

## **Unemployment as a liminoid phenomenon: Identity trajectories in times of crisis**

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### **Abstract**

This article explores the formation of work identities in times of financial crisis and extreme austerity. In particular, we build upon prior studies of liminality, a state of in-betweenness and ambiguity, and explore how individuals, whose employment opportunities and career paths have been disrupted, construct their work/professional identities. The study draws on 39 semi-structured interviews conducted in Greece, where high levels of unemployment and economic stagnation prevail. Persistent crisis and austerity have prompted extended periods of instability and unpredictability during which the unemployed narratively (re)construct their past, present and future work selves. We propose that frequent job changes and persistent lack of work are not linear experiences but instead, require multiple and at times, ambiguous, fluid and incomplete identifications. These identifications include attempts to re-affirm prior stable professional identities, to institute new, yet still unidentified, careers or to enact what we term 'liminoid identity positions'. When in liminoid positions, instead of pursuing intangible work futures, the unemployed create anti-structural spaces in which they collectively practice alternative forms of work and organization. Concluding, the article provides grounds for the study of individuals' capacity to challenge the meaning of work in capitalist societies and the possibilities for transformation in periods of unemployment.

### **Keywords**

Alternatives, anti-structural, communitas, Financial Crisis, identity, liminality, unemployment

## **Introduction**

Almost eight years since the beginning of the 2008 Global Financial Crisis, more than seven million people have already lost their job in the so-called developed world and this number is still rising (Moore, 2013). The scale of job loss is comparable to that of the interwar crisis of advanced capitalist countries and arguments of a 'jobless recovery' are becoming increasingly relevant (Lehndorff, 2012; Gialis and Leontidou, 2014). As Bellamy-Foster and McChesney (2012: 145) pointed out, the total number of the unemployed, the vulnerably employed, and the economically inactive population in prime working ages (25-54) comprises 'what might be called the maximum size of the global reserve army in 2011: some 2.4 billion people, compared to 1.4 billion in active labour army'. At present, the youth unemployment rate is 18% in the European Union and 20% in the Euro area, with the highest official rates recorded in Greece (48%), Spain (42%) and Italy (37%) (Trading Economics, 2017).

These alarming rates have led governments to devise workfare policies for re-integrating the unemployed into the workforce (Cremin, 2009; Garland, 2015). Unemployment, under these policies, is not seen to be a structural trend but a condition, which the unemployed, if they choose to, can potentially reverse. In this context, it is not surprising that discourses of self-blame that psychologize unemployment proliferate, deeming joblessness a psychological flaw that could be amended as long as the unemployed decide to invest in themselves (Strain, 2014; Ehrenreich, 2006): the ideal jobseeker is expected to overcome unemployment 'through a relentless enterprise of selling their self through complete self-control and chameleon-like performances' (Boland, 2015: 347).

These discourses echo earlier positivist research, which arguably claimed that chronic unemployment causes 'hysteresis' in the labour market because the unemployed develop anti-

work identities (or an ‘anti-work life style’; Lechthaler and Snower, 2013; see also, Ezzy, 1993; Layard et al., 2011) that not only contribute to the recession but also cause long-term damage to economic performance. Such studies usually portray ‘not-working’ as a social problem, which needs to be resolved through market restructuring programmes that will re-integrate the unemployed into the productive sphere and restore their personal and professional identities (Jahoda, 1982; Ainsworth and Hardy, 2009; Kapuvvari, 2011; Vesterberg, 2013). According to these views, however, the structural effects of neoclassical economic policy (such as debt and unemployment) are misrecognized as individual phenomena, with special emphasis placed on the decisions and psychological makeup of the unemployed.

Critical researchers, on the other hand, challenge these neoliberal constructions of the unemployed and their emphasis on individual responsibility; instead, they focus on emergent patterns of precarious employment in order to understand the degradation of jobs as well as the different ways in which this trend is or could be resisted (Advent, 2016). More particularly, prior studies on resistance to the neoliberal restructuring of work (broadly defined as ‘post-work’ critique of employment) have already emphasized the importance of exit and collective autonomy from the space of employment, either partially or completely (Papadopoulos et al., 2008; Fleming, 2015; Frayne, 2015; Srnicek and Williams, 2015). Such analysis nevertheless tends to concentrate mostly on those already engaged in paid employment of some kind, overlooking the growing number of people who are already without work. In this article, we argue that the unemployed are also important to consider when evaluating the emergent politics of work and non-work in times of socio-economic crisis.

Adopting therefore a critical perspective on the study of work and non-work, we draw on relevant narrative research on job loss and financial crisis (Gabriel et al., 2010; Blustein et al.,

2013; Simosi et al., 2015; Barbosa and Ferreira, 2015) and explore the identity trajectories of the chronically unemployed or underemployed. Focusing on Greece, the country that currently has the highest rates of unemployment in Europe at 25% (long-term unemployment at 18% and youth unemployment at the alarming rate of 48%),<sup>2</sup> we consider the narratives through which the unemployed construct and re-construct their (work/non-work) identities. In particular, we ask the following question: what are the identity trajectories of the chronically unemployed in contexts of high unemployment, financial crisis and austerity politics and how are these trajectories narratively (re-) constructed?

We build on prior work on liminality in relation to identity transitions (Garsten, 1999; Mangham, 2001; Ibarra, 1999; Ibarra, 2005; Mayrhofer and Iellatchitch, 2005; Beech, 2011), and suggest that while they engage with identity work, the unemployed narratively construct unemployment as a liminal space-time in which future ‘possible identities’ (Markus and Nurius, 1986; Oyserman and James, 2011; Nazar and Van der Heijden, 2014; Ashforth and Schinoff, 2016) are being anticipated and enacted. Thus, emphasizing the creative and transformative aspects of liminality (Swan et al., 2016; 782; see also Tempest and Starkey, 2004), we explore how performances of liminality affect the identity work of the unemployed during times of austerity and recession.

The remainder of the article is structured as follows: we first discuss how experiences of liminality trigger attempts to explore possible future identities in contexts of chronic and persistent unemployment, and define what we term ‘liminoid identity positions’. After explaining the research context and the methodology of the study, the paper continues with the analysis of the findings. Frequent work changes and persistent joblessness, we will argue, require multiple positionings and ambiguous identifications that do not only reconcile the

contradictory transient spaces of unemployment but also provide spaces for creative engagement with alternative work selves. In the final section, we discuss the main contributions of the study and identify areas of future research that could expand the insights of our work.

### **Unemployment and liminality: Identity transitions in times of crisis**

Following a symbolic interactionism perspective (Blumer, 1969), identity describes the meanings that individuals attach to themselves, which are sustained through processes of social interaction (Gergen and Gergen, 1988), discourses or narratives (Giddens, 1991), dialogue (Beech, 2008), or performance (Goffman, 1967).<sup>3</sup> With the rising importance of identities in the field of work and organizations (Brown, 2001), researchers have turned to the study of identity formation and transformation in professional, work-related contexts, and focused upon the agency involved during ‘identity work’ (Snow and Anderson, 1987; Alvesson and Willmott, 2002; Brown, 2015). Identity work is enacted in the interplay between ‘self-identity’ and ‘social-identity’ (Watson, 2009) and describes individuals’ (e.g. workers, managers, employees) engagement in ‘forming, repairing, maintaining, strengthening or revising’ constructions of identity (Sveningsson and Alvesson, 2003:1165). Following Maclean et al. (2015), these changes in professional identities accompany changes in organizational life that are often unpredictable, indirect and discontinuous. Identities thus evolve over time through a process of ‘way finding’ in response to role changes, setbacks and turning points, as actors make sense of (or enact) their environments (Maclean et al., 2015:1623). In that sense, identity “always remains incomplete, is always ‘in process’, always ‘being formed’ [...]. Thus, rather than speaking of identity as a finished thing, we should speak of identification, and see it as an ongoing process” (Hall, 1996: 608).

Although there seems to be a consensus among constructivist and interactionist thinkers that

individual identities are constantly in a state of flux (Alvesson and Willmott, 2002), research on identities and unemployment, mostly conducted before the global financial crisis (hereafter GFC), has emphasized the construction of coherent work identities, focusing on the processes through which individuals strive to reinstate coherence in their work identities after relatively short periods of transition (Conroy and O'Leary-Kelly, 2014; Brown, 2015; Hoyer and Steyaert, 2015). These transitions, which involve moving from one stable identity to another, are temporary and infrequent, and usually take place within the domain of work organization (Ashforth, 2001) or across domains (Ladge et al., 2012). Employment breaks are normally the result of acquisition of new work roles or temporary periods of unemployment due to maternity leave (Hennekam, 2016) or workplace exit (Kanji and Cahusac, 2015). For example, in an attempt to maintain continuity and stability, managers at the age of fifty narratively constructed job loss as a temporary interruption (Gabriel et al., 2010), while women who left work after motherhood tried 'to continue working in some form as a means of reconfirming their lost identity' (Kanji and Cahusac, 2015: 1418).

Others, however, drawing on recent research that stresses the complexity that characterizes identity transitions (Hoyer and Steyaert, 2015; Hoyer, 2016; Beech et al., 2016), have suggested that unemployment does not necessarily follow a linear progression from 'a working to a not working identity'; instead it is characterized by ambiguities, discontinuities and intersections (Kanji and Cahusac, 2015: 1430). In cases of prolonged periods of uncertainty, identities remain fluid and incomplete, resulting in an 'in-between' period during which one belongs 'neither here-nor there', 'between-and-between' (Van Gennep, 1960; Turner, 1967; 1969), a state that requires living in limbo while dealing with intense feelings of confusion and blurriness (Garsten, 1999; Tempest and Starkey, 2004; Beech, 2011; Ybema et al., 2011; Johnsen and Sørensen, 2014). These liminal experiences highlight 'instabilities in the social

context, the ongoing ambiguity and multiplicity of meanings’, and describe ‘a temporary transition through which identity is reconstructed’ (Beech, 2011: 4).

Building upon these studies, we will argue that, when unemployment is temporary, individuals can experiment securely with possibilities, knowing that they will soon be able to return to stability again. This ‘positive side’ of liminality depends on liminals’ ability to project a post-liminal self into the future. However, the GFC has instigated experiences of elongated or permanent liminality (Szokolczai, 2009; Beech, 2011; Johnsen and Sørensen, 2014) that extend beyond months or years, during which individuals disengage from one or possibly multiple roles (such as jobholder, work group member, organizational member) without having a new role to identify with. In these contexts of chronic unemployment and ‘liminality irresolution’ (Tempest and Starkey, 2004), ‘what comes next’ (Van Gennep, 1960) is highly unpredictable and volatile. In such cases, despite complex and extended periods of instability and unpredictability, the unemployed formulate meaningful narrative accounts of their (non-) working experiences, which are simultaneously retrospective and prospective. These accounts entail fluid (re-) constructions of what one has been in the past as well as projections of what one aspires to be in the future (see also Polkinghorne, 1988).

Crucially, we will argue, the unemployed do not only try to adapt to transition as an almost permanent or recurrent condition and imagine ‘possible identities’ (Markus and Nurius, 1986) but in some cases, they also develop what we will refer to as *liminoid identity positions*. When in these positions, instead of chasing elusive work futures, the unemployed construct ‘anti-structural’ spaces (adapted from Turner, 1974b) where they adopt a more active and reflexive state of being and enact what in the organization studies literature has been described as ‘alternatives’ or ‘alternative forms of organizing’ (Parker et al., 2014; Land and King, 2014;

Cheney, 2014). More specifically, the study demonstrates that during unemployment, experiences of liminality trigger not only images of (prior) coherent work identities but also possible (sometimes undetermined) identities and alternative work futures. As components of the future self, possible identities become working theories of ‘who one should be now’ or ‘may become in the future’ (Higgins, 1996; Ibarra, 1999; Oyserman and James, 2011).

Therefore, possible future identities are not fixed (Ibarra, 1999; Obodaru, 2012) but adapted, amended or dropped ‘depending on *contextual affordances and constraints*, and these changes are not necessarily conscious and deliberate’ (Oyserman and James, 2011: 120; emphasis added). Accordingly, it is crucial to focus on the formation of possible identities in those contexts where liminality is experienced collectively - ‘public liminality’ (Turner, 1988: 102) - that is, in contexts where unemployment affects entire populations, if not generations. In such circumstances, following Turner, one expects that a revolutionary re-ordering of the dominant social order could affect new common bonds achieved through the cathartic experience of ‘ideological communitas’ (Turner, 1969: 131-140). This, we will suggest, requires the construction of identity trajectories that map a movement from identity positions when the unemployed (cannot) imagine a possible future self, to ‘liminoid identity positions’ when the unemployed perform new work selves by collectively enacting alternatives to precarity. Whereas liminal phenomena are the result of a crisis in the social process and are fully integrated into the established structures of the social and economic world, the ‘liminoid’ challenges these structures by offering social critique or even alternatives to the dominant social order (Turner 1974b). In such cases, ‘resolution’ becomes a matter of ‘option’ (a choice) rather than an obligation (Turner, 1974a: 73). Accordingly, liminoid positions can enact creative agency outside the mainstream productive activity and allow for alternative selves to be performed.

## **Context and methods of the study**

### *Research context*

Recent reports from the World Bank (2015) suggest that the continuous, six years contraction in Greece has brought about an annual decline of 4 percent in GDP per capita, and officially registered the Greek depression as deeper and longer than the American Great Depression of the 1930s. The Greek depression has brought about the reduction of output of nearly 26 percent, equivalent to shifting the economy a full decade back into the past. The crisis and the policies that followed have led to a new capital accumulation regime: a) a smaller productive system composed of the lean firms that survived the crisis (almost 200,000 small and micro enterprises — that is, about half of the total number of small firms that existed prior to the crisis and a large number of bigger corporations, have closed down); b) a low-wage, unprotected labor force deprived of employment rights and made passive through insecurity, and a weak welfare state (Greece is now a society in which two-thirds of the population are in a state of precariousness); and c) a permanent crisis of social reproduction, pushing large sections of the population to the margins, and excluding them from the ‘world of capitalist work’ (Ioakimoglou and Souvlis, 2016: n.p.).

Exceptional disciplinary austerity policies adopted during the last six years have resulted in loss in productive capacity, disinvestment, unprecedented unemployment, corrosion of the employment conditions, rising inequalities and poverty. The economic contraction has led to even larger deterioration of household incomes. Greece has the highest proportions of the young unemployed that have been without work for more than a year, with youth unemployment at around 48% in early 2017 (Trading Economics, 2017). Those 25-29 years of age were hit hardest by the recession and failed to make a successful transition from school to

work (Bell and Blanchflower, 2015). These conditions clearly constitute a distinctive socio-economic field where the consideration of narrative experiences of unemployment and identity transformation is imperative. In the study that follows, we share the personal narratives of those who struggle to find work in this socio-economic context, and give voice to the marginalized, often invisible communities that, though severely affected by the new socio-economic context, still remain underrepresented in the academic accounts of the crisis.

### *Methods and data collection*

The study employed a qualitative approach in order to explore the narrative performances of identity (Boje, 2001) of 39 un(der)employed individuals in Greece. We conducted and recorded semi-structured interviews with individuals 22-50 years old, most of them graduates in various disciplines with some also having postgraduate qualifications (seven had Masters and one PhD). These respondents were mostly recruited through the method of 'snowballing' where the researcher allows one respondent to lead her to the next. This method allowed for multiple perspectives on the same problem, without necessarily trying to construct a fully representative account (Goodman, 1961; Biernacki and Waldorf, 1981). Although, we did not intentionally target the most affected age group in Greece (25-29 year old) during data collection, 25 out of the 39 participants belong to this category. Moreover, Greece is the country with the highest rates of unemployed graduates among OECD countries (around 20% in 2013; [Statista](#)). Reflecting this, the research participants are predominantly unemployed individuals with university degrees (35 out of 39). Based on prior research that suggests that the most educated have the lowest probability of being unemployed or long-term unemployed (Bell and Blanchflower, 2015), we also wanted to explore how this group, which allegedly occupies a relatively 'privileged position', narratively re-constructed their identities in relation to experiences of unemployment and precarious work. Finally, the data set included 10 men

and 29 women. Although we acknowledge that previous research explores gender differences and unemployment (Antonopoulos, 2014; Benería et al., 2015), participants' narratives, as discussed below, do not explicitly orient to the gendered impact of the crisis; these are however indeed themes that need to be explored in future studies.

The interviews lasted on average from 40 minutes to an hour. The participants were long-term unemployed and a few individuals (n=7) whose long periods of unemployment were temporarily interrupted by informal work or zero hour contracts. They were all self-identifying as unemployed, except four (Mike, Vaggelis, Nicole and Dimitris), whose unemployment had recently ended when they became part of two self-organized work settings namely, a recuperated factory and a social clinic (see Table 1).

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All interviews were recorded after consent of the respondents who were also informed of the anonymity of their statements. We have to note here that some of the unemployed individuals we approached were initially reluctant to share their experiences of unemployment and future aspirations. Despite the fact that the experience of being or becoming unemployed in Greece is a rather widespread phenomenon, for some losing a job or not being able to find one still carries a stigma (see relevant work by Imogen, 2016). To address this, at the beginning of the interview process, we invited the participants to share their views on the financial crisis and the economic climate in Greece and Europe in general. Discussing austerity, unemployment and financial hardship as global issues, that other people in other countries also face, allowed participants to open up and gradually share personal experiences, thoughts and ideas. We then

prompted our respondents to comment on their job seeking experiences and let their narratives develop as personal stories from the past and projected futures (Foster, 2012). This gave us access to participants' experiences of in-betweenness, projected work transitions and perpetual liminality as well as anticipated (or practiced) possible work identities. During both data collection and analysis we adopted a reflexive approach, acknowledging that due to our Greek nationality, families members and friends had also been affected by the crisis. Our affective involvement therefore with the topic of research was taken into account and the effects were mediated by limited interviewer interventions during the data collection process.

### *Analytical framework*

Once we transcribed all interviews, we moved iteratively back and forth between data (text) and theory (Wodak, 2004) and reflected upon respondents' narrative descriptions of liminality and their attempts to construct post-liminal work identities. We paid particular attention to any contradictions embedded in the constructions of liminal selves and the evolution of participants' self-narratives in relation to possible, future work identities. Their narratives involved several, even contradictory, positions and pointed to identity trajectories that included attempts to: re-affirm *prior* stable professional identities (e.g. 'waiting to get my old job back'), accept *indeterminate* future work selves (e.g. 'I don't even know where I will be next week') and construct new work identities (e.g. 'I prefer to build collaborative relations in my working life'). Finally, we also identified what we term 'liminoid identity positions': positions that describe the enactment of alternative forms of work (e.g. 'create work and self-manage the factory').

The analysis of identity trajectories also unveiled two distinctive yet interrelated categories namely, the 'structural' and 'anti-structural' spaces (adapted from Turner, 1974b). The term

‘structural’ refers to those spaces of work and organization in which participants seek to reaffirm prior identities and careers and/or ascertain new possible ones, which reinforce the labour processes and markets that underpin neoliberal capitalism. In contrast, what we term ‘anti-structural’ describes forms of work and organization that challenge and actively resist precarious, low-paid work arrangements, and could potentially foster alternatives. These alternatives aim to bring about social change through new subjectivities that are engaged in, shaping and (re)producing alternative economic futures (Gibson-Graham, 2008; Lee, 2013). In the analysis that follows, we will show that, as the unemployed reflect upon or construct their work futures, they move from one identity position to the other, revealing their continuous engagement with several (sometimes contradictory) possible futures and the interrelationship between the ‘structural’ and ‘anti-structural’ spaces of work and organization.

### **Identity trajectories of the unemployed: Narratives of possible future selves**

We present the findings in four parts: the first two include narratives of the unemployed who try to (re-) construct their work identities by either re-establishing prior careers or identifying new ones within the dominant domains of the economy, which do not entail departure from capitalist work organization. After that, we discuss how some of the participants not only narratively engage with alternative selves, but also collectively enact new forms of work and organization in anti-structural spaces. We propose that, although they share some common features with structural spaces, such as creative energy and interaction with dominant socio-economic structures, ‘anti-structural’ spaces denote participants’ efforts to ‘take back the economy’ (Gibson-Graham et al., 2013) by collectively enacting new forms of work based on collectivism, autonomy and solidarity.

### *Prior Selves and indeterminate work futures*

As the cases below demonstrate, the search for work is fuelled with hope and anticipation as well as disappointment and frustration. Costas' case illustrates how some of the participants anticipate restoring their prior stable professional identities by getting their old jobs back. A lecturer in linguistics, Costas has decided to continue working for the private University that has recently dismissed him:

‘Yes, they told me that I cannot work for them anymore as they cannot offer any paid employment. Yet, they mentioned that some work could be available in the future so I decided to stay and work for free. I prefer to live in this state of limbo, waiting to get my old job back rather than identifying myself as unemployed’ (Costas, participant 6).

Unemployment has brought about a period of disruption during which, for individuals like Costas, doing unpaid work is the only way to maintain some sort of continuation and stability and mediate the impact of insecurity experienced after job loss. Others however acknowledge that, in this financial environment, they may not be able to restore their previous work arrangements and achieve a coherent work identity. Jenny, for example, has experienced repeated precarious experiences (as an hourly-paid private tutor), while trying to find regular, long-term unemployment. She openly expresses feelings of disbelief and extreme uncertainty about being able to re-affirm her prior work identity and to find full-time employment in her chosen professional field (marketing):

‘The future frightens me [...]. Sometimes, I think that this is a bad dream, I’ll wake up and I will not have to do this job [tutor] anymore. I cannot see how, in this environment, I will be able to practice what I studied’ (Jenny, participant 21).

The rise of precarious, low-paid employment has severely affected both career plans and the job seeking experiences of those who find themselves without a job. Being unemployed in Greece, where hardly any regular work is available, does not require a temporary re-adjustment, but learning to face an unknown future and live, almost permanently, with ambiguity. Like Jenny, Gianna, who holds a postgraduate qualification in media studies, also recognizes that she may have to abandon her preferred career in order to seek a different work future. In Gianna’s case, this new work identity remains undecided:

‘Looking at the future terrifies me [...] To be honest, I prefer not to think about it at all [...] I may not be able to work in media and compromise by doing something else [...]. I may have to consider a different future, yet I still cannot imagine what this may be. Meanwhile, I have to live with this uncertainty’ (Gianna, participant 18).

We can observe, however, that although Gianna has decided to detach from prior career aspirations (in the media sector), she is not able to determine any possible future work identities. The high rates of unemployment across all sectors of employment hinder attempts to explore and experiment with new professional domains during liminality (see relevant work by Ladge et al., 2012). Instead, the unemployed are forced to accept short, precarious employment (for example, zero hour contracts, mini-jobs), hoping for a future (still unidentified) work self that will allow them to fully re-embed themselves in the formal economic structures of society. Similarly, Peter, a young graduate with a degree in marketing

and communications, explains how he is ‘trying to adapt to not-knowing’:

‘There is no way that I can envision myself in a year’s time [...]. I don’t think I will ever work in communications; we are learning to live day by day, find short-term work and not make any plans [...] I don’t even know where I will be next week (laughs). I am trying to adapt to not-knowing what comes next but it is not easy’ (Peter, participant 35).

Like Jenny and Gianna, Peter also describes his disbelief about being able to find employment in the communications sector. Instead he is ‘learning to live day by day’, adopting precarious work roles and accepting indeterminacy. Thus, in the cases discussed so far, the unemployed still engage with prior work identities since they are all concerned with the lack of jobs and the limited career opportunities within their professional domains. Yet, despite their commitment and desire to find stable employment and preferably re-affirm prior professional identities, participants also accept ambiguity and seek to identify new work selves, which however, in some instances, remain unidentified.

### *Mapping out future actions*

Some participants have already started identifying concrete strategies that could potentially allow them to move into a new career. In contrast to the previous narratives, where work futures seemed rather elusive, in the vignettes that follow, we can observe attempts to construct new professional identities through the use of ‘projective narratives’, narratives that do not only tell ‘a story of the past, but also map out future actions’ (Tölölyan, 1987: 101). Chryssa, a political scientist, who has been unemployed since graduation, considers seeking work abroad. She is potentially one of the 500,000 mostly young graduates who have left the country since the

beginning of the crisis in 2008 (Central Bank of Greece, 2016). The ongoing brain drain has acquired alarming proportions and besides the high rates of youth unemployment, migration has also been triggered by the dramatic deterioration of working conditions and low pay in the local labour market. Chryssa explains her plan:

‘Staying here I will either be paid very little or find no work at all. I cannot live with this insecurity so I plan to leave the country and go for work abroad.’ (Chryssa, participant 5).

Others, like Alexia (an unemployed architect), to avoid low wages and poor working conditions, consider becoming self-employed. Despite the fact that Alexia recognizes the difficulties of setting up her own business, she is willing to ‘work on herself’ (Bröckling, 2016). In the vignette below, she describes her attempts to reconfigure resources, knowledge and skills and re-establish herself as an active member of the labour market by becoming what Jones and Murtola (2012) describe as ‘crisis entrepreneur’. If she manages to overcome the obstacles (no prior experience, social networks and capital), the realization of her entrepreneurial aspirations may be possible:

‘Now I am trying to find out how I can set up my own business [...] I have some ideas, contacts and I think I will need support with funds and the rest [...]. I know that it is not easy, but I would like to try to set up my own practice’ (Alexia, participant 2).

On the contrary, George explains the reasons he cannot consider a career as an entrepreneur, stressing mainly the lack of financial and non-financial resources:

‘I don’t believe that I can do something on my own... It is very risky, isn’t it? You need to have work experience in the particular field, to know some clients first. I cannot start my own thing just like that...out of the blue [...] You also need a capital to start with, money that at the moment I don’t have’ (George, participant, 17).

Instead some participants turn to collective efforts with similar others in order to raise the capital and start up their own business. While John, a young architect, appears willing to explore new professional roles (‘if any other job offer comes up’), at the same time, he expresses his wish to continue working as an architect by becoming part of a more collaborative arrangement:

‘I do not want to commit to what I studied [architecture] as this means that I will never be able to find work; if any other job offer comes up, I may have to take it [...]. Ideally in the future, I would not like to work in a traditional job; I prefer to build collaborative relations in my working life [as an architect]. If I could find others who think the same way, who don’t want to work for someone else anymore, we could maybe start something together’ (John, participant 22).

Cristina, like John, is already willing to move beyond ‘traditional’ jobs and search for a more collective work future, while still relying on prior career/work identifications; the possibility of a ‘new social structure’ offers temporary relief from feelings of frustration and disappointment and provides hope:

‘I believe that a new social structure may arise... seven of us can do it together and raise some capital [...]. This can work in a more collective way’ (Cristina, participant

4).

Despite that, however, they all stress how ‘capital’ is key to the establishment and success of any entrepreneurial venture. Therefore the ‘new social structure’, as conceptualized here, does not depart from capitalist modes of production and crucially, does not bring about new forms of organization that could provide an alternative to the structural spaces of work. Instead, financial ‘capital’ continues to be recognized as the driving force upon which the unemployed need to rely in order to map out their work futures and desired work identities.

*Refusing precarity: From structural to anti-structural spaces of work*

While the narratives discussed in the previous sections demonstrated participants’ attempts to either re-affirm prior work identities or establish new possible ones within the formal domains of the economy, the vignettes we share below, portray the search for possible identities that can only be performed through the institution of alternative organizational forms. These alternative forms are less hierarchical, less bureaucratic, and more attuned to human and environmental needs, frequently develop in opposition to the familiar, traditional, hegemonic institutional arrangements (Cheney, 2014). Crucially these alternative forms can be considered anti-structural spaces because they are also ‘prone to communitas, once they are correlates of a condition in which subjects are relatively equal while interconnected, othered, and marginalized by the rest of society’ (Meira, 2014: 718; see also Davis, 2008).

To illustrate, driven by the principles of sharing and sustainable community living, one of these alternatives involves leaving the capital city to participate in eco-communities that are collectively created in rural areas: Andrea, a biologist, explained:

‘There is unused land in rural areas that belongs to the Church, which could be given to unemployed people if they wanted to live in the countryside and create something different over there [...] this is my exit plan, something that I may consider in the future’ (Andrea, participant 3).

Although ‘something different’, an alternative work future, is considered, Andrea is still not ready to pursue this path: this is her ‘exit’ route. Andrea here constructs a narrative that captures the dynamic relationship between structural and anti-structural spaces: for her joining an eco-community is a conscious authoring of a self who exits the structures of the formal paid work in search of alternative ways of organizing. This identification with a work identity, *other* than the dominant one, is also found in the way that Marina constructs her unemployed self: she is not going to work for little pay or no pay but will try to find a different type of work. Through that she opens herself up to alternative forms of employment (to the ones that are currently available) and reclaims her self-worth by refusing precarious, low-paid forms of employment:

‘I prefer to stay at home rather than work with little or no pay and at the same time being overworked. I know people who work hoping that they will get paid!! Don’t get me wrong, I still want to find work but not this kind [...] there must be another way’ (Marina, participant 25).

Marina considers alternative work futures (‘there must be another way’), a choice ‘yet-to-come’ (Bloch, 1986), problematizes the state of the employment relationship and rejects the jobs currently available in the labour market; her narrative therefore presents a critique ‘not of creative or productive activity, but of the present configuration of the work society and its moralized conception of work’ (Weeks, 2011:32). This exploration for alternative work futures

can also lead to contradictory constructions of the self. For example, Veronica, at first, expressed her frustration with how little she earns in her fixed-term, hourly-paid contract as a schoolteacher, and she explains that she has to find stable full-time employment and re-affirm stability:

‘[...] At the moment, as I restricted my expenses, I should be fine but this situation can only be temporary, I cannot live in limbo next year as well. I *have to* find a full-time job’ (Veronica, participant 29).

Later on though she protests against a labour market that currently requires working long hours in jobs that pay very little and at times, do not pay at all. She also expresses her dissent and indignation with available forms of work, and wants to get involved with collective and meaningful spaces:

‘Probably everyone feels trapped in a shell, because they have scared us and persuaded us that we need to rely on these 200 €. So bow your head, do not speak and work, otherwise you die [...]. I would like to get involved in alternative communities, and express my personal indignation and protest [...]. I think the best way is organizing in small collectives, which assert and protect workers' rights in different sectors, social groups and social strata, against the state [...].’ (Veronica, participant 39).

Although Veronica expresses a wish to restore a stable work identity (as a full-time employee), she also questions the possible work futures that she can anticipate, after the structural reforms of the labour market in Greece. Engaging reflectively with issues of exploitation (low salaries of 200 euros), she is seeking ways to mediate the effects of the crisis, and proposes collective

organizing as a means to restore dignity at work. Hence, while the unemployed try to maintain some kind of identity coherence, achieved through re-embedding the self into formal employment structures (like ‘finding a full-time job’), they also aspire to alternative selves which, sometimes, belong to communities that operate ‘against the state’ (or in spite of it), and could bring about social change. The section below expands the discussion on this, arguing that, as part of collective efforts to enact new forms of work organization and change, the unemployed also adopt liminoid identity positions.

*Liminoid identity positions: The enactment of alternative work futures*

The narratives discussed in the previous section revealed that some participants have already started to problematize precarious work futures and engage with alternatives to neoliberal work arrangements. In this section, we focus more on the enactment of new forms of work organization and the performance of liminoid identity positions – that is, identity positions that allow the unemployed to become active agents in a process that resists the dominant socio-economic order and institutes alternative organizational forms.

Mike and his co-workers lost their job in 2011, when the private owners of a metallurgical factory in Northern Greece (*Vio.Me*) declared bankruptcy, leaving hundreds of workers unpaid for months. Employment losses due to disrupted capital accumulation, combined with fierce austerity and destruction of the welfare state have triggered a variety of processes, which have shattered the labour force:

‘We are workers who do not just produce but also create; when there is not any work available you are trying to create it; we have been operating the [recuperated] factory for three years now through the workers’ general assembly meetings, who play a key

role in establishing our initiative as autonomous, self-organized and collective effort’ (Mike, participant 29).

In April 2014, a group of the dismissed employees formed a worker-owned cooperative, based on the principles of collective decision-making through the workers’ assembly, collective ownership of the means of production, and non-profit operation, as any surplus returns to the factory and the wider community:

‘I was a worker in this factory for years and then one day, they [the private owners] decided to close it down and disappear [...]. The former owner owes the workers almost 1.5 million Euros in unpaid wages. For us, the struggle is not only to reinstate fairness but also to get control over our future and the futures of our family and our community. We don’t want to become bosses, we want to work in our own terms, and collectively make the factory a social space for the whole community’ (Mike, participant 29).

Here we observe an attempt to invent new subjectivities that entail creative disengagement as opposed to what Weeks (2011:100; see also Virno, 1996) calls ‘a merely defensive stance’ of resisting work. Dimitris, another member of the recuperated factory, explains:

‘Others wait around for an employer to offer them a few hours of work with very little pay. We decided to create work and self-manage the factory, decide what to produce [they have chosen to create natural cleaning products], and work without bosses’ (Dimitris, participant 9).

Vaggelis, an unemployed chemical engineer, explains how he also wanted to be part of ‘a struggle, which has both social and political dimensions’ and hence decided to become a member of the factory:

‘We decided to put all our knowledge into practice after finishing University. For us working in structures that do not respect the environment and the wider community was not an option. We wanted to be part of a struggle, which has both social and political dimensions. For us this was very important rather than working in large firms which, as we all know, do not care for the safety of the users and the environment’ (Vaggelis, participant 38).

Vaggelis’ and Dimitris’ decision to get involved with the recuperated factory is driven primarily by a concrete set of values that prioritises respect for the environment and the wider community. These values, part of an anti-capitalist socio-political imaginary, foster the development of anti-structural spaces, which encourage the establishment of ‘bonds of *communitas*’ (Buber, 1958; Turner, 1974); these bonds are anti-structural in the sense that they are undifferentiated, egalitarian, direct, extant and existential relationships (Kinnard, 2014). ‘*Communitas* does not merge identities; it liberates them from conformity to general norms; [it] is spontaneous, immediate, concrete’ (Turner, 1974b: 274). Thus, anti-structural spaces, like the self-managed factory, can be seen as ‘concrete utopias’ (Bloch, 1986) that shape the emergence and evolution of alternatives by nurturing emancipatory ideals while at the same time, they remain ‘fully cognizant of the deep complexities and contradictions of realizing those ideals’ (Wright, 2013: 7).<sup>9</sup>

Although not removed from the dominant capitalist socio-economic environment within which they are embedded, Mike, Dimitris and Vaggelis have chosen to stop looking for low paid-jobs or zero hour contracts, and instead co-create alternative forms of work, which involve caring for others and contributing to society. This is also illustrated by the case of Nicole who participates in the *Workers' Clinic*, a self-organized social clinic that operates in the premises of the factory of *Viome*:

‘The *Workers' Clinic* is open to the community on a regular basis while actively opposes the austerity policies implemented in the national health care system in Greece by being part of other initiatives [...]. Visitors in the Clinic are actively involved in their own treatment, which is not responsibility of one doctor but of a team of medical practitioners. Visitors are given the opportunity to also become members of the clinic and contribute to a community that extends our understanding of medical care’ (Nicole, participant 33).

These examples provide evidence of the emergence of new subjectivities that are necessary for the society to function and in extreme situations, to survive when in liminoid phases. During this process, the boundaries between segmented social positions disappear and a heightened sense of solidarity is being observed. For Mike, Vaggelis, Dimitris and Nicole, involvement in these initiatives is not simply a strategy to reclaim employment but a social and political struggle for the creation of collaborative communities that can offer an alternative to privatized public services and precarious or no work. The formation of non-hierarchical, ‘spontaneous’ and ‘self-generating’ solidarity initiatives constitutes part of an effort to envisage ‘plural, fragmentary and experimental’ spaces of work (Turner, 1974a: 57). These spaces, therefore, represent ‘radical critiques of the central structures’ and demonstrate that unemployment is not

only a temporary, in-between state but can become part of a trajectory that challenges neoliberal work arrangements and potentially brings about alternatives though ‘engaged withdrawal’ (Virno, 1996).

Thus, while some participants strive for coherence and continuation (to find a job that will allow them to reinstate prior work identities or institute new possible ones), others often engage with liminoid identity positions, which liberate them from normative constraints, in favour of alternative work selves. The occupied factory of *Vio.Me* and the *Workers’ Clinic* were both created as relational and expansive spaces of solidarity that currently provide more egalitarian, horizontal and collaborative forms of work for a number of unemployed or precariously employed individuals. Such spaces bring about the emergence of new inter-subjectivities that challenge the current state of the employment relationship by offering a critique, or even alternatives, to the dominant socio-economic order (Daskalaki and Kokkinidis, 2017; Daskalaki, 2017).

## **Discussion**

The analysis of the findings demonstrated that the unemployed adopt flexible identity positions and construct their liminality in *both* coherent and ambiguous ways (Hoyer and Steyaert, 2015; see also Steyaert, 2007; Sveningsson and Alvesson, 2003). This is consistent with what Beech et al. (2016) call ‘unresolved identity work’ – a process of self-questioning that allows them to follow identity trajectories that ‘disrupt a sense of self’ (Beech et al., 2016: 520). Unemployment becomes a new reality that destabilizes personal and professional identities, allowing for the narrative construction of ‘lost and found possible selves’ (King and Raspin, 2004), which are performed in structural and anti-structural spaces (see Table 2 for a summary of the findings).

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INSERT TABLE 2 ABOUT HERE  
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In the structural spaces, the unemployed (re-) construct their identities through a process during which they attempt to adapt to the neoliberal structuring of work. Becoming or not-becoming a ‘crisis entrepreneur’ was one of the possible selves the participants narratively constructed in these structural spaces, in their attempt to reflect on possible post-liminal selves. As critical entrepreneurship approaches have already argued, neoliberal discourses of crisis entrepreneurship attempt to construct financial disasters and crisis as market opportunities (see for example, Jones and Murtola, 2012; Barbosa and Ferreira, 2015; Jessop et al., 2015). Through the ideology of entrepreneurship, therefore, neoliberalism attempts to take over non-work space-time of unemployment and demands from the individual to become more efficient and more productive: it is the individual that carries all the responsibility to become employed again.

For example, although George rejected the possibility of becoming an entrepreneur, he still engaged with the ideology of entrepreneurship and sought to find ways that could enable him to become self-employed in the future. Yet, while trying to deal with difficulties and overcome the obstacles, he aspires to return to the structural spaces of the economy, failing to ‘choose differently, to opt out of entrepreneurial self-optimization’ (Bröckling, 2016: 197). Therefore narrative constructions of liminality indicate that the unemployed engage with identity work that remains ambiguous: for example, although some of the participants, like George doubted pursuing a career as self-employed, at the same time, they considered participating in such

efforts in order to find work in the future. Through that, the unemployed attempt to leave not-knowing positions and map out a course of action, that is, strategies that will help them identify new possible selves. Therefore, they narratively construct a work future, albeit a precarious one, that will reinstate them as part of the capitalist domains of the work and organization.

Yet, the unemployed, in search of new possible future identities, also contest precarious low paid work, disrupt prior career identifications, and try to construct alternative selves outside the structural spaces of work and organization. Veronica's narrative indicates that while she is trying to adapt to precarious working conditions (and remain in structural spaces), she also reacts against the low paid, insecure employment and injustices brought about by austerity and deregulation of the employment relationship. For Veronica, and others who are still struggling with indeterminate work futures or the enactment of new ones, unemployment signifies a period of 'unresolved identity work' (Beech et al., 2016). During this period, new alternative selves can also be enacted in what we described as anti-structural spaces of the economy. These are capsules beyond neoliberal arrangements of working life that present a social critique or a revolutionary manifesto that exposes 'the injustices, inefficiencies, and immoralities of the mainstream economic and political structures and organizations' (Turner, 1974a: 86).

Although Mike, Vaggelis, Dimitris and Nicole have collectively organized an alternative space of work, they still have to live and work in uncertainty and ambiguity. The operation of the factory is currently under threat, as the state has failed to provide support to such initiatives and plans to auction the land in which the factory is built. Indeed 'the great difficulty is to keep this intuition alive...the *experience* of *communitas* becomes the memory of the *communitas*, with the result that *communitas* itself, in striving to replicate itself historically, develops a social structure' (Turner, 1974a: 78, emphasis in the original). Yet, we propose that anti-

structural spaces, not only forge *communitas*, but also enact a process during which new inter-subjectivities can be actively performed. Anti-structural spaces thus trigger points of rupture during which precarious forms of work are being rejected in favour of collective organization of alternatives. These alternatives become part of a broader project of emancipation, which is historically specific to the (present) moment of capitalism. Similarly to ‘concrete’ utopias (Bloch, 1986) or what Cooper (2013) calls ‘everyday utopias’, anti-structural spaces are in the making, in the here and now, mobilized by autonomous social organizing that ‘shapes absences’ (Dinerstein, 2014a; see also Dinerstein, 2016).

Accordingly, focusing on the formation of liminoid identities and their potential to refuse neoliberal capitalist work arrangements, we stress the role that struggles over alternative work futures can play, both in the enactment of resistance practices as well as the emergence of new, collective forms of insurrection. As Mumby et al. (2017: 32-33) recently pointed out, ‘the strength of neoliberal capitalism is also its weakness; it generates wealth and power by appropriating and mediating human meaning and identity formation’, but it can also be subverted on these same terrains. Yet, we are mindful that the studies of alternatives can, at times, romanticize achievements and simplify the limitations and contradictions involved in such practices. Downplaying the political and institutional drivers, replication and long-term sustainability are often ignored or underdeveloped in such research. For example, some of the 1960s and 1970s grassroots movements’ discourses may have been appropriated and promoted as part of the neoliberal discourse (for example, ‘freedom’, ‘self-realization’ or ‘empowerment’; see Bröckling, 2016). Some may also argue that there are liminoid phenomena (such as ‘total institutions’, Goffman, 1961), which do not resist the wider social structure but on the contrary, facilitate the social order. However, the contribution of struggles for alternative work futures both in the enactment of resistance processes as well as the formation of

contemporary post-capitalist movements cannot be disregarded (for a recent discussion of resistance in and around organizations, see Mumby et al., 2017).

## **Conclusion**

In this article, we engaged with the literature on unemployment and identity transitions and proposed that in crisis contexts, unemployment triggers trajectories from (ambiguous) possible identities to liminoid ones, where, in some cases, post-capitalist alternatives are being practised. The contribution of this article is threefold: First, we propose that unemployment is not only a liminal time-space where possible identities are being aspired to; the unemployed also create anti-structural spaces and participate in the emergence of new forms of work that challenge the current state of the employment relationship and offer a critique, and at times alternatives, to the dominant socio-economic order. This framing provides the grounds for the study of individuals' capacity to challenge and rethink the meaning of work and non-work and the possibilities for transformation in periods of unemployment.

Our second contribution lies in the area of liminality as applied in the field of management and organization studies. We proposed that liminality and the ways it affects (work) identities need to be studied in relation to specific contexts (in our case, the context of persistent high rates of unemployment and economic stagnation) so that 'identity practices and processes become more visible in terms of what they enable or constrain within the practices and processes of organizing' (Coupland and Brown, 2012: 3). Being suspended in liminality could trigger transformation; relational structures shift, allowing organizational members to form new relationships and strengthen existing ones. This process (described as 'liminal suspension') lays the pathway for resilience activation through 'collaborative organizing of new routines and relationships' (Powley, 2009: 2199).

Following from this, our third contribution lies in the area of alternative organizing and post-capitalist work futures (Gibson-Graham, 2008; Parker et al., 2014). We proposed that in contexts where the prospects of waged labour are declining, one can challenge capitalist work arrangements by inhabiting spaces of unemployment that enact our collective capacity to organize alternatives and co-constitute a starting point for reclaiming life. Locating the study of identity within a study of organizing, we employed Turner's (1974a) concept of the 'liminoid' and suggested that liminoid identity positions have the potential to resist capitalist forms of employment towards more collective, autonomous organizational forms. We thus argued that periods of chronic unemployment and extreme austerity could bring about self-organized anti-structural spaces that are founded upon relations of solidarity and ethical engagement with the other.<sup>10</sup>

Concluding, it was beyond the purpose of this study to consider the reasons why some chronically unemployed participants construct liminoid identities and collectively enact alternative work arrangements. This is necessary, however, in order to fully understand the heterogeneities that characterize the unemployment condition. These heterogeneities may be the result of several interacting factors such as family support, other income, social relationships, political ideologies or length of unemployment. We thus propose that future studies, through longitudinal approaches, could examine the conditions under which the unemployed navigate identity trajectories and at times, escape to organizational spaces where post-capitalist futures can be pursued.

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## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Here, Bellamy-Foster and McChesney (2012) draw on Marx's theory of the industrial reserve army of labour.

<sup>2</sup> Figures in January 2016; see <http://www.tradingeconomics.com/greece/unemployment-rate>.

In addition, from 2011-2014, 1.4 million Greeks have left the country

(<http://www.euronews.com/2014/04/21/the-greek-brain-drain/>).

<sup>3</sup> Although the authors mentioned here may not specifically identify as symbolic interactionist, clear traces of interactionist ideas are apparent in the ways their approaches have evolved.

<sup>4</sup> See the discussion of the lost generation with reference to Greece and Spain (Malkoutzis, 2011).

<sup>5</sup> During the period of 2010–12, the income of the bottom 40 percent of households declined 41 percent. The rise in unemployment has affected the bottom 40 percent to a much larger extent than the top 60 as the former group includes more young people and the less skilled (World Bank, 2015).

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.statista.com/>

<sup>7</sup> According to the World Bank, long-term unemployment refers to the number of people with continuous periods of unemployment extending for a year or longer. The long-term unemployed in our study have been without work for a period of time ranging from 12 months to 3 years; for seven of the informants this period has been interrupted at the time of the interview either by short-term contracts or zero hour agreements. Yet they also continued searching for work due to low income, insecurity and no ties to these precarious work roles

(not related to their studies and career aspirations). Thus, they also considered themselves unemployed and stated so during the interviewing process.

<sup>8</sup> Many in recent years have collectively left main cities organizing eco-communities in rural areas of Greece (Babington and Papadimas, 2012).

<sup>9</sup> For a critical discussion of the difference between what Wright calls 'real utopia' and Bloch's 'concrete utopia', see Dinerstein, 2014b.

<sup>10</sup> For a recent detailed discussion of ethical engagement with the other in the field of management and organization studies, refer to Pullen and Rhodes, 2014 and Clarke and Knights, 2015.

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**Table 1. List of participants**

No	Names	Age	Qualifications	Current employment status
1.	Afrodite	31	B.Sc. in Accountancy	Unemployed
2.	Alexia	28	B.A. in Architecture	Unemployed
3.	Andrea	27	B.A. in Biology	Unemployed
4.	Cristina	26	B.Sc. in Medicine	Unemployed
5.	Chryssa	27	M.A. in Political Science	Unemployed
6.	Costas	40	PhD in Linguistics	Unemployed
7.	Dafni	30	B.A. in French Literature	Unemployed
8.	Dimitra	25	M.Sc. in Psychology	Unemployed
9.	Dimitris	46	Vocational qualification	Unemployed, now works at recuperated factory
10.	Dionysis	30	B.A Media and Communications	Unemployed
11.	Efi	32	B.A. in Tourism	Unemployed (short, fixed term contract)
12.	Emily	28	B.A. in Nursery Education	Unemployed
13.	Emma	24	B.A. in Psychology	Unemployed
14.	Florence	31	B.Sc. in Accountancy	Unemployed (short, fixed term contract in accountancy firm)
15.	Foula	24	B.Sc. in Business Administration	Unemployed
16.	Froso	27	B.A. in Classical Studies	Unemployed (private tutor, zero hour)
17.	George	28	B.A. in Engineering	Unemployed
18.	Gianna	25	M.Sc. in Media Studies	Unemployed
19.	Irene	24	M.Sc. in Communication	Unemployed
20.	Jasmin	26	M.Sc. in Media Studies	Unemployed
21.	Jenny	27	B.Sc. in Marketing	Unemployed (private tutor, zero hour)
22.	John	26	BA in Architecture	Unemployed
23.	Lilla	32	B.Sc. in Economics	Unemployed (private tutor, zero hour)
24.	Loukia	30	B.A. in Shipping	Unemployed
25.	Marina	24	B.A. in Sociology	Unemployed
26.	Marion	29	B.Sc. in Communication	Unemployed
27.	Marlen	30	M.Sc. in Media Studies	Unemployed
28.	Mary	35	Diploma, Tourism Studies	Unemployed

29.	Mike	50	Vocational qualification	Unemployed, now works at recuperated factory
30.	Mikela	32	Diploma in Culinary Arts	Unemployed
31.	Myrto	25	M.A. in Law	Unemployed
32.	Nick	27	B.A in Mechanical Engineering	Unemployed
33.	Nicole	35	Medical Doctor	Unemployed, now works at a social clinic
34.	Pauline	28	B.A. in Classical Studies	Unemployed (private tutor, zero hour)
35.	Peter	24	BA in Marketing and Communications	Unemployed
36.	Petra	29	B.A. in Fine Arts	Unemployed
37.	Sia	25	M.Sc. in Communication	Unemployed
38.	Vaggelis	28	BA Chemical Engineer	Unemployed, now works at recuperated factory
39.	Veronica	23	B.A. in Education	Hourly-paid teacher, fixed term

**Table 2. Identity trajectories of the unemployed: In search of future possible selves**

Spaces of work (Liminal → liminoid)	Identity positions of the unemployed	Narratives of possible, futures selves (Examples)
<i>Structural</i>	<p><b>Re-affirm prior stable professional identities</b></p> <p><b><i>Indeterminate</i> future identities</b></p> <p><b>Mapping out future actions</b></p>	<p>‘waiting to get my old job back’</p> <p>‘I don’t even know where I will be next week’</p> <p>‘I cannot see how, in this environment, I will be able to practice what I studied’</p> <p>‘I don’t even know where I will be next week (laughs). I am trying to adapt to not-knowing what comes next but it is not easy’</p> <p>‘I may not be able to work in media and compromise doing something else [...] I may have to consider a different future, yet I still cannot imagine what this may be’</p> <p>‘Now I am trying to find out how I can set up my own business’</p> <p>‘I don’t believe that I can do something on my own... It is very risky, isn’t it? You need to have work experience in the particular field, to know some clients first’</p>
<i>Anti-structural</i>	<p><b>Alternative futures: Refusing precarity</b></p> <p><b>‘Liminoid identity positions’</b></p>	<p>‘this is my exit plan’</p> <p>‘create work and self-manage the factory’</p> <p>‘We wanted to be part of a struggle, which has both social and political dimensions’</p>

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