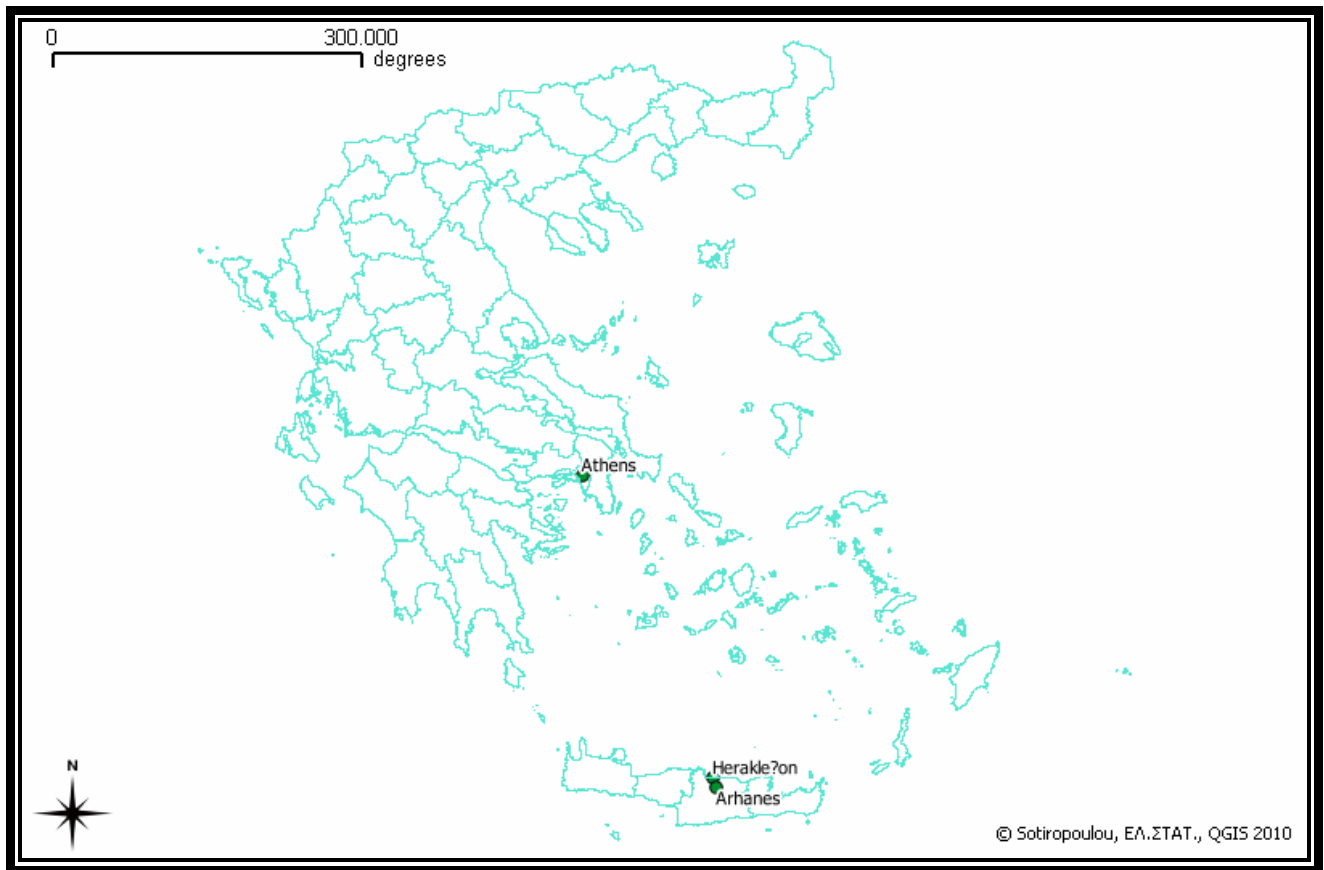
The second scheme in Herakleion county is based in Archanes, which is a small town in Herakleion mountainous area. The scheme is actually an artistic collective, named LATHOS (error, in Greek) who work on several projects, within the framework of social intervention conceived as artwork. The scheme managed to construct an entire house using exchange networks instead of money (apart from all transactions that by law should be done with official currency) and they aspire to continue this same exchange activity in order to work on more artistic projects in the future.

The third scheme, named ARTBANK<sup>2</sup>, is located in Athens. This is an art project by a collective of artists who want to create a platform for discussion and debate on the terms of money, currency, exchange and economy. Therefore, the artworks created and exhibited by the collective are used as money tokens or as pretexts for inviting people to exchange views on essential economic notions.

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<sup>1</sup> The seeds are free because they are traditional varieties (landraces) and the group members exchange them for free and preserve them the traditional way. They are also in cooperation with the Peliti network.

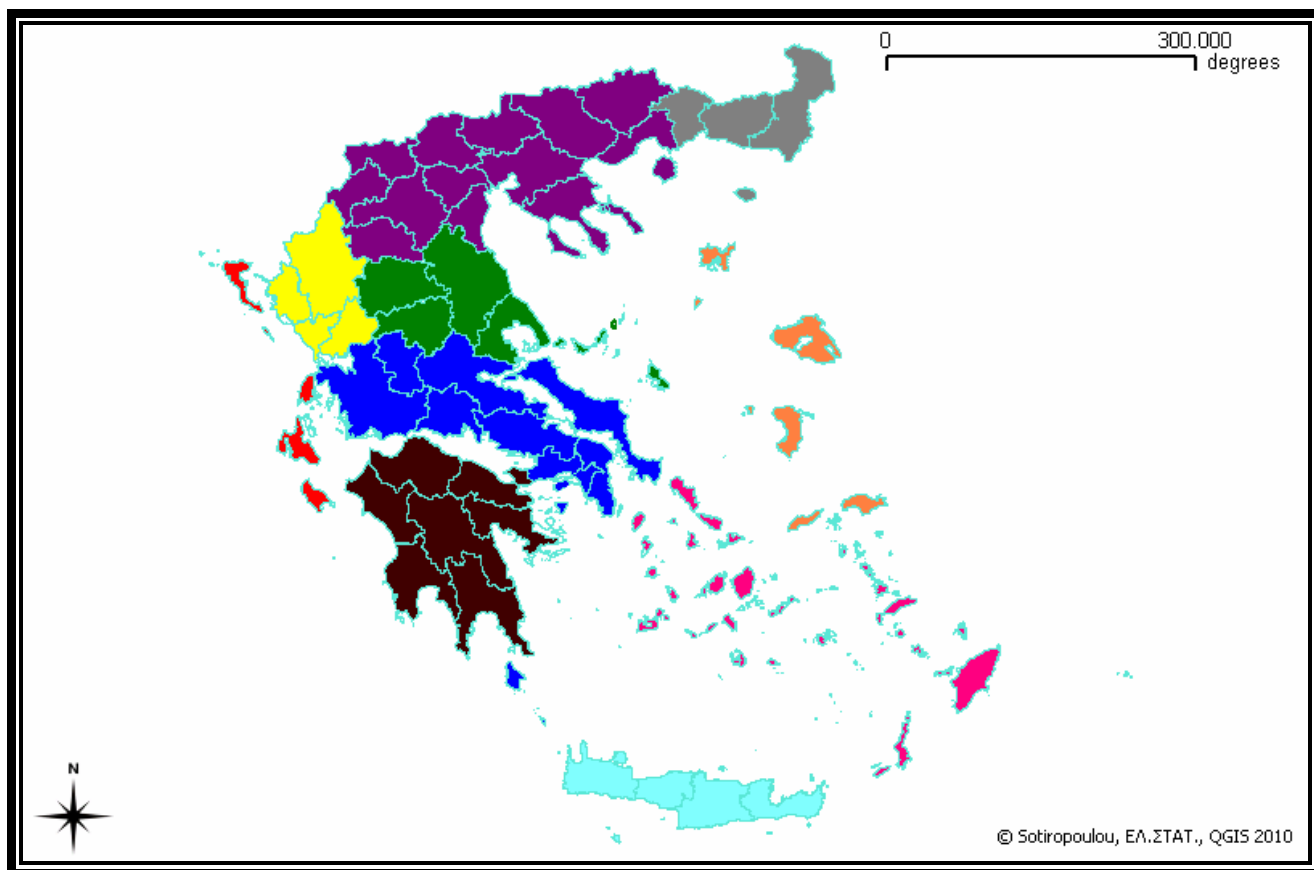
<sup>2</sup> More information can one find at the group's blog <http://orizontasgegonotwn.blogspot.com/search/label/ArtBank> .

**Map 20: The sui generis schemes****IV. SOME INFORMATION ABOUT ACTIVITY ON REGIONAL LEVEL**

To have some picture on regional level, we created a map of regions (each one with a separate colour) and we also created a table where some of the schemes' membership is presented on regional level. In this table, we use the data we have for schemes with country-wide membership. In Sterea Ellada (Mainland Greece) region, there belongs the Attica county and in Macedonia region, there belongs the Thessalonike county. The map follows after the table, where each region is coloured accordingly.

**Table 1: Percentages of population and membership**

REGION	% Total	% Peliti-general	% Peliti-specialised	% Ovolos Association	% Dosse-Pare	% Freecycle
Thrace	3,3	4	6,1	1,51	2,18	2,05
Macedonia	22,12	39,43	35,21	18,07	27,89	28,7
Epeiros	3,23	0,57	3,76	2,71	1,42	0
Thessalia	6,88	6,29	11,74	6,93	3,59	1,18
Stereia Ellada	41,88	30,86	12,21	22,59	51,74	55,21
Peloponnese	10,53	4	7,98	34,04	6,86	6,47
Ionian Islands	1,94	0,57	3,29	0	0,76	0
N.Aegean	1,88	1,71	5,63	0	0,33	2,1
S.Aegean	2,76	1,71	6,1	2,71	2,07	1,15
Crete	5,48	10,86	7,98	11,44	3,16	3,14
	100	100	100	100	100	100

**Map 21: Regions of Greece (old regional division)**

To check out the same trends according to the new regional boundaries as implemented in January 2011 we created a similar map and table. There follows the map of actual administrative regions:

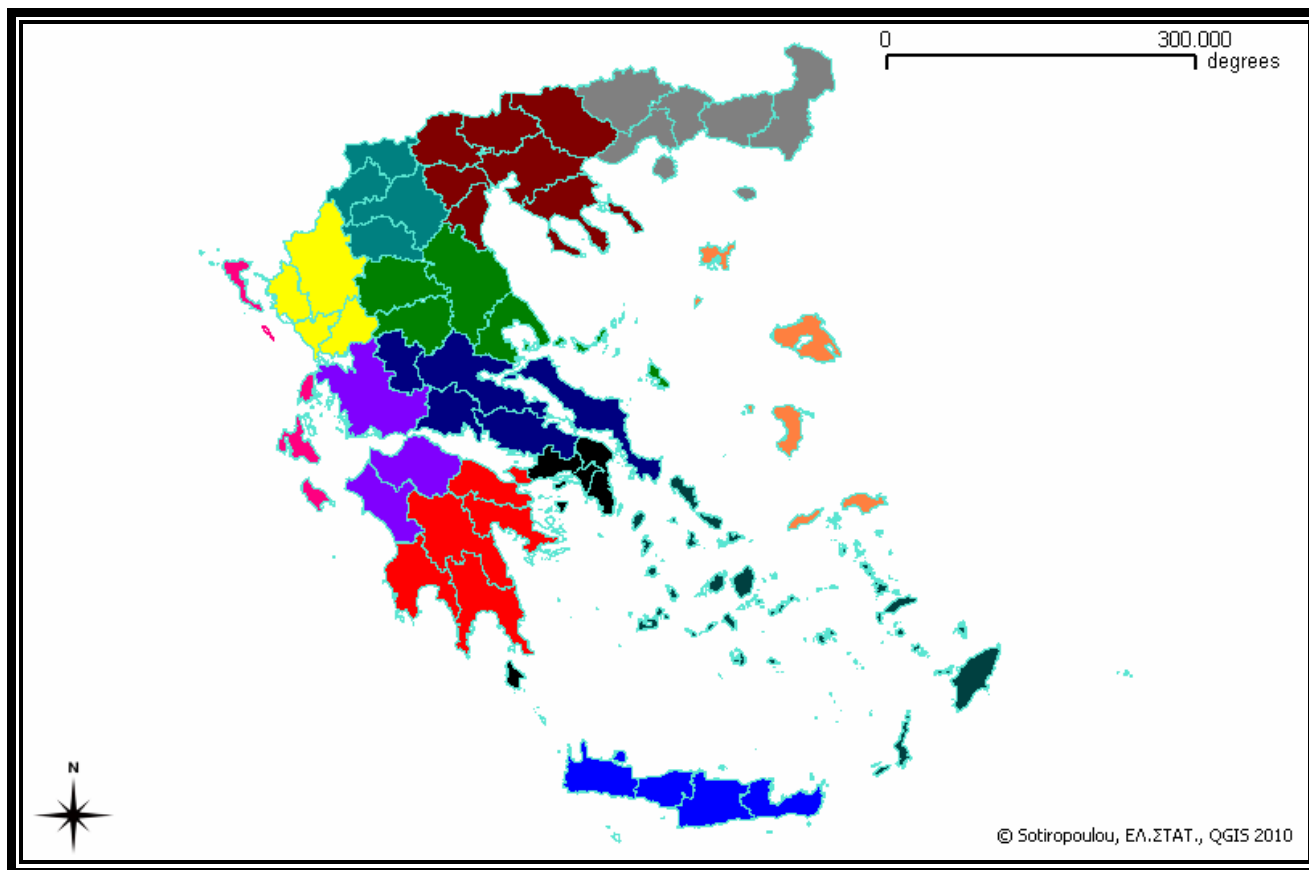
Map 22: Regions of Greece in January 2011<sup>1</sup>

Table 2: Percentages of population and scheme membership according to 2011 regional maps

REGION	% Total	% Peliti-general	% Peliti-specialised	% Ovolos Association	% Dosse-Pare	% Freecycle
Thrace & East Macedonia	5,57	10,29	11,27	1,51	4,36	2,05
Central Macedonia	17,09	29,71	25,82	16,87	24,83	26,79
Western Macedonia	2,75	3,43	4,23	1,2	0,87	1,91
Hepeiros	3,23	0,57	3,76	2,71	1,42	0
Thessalia	6,88	6,29	11,74	6,93	3,59	1,18
Mainland Greece	5,52	6,29	3,76	2,11	1,2	1,08
Western Greece	6,75	4,00	5,63	27,41	5,34	5,7
Peloponnese	5,83	2,29	5,63	6,63	2,4	0,77
Attica	34,31	22,29	5,16	20,48	49,67	54,13
Ionian Islands	1,94	0,57	3,29	0	0,76	0
N.Aegean	1,89	1,71	5,63	0	0,33	2,1
S.Aegean	2,76	1,71	6,1	2,71	2,07	1,15
Crete	5,48	10,85	7,98	11,44	3,16	3,14
	100	100	100	100	100	100

<sup>1</sup> Information on new regional boundaries one can find from the map of Greek Ministry of Internal Affairs which also has been used to construct the map on new regional administration  
<http://www.ypes.gr/el/Regions/programma/xartes/RegionAdmin/>

## V. THE RECENT UNEMPLOYMENT TRENDS

On January 13<sup>th</sup> 2011 the Hellenic Statistical Authority announced the most recent labour force survey as of October 2010 with data concerning unemployment in all regions of Greece, in comparison with unemployment rates since October 2005<sup>1</sup>. We do not consider unemployment as a satisfactory explanation for the turn of so many people to the use of non-monetary or parallel currency schemes. However, the increase of unemployment rates has been so abrupt the last years, to the extent that we cannot neglect it either.

**Table 3: Unemployment rates in % of the labour force as of October 2005 to October 2010 in each region of Greece (Source: Hellenic Statistical Authority)**

REGION	Oct. 2005	Oct. 2006	Oct. 2007	Oct. 2008	Oct.2009	Oct.2010
Thrace & East. Macedonia	11,8	9,6	7,2	10,7	9,8	15,4
Central Macedonia	11,2	8,2	9	7,6	10,1	14,8
Western Macedonia	12	9,7	10,1	10,7	9,3	17,2
Hepiros	8,1	8,3	12,8	10,4	12,7	13,9
Thessalia	8,5	6,1	7,2	8,7	9,7	10,6
Mainland Greece	13,2	9,6	11,5	9	9,9	14,3
Western Greece	9,8	10,7	9,5	10,7	10	12,5
Peloponnese	7,3	6,8	8,1	7	9	9,5
Attica	9,1	7,5	7,3	6,1	10,4	14,4
Ionian Islands	5	7,9	4,9	8,7	5,4	11,3
N.Aegean	8,5	7,2	4,7	1,9	2,2	7,7
S.Aegean	9,1	5,6	5	4,2	9,1	14,5
Crete	6,3	3,9	4	5,4	8,7	9,8
<b>Greece</b>	<b>9,5</b>	<b>7,7</b>	<b>7,9</b>	<b>7,4</b>	<b>9,8</b>	<b>13,5</b>

We also calculated the increase of unemployment since October 2008, when the global financial and economic crisis started and when at the same time, this research project was being designed. One should also note that several schemes (like Ovolos currency, TEM currency, Logo-Timis network, the Money Back System, Dosse-Pare network) appeared since 2009 onwards. Moreover, there is no data for older schemes to see whether there has been an increase in membership since October 2008. However, if we revisit Table 2 while adding the percentage of increase in unemployment rates since October 2008, we can raise some very interesting questions.

<sup>1</sup> You may find this data in English at

[http://www.statistics.gr/portal/page/portal/ESYE/BUCKET/A0101/PressReleases/A0101\\_SJO02\\_DT\\_MM\\_10\\_2010\\_01\\_F\\_EN.pdf](http://www.statistics.gr/portal/page/portal/ESYE/BUCKET/A0101/PressReleases/A0101_SJO02_DT_MM_10_2010_01_F_EN.pdf) In Greek the file is available at [http://www.statistics.gr/portal/page/portal/ESYE/BUCKET/A0101/PressReleases/A0101\\_SJO02\\_DT\\_MM\\_10\\_2010\\_01\\_F\\_GR.pdf](http://www.statistics.gr/portal/page/portal/ESYE/BUCKET/A0101/PressReleases/A0101_SJO02_DT_MM_10_2010_01_F_GR.pdf)



**Table 4: Percentages of scheme membership and unemployment rate increase<sup>1</sup> on regional map 2011**

REGION	% Total population	% Peliti-general	% Peliti-specialised	% Ovolos Association	% Dosse-Pare	% Freecycle	% unemployment increase from 10/2008 to 10/2010
Thrace & East. Macedonia	5,57	10,29	11,27	1,51	4,36	2,05	<b>43,93</b>
Central Macedonia	17,09	29,71	25,82	16,87	24,83	26,79	<b>94,74</b>
Western Macedonia	<b>2,75</b>	<b>3,43</b>	4,23	1,2	0,87	1,91	<b>60,75</b>
Hepeiros	3,23	0,57	3,76	2,71	1,42	0	<b>33,65</b>
Thessalia	6,88	6,29	11,74	6,93	3,59	1,18	<b>21,84</b>
Mainland Greece	5,52	6,29	3,76	2,11	1,2	1,08	<b>58,89</b>
Western Greece	<b>6,75</b>	<b>4,00</b>	5,63	27,41	5,34	5,7	<b>16,82</b>
Peloponnese	5,83	2,29	5,63	6,63	2,4	0,77	<b>35,71</b>
Attica	34,31	22,29	5,16	20,48	49,67	54,13	<b>136,06</b>
Ionian Islands	1,94	0,57	3,29	0	0,76	0	<b>29,89</b>
N.Aegean	1,89	1,71	5,63	0	0,33	2,1	<b>305,26</b>
S.Aegean	2,76	1,71	6,1	2,71	2,07	1,15	<b>245,24</b>
Crete	5,48	10,85	7,98	11,44	3,16	3,14	<b>81,48</b>
Total in Greece	100	100	100	100	100	100	<b>82,43</b>

One would also say that in this table, there are not included the members of Ovolos currency which are not members of Ovolos Association, neither the schemes which do not cover the entire country. Moreover, as we miss several sets of data from some schemes, one cannot reach any safe conclusions; apart from one: unemployment increase might be a reason for joining a scheme, but it cannot be the only one, as we see regions with high unemployment rates or sudden unemployment increase and limited scheme membership or limited local scheme creation.

## VI. INSTEAD OF CONCLUSIONS

Mapping has created much more questions than it was supposed to answer: what this uneven activity might mean? Would one be justified to construct a hypothesis, where schemes mostly related to agricultural activities are more popular far from big urban centres, while schemes related to excess of production are more popular in urban centres? Why are local schemes for preservation and dissemination of traditional varieties found located in islands only? Is unemployment increase the last two years in Greece affecting the emergence as well as the popularity of the schemes? Why

<sup>1</sup> To calculate the percentage of increase of unemployment rates, we used the data as provided by the Hellenic Statistical Authority (see for more information Table 3 of the present paper).

is scheme participation in regions like Western Macedonia and Hepeirus so low? What one could predict for non-monetary schemes in areas, like Aegean islands and the region of Attica (where Athens and Pireaus urban centres are located) where unemployment increase has been so abrupt the last two years?

The first stage of the present research project revealed that the activity taking place within all those schemes is much more complicated than we could ever imagine. This led us to re-assess existing theories but also to admit that we have questions which cannot be answered by hypotheses like the ones who connect just rates of unemployment and scheme activity<sup>1</sup>. The next stage of research, which will include questionnaires addressed to scheme members might shed some light on the questions raised above.

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<sup>1</sup> See for this Sotiropoulou, I. (2010a).

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