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Authoritative Models and Grassroots Responses to Crisis: Reconfigurations of Everyday Life in Chalkida, a Postindustrial Greek City

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Abstract

This thesis focuses on grassroots practices, meanings and understandings in the context of the Greek economic crisis and austerity restructurings that were unilaterally imposed by hegemonic institutions and Greek governments between 2010 and 2016. I employ a bottom up approach to identify the social, economic, political and cultural shifts and ruptures that the imposition of austerity measures and neoliberal policies provoked in Chalkida, a mid-sized (post) industrial city. I juxtapose mainstream definitions and explanations of crisis with national and place-bound grassroots experiences, practices and understandings in order to establish an inter-scalar interconnection between global processes and local agency.

This thesis is based on 18 months of systematic fieldwork that took place between April 2015 and December 2016. Material was collected through participant observation in workplace settings, public spaces and households. Additionally, the research was informed by semi-structured personal and group interviews, as well as many informal conversations in cafes, taverns and open air markets. Building on existing literature on crisis, neoliberalism, scale and power, household transformations, social solidarity and informality, I assess the impact of crisis and austerity on the socio-economic relationships and established livelihood patterns that were severely challenged by it.

My research demonstrates that people in a provincial city like Chalkida counterbalanced the austerity crisis's effects on formal income resources and the restructuring of the state and its welfare provisioning. They did so by reinventing traditional structures and practices that had been predominant in the past when resources had also been scarce. I therefore suggest that crisis was understood as a retrograde movement that questioned linear processes and conceptualizations of modernity and progress. Drawing upon historical continuities and ruptures at the local, national and international scales, this dissertation offers a rich ethnographic account of everyday life under the condition of "being in" and "living with" crisis.

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Introduction

This thesis' aim is to offer an ethnographic, political and historical account of everyday struggles and life experiences during the Greek economic crisis in the city of Chalkida. As the capital of an industrial region in Central Greece, Chalkida has been severely affected by the ongoing socioeconomic transformations produced by the current crisis. It has been almost a decade since the outbreak of the sovereign debt crisis which has brought with it harsh austerity measures that have changed the country's economic, social and political landscape. Greece today finds itself in an unprecedented situation due to neoliberal restructuring that has resulted in wage cuts, high taxation, reductions in social welfare spending, privatization of the public sector and mass layoffs. These policies have pushed increasing numbers of people into poverty. Most of those affected by the so-called sovereign debt crisis are those who belong(ed) to the working middle classes (Giannitsis & Zographakis, 2018), that is to say, the majority of Greek society who experienced a radical decline in their standard of living.

The current economic crisis has on the one hand unveiled the middle classes' false consciousness and on the other, revealed the great chasm of inequality and injustice inherent to the articulation of power under globalized capitalism today. People who had constructed their livelihoods according to the prospect of continual capitalist progress and economic growth, which opened up a world of possibilities, saw their future expectations and existing living arrangements collapse. As a result, the crisis has produced not only economic and structural shifts in everyday economic activities and decisions but has also challenged ideological and moral values. In this thesis, I follow a bottom up approach in order to critically evaluate the effects of the reforms that the IMF and the Eurogroup have imposed on the Greek economy, and more particularly on ordinary people. I do so through an exploration of grassroots anti-crisis responses that have emerged through people's day-to-day communication and interactions. My particular interest is in the ways in which people value and manage their limited resources and the grassroots networks they mobilize in order to sustain social reproduction practices.

The recent crisis has broken the livelihood arrangements of the majority of Greeks and has greatly affected their income resources, shattering the promise of modernity as well as any possibility of future upward mobility. Therefore, people who built their life projects during

the past thirty years believing that they belonged to one of the richest and most "developed" parts of the world (the European Union), experienced an identity shock which altered their relationship with national and international power structures. The abrupt transformations brought about in the context of the austerity crisis altered their moral and ideological values and their attitudes towards the state, the political system, the EU and the banks. This led them to reconsider and reflect on their pre-crisis consumption-based lifestyles and to reevaluate their life needs. In order to locate the process of social transformation in its broader context, it is therefore necessary to describe ordinary people's pre and post-crisis practices and expectations as regards happiness, success and wellbeing. In order to do so, I engage in a detailed exploration of the life and work histories of local people. Thus, I consider that "crisis" is a concept with varied meanings that motivate people's actions in diverse ways, and that these grassroots definitions must therefore be placed at the center of attention. It is my contention that within the crisis context we can witness the transformation and reconfiguration of other social spheres in which economic actions are embedded. Hence my research questions and analysis are guided by a combined political economy and moral economy framework through which I assess social stratification.

Aligned with the collective objectives of the Grassroots Economics Project (GRECO), my aims are to assess the impacts of mainstream expert economic models on the unfurling of the crisis, unpack new social and economic dynamics that emerge in the crisis context and elaborate on how, in the creative process of getting by, people adapt to crisis. My goal is to provide an anthropological perspective on socio-economic life that dissects neoliberal narratives on the economy, deconstructs the salvational discourses of "austeritarian policies" (Mirowski, 2013) and popular media representations of crisis. I focus my analysis on the ways in which moral and cultural values are produced within the context of modern Greek history and the contingencies of the recent crisis. I establish a multi-scalar interconnection between the global economy and local agency by highlighting a "global sense of place." In this way, I make the regulatory frameworks that stabilize economic behavior available to analysis.

My main objectives are the following: a) to analyze everyday economic practices during the crisis and their regulatory framework; b) to apprehend grassroots meanings and definitions of "the economy" and lay understandings of "economic logic"; c) to trace the multiple ways in which the global, national and local are integrated in ordinary people's practices, feelings and

experiences; d) to unravel the inherent inequalities of the capitalist economic system by giving special attention to the gendered and generational aspects of the crisis e) to assess the neoliberalization of the economy and the financialization of everyday life through a bottom-up approach and f) to unravel the historical continuities and discontinuities that surfaced in the context of the recent economic crisis..

Consequently, in the thesis I seek to answer the following questions: 1) what are the multiple grassroots meanings and definitions of "crisis" and "austerity" and how do they differ from dominant discourses? 2) how do people reconfigure their identities through the concept of crisis and the condition of austerity, and what are the implications of this for the social contract? 3) how is social consent reproduced under austerity and generalized crisis? 4) what are the ground responses to authoritative models of the crisis? 5) what are the new labor regimes that have emerged during the crisis? 6) what meanings and moral value frameworks sustain economic practice? 7) what sorts of livelihood projects are designed by diversely situated people? 8) how are resources assessed, evaluated, accessed and distributed? 9) how do people manage (or not) to sustain their livelihoods and socially reproduce under the regime of austerity? 10) how do people understand change and how do they decide what to keep and what to abandon in the creative process of moving forward?

My Field

Today, the municipality of Chalkida is an urban conglomeration of 100.000 people. It is the capital of the island of Evia and its city-center stretches across both sides of the Euripus Strait. Two bridges connect Evia with central Greece. Since 1995, when the new bridge was opened, car access to the city of Chalkida, which is located only 78 kilometers north of Athens (about an hour's drive), was made even easier. When driving to Chalkida, the first thing that one notices are the cement factory's giant installations at the city's threshold. Whether you take the new or the old road to the city, you pass abandoned industrial areas and factories and the closer you get to the center, the older the abandoned factories. This is how Chalkida's industrial history unfolds before the eyes of the visitor. Chalkida is a typical modern Greek city that is a miniature of Athens (see Burgel, 1975; Leontidou, 2006), indeed the city has frequently been characterized as

“Athens’ backyard”. Because of its geographic location, it developed as an industrial hub and satellite production site for the needs of Athens. It also served as a host area for thousands of displaced immigrants from Asia Minor, who settled there and were exploited as cheap labor force for the growing industrial sector during the early 20th century. As Greece’s urbanization and modernization project unfolded, the dynamic opening of factories along the coast of the Evian Gulf attracted many economic migrants who sought to improve their livelihoods through waged employment at one of the many factories that had opened. For over a century, industrial income provided the basis on which the local economy expanded, and commercial markets emerged in the city. The construction sector thrived and, until 2008, the demand for housing was continually on the rise as the city’s population grew and their living standards improved.

Chalkida started to develop its industries in the 1880s, when small industrial units appeared around the port that processed the areas’ raw materials (olive oil, vines, wood, clay). At the dawn of the 20th century, the city was connected to Athens by train and its port facilities were upgraded. Several new factories were constructed along the railway network and by the port. After the population exchange between Greece and Turkey in 1923, many people from Asia Minor settled in Chalkida and the areas around it, and its population grew significantly. The displaced populations provided low cost labor for the factories (Hirschon, 1979) and Chalkida’s Cement Plant, the first heavy industry and landmark of the city’s industrial character, was founded. After the Second World War, capitalist expansion in Greece advanced at a radical pace and from 1951 to 1991, the extensive industrialization of the area was followed by an exponential growth of Chalkida’s population, from around 30 to 60 thousand people. Another surge of relocations to Chalkida occurred after the new bridge was completed in 1995. This made the city, which lay in the boundary area between three administrative prefectures, Attica, Viotia and Evia, the center of the largest industrial region in Greece.

Beyond its industrial character, Chalkida is also the capital of the island of Evia, Greece’s second largest island. The city therefore serves as a hub that concentrates the island’s agricultural, animal and fish production, which is processed and/or consumed in the city. Locals maintain strong relationships with the countryside and with food production sites and activities. Together with their formal employment, first and second, generation rural migrants usually maintain a secondary, often informal income from agriculture (Diamianakos, 2002). Critical to

this development has been car ownership which has enabled people to commute and move around to attend to their multi-sited activities. As I got used to driving in and around the city, I started to notice the many trucks that were either going to or returning from the Athenian open-air markets. Evia is also the fifth biggest olive oil producer in Greece and as Braudel (1972) noted, olive oil is an essential element of Mediterranean culture and a crucial material in the social reproduction of the Greek household. It is also a good that many households in Chalkida have market-free access to through kinship and social networks.

The economic crisis in Chalkida has been very acute and it pushed numerous factories to close. Between 2011 and 2013 and nearly 3,100 industrial workers lost their jobs in Chalkida. If we scale up the number of unemployed workers at the level of the household, we need to multiply that number by four (the aggregate number of household members). In that case, more than one tenth of the population was directly affected by the closures of the four large factories, and their social reproduction practices were threatened by unemployment. In and of itself, this event signals challenges to the social reproduction not only of laid off workers' households, but also to the wider local economy and to social life. The disappearance of industrial labor, combined with austerity cuts to pensions and salaries, has induced great shocks in the formal market where the self-employed operated and managed to earn a living. Narotzky and Goddard (2016, 2015) combine contemporary ethnographic examples of capitalist crises around the world with a focus on the connectedness between local livelihood patterns and the global economy. Restructuring in the industrial sector has the power to make and unmake livelihood projects in local spaces where heavy industry is present. Through industrial capitalism, local places become vulnerable to shifts in capital accumulation processes in the era of financial capitalism. Local economies that depended on heavy industry were among the first to be affected by the global financial crisis in 2007. In Greece, the economic crisis has accelerated de-industrialization, thus Chalkida was among the first cities in Greece to experience the effects of the economic crisis.

Crises in the industrial sector have been common since the 1980s, as a result of the global restructuring of industrial production and the rescaling of the Greek economy to meet the EEC's standards. Chalkida's population has faced many smaller scale crises in the past that were successfully absorbed by other thriving economic sectors such as construction or other commercial activities and self-employment schemes. Chalkidians are therefore accustomed to crises in the industrial sector and have learned to adapt to them and counterbalance the small

scale, local crises caused by factory closures. In the recent iteration of the Greek economic crisis, the process of de-industrialization has become more acute. Widespread economic instability and austerity taxation have prevented the formulation of alternative self-employment projects which in the past had provided an alternative to forced unemployment (Parker, 2004). When I entered the field in April 2015, the city of Chalkida had fallen into socio-cultural and economic decay. One could see abandoned factories both within and outside of the city, the lack of public funds and unmaintained and undeveloped public infrastructure, abandoned construction projects and sense the general state of disorganization, despair, hopelessness and misery that had taken over public life.

Interestingly, Chalkida's other constitutive aspect, in which it is the capital of an island rich in natural resources, has not faced crisis. In fact, small scale agricultural and food production activities that combine formal and informal structures and characteristics have proliferated and taken a central role in the organization of economic life during the crisis years. As a consequence, food production was the leveling force that counter-acted the crisis. The population's food production skills and means provided them with material resources for social reproduction, and goods and services circulated through social and kinship networks. Amateur fishing, for instance, provided a steady source of income for those who wanted to sell their catch in the local market or to the many fish taverns that attracted weekend visitors from Athens. Chalkida is a well-known destination for sea food lovers and offers a greater variety of locally produced sea food than I have encountered elsewhere in Greece. Local taverns absorb and formalize most of the informal sea food production, making amateur fishing a profitable business. Furthermore, there are numerous agricultural production sites around the city of Chalkida. Food resources are plenty and easily accessible for sustaining the needs of the local population. I had many encounters with people who were themselves petty food producers and who stressed the fact that the impact of crisis was not as intense there as in Athens or other large cities. Amateur fishing and small-scale agriculture dampened the effects of the crisis and resource scarcity. Chalkidians possessed the knowledge and means for producing their own food, something which is unattainable in large cities where the only option for accessing food at the local scale is through formal markets.

In the neighborhood where I chose to live, I heard people talk about the weather and how it affected agriculture. For instance, in August, a rain might be catastrophic for vineyard cultivation, but beneficial for the olive harvest. As Panourgia (1995) explains, the peasant populations that migrated to modern urban centers reproduced village life and their rural habitus in their new urban surroundings (Hondrageu-Sotelo, 2014).

Research Hypothesis

Chalkida's current population consists of first, second and third generations of internal economic migrants with rural backgrounds who chose to live in the city and improve their livelihoods through industrial employment and participation in the growing capitalist markets. Quite a few neighborhoods were informally built by people of the same kin or from the same village, through collective self-built housing. With the state's structures absent, people helped each other with the construction of their humble homes. Social progress was therefore a matter of collective effort and mutual support, a matter that was negotiated on the social grounds of everyday life rather than through top-down plans executed by the state. Informal houses were built with the help of kin, neighbors and friends in the same manner as people had harvested their olive groves and carried out agricultural tasks in their villages. Thus, the village community was reproduced and recreated at the neighborhood scale. With the passage of time, however, the characteristics of village communities have faded, especially among the younger generations. Capitalist progress and consumption-based lives have eroded the foundations of such networks as they ceased to be vital for socio-economic reproduction. Eroded but not extinct, these grassroots structures acquired a customary role in the Greek traditions which elders maintained, and in times of resource scarcity, old and new village-type communities were reinvented to aid social reproduction.

My research hypothesis in the thesis is that a mid-sized city such as Chalkida is representative of how people who are less alienated from each other, from nature and food production, people who possess knowledge and skills and have access to informal networks, are more resilient to crisis and socio-cultural changes and transformations than the populations of large urban centers where provisioning systems are embedded into capitalist market

relationships. While most of the social and economic research of modern Greece has been focused on big cities such as Athens and Therssaloniki, or the Greek rural world, there is very little knowledge about smaller, peripheral cities such as Chalkida, and the experience(s) of crisis. In order to understand the actual crisis, I believe it is necessary to conduct a bottom up approach also to such medium size cities and correlate it with the broader national and international transformations and global processes which have shaped the city and its social and economic life throughout the past two centuries of modern capitalist development, up to the present.

One of my first informants, was Sotiris, (49), a laid-off factory worker. In order to cope with unemployment, he developed a small wine producing unit and cultivated vineyards. One day, while I was conducting participant observation at a local tavern owned by another informant of mine, I accidentally met Sotiris who invited me to sit at his table. He revealed to me that he was not only a customer, but also a supplier of wine. Then a chain of social relationships appeared as I discovered later, that, Angeliki, (42), who worked at the tavern as a cook and was the former wife of a good friend of the owner, had known Sotiris and she was the one that introduced him and arranged to supply wine to the tavern. Angeliki, knew Sotiris because she used to be employed at Sotiris's brother venture who owned a canteen in an industrial zone nearby. Such unexpected, ethnographic encounters were recurring during my fieldwork and I was surprised by the social networks of proximity that govern socio-economic relationships in Chalkida. In such a small city, almost everyone knows everyone, a fact which impacts significantly on a person's social and economic integration. Very frequently, I met people through varied contacts and situations who ended up at the very least being known to each other. These random encounters are indicative of the extended domestic networks of proximity that could be maintained and further cultivated in Chalkida's small society because almost everyone is, more or less, connected, integrated and interdependent within the city's social and economic life. This also means that local economies have a solid foundation that is based on durable interpersonal relationships that last over time.

Theoretical Framework

Neoliberalism, Power & Culture

Today, the neoliberal form of capitalism, with its understanding of the "Economy" (Comaroff & Comaroff, 2000), has largely replaced the hegemonic, regulating role of religion, especially in the old centers of western capitalism. "Crisis" and "Austerity" are concepts which have been borrowed from the christian religion/culture and ideology and entailed notions of punishment and judgment, revelation and salvation (Koselleck, 1988) . Therefore, I suggest that cosmologies and philosophical beliefs are now increasingly expressed in the economy and economic institutions at the macro level (Peck & Tickell, 2002), and in ordinary economic practices at the micro level. Following Mirowski's analysis (2013) about the similarities between neoliberalism and religious dogmas, one can state that historically dominant doctrines both produce and reconfigure people's habitus. Hence, the recent crisis in Greece, did not only affect the economic arrangements of people, but it has challenged the deep structures of the Greek society and the established pre-crisis capitalist culture. The invasion of neoliberal mentality under the guise of crisis has clashed with traditional modes of capital accumulation under which people have learned to get by and aspire for upward mobility. The shift from traditional, industrial capitalism to neoliberal, financialized modes of capital accumulation and free-market ideology has created a profound rupture in the Greek project of modernity that was entangled with the national project of capitalist development. Stuart Hall, traced neoliberalism's passage through liberalism by stating that "political ideas of 'liberty' became harnessed to economic ideas of the free market" (2011: 71).

Since the beginning of the so-called financial crisis in 2008, mainstream economists, politicians, journalists and other "experts" from across Europe have employed organic and corporatist images of southern Europe in crisis. Three core ideas shape their discourse. First, the crisis is a (class-blind) state of disruption that affects the entire social body. Second, national entities share responsibility for producing the economic meltdown through their collective *bad southern* behavior (the product of corruption, conspicuous consumption and the lack of an *ethos* of hard work). Finally, the discourse lauds austerity as the "cure" for crisis that will promote

regeneration of the social body (Hadjimichalis 2017; Mylonas 2014; Narotzky 2012; Raudon and Shore 2018). In the current time, global power lies more in the economic dogmas that are created in capitalism's metropolises than in religious dogmas. It is no longer a case of missionaries preaching the bible and trying to convert everyone to Christianity; today it is the neoliberals who preach for the free-market and try to promote capital accumulation schemes and free-market ideology. Neoliberalism in that sense, can be conceptualized as a project of acculturation (Lawn & Prentice, 2015). The present thesis focuses on the latter project, its inner mechanics of not only economic, but cultural and moral transformation, and the unraveling of socially situated dynamics that accommodate, react or resist to that project. Within this frame, I resist the temptation of understanding Chalkida's social reality as the mere "object" of a top down project of financialization and rent extraction. Rather, I am convinced that I can give voice to the regimes of truth and meaning expressed by my informants at the grassroots level, by shedding light onto their active role as parts of a complex, dialectical relation, in which they daily negotiate, mediate, resist to and transform the cultural models that the free-market structures are bringing about (Narotzky and Smith, 2006; Narotzky, 2007). I suggest to theorize neoliberalization as a cultural hegemonic project which lands in social lifeworlds and imposes itself by affecting social reproduction and systems of provisioning (Narotzky, 2005).

Austerity restructurings have triggered social and cultural shifts in the way people approach social and economic life. Consequently, investigating the shifts in people's habits can be illuminating, given that economic arrangements lead gradually to the formation of habits, and durable habits, in so far as they reproduce structural differentiation, constitute the habitus (Bourdieu, 1984). Habitus then provides the framework in which people are exploited in a particular way. For instance, global consumption trends such as smoking and the tobacco industry or the recent rise of mobile phone use and services indicate that production and profits are maximized by targeting and creating habits which have gendered, cultural and generational dimensions (Mintz, 1985; Sahlins, 1976). In this sense, the interaction of practices and representations at the local level, with the logics and dynamics imposed by globalized economic models can only be grasped by an effort to combine historically grounded ethnographic data collection, with a multi scalar analysis of the relational processes that link global structural powers (Wolf, 1989), to institutional fields (transnational and national), to the more localized,

socially situated fields and lifeworlds of "normal people", like the individuals and families I spent time with in Chalkida.

Scale

In order to assess the impact of ongoing austerity restructurings and the neoliberalization of the Greek economy on the ground, I decided to borrow the concept of scale as it was developed by critical geographers. There is a comprehensive literature on the fluid concept of scale (Katz, 2001; Marston, 2000; Peck, 2002; Smith, 1984; Swyngedouw, 1997) that concerns itself with the sense of time and place which Harvey has termed "space-time compression" - an effect of global relations of production and consumption. Abstract logics of capital accumulation processes at the larger scale are formed and performed in particular local contexts. Katz (2001) provides a detailed topography of globalization in Sudan where, she argues, neoliberal modes of production, reproduction and consumption are grounded in local culture. However, different local expressions of this accumulation process express a similar position in regard to the larger scale logic, hence her concept of "topography". Globalization would mean nothing had there not been local spaces to be (neo)colonized. As Katz (*ibid*) shows, the transformations prompted by neoliberal doctrine at first target the market base of the economy (Gudeman, 1990) which in turn prompts subtle shifts within other spheres of social reproduction and stratification (Doob, 2012; Gowdy, 2006). Harvey (1990) argues that modernization and restructuring are about speeding up the pace of economic processes and consequently of social life. However, "the implantation of new methods of capital accumulation has either to await the "natural" lifetime of a worker or an industry to pass or engage in the process of creative destruction which rests on the forced devaluation or destruction of past assets in order to make way for the new. (*ibid*: 230)" Transformation occurs both ways though, since there are many critical in-between factors that affect change. Scalar relationships involve nation-states which often act as intermediaries between the local and the global. Most of the time, states appear to be acting in favor of global patterns of capital accumulation that become localized thanks to their intervention.

However, recent approaches to the issue of scale have underscored the fact that it is not only capital that has the capacity to jump scales and affect structures at multiple scales simultaneously; mobilizations against capital by workers, social movements and so on also have

this capacity. Scale is a very vague and fluid concept that is able to mold into any shape (Brenner, 2001; Marston et al, 2005; Marston, 2000); yet at the same time, both its advantages and disadvantages lie in this fluidity. Therefore, according to Wolf's (1999, 1994) approach to power and knowledge, scale can be employed for understanding how global power is diffused and channeled through multiple scales. Neoliberal models aim to exploit and manipulate, not to destroy pre-existing forms of organization, as long as these do not stand in the way of accumulation. Scale becomes thus crucial to the understanding of the constructive and destructive forces that function together at multi-level interactions, and of how global events affect local people and vice versa. Accordingly, my research follows Burawoy's (2000) global ethnography scheme, that is, it explores the mutual shaping of local struggles and global forces.It also takes up Wolf's emphasis on those practices by people that produce structures, with the difference that today, the global economy and neoliberalism are very distinct from what they were at the time of his research. The new technological innovations have produced new analytical challenges and possibilities.

Household & Social Reproduction

In 2008, 320,000 households in Greece had at least one unemployed member while in 2014 the number of unemployed had increased to over a million (Gianitsis & Zografakis, 2015). This represents one third of the working population aged 18-65 and at the same time, more than 70 percent of people faced long-term unemployment (Eurostat, 2015). During the crisis, more than 300,000 men lost their jobs while the number of unemployed women increased by 100,000 and youth unemployment surpassed 60 percent (Giannitsis & Zografakis, 2015).An assumption that can be extracted from statistics, is that crisis triggers new gendered and intergenerational relationships both within the household and the labor regimes as the established male bread-winner model (Janssens, 1997) failed, in many cases, to reproduce itself. Those shifts that the crisis produced, alter gendered and intergenerational relations (Guerin et al., 2014; Narotzky, 1997; Pine, 2002, 2000; Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1999, 2014) upon which the socio-cultural project of Greece has been construed. I maintain therefore throughout the whole of my thesis, a

gendered analysis of how crisis affects different generations and assess whether it narrows or enhances the gender gap in the contemporary Greek society.

Households are privileged spaces in which to study social reproduction practices and dynamics. I conceptualize the household as a node that links multiple channels and networks of social agency, and as a primary field of social reproduction. "The household (or domestic unit) generally refers to a group of co-resident persons who share most aspects of consumption and draw upon a common pool of resources for their livelihood" (Kandiyoti, 1999: 4). As Kandiyoti points out, many household arrangements and forms are excluded from formal sociological analysis because of the diversity of their kinship relationships. Similarly, Smith & Wallerstein (1992) approach the household as a resource pooling structure that is not confined to four walls. Guided by anthropological approaches to the household (Narotzky, 1997; Collins, 1986; Kandiyoti, 1999; Yanagisako, 2015; Wilk, 1991; Smith & Wallerstein, 1992), I investigate the rescaling of the household's role and functions to the reality of crisis and evaluate whether crisis has extended the limits of the household and facilitated the reemergence of extended family households. Narotzky (*ibid*) has pointed to the problems of defining the "household," its boundaries and conceptualization as a consumption unit, and suggests that we conceive of the household according to its functions rather than its morphological characteristics. Following Narotzky's critique of the household and the extensive feminist literature on hidden and unpaid reproductive labor (Federici, 2013;; Narotzky, 1991; Pine 2002; Guerin, 2013), I evaluate whether crisis has extended the limits of the household, and look at how households manage to reproduce themselves and how capitalism in its financialized guise invades the lifeworld of the households. In addition, I assess the intergenerational and gendered reconfigurations and strategies for accessing resources and envisioning the future that the new circumstances bring about. Following household members as they support, negotiate and conflict with each other and following their provisioning networks and practices can reveal, as Lomnitz (1988) suggests, the various logics that inform everyday economic practices, which cannot be explained by mainstream economic laws. Carol Stack (1974) has shown the importance and complexity of domestic networks that are used to circulate goods and exchange services, which serve to improve the living arrangements not only of private, isolated households, but the whole "informal" configuration around them.

According to Narotzky (1997), social reproduction should be studied as a whole, that is, material relations should be studied together with their cultural expressions and their world-wide connectedness. Social reproduction practices have been severely challenged by the imposition of austerity. While this is a familiar scenario for the middle and working classes, one can ask, what happens when social reproduction fails? What do people choose to reproduce and keep, what do they abandon and what do they change in times of crisis? This is the central question that I explore systematically in this thesis, unraveling the new social dynamics that emerge. Ethnographic accounts that analyze systems of provisioning (Collins, 2012, 2008; Narotzky, 2005) has guided my ethnographic explorations in the ways people access and manage resources. I therefore, focus on the provisioning of care and the circulation of resources both within households and across kin households and social and kinship networks (Stack, 1974). Following Narotzky who acknowledges the significance of a provisioning approach, I conduct a multi-scalar analysis that unravels the complex path of socio-economic relations of production, distribution and appropriation of goods and services, their regulatory framework, while "complex connections and processes of differentiation in provisioning that are simultaneously material, political and cultural are a product of the intersections of regional and global histories (Narotzky 2005: 91).

Consumption

Consumption practices and strategies are another topic which I focus my research on. Sahlins (1976) and Mintz's (1985) classic works, about how people's consumption practices affect large scale production, demonstrate how production and consumption are co-determined. The relation between production and consumption, and the power that lies in ordinary people's consumption practices are mystified and rendered obscure to them. At stake in the current problem is what Walter Benjamin (2003) describes as "phantasmagoria" . Benjamin defines phantasmogoria as the condition in which subjects become enchanted by consuming specific goods that mystify the act of consumption. They become alienated both from the economic and social dimension of consumption and from the power that their agency entails. Before the 2008 crash,

overconsumption had been very common in Greece, and an entire culture of consumption had been systemically cultivated by the media and banks. Phantasmagoria reveals the irrational foundations of capitalism and its logics. This makes it a very useful concept for deconstructing claims about the formalist, rational organization of economic behavior and calculative reason that are dominant in capitalist societies. In the context of austerity, consumption practices have been restrained, yet the supply of commodities has remained the same. I assess how people in societies of abundance re-frame their consumption-based lifestyles and adapt to the material restraints that austerity brings, formulating alternative methods and market-less structures to sustain socio-economic life (Schor, 2010). In this context, I explore ethnographically is whether resource scarcity reveals the false consciousness of consumption and leads people to reevaluate what is "needed," demystifying the hidden logic of consumption and the socio-economic relationships behind it. Or, to the contrary, is it the case that the urge to consume further enchants commodities with desirability, particularly those that in times of resource scarcity are not affordable, which thereby acquire the "magic" properties of fetishes, as in the African and South American economies that have historically been troubled with economic crises (Comaroff & Comaroff, 2000; 1999; Taussig, 1980; Meyer, 1998)? Do people, in their effort to get by and maximize the use value of their money, incorporate capitalist logics and calculative reasoning, thereby assimilating free market competition and reproducing the inequalities inherent in capitalism? Or do they become more informed consumers and use their resources as social investments?

Social Solidarity

In this thesis, I make use of sociological theory on social solidarity, which I bring together with anthropological theory on the gift economy (Komter, 2005). I do so in order to formulate an alternative approach to the hegemonic economic Darwinism of free market competition, which I juxtapose with the creative social forces of mutual aid and support that keep society together. I suggest that ruptures in organic solidarity structures, the welfare state and the modern social contract's promises, initiated a process of "mechanicalization" of social solidarity that counterbalanced the lack institutional forms of solidarity. I argue that while money and material

wealth might not bring happiness (Csikszentmihalyi, 1999; Ahuvia, 2008), their lack can generate great unhappiness and discontent. I understand money as a commons which people share and use in their everyday lives, as an essential part of social organization. Inspired by Komter's (2005) approach, I assess that money, like gifts, is to be circulated, and it is the very act of circulation that sustains the whole socioeconomic system and its culture. In other words, it makes a social organization solid. I therefore reject tensions in the definitions of solidarity that blur it with non-self-interested, altruistic practices and discriminate between receivers and givers. Instead, by focusing on the very act of circulation, we can avoid confusing social solidarity with charity, philanthropy and humanitarianism (Theodosopoulos, 2016). This opens up a new field for the study of grassroots expressions of social solidarity in everyday economic practices. In this way, social solidarity is not viewed as creating asymmetrical relationships between the giving and receiving parties but rather forms relationships of interdependence.

Many of my informants whose activities were based in the commercial sector were adamant that the social crisis was the outcome of austerity policies which had created ruptures in capital circulation at the local scale, for which reason informality was the prevalent economic field in which social solidarity was practiced. Unlike recent approaches to social solidarity in Greece by anthropologists (Rakopoulos, 2016; Angelopoulos, 2018; Cabot, 2016; Rozakou, 2018; Papataxiarchis, 2016;), which draw on ethnographic observations of grassroots movements and focus on discourses and representations of social solidarity in their political discourse, I seek to understand social solidarity in intimate social relationships within households, kinship and social networks of mutual support in Chalkida and beyond. I argue that institutions of mutual aid (Kropotkin, 1988[1902], which for the Greek peasantry were the only tangible form of social solidarity before modernization and urbanization, are re-invented when formal institutions of organic solidarity fail to sustain social cohesion and social reproduction. Thus, the ruptures produced by austerity in organic solidarity structures provoked mechanical types of solidarity to emerge, in a process which I call the "mechanicalization" of social solidarity.

Social division, by contrast, has also been widespread during the crisis, and re-surfaced as a destructive force that breaks socio-economic relationships. In the context of the economic crisis, multiple socio-economic arrangements failed and ceased to exist. Chalkida's ventures which sustained local economic structures lost major shares of their clientele. The

discontinuation of economic exchanges eroded the social articulation of local economic life. This has resulted in social and economic separation and local people have become economically disconnected. Another factor that has contributed to social fragmentation is foreign supervision and hegemonic intervention in domestic affairs. Under the threat of imminent bankruptcy and Grexit, the state was forced to comply with the demands of the Troika (the IMF, EU and ECB) and lost its sovereignty over the design of domestic economic policy.

The worst impact of crisis, as an informant of mine elaborated was that "it made us lose our social cohesion" (Takis, 45) who tried to support local ventures and people through his consumption practices. Through the past decade of crisis and imposed austerity, the state's formal structures have collapsed. As a consequence, socially divisive forces have been unleashed which have indicated a break in the established social consensus and the organization of civil society. Austerity measures were implemented by degrees through the strategy of divide and conquer. Restructuring of the public sector was backed up by media discourses and mainstream representations that portrayed the Greek public sector as the main cause of the public deficit, thereby justifying cuts to organic solidarity structures such as the state's provisioning sector (healthcare, education and pensions). People working in the public sector were homogenized and scapegoated as corrupt, incompetent and unworthy of their salaries; they therefore deserved to carry the burden of the cuts. Shortly after the restructurings, neoliberal policies that reshaped the market were applied; these favored large firms over the small and medium-sized enterprises that dominated regional economies. Tax evasion was also portrayed as another major cause of the sovereign debt crisis and was identified as a customary activity of the self-employed who were driven by self-interest.

Informality

Historically, informal economic arrangements have been widespread in Greece and they have shaped the Greek economic habitus and facilitated capitalist growth. I adopt a bottom-up approach to informal economic practices in which I discriminate between self-interested, petty economic activities that aim to maximize profitability versus informal economic practices that contribute to social wellbeing. Further, in the crisis context, evading taxation and participating in

informal circulation and production have been endowed with notions of resistance (Scott, 1985, 1976), subsistence and survival. Following contemporary understandings of the phenomenon of informality (Chen, 2012, 2006; Hart, 1992, 2006; Portes & Haller, 2005) that highlight the multiple intersections, between formal and informal economy, I assess the ways formal and informal economic practices and structures, intersect, contradict or even co-operate at the grassroots scale by stressing the socio-cultural aspects of grassroots economic organization. I evaluate dominant approaches to the informal economy through ethnographic examples from my fieldsite. My description of how subjects give meaning to and explain their own informal economic activities underscores the importance of adopting a bottom-up approach to the concept of informality. In addition, the concept of embeddedness, which Polyani introduced in his substantive analysis of pre-capitalist societies (Polanyi, 1957) is prevalent in the ways people practice economic solidarity. I therefore, focus on the various ways in which people understand the relatedness between economic activities and social relationships in practice (Narotzky, 2007). Thus, I highlight the emic, western understandings of the economy that produce difference and enable distinctions to be drawn between formal and informal activities. The austerity crisis in Greece has dramatically affected the material resources that people use to invest in the maintenance of socio-economic relationships and networks. Some social relationships were broken, especially in the city's formal market sector, while others were strengthened, especially those at the household level and amongst first degree kin.

Crisis

Crisis is a Greek word that derives from the verb *κρίνω* (to judge). Crisis is thus imbued with notions of change and transformation and does not necessarily imply evil or horror. Koselleck (2006) provides an extensive historical account of the "crisis" as an analytical concept and category. He suggests that crisis has been a constitutive part of modernity and correlates crisis with critique and moral judgment. Given the fact that in the first instance, crisis means an abrupt change in established social, cultural, political, economic or even environmental contexts, it can be understood as a critical moment that changes the course of history, or a point of no return (Roitman, 2013). In Greece, after the structural shock and imposition of austerity, a grassroots

process of criticism was initiated. This was a process that showcased crisis as judgment, in which people evaluated the situation, took difficult decisions and established a course of action. Moreover, crisis is a force that reveals, and as Wolf states: "the arrangements of a society become most visible when they are challenged by crisis" (1989: 593). For this reason, anthropological research is capable of providing valuable insights, particularly in times of crisis, when the foundations of social organization are openly questioned.

The outbreak of economic crisis in modern, developed economies enables us to question and deconstruct capitalist discourses of salvation. Capitalism's expansion needs to be judged and reconsidered in the long run as (self)destructive rather than as a model of development. As Harvey (2003) puts it, through crises, capitalism reassembles itself and starts to seek out new territories for exploitation. Crisis, is therefore a central function that serves capitalist order; it is a destructive force that enables the reconfiguration of capitalist accumulation in new fields, and as Marx & Engels (1978 [1848]) elaborate, in order to overcome crisis, ruling capitalist elites displace it, channeling it to society's productive forces. Thus, productive forces are sacrificed, or in other words "creatively destroyed" (Harvey 2003), in order to open up new fields for exploitation.

Following Burawoy (2000) and Wolf (1999, 1989), I argue that crisis is a recurring, historical phenomenon in modern, pre-modern and ancient societies. Therefore, I suggest that crisis is a symbolic category through with meaning is produced (Turner, 1988, 1967). Eric Wolf's (1982) *Europe and the People Without History* is history written on a global scale, tracing the connections between communities, regions, peoples and nations that are usually treated as discrete subjects. "Wolf's emphasis is on the people "without history" (i.e. not given a voice in western histories) and on how they were active participants in the creation of new cultural and social forms emerging in the context of commercial empire. (Roseberry 1989:130)". Through this thesis, I want to give voice in grassroots analyses, experiences and understandings of crisis and deconstruct, rework, or even incorporate mainstream explanations . Economic crisis has disrupted fundamental elements of pre-crisis popular culture, upward mobility patterns, systems of provisioning (Collins, 2008, 2012; Narotzky 2005) and consumption based lifestyles (Bourdieu, 1984), producing ruptures in the social fabric, with a large portion of the population unable to reproduce itself, thus I want to unravel how the structural crisis of 2008 has scaled down through austerity and evaluate the multiple crises it has created on the ground.

The dramatic increase in unemployment in Greece, affects not only the economic but also the social life of a person and its perception of time. I therefore, locate crisis and the multiple facets of it in the everyday realities of people. The lack of resources causes the reconfiguration not only of the conscious, articulated lived experience of everyday reality but also of what Raymond Williams (1977) defines as "structures of feeling." Williams uses the term feeling rather than thought to suggest that what is at stake may not yet be articulated and thus has to be inferred by reading between the lines. Crisis therefore, needs to be assessed not only through forceful, outright popular manifestations and discourses, but also in subtle grassroots reactions and experiences regarding the condition of "living in" and "living with" crisis in the everydayness.

Methodology

This study is based on ethnographic material which I collected in Chalkida, Greece, from May 2015 to December 2016. During the first month of my stay there, I explored the area, gathered information about the local culture and adapted myself to its routines. Since my fieldsite was the whole city of Chalkida, I had to carefully select and evaluate my potential subfields.

One of the first things that attracted my attention when I arrived were the laid-off cement factory workers who had been struggling to reopen the factory since 2013, and were in a legal battle with the factory's owners. I joined them in the places where they assembled every morning in Chalkida's city center and was invited to go with them to the occupied cement factory's facilities during night shifts. From 8 pm until dawn, laid off workers guarded the factory's premises and patrolled the area in order to prevent thefts by scrap metal hunters who targeted the numerous abandoned factories in the area. I conducted both personal, one-to-one interviews with many of the workers and focused on their life and work histories. I also took part in spontaneous celebrations and food gatherings with homegrown products that the workers brought and shared with their peers.

I conducted participant observation and interviews in the local businesses of the self-employed. I was invited for coffee on numerous occasions and had the chance to witness

conditions in Chalkida's market and observe the ways in which shop owners communicated and related with their customers. I learned firsthand how the local market operated and investigated the economic lifestyle and culture of self-employed people and the crisis their sector was experiencing. I focused on two clothes shops, an electric appliance and repair shop, a solar boiler retail shop a cleaning service and retail shop, a clothing alteration shop, a marriage hosting business, a kiosk, a general store, three stall owners at the open air market, three coffee shops and three taverns. Furthermore, I had numerous informal talks with people which provided valuable leads for grasping the wider picture and the multiple facets of the crisis in Chalkida.

I also managed to access civil servants' workplaces without having to acquire any special authorization. I had been invited to give a talk about my research to high school students who were interested in my job as a social anthropologist, and in my interest in Chalkida's cement factory in particular. I took the opportunity to interview the head teacher and was invited by her to visit and do a follow up interview with her and other schoolteachers and auxiliary personnel. Through a social acquaintance of mine in one of Chalkida's taverns, I was invited to the city's taxation agency, which had recently moved in a new building a few kilometers outside the city and was accessible only by car or bus. I interviewed some of the employees and observed them doing bureaucratic tasks. I thought that the taxation agency would be an interesting subfield due to the tensions and disagreements people had with the economic authorities and taxes in general. Yet to my disappointment, I found that the taxation office was not a place which the general public visited, and it had become an almost exclusive site for professional accountants who were acting on behalf of their clients.

I also had access to Chalkida's urban planning bureau from which I gathered valuable information about urban planning and the state of the construction sector. I intended to do some archival research there and was encouraged in this by the employees; however, this became near impossible due to the administrative restructuring in 2011. During the restructure, archives were split between regional and the municipal organizations and were incomplete and therefore could not be compared. For instance, after 2011, Chalkida's urban planning bureau assumed authority for a larger urban zone than previously. Before 2011, its archives' data corresponded to a smaller area, which is not to mention the fact that many of the former office's archives were lost in the moving process. Being aware of the chaotic condition of Greek bureaucracy, I had expected this to happen. I also went to the city's registry office in order to gather data on birth, death, marriage

and divorce numbers. However, the data were incomplete because many Chalkidians chose to give birth in Athens' private clinics, so the births were registered there and did not appear in their archives. Given these conditions, any data I could collect would have been partial and misleading.

In terms of finding informants, local taverns and coffee shops proved a goldmine. In these, beyond the owners and employees, I could identify many potential informants among the clients and suppliers. After I had established my presence in the field, I worked on classifying and selecting key informants and focused on gaining access to their households. I ended up with a large pool of informants and information, so I had to narrow my sample down and focus on household arrangements during the later stage of my fieldwork. I investigated in depth the livelihood arrangements of nine (9) households: their formation, income resources and expenses, social and kinship networks and the life and work histories of their members. I carefully selected households so as that their members represented different generations and combined distinct income resources. I followed household members in their everyday routines and economic activities both within and outside the household, gained access to their income resources and expenses, and focused on intra and inter-household relationships of care and kinship, and social networks of support. In my research, the household served as a place of both departure and arrival, and a main analytical category that unfolded gendered, generational and cultural aspects of the organization of everyday life. Household arrangements provide valuable insights for assessing the impact of crisis and austerity at the grassroots scale of social reproduction.

My research on households focuses on key issues such as credit, income, past struggles and future expectations and the way that moral values are produced and re-created through people's everyday economic activities. I am therefore very interested in what has changed as well as in what has not changed. Thus, I focus on describing the practices that people choose to transform, maintain or abandon. The history of the aforementioned issues is crucial for understanding crisis and unraveling not only why but also how and in which direction transformation occurs. How people design life projects and their past and future expectations are undoubtedly affected by the discourse around crisis. I am extremely interested in the qualitative shifts in peoples' hopes, dreams and fears as they are challenged by their past and present economic state (Narotzky & Bresnier, 2014; Ringel, 2012; Zigon, 2006). Researching life

projects and expectations provides the data necessary for analyzing the grassroots logics that inform peoples' everyday economies and economics. Given the fact that those economic changes are grounded in social relationships, my research sheds light on the meanings, networks and strategies that people devise in order to access resources in the creative process of getting by.

Following household members in their everyday activities, I ended up visiting Chalkida's open air markets on a regular basis. I was introduced to various food suppliers who operated their stalls in the open-air markets. To them I first became a customer; then they become my "customers." Thus, I ended up spending my Saturday mornings with them, talking and observing the crowds as they did their shopping. Open air markets are multifunctional places where social and economic relationships are not simply enacted but are performed. People openly addressed current affairs in the city and to a lesser extent, in the nation in general. They used, transformed and even made fun of media representations of crisis, railed against politicians, debated politically, challenged mainstream economic models, complained about pension cuts and gossiped. The open-air market was a lively space and was the most enjoyable ethnographic setting for me during fieldwork. People went there not only to do their shopping, but also to have fun and socialize. At the markets, they could access food resources sold directly by local producers from Evia and other food retailers and brokers; here they cost less than in the shops. The open-air market was an ideal setting in which to study consumption practices and strategies as well as the interconnectedness of social and economic relationships. *Laiki agora* (open air market) in Greek means a market for the people, while the Greek term for "market," (*agora)* entails the notion of exchange in a broader social context and, beyond sales, can refer to public speaking.

Lastly, I volunteered to help out at *Koinonikes Domes*,[1] a state and EU funded project that on the one hand aimed to alleviate poverty and the impacts of the crisis, and on the other, was supposed to tackle youth unemployment through workfare. I helped in the distribution of food at the soup kitchen and through this, realized that most beneficiaries had been in a condition of chronic poverty since before the recent crisis. I therefore got interested in workfare employees, who were also another group of beneficiaries. The ethnographic study of such working

[1] This translates literally as "social structures". It was a project that included a time bank with an alternative currency, a barter bazaar of used clothes and other items, a soup kitchen, a homeless dormitory with bathing facilities, psychological support, medical examination and a bureau that provided legal advice.

arrangements unravels multiple aspects of labor conditions under neoliberal austerity (Collins, 2012; Collins & Mayer, 2010; Peck, 2002).

Contents

The thesis' first two chapters focus on history. In Chapter 1, I explore the social and economic history of Chalkida and its urban and industrial development since its incorporation into the Greek nation-state in 1833. I trace the historical developments that shaped the city to its current state by giving special attention to the cement factory and its history, as well as to cement as a material that enabled the implementation of sweeping urbanization and modernization processes. I use the history of the cement factory as an historical compass, a node through which Greece's economic and social projects unfolded at various scales of analysis. For instance, restructuring of industrial production and grassroots practices and livelihood aspirations are both linked with the production of cement. Finally, I argue that Chalkida's post-industrial era officially begun when the cement factory was closed on March 26th, 2013.

In Chapter 2, I focus on a number of critical moments and events in the modern history of the Greek nation-state that shaped its social, cultural and economic projects, and particularly, indebtedness and bankruptcy, military and economic dependence and hegemonic interventions, socio-economic, political and humanitarian crises. The Greek social, political and economic habitus has been forged by the country's relationship with domestic and foreign political, economic and cultural powers and authorities (Hertzfeld, 1987, 2002). Historical events are important for understanding the current state of affairs and for unraveling the continuities and ruptures produced by the recent crisis and a globalized economy. Furthermore, they provide the information necessary for interpreting and explaining, in sociological terms, grassroots practices and discourses during this most recent iteration of crisis. I begin with the foundation of the Greek nation state and the initiation of modernization and capitalist development which I trace through until May 2015, when I began my fieldwork.

In Chapter 3, I introduce the main body of my ethnography with a look at labor income and cultural economics in distinct employment sectors. I assess the impact of crisis, austerity restructuring and neoliberal policies on formal labor income. I begin with the impact of the crisis

on industrial employment and the disappearance of industrial jobs in the city of Chalkida. I draw mostly on interviews from unemployed cement factory workers and analyze the reconfiguration of their livelihood arrangements. Then I focus on precarious jobs which demonstrate strong generational characteristics. Younger people who have never had a stable job and who had to juggle through seasonal employment schemes adapted more easily to the crisis, since for them, it did not bring about any major change in their existing livelihood arrangements. Next, I examine the impact of austerity and neoliberal restructuring on self-employed income. I elaborate on the various capital accumulation and circulation patterns of small and medium-sized enterprises in Chalkida's local markets. For the self-employed, crisis has been experienced as the lack of capital circulation that austerity policies (wage cuts and general unemployment) have produced. Finally, civil servants and pensioners alike were the first to be affected by restructuring that produced a radical decline in their formal income resources. I examine how people whose income resources depended on the state's budget reassessed their economic situation and coped with austerity and the precarization of their income. I first examine the impact of the crisis on civil servants' labor conditions, and then consider the impacts of pension income reduction and the cuts to welfare provision such as health care. For all of the above income sectors, I explore gendered and generational characteristics, which I underscore throughout the whole chapter.

In Chapter 4, I present nine (9) households and their diverse social reproduction patterns. I describe the life and work trajectories of their members. I examine the intra and inter household relationships and networks of proximity in order to elaborate on how resources are accessed, managed and circulated at the household level. I give special attention to caring relationships and relationships of interdependence. Furthermore, I assess the level of financialization of household economics and everyday life in order to identify the cultural and moral framework that guides economic practices. I do so by examining the way in which people design livelihood projects and frame their understandings of prosperity.

In Chapter 5, I move to an exploration of social solidarity as it is materialized in intimate socio-economic relationships. I find that the conditions for social solidarity lie in the circulation of resources either in the form of goods, capital or services that people exchange. Social solidarity forms relationships of interdependence and networks of mutual support. Further, grassroots institutions of mutual aid that are inherent in social and kinship networks evidence informal characteristics to the extent that social solidarity is mostly expressed through informal

economic means. Furthermore, I examine the divisive forces that were unleashed by the ruptures to the social contract that the regime of austerity has created, and also look at the dismantlement of modern, organic solidarity structures. I focus on events that followed the calling of the Greek referendum in July 2015, and how people behaved and reacted when capital controls were imposed to avoid a run on the banks, in a moment in which the probability of Grexit and a return to the national currency was high.

In the final Chapter 6, I focus on grassroots analyses and explanations of crisis. In particular, I am interested in the ways in which people make sense of the crisis and either incorporate mainstream representations and explanations of crisis or challenge them. Moreover, I give special attention to historical references and justifications that ordinary people use in order to explain the current crisis in Greece. I therefore map the geometries of responsibility, of whom and what people blame for the persisting economic crisis. In the top three positions, according to my informants, are politicians, the banks and the EU, and all three appear to serve the same cause and interests that are contrary to those of the Greek people. I show that the crisis created a new national homogeneity, given the fact that from those with lower to middle incomes, that is the vast majority of Greeks, crisis was a common experience that acquired the form of a collective, national suffering. Thus I suggest that the current crisis, with its own particular characteristics, has been nationalized, as have many other crises that the modern Greek nation has experienced.

Chapter 1

The Cement of Chalkida's Society: Sketches of Modern Development in Industrializing Regions

Introduction

In this chapter I begin by sketching the political and economic history of my fieldsite and the multiple forces that shaped the city of Chalkida as it is today. I construct this narrative on the basis of leads provided by my informants, which I then triangulate with online sources and archival research. The account is based on information from multiple informants, interviews and sources. I reconstruct these fragments and present them in a linear manner in order to stress how multiscalar historical processes that were grounded in specific moments in my fieldsite affect the social life of Chalkida and hence, how historical processes have systematically cultivated and structured its economic habitus. In their narrations, my informants frequently navigated back and forth in time to reflect on history through the contingency of their present status, while at the same time appearing to have some concrete understanding of historical process as remaining unaffected by the current state of affairs. To my surprise, I could not find any written accounts of Chalkida's recent economic history - apart from some research on the city's urban development as seen by civil engineers and architects, who examine the phenomenon of urbanization through a more technocratic lens. As a result, I base this chapter on my informants' leads, on archival research and deductive reasoning.

Key to understanding the historical processes that made Chalkida a modern Greek city is its industrial sector. This sector not only provided the city with the material means for it to develop in its particular way, but also constructed a cultural model which, for many decades, guided peoples' aspirations for upward mobility as well as their survival strategies. Since its annexation to the modern Greek State in 1833, Chalkida has acquired a semi-peripheral role due to its proximity to Athens and its geographical location, both of which enabled it to act as an interchange in the regional development of the modern Greek state. Its prominent geographical position, close to sites containing raw materials and natural resources, made the city a center of industrial capitalist exploitation and progress. Located next to the sea and close to agricultural areas, the rich, fertile soil has also always offered up top-quality mineral resources for heavy industry. Taking a historical perspective on Chalkida's political economy, one can identify capitalism's different phases not only at the local scale, but also at the national and global scales. Here I investigate the three upper layers of these scales, that is, I investigate how, since the birth of the modern Greek nation-state, local economic processes such as industrialization, urbanization, rural to urban migration, de-industrialization and financialization have communicated with national and international trends and developments. I divide this historical era into two significant periods in order to pin-point the shifts promoted by upper scale economic transformations and top down developments to the shaping of Chalkida's urban character and culture. I introduce the reader to the deep structures that lie beneath my fieldsite and which I place, following Burawoy's (2010) insight, into the dynamics that local places and processes have in a globalized world, thus making my fieldsite comparable with other sites with similar ethnographic characteristics. My fieldsite and ethnography are part of the wider Grassroots Economics Project (GRECO), which examines and analyzes historical and contingent transformations of mid-sized peripheral cities in the crisis inflicted countries of the European south.

Chalkida has been the site of a major cement factory that marked its industrial period. I begin with a brief history of cement and its uses in advanced modern capitalism as a technological breakthrough that enabled the development of vast and rapid urbanization and industrialization patterns or schemes in undeveloped areas. The wide consumption of cement

began around the 1850s, shortly after the modern Greek nation-state was founded. At first, cement was mainly applied in infrastructure projects and its use was limited to the centers of western capitalism. Later it was introduced to other, non-industrially developed countries and areas. The West's colonies were ideal sites for both the production and consumption of cement, and it is no coincidence that until today, India ranks among the top producers and consumers of cement globally. As a result, cement has been one of the driving forces for the modernization and alignment of undeveloped regions with the global trends of capitalist development. My fieldsite has the advantage of being a place that both produced and at the same time consumed large amounts of cement in order to develop. In my discussion, I divide its history into three periods: 1) That starting with the annexation of Chalkida and the island of Evia to the newly founded Greek State (1833) and the city's industrial and urban development up to the time when large numbers of Greek-speaking populations from Asia Minor settled there 2) The era of cement, which started in 1926 when Chalkida's cement plant was founded and set the ground for the installation of other heavy industries contributing to an acceleration of the area's urbanization and industrialization. 3) The age of financial capitalism and the various waves of deindustrialization it has caused.

I close with a brief historical account of the value and social importance of Chalkida's cement factory which, as I show, represents global processes and events in condensed form. The factory's story itself narrates a history of both macro processes at the global scale with local processes and grassroots practices. The factory's history reveals the logics of capital accumulation in its various phases of development, which take tangible form in the everyday realities of locals. Cement has literally been, to use John Elster's (1989) metaphor in a more concrete way, the cement of Chalkida's society which, for over 90 years, has generated capital for the city through which multiple generations of workers have passed. Almost every local I met had a strong relation with the factory and/or directly or indirectly relied on the income that it generated. The social glue that kept Chalkida's society together and enabled a large part of its population to successfully reproduce and aspire to upward mobility was provided, to a great extent, by the cement factory and the other industries that used to operate in the area, producing the industrial habitus of the city.

1.1 A Brief History of Cement and Its Role in Undeveloped Regions

Building materials have shaped the human being throughout the course of history. Various types of cement have been used by humans to build not only their civilizations but also to construct and reproduce their cultures and practices. Cement has been a material known to humanity since ancient times. Evidence suggests that even the Minoans of Crete used a mixture that is similar to modern day cement. It was Roman engineers who used it in large scale constructions, some of which still stand, and who set the basis for modern cement products. Up until the 19th century, people used various combinations of cement that had a limestone base, which was mixed with other materials to create concrete. In 1840, William Aspdin, an English engineer to whom the invention of "modern" *Portland cement* is attributed, used an innovative method to produce a kind of durable, easy to use concrete with a fast coagulation rate. By the 1850s the use of *Portland cement* had become very common. This was thanks to the industrial breakthroughs that were incorporated into developing its mass production and which further enhanced its properties in the coming decades, such as rotary kilns. From that point on, late modernity, urbanization and capitalist development were characterized by the use of concrete, that was firstly applied in industrialized countries (Grimshaw, 1968) and accelerated capitalist accumulation processes through the construction of various types of infrastructure. Shortly after, the colonies in Asia, South America and Africa followed and thus the global cement market was born (Dasgupta, 2002; Gupta, 1975), a market that has been growing ever since and which is projected to grow further in the future.

This modern method of producing cement, which distinguishes the final product from its natural cement predecessors, has revolutionized not only the industrial but also the construction sector. Cement uses were gradually scaled down to into the social body and as its production costs rapidly decreased, it was incorporated into the construction of ordinary people's houses. In this way, across the globe, the vast and rapid urbanization phenomena of the past two centuries have occurred, even in areas that did not have any urban characteristic before. It is cement and its various applications that have made possible the emergence of chaotic cities and megalopolises in underdeveloped countries.

Portland cement (from now on simply referred to as cement) is by far the most common type of cement for general use and, in my view, signals the coming of advanced capitalism. It is made by heating up limestone and other materials (usually clay) in a kiln in which temperatures reach 1500 degrees Celsius. Vast urbanization phenomena around the globe would not have been possible had it not been for a material like cement, which is relatively cheap and durable, and can be used in all types of construction, from simple houses to all kinds of infrastructure. Recent economic reports on cement consumption around the globe draw a strong correlation between cement consumption and GDP growth. As Emma Davedison for the *Global Cement Magazine* suggested in June 2014,[2] there is a striking correlation between the level of development of a country and its cement consumption per capita.

Countries such as Brazil (McArdle, 2014), Mexico (Flores Castro & Rodriguez-Acheves, 2018), India (Nath & Bose 2002; Cement Shows the Way, 2000; Vadiya, 2002) and Nigeria (Adisa, 2013), as well as internal peripheries within the industrialized core countries of the west such as Midlands and Southeast in the UK which concentrated most of the cement factories since 1900s (Grimshaw, 1968) managed to develop rapidly through varied applications of cement which created the basis for capitalist development. In contrast with core industrialized countries in which cement was used to back up and upgrade already existing infrastructure (Jarvis, 1949) and accelerated the capitalist growth after WWII , in periphery countries such as Greece, cement has mediated industrialization and urbanization projects and boosted bottom-up social movements and trends. Thanks to cement, industrialization processes that took a few centuries to develop in core countries, in peripheral countries and regions happened in a few decades.

Greece's modern history is a characteristic example of the uses and abuses of cement. From the 1920s on, and especially after 1960s, cement consumption has been excessive and is correlated with the rapid growth of GDP, the expansion of the construction sector and public infrastructure projects. The more Greece's GDP grew, the more consumption of cement increased as the country modernized or developed to adhere to western cultural models. During the latest crisis years, construction, once the national economy's leading sector, was hit severely. Greece's GDP has fallen dramatically over the course of the recent crisis and so too, unavoidably, has national cement consumption, leading to major losses for the cement industry in Greece.

[2] http://www.globalcement.com/magazine/back-issues/archive/2014 (Last accessed 10/10/2019)

According to the Hellenic Cement Industry Association (HCIA), 65 percent of the cement produced in Greece is consumed within the country. Further, my sources from Chalkida's urban planning bureau told me that, from the 1990s till 2009, their office used to process around 3000 construction licenses annually.

During the crisis, the number of construction licenses issued in the region of Chalkida has dropped: in 2010 to 805; in 2011 to 600; in 2012 to 330; in 2013 to 237; in 2014 to 182, in 2015 to 137 and in 2016 to 190.[3] This decline is an indicator of low demand for cement which is strongly correlated with the decline of GDP during the crisis years (see figure I).

Figure I: The Greek Cement Production – Source www.hcia.gr

What is also interesting is that, in contrast with Greece, the global cement market has not been affected by the recent economic crisis; on the contrary it has grown its profits and is expected to grow further in the coming years (figure II). As a matter of fact, the global economic crisis has affected local/national cement production/consumption but at the larger, global scale, consumption and production figures have remained unchanged. This is a very interesting scalar discrepancy which I untangle through my study of the Greek cement market and the factors that

[3] Data obtained through an interview with the responsible official.

led to the closure one of the oldest factories, not only in Chalkida but in all of Greece, which had continued to produce cement up until 2013.

WORLD CEMENT DEMAND
(million metric tons)

Item	2009	2014	2019	% Annual Growth 2009-2014	% Annual Growth 2014-2019
Cement Demand	3009.0	4160.0	5190.0	6.7	4.5
North America	115.0	136.0	168.0	3.4	4.3
Western Europe	163.0	126.0	142.0	-5.0	2.4
Asia/Pacific	2149.0	3158.0	3940.0	8.0	4.5
Central & South America	119.0	153.0	190.0	5.2	4.4
Eastern Europe	105.0	120.0	139.0	2.7	3.0
Africa/Mideast	358.0	467.0	611.0	5.5	5.5

Figure II - Source https://www.worldcement.com/europe-cis/27082015/global-demand-cement-billion-tons-449/

At an ethnographic level, my fieldsite had the advantage of being a place of both cement consumption and production as its industrial character was defined by the foundation of Chalkida's cement factory in 1926. Because of Greece's belated modernization, cement was a protagonist in the process of urbanization and is therefore a critical element in the country's cultural socio-economic progress. The cement industry was very promising and constituted a secure investment due to the continually increasing demand for cement in private housing and public infrastructure projects. According to records, the first cement building in Greece was constructed in Piraeus, Athens, in the early 1900s (Burgel, 1975). Cement and its materiality can reveal a broader set of human and non-human relationships that are imposed by the cultural models of capitalistic expansion. As Penny Harvey (2015) puts it, extraction, construction and transformation bind cultural and material relationships together. Through the life history of cement and the cement factory of Chalkida, I explore the variants of capitalist logics in developing countries such as Greece, while also considering the wider global context of capitalism. The production, consumption and transformation of cement, together with its nature as a material, act as a node that links the local, national and international scales that have shaped the world as we know it today. All in all, cement has enabled a wide set of social practices that,

to a great extent, represent a society's specific cultural model. This applies both to the level of public infrastructure which aims to improve a society's living conditions, and to that of private housing which, in modern Greek culture, was the ultimate dream of the lower and middle classes in their aspirations for a better future both for themselves and for future generations. In Greece, the rising middle classes' major struggle was to become homeowners or, as the folk saying goes, "to have a roof over your head." The dreams of the lower and middle classes in Greece were then made, quite literally, of cement.

1.2 The Political Economy of Chalkida Before the Cement Factory (1833 – 1926)

Chalkida, along with the island of Evia, officially became part of the modern Greek nation-state in 1833, five years after the declaration of independence from the Ottoman empire. In 1834, Athens was designated the capital of the Greek state and therefore Chalkida, which had been a significant port and an influential commercial center during Ottoman and Venetian rule, became a peripheral region in the modern Greek state. Up until the 1870s, the population of Chalkida remained relatively small because the city had little to offer in terms of employment opportunities and most rural and urban migrants chose to migrate to Athens instead. It was under Gazepis' mayorship from 1873-1890 that the city, because of its prominent geographic location, underwent one of its major modern developments, the upgrade of its port facilities. The modern character of the city started to take form when the medieval fortification was demolished and the port of Chalkida upgraded. Modernization, and modernity in general were enacted by a systematic destruction of the past, mainly the Ottoman, and to a lesser extent the Venetian constructions that were seen as material evidence of foreign domination (Goutou-Fotopoulou, 1986; Tsaousis, 1990). The destruction of Ottoman structures was viewed as an expression of liberty and of the emancipation of Greeks who thereby abolished the symbols of the Ottoman occupation and embraced the Western civilization.

At the same time, the first small scale industries appeared in Chalkida and the city became an important port that could compensate for the lack of national transportation infrastructures by providing easy and cheap transport routes for goods. Chalkida was connected to the national railway network in 1906, hence those first industrial cores appeared around the port facilities initially and then along the railway network. The first wave of industrialization and modernization of Chalkida occurred in the 1880s and produced major changes in the existing urban environment.

The establishment of industry provoked urban expansion in those areas near industrial sites as workers chose to settle close to their workplaces. These small-scale industries included olive oil processing, soap industries, food processing, canning and bottling industries, wineries and distilleries, ice production, wood processing, textiles and footwear, pottery and brick

production. In fact, bricks and pottery were one of the most prominent production sectors of that era, and the nearby fertile valley of the River Lilas, which had been at the center of a great war between the ancient city-states of Chalkida and Eretria, was the main source of top-quality clay. The valley of the River Lilas is in many respects similar to the famous Cauca valley which Taussig (1980) investigated.[4] Pottery and ceramics were at that time a very popular material for household use as well, and ceramics workshops were a profitable business that would endure for several decades.

By studying the urban expansion of Chalkida, one can discern that the city has grown with industries which often occupied the space of ancient ruins from the Hellenistic and Roman periods. All those industries were relatively close to the city center but at the margins of the urban web, in the area of Agios Stefanos which was next to the sea and which had direct access to water resources. Urbanization goes hand in hand with industrialization as diverse local markets emerge to serve the needs of the growing population. In many instances those markets operated near the industrial sites where people traded goods and services. Yet a stable employment model did not exist and since employment opportunities were varied, most people had multiple jobs. In many instances, labor shortages were covered by the itinerant populations who passed through Chalkida to sell their merchandise. At the beginning of the 20th century, Chalkida's old bridge, which connects the island of Evia with central Greece was upgraded and cars and trucks could move in and out of the city, the island and beyond. Toll booths were installed on the bridge and fees for trucks were calculated on the basis of the value of the merchandise they were carrying.

In the aftermath of the Greco-Turkish war (1919-1922), and the population exchange, Chalkida served as one of the hosting areas for some of the thousands of displaced people from Asia Minor. Several neighborhoods within the urban web of Chalkida and settlements nearby were formed by Asia Minor immigrants. Those refugees who settled in the areas in and around Chalkida provided a cheap labor force for the industries that already operated there and lacked laborers, while the city's prominent location attracted further industrial investments that went

[4] The only reason for which the environmental destruction of the valley was much less significant than that in Peruvian Cauca is because of the belated modernization and urbanization of Greece. The emergence of cement made clay bricks obsolete, and thus halted the further degradation of the river and its fertile soil at the hands of urban expansion.

part and parcel with the westernization and modernization principles that Greek governments had opted for. According to official records, by 1928 the population of Chalkida and the nearby areas of Nea Lampsakos and Nea Artaki, where the Asia Minor immigrants had settled, had surpassed 21,000 people. This was three times more than in 1879 when less than 8000 people lived in the area, and far fewer than the 1920 population census, when Chalkida had nearly 15,000 inhabitants, while Nea Artaki and Nea Lampsakos were exclusively inhabited by Minor Asians (*mikrasiates*). Within Chalkida, the Minor Asians had mostly settled around the industries in Agios Stefanos and near the cement factory, in the new neighborhood of Agia Marina that was initially populated by minor Asian cement factory workers who could easily commute by boat to the factory.

1.3 The Political Economy of Chalkida in the Era of Cement – Major Urban & Industrial Developments (1926 - 1980)

The Second Wave of Industrialization (1926 – 1950)

Chalkida's cement factory, was founded in 1926. The factory paved the way for other factories to install in the area, and multiple zones that concentrated industrial activity started to appear around Chalkida's urban web. In section 1.5 I discuss the particular case and life-history of the cement factory in detail; here, I trace the general outlines of industrial development. Industrial labor attracted great numbers of peasants who aspired for a salaried income as a means of improving their living conditions. Many chose to move to the city and most of them sought employment in the growing industrial sector. As Greece's second wave of industrialization began at the national level, Chalkida provided an ideal place for it to develop. The availability of cheap labor along with its strategic geographic location provided a good fit with the modernizing aspirations of the Greek state which was prioritizing industrial projects in order to catch up with the advanced European economies.

Another important industry of this period was Afentakis steel, which was founded in 1936 and whose main products with national circulation were its inox pots that replaced the old ceramic ones. The modern material assets of households - their cutlery and other products made of steel, signaled the gradual decline of pottery and the era of technologically advanced industrial items. Another industry that played a major role in the industrial character of Chalkida was Darigk, an ice producing company that was founded in the late 1920s in the area of Agios Stefanos. At the time, electric refrigerators did not exist and there was a rising demand for ice, for industrial and commercial use in the fishing sector as well as for households. The industrial dynamic that had started to develop after the resolution of the Balkan Wars in 1917 and the great expansion of the Greek state's territories, as well as the loss of Asia Minor and the influx of cheap refugee labor was soon halted by the global economic recession of 1929 that reverberated into the early 1930s, and also of course, by World War Two and the Civil War that followed.

Along with the petty industrial activities that emerged, the political economy of Chalkida was based on food production. The island of Evia has extensive olive oil production and a noteworthy fishing sector. To this day, a large portion of Chalkida's population engages in agricultural and fishing activities. The waters of the Evian Gulf, which are rich in fish, have been crucial to locals. As an elderly informant told me, during the German occupation of WWII, the locals only managed to get through the great famine because the sea was full of anchovies.

The Third Wave of Industrialization (1950s – 1980)

After the resolution of the Civil War (1944-1949), the country started to recover from the devastating effects of WWII. The third and biggest wave of industrialization started at this time and peaked in the late 1960s to early 1970s. From 1948-1962, during a period of economic stabilization, the state drew up various incentives and funding schemes that promoted industrial growth and took into account the relocation and housing needs of the mobile labor force which mostly consisted of unskilled workers who had previously been agricultural workers in their hometowns. In spite of the apparent "progressiveness" of these incentives, the implementation of an industrial growth model (Pagano, 1993) was chaotic and led to an intensification of uneven regional development, as Labrianidis & Papamichos (1990) illustrate. Most of those industries that eventually relocated moved into the neighboring prefectures of Attica and Thessaloniki, and therefore created semi-peripheries that reproduced uneven development models (Hadjimichalis, 1987).

In the 1950s, the Industrial and Commercial Chamber of Evia was founded and one of its top priorities was to train unskilled industrial workers in the new technologies of the era. The industrial machinery and engines which at first were imported from Italy, Germany, France and UK had to be maintained and upgraded. Local people acquired the proper training, skills and knowledge and started manufacturing industrial engines and machinery that the local factories used. Moreover, as I was informed, by several of my interlocutors several workshops in Chalkida produced engines for ships as well. The renowned Technical School of Democritus, which trained locals who aspired for a career in industry was very successful. I have interviewed many of its graduates who found industry related employment and prospered in that sector. They

told me that having graduated from Democritus School gave them a big advantage and that they were the most desirable employees for factory work.

The period from 1962 to 1973 was one of unprecedented industrial accumulation. National and foreign capital invested in the industrial growth of Greece while spatial concentration continued, accompanied by increasing regional disparity in the distribution of income (Kottis, 1980). During that time, and especially after 1967, the biggest industrial district of Greece was created in the neighboring prefecture of Viotia. Very close to both Chalkida and Athens, Viotia is located in the area called Oinofyta which in Greek means vine plantations. The military Junta of 1967-1974 put forward a plan for intensive industrialization. In implementing it, the regime sought to attract industrial investment by offering a host of privileges to investors (Kafiris, 1975). Loose regulation of industrial activity and the urge to industrialize the national economy the creation of the biggest industrial district in Greece, in the Valley of the River Asopos, in the neighboring prefecture of Viotia, very close to the city of Chalkida. The area by the river and the valley of Asopos underwent an intense industrialization that was framed by little to no regulation. Even today, the authorities are not aware of the exact number of companies that operate in the area, there is no urban plan and, as a result, no detailed record of industrial facilities or activities.

In the case of the administrative area of Chalkida, many heavy industries appeared during the 1960s and 1970s which operated at the national economic level with nationwide recognition. To name a few, Darigk, the former ice producer, transformed itself in the 1960s, moving into heavy industry and producing iron wire for fences and construction materials. Long after the factory's closure, these products continue to be named after the company. In 1961, the toxic factory of Ellenit was founded in the Nea Lampsakos settlement of Asia Minor refugees, It processed asbestos construction materials and its products were also known by name all over Greece. At the same time, the multinational company Ideal Standard opened up a production line in the area of Ritsona, next to Chalkida, thereby creating another industrial zone. Sanitary equipment was directly linked with construction and modernity and was a symbol of the modern western culture that was materialized in it. The Greeks distinguished this from their old sanitary equipment, which was characterized as Turkish, in a symbolic contrast between the western way

of life and the Ottoman past. In 1962, Shelman, another heavy industry facility that processed wood, was founded in the area of Vasiliko. It thrived both in Greece and abroad. Chalkida's cement plant was upgraded in 1964 and became the heaviest industry in the area. Indeed, many of the heavy industry plants that were established in 1960s were oriented to the construction sector.

For instance, the coastal area next to the cement factory was an important site for Chalkida's shipyards which established themselves there, along with Interkem, a heavy chemicals factory that owned the only port licensed to transport chemicals in Greece. Crucial to these investments was the capital coming from Greek entrepreneurs from Istanbul who were expelled from Turkey in 1964. The cement factory and Interkem were owned by businessmen from Istanbul. Another heavy industry facility that was set up in Ritsona in 1966 was Hellenic Pipe Industry (Ellinika Soliniourgia) which was founded by the Tsaousoglou brothers, also from Istanbul. The company was one of the few in the world to be certified by the API (American Petroleum Institute) and it exported its products primarily to the oil drills in the Middle East and elsewhere.

In the 1970s, Linder, a German company that produced electric cables built a large factory that employed around 1500 people. Peraiki-Patraiki, the biggest national textile firm also expanded its production line to include Chalkida. It was yet another industry whose products were endowed with the ideals of modernity. In the same decade, the triangle of Oinofyta, Tanagra and Schimatari, only 15 km from Chalkida, became Greece's biggest industrial district. Leading companies that established themselves there included Elval in 1971 and Chalkor in 1976 (members of the Viohalco), along with the public Greek Aerospace Industry (EAB) in 1975. These created a major pole of industrial activity that drew many people in search of employment. At the same time, a secondary, supportive industrial sector that provided various industry related services was created, as were numerous smaller processing and manufacturing industrial units that were interconnected with the activities of the area's heavy industry facilities.

The Junta government also promoted the development of the construction sector which, from the 1970s onwards, became the leading sector of the Greek economy. As a result, Chalkida was widely urbanized and settled by industrial laborers who worked at the nearby factories. It is no coincidence that most of the heavy industry plants that installed themselves in the wider

region of Chalkida oriented their production towards the construction sector. Moreover, in 1970s the development of road networks facilitated the transportation of the labor force to the industrial sites; as many locals told me, there were buses that picked up workers from Chalkida and the villages around it. Nea Artaki, which was closer to the food production sites of Northern Evia, attracted companies which were oriented towards food production and the processing of local agricultural products. In the 1960s, small, family poultry production businesses appeared in Nea Artaki. In the ensuing decades, those companies managed to scale up and by the late 1970s, Nea Artaki was the largest producer of poultry in the Balkans. A major contributing factor was the development of roads that were used to carry not only people but also raw materials from all over Evia, as well as to distribute the final products within local and national markets.

Chalkida's cultural capital was determined by industrial labor and production. Its inhabitants structured their economic habitus around their industrial income, their longstanding urban-rural relationships and unpaid female reproductive labor. The above three elements were common to every household in Chalkida. Every economic activity was either directly or indirectly connected with the industrial economy of the area and with productive economic processes and activities. Also significant during this period was the fact that the construction boom was fueled by the increased need for housing and the rise in the population's purchasing power. Informal construction schemes were tolerated and encouraged by the state, and due to the lack of urban planning and an overall housing policy, the urban spaces of Chalkida were produced by private initiatives that led to the chaotic urban structure that still defines the city today. As new neighborhoods were built, the city's urban plan had to be readjusted several times to include informally produced urban spaces that lacked basic infrastructure.

The process of urban expansion was driven by another wave of creative destruction engendered by the unique Greek phenomenon of the *antiparochi*[5] (property-swap) system, a Greek invention that involved the granting of construction land by small house and plot owners to small or medium-sized firms in exchange for being granted modern apartment(s) in the new multi-story buildings the promoters would construct. On the one hand, this was an effective

[5] The *antiparochi* system was enabled by the 1929 law of horizontal ownership It was extensively used to reconstruct the demolished buildings that WWII has left in Greece and escalated in the coming decades due to the increased housing needs in the growing cities.

housing solution for the dense populations of the urban centers, on the other, it transformed modern Greek cities, especially Athens, into formless, borderless and placeless urban landscapes (Aesopos & Simeoforidis, 1999). Small houses were replaced by blocks of flats and a 1968 law accelerated this process by increasing the building capacity of land plots in the historic city center. Home and land plot owners in the center lined up at the construction firms in order to exchange their old home with a flat in a new building. This was the death knell for the city's remaining medieval constructions. Yet one can discern the old medieval plan of Chalkida when one walks around the city center, in fact, the blocks of flats were built on the very same urban plan that the Venetians had created.

Also, of note is the fact that, according to an informant who worked at Chalkida's port, the infrastructure for providing electricity to the Greek islands passed through the port of Chalkida. Even though the city had a peripheral role in the formal economic development of the country, it acted as a hub that mediated modern developments in the rest of the underdeveloped regions. For instance, Nikos (79) who used to work in Chalkida's dockers union, told me that the infrastructure to develop electricity network in the islands of the Aegean happened thanks to the port facilities of Chalkida, and to a greater extent, thanks to him and the dockers union of Chalkida that helped in the transportation of cables, wires and pillars.

1.4 The Era of Financialization (1980s - 2010s)

In the 1980s, industrialization processes in Greece ground to a halt as the model of capital accumulation shifted from productive activities to financialized ones. In 1981, Greece became a full member of the EEC and elected its first socialist government. Unionization of the labor force affected the industrial sector which now also adhered to the European regulatory economic framework. New labor laws enabled workers to enjoy a range of welfare benefits. In addition, from that moment onwards, the Greek economy was rescaled to adapt to global market principles. This produced a considerable shock for national and regional economies when the impacts of those structural shifts trickled down to the locality of Chalkida. The labor rights that the socialist government of Pasok advanced had significantly increased production costs, which in the preceding decades had been much lower, attracting industrial investment. In the 1980s, Industrial laborers started to enjoy increased salaries, various benefits and modern labor rights. As a result, an era of capitalist abundance and a consumption culture initiated. Moreover, because of the socialist turn, the state became one of the largest employers as it sought to provide varied public services to its people. The number of civil servants grew significantly from the 1980s and was increasing until 2010. Consequently, Chalkida's GDP was infused with income that came directly from the state and its provisioning sector, all of which constituted a belated attempt to create a welfare state (Gunther, Diamandouros, & Sotiropoulos, 2006; Allen, Barlow, Leal, Maloutas, & Padovani, 2004).

In the preceding decades, formal female employment opportunities had been scarce and women usually were employed informally and were underpaid. When they got married, most women quit their jobs to devote themselves to the household, that is to their offspring and husbands. Before the 1980s, working outside of the house was considered a socially shameful practice for women that signified extreme poverty. Further, it was considered degrading to the honor of the adult male members of the household because it suggested that they could not sustain their family (Janssens, 1997; Horrel & Humphries, 1992), which task was the ultimate social/natural purpose of life, according to the social norms of the time. Formal female

employment was underpaid and most of the women who worked at the numerous factories had low, unskilled positions.

After the 1980s there were major changes in the labor sector and more women were included in the public sector sphere. The service sector, which was backed up by industrial income creating activities, proliferated. What's more, this proliferation of services opened up a large field of employment for women who in the 1980s were more emancipated than they had ever been in modern Greek history. The vast improvement in living standards that the lower and middle classes enjoyed during this decade was due to female labor which almost doubled the available income of households/nuclear families with two, instead of one source of labor income.

Education was also another pillar which people in Chalkida and in Greece valued a great deal. The number of university graduates slowly started to increase as more and more people, especially women, had access to higher education. As a result, Greece's labor force was significantly upgraded in terms of skills. In the 1980s, Chalkida's industrial workers became highly skilled in operating various types of industrial machinery and therefore indispensable to the production line. This was in contrast with past generations of industrial workers who had been easily replaceable. It was on this basis that unionization of the skilled labor force was made possible, as were the structural shifts in labor law that the socialist government of Pasok promoted.

The decade of the 1980s also signaled the start of deindustrialization. Most of the factories that operated within the city center had already closed or were about to close; others were merged and downsized their labor force. The industrial sector and industrial identity therefore suffered minor shocks which did not scale up to the national economy. The regional economy had the capacity to absorb those shocks and those who lost their jobs had many alternatives. They could seek a job at the factories that operated in the nearby areas of Oinofyta, Schimatari and Tanagra, they could become self-employed or they could migrate to Athens where there were also many employment opportunities. In many instances, industrial workers took the opportunity to become their own bosses and leave behind the demanding industrial jobs that they had been trapped in. The decline in industrial jobs was counterbalanced by the increase in construction and thus, economic growth and capitalist expansion were sustained (Allen et al, 2004).

At the same time as the old industrial cores started to deindustrialize, new, but significantly fewer industrial companies were founded to fill in market gaps and serve popular demand (Agriantoni, 1986). One of these, a large furniture manufacturer called Neoset, built a factory next to the wood processing giant of the time, Shelman. The company thrived and managed to export to various countries around the world as well as to serve the domestic needs that the housing construction boom created. Nonetheless, the process of deindustrialization intensified in the coming decades. The first big closure that shook the Greek public was that of Peraiki-Patraiki, which was considered a modern Greek miracle - a company that succeeded in exporting its products to numerous countries. It closed in the late 1980s leaving substantial unpaid debts to the state, its suppliers and workers all over Greece, and many accused the company of scandalous administration and political corruption. Afentakis steel factory also closed down after the death of its founder in the mid-1980s; Ellenit also started to decay after publicity about the hazardous health effects of asbestos.

Many of the companies in the wider region of Chalkida that were mentioned earlier shifted their productive activities to financialized ones, and between the late 1980s and the early 1990s they entered the Greek stock market. As local informants told me, many of the factories that had produced varied goods in the industrial areas of Chalkida shifted their activity to logistics, serving as distribution hubs, as most of them found it more profitable to move their production abroad. By contrast, the construction sector was expanding, mostly because of the housing boom - being a homeowner was the ultimate goal for the majority of Greeks. The house construction sector was a field dominated by small and medium- sized local firms which prospered from increasing market demand. In 1985, a large public infrastructure project, the new Euripus bridge, was launched, and it made car access to Chalkida and the island of Evia even easier than before. Chalkida, which was often characterized as Athens' 'backyard', started to develop as a suburb of the chaotic capital. Moreover, a large percentage of industrial workers in the neighboring industrial district chose Chalkida as their city of residence, and so another population boom occurred. The financialization principles of capital accumulation provoked many closures and transformations in the industrial sector. At the same time, modern household needs multiplied and thus the service sector expanded. In addition, various forms of self-

employment provided the means for social reproduction and subsumed the shocks created by widespread layoffs in the declining industrial sector caused by increased production costs due to the establishment of labor rights. In response, factories sought to use innovative production methods that required less personnel.

Another interesting development was the introduction of environmental regulation to industrial activities, which was mostly an imposition of the EEC. Although the situation started to improve, environmental groups claimed that the environmental impact studies that companies had to draw up were very ineffective and in fact produced the opposite result. Instead of prohibiting polluting activities and obliging those factories that were in violation of the law to protect the environment, they justified and enhanced environmentally damaging activities, opening up a new field for corruption. Most Greek environmental organizations point to the high levels of political corruption in industry, as well as the fact that business owners can use their economic power to influence politics and policies, both at the national and at the European levels.

By the late 1990s, most of the remaining factories in the area were listed on the stock market and thus had become vulnerable to fluctuations in global markets. While on the one hand Chalkida's industrial zones were de-industrializing, on the other, Oinofyta and Schimatari were attracting industrial investment. For instance, Coca Cola Greece created a large beverage production unit in Schimatari in 1990, and large pharmaceutical and cosmetics factories belonging to multinational groups moved their production lines there in the late 1990s and early 2000s. Thus, Barilla created its 3rd largest production unit in Oinofyta in 2000. In addition, the coming of the age of financial capitalism led to one of the biggest scandals in Greece's modern economic history, the Athens Stock Exchange bubble. This bubble burst in the early 2000s and prompted mergers, sell-offs and closures in the industrial sector. These well calculated, macro-level financial (dis)investments produced a radical restructuring of the industrial labor field which led to the loss of many job positions.

According to an informant who had a high post in one of the companies that contributed to the Athens Stock Exchange bubble, the company's owner, who had contacts with the Pasok government, had instructed some of his own trustees to buy company shares from a specific broker, and to then sell those shares when that broker instructed them to do so. The shares, he

recounted, had been increasing in value when suddenly, an aggressive yet calculated sell off caused the bubble to explode. As a result, those who knew beforehand about the scam became rich while the company's owners made vast profits without producing anything. After the bubble burst, the company's productive activity was shut down and, he informed me, they only kept on a few employees to take care of maintenance. He was one of those whom they retained while firing most of the production line personnel (see Tsangari & Chatzicontou, 2016;[6] Thalassinos, Kyriazidis & Thalassinos, 2006).

In the 2000s, after the Athens Stock Exchange scandal, the process of deindustrialization accelerated. Greece's entrance into the Eurozone produced another big wave of de-industrialization and delocalization for those companies which were exporting goods to the EU. Those companies opted to produce at low cost and then import their products to sell them at great profit margins to the Greek market which was using euros. For the citizens of Chalkida, this resulted in great losses both at the material and cultural levels. Well-trained industrial workers were left without jobs and as a local informant told me, the delocalized factories often hired Greek workers to train the new, unskilled laborers in the country to which they had relocated, usually Bulgaria, but also Romania, Turkey and other countries in the Balkan Peninsula that offered much lower production costs. Moreover, many businesses which had outstanding debts and deficits, and which were wary of corruption scandals, applied for bankruptcy. Darigk, the last remaining factory in the center of Chalkida which, given the city's scale, occupied a large space, closed and its laid-off workers protested against the owner accusing him of economic misconduct.

The mass closures of factories were a major shock for locals who, during the course of a century had built an industrial identity both for themselves as individuals and for the city that prospered because of the circulation of industrial capital. Chalkida's commercial markets were owned by locals and as a result, capital from the service sector was recycled through the local market and was not accumulated in other areas. For instance, there were large supermarket

[6] In their BA thesis, available at: https://apothesis.lib.teicrete.gr/bitstream/handle/11713/8080/TsangariCharitomeni_ChatzikontouIoulia2016.pdf?sequence=1 they investigate the impact on listed companies at the Athens Stock Exchange after the crash in 1999. One of those companies whose name I will not mention, is the company where my informant worked.

chains that operated at the local/regional scales and the same applies to other commercial shops, such as electrical appliances, construction materials, furniture, clothes and so on. In the 2000s, the multinationals and larger national enterprises which operated only in big cities started to penetrate local markets. As a result, capital accumulation and re-circulation was uneven for the city of Chalkida as the profits of the commercial sector were accumulated by national and international companies that did not produce or generate income as the factories used to.

The multinationals which entered the national market also created many problems of viability for smaller Greek productive industries. For instance, when Ikea entered the Greek market, Neoset faced major losses in its commercial sector which affected its production. Also worthy of mention here is the gradual introduction of the internet into the everyday life of Greeks. This accelerated after 2003 when high-speed broadband connections became available to end users. Telecommunications became a thriving economic sector and by the late 2000s almost everyone who lived in the cities had access to high-speed internet. The penetration of the internet into everyday life also opened up new markets, both for information and goods, as Greeks, and especially the younger generation, started abandoning the traditional media for socio-economic practice.

The large infrastructure projects of the 2004 Olympic games generated an influx of credit that deferred the turbulent situation that was about to erupt. While in 2007 the GDP reached a record high, the first signs of recession started to appear, and a series of ineffective, self-imposed austerity measures were taken by the government. In 2009, in the aftermath of the global financial crisis, the banks ceased providing credit. The construction sector shrank dramatically, which contraction intensified in the coming crisis years, dragging down with it the regional and national economies.

1.5 Chalkida's Cement Factory

Chalkida's cement factory was founded in 1926 in the area of Vathi-Avlidos, on the opposite coast of Viotia, very close, tracing a straight line, to the center of Chalkida. Its location is rich in the raw materials that are required for 'baking' the final cement. Initially a small surface mine and petty cement producer, it gradually expanded. Today the factory, along with its mines, possesses an area comparable to that of Chalkida's city centre.[7] Because of the non-existence of regulatory mechanisms, no obstacles were posed to the factory's location, neither on the grounds that it was very close to inhabited areas, nor on the grounds that it was literally taking the space of the ancient site of Avlida. The soil and land in the area in which the factory was located were completely degraded and the factory produced tremendous noise pollution (locals report that they used to hear the factory's engines and mills working at night from the Chalkida's city center). In addition, the people of Chalkida were literally dusted by the factory whenever the wind blew in the direction of the city. This was especially true before 2000, when no measures existed to limit the air pollution created by cement dust.

In the name of modernity and as a personal, local and national project, factory workers in the first instance, together with the local population of Chalkida accepted the factory as a means of prospering and improving their living conditions. Yet for all the tremendous benefits that cement produces, the global cement industry is one of the biggest sources of pollution and environmental degradation in the areas of its production, while its excessive and irresponsible application in urban sprawl has devastating effects on the environment at the site of its consumption. Moreover, numerous medical studies have exposed the hazardous effects that cement dust has on the workers who are those most exposed to it, and on neighboring residential areas (Fell et al, 2010; Tungu et al, 2013; Penrose, 2014; Smailyte et al, 2004).

The growing demand for cement caused the factory to expand and seek laborers from all over Greece. In a number of cases, the factory provided food and shelter for the seasonal workers that it employed and, in many respects,, one could argue that the cement factory itself promoted

[7] The total surface of the factory's mines and its facilities is around 2 square kilometers while Chalkida's city center is around 3,5 square kilometers (data calculated through google maps: https://www.daftlogic.com/projects-google-maps-area-calculator-tool.htm#

internal migration into Chalkida. Moreover, beyond providing the materials for urbanization, it also created the human subjects that would inhabit the growing city of Chalkida. During the Second World War, its facilities were requisitioned by the Army, and as factory workers informed me, during the war, instead of being sent to the front, they were called to serve their country by producing cement for the army. Because of this, laid off factory workers I interviewed stressed the fact that 'their' (sic) factory and the cement industry in general were a matter of national importance. After the war, the factory changed hands and was bought by two entrepreneurs from Istanbul. In 1964 it greatly expanded its production capacity and upgraded its machinery to meet the increased demand for cement at the local and national levels. The factory's location, another fact that the workers stressed in their conversations with me, is highly significant. They repeatedly mentioned that the factory had direct access to the road and rail network as well as its own port license which increased significantly the value of the factory. In addition, the nearby limestone extraction sites and a smaller clay mine were part of the factory's property and reduced to a great extent the cement's production cost.

In spite of the above favorable conditions, the company had many outstanding debts which it covered with loans it managed to secure from the state, specifically the Junta government in 1968. In 1982, the company faced financial difficulties that lasted over the coming 15 years. The factory passed into the hands of investment funds that tried to dominate the global cement market.[8] In 1982, Around 2,500 regular and subcontracted workers were employed in the factory, a number which, if we scale it up from the personal to the household level, meant that almost a fourth of Chalkida's population depended directly or indirectly on the salaries of cement factory workers. Thanks to the socialist government of Pasok, workers and their trade unions started to enjoy varied benefits and to actively claim more working rights from their employers. In 1985, the company's creditors refused to provide it with new loans and in 1988, the company was subjected to the OOAE (Economic Restructuring Organization for Businesses) by capitalizing its debt to the state. However, that process was blocked by the EEC because of its various violations of the code of conduct and the unfair market competition it implied. In order to survive, the factory's owners did not pay taxes and social insurance fees to the state, and because of this, competitors sued them for unfair competition.

[8] Source: https://eviaportal.gr/i-istoria-tis-etaireias-tsimenton-chalkidas/ (Last accessed 10/10/2019).

In 1991, AGET, a leading cement company that owned several cement factories and limestone mines all over Greece, was re-privatized. The state had nationalized it in the mid-1980s in order to save it and secure the many jobs it provided (as, following socialist doctrine, it had done with many other industries which were on the brink of bankruptcy). The Italian Cement fund, Calzestruzzi bought out 50,3 percent of AGET and through subsidiary firms and 70 percent of Chalkida's Cement Company shares which at the time was deeply indebted. The 1990s were, as previously noted, the decade during which Greece entered the era of financialization and financial capitalism. Chalkida's cement factory has changed several owners, as foreign funds aimed to extract profits through financialized method of neoliberal capital accumulation in the Greek stock market and dominate the national and international cement production.

In 2001, Blue Circle investments bought both Chalkida's Cement Company and AGET. The two companies were merged, and the factory's name was changed to Heracles III. After this, the company's profits sky-rocketed and the factory's production capacity was significantly upgraded. Subcontracting firms penetrated more deeply into the factory and the ratio of retired to new employees became unbalanced: for every five retired regular factory workers, only one was hired. In the same year, Lafarge, the multinational cement giant, finally succeeded in buying the firm. This was indeed a strategic move since Greece was about to host the 2004 Olympic Games and the demand for cement for national consumption was very high at that time. Greece's GDP increased dramatically, particularly after Greece entered the Eurozone in 2001, and large funds were dedicated to the construction of public infrastructure. The influx of credit fueled many private construction schemes, and many Greeks got loans to buy or build a house. After 2004, the factory administration started to hand out incentives and large bonuses for early retirement, and the number of regular employees fell from 570 in 2004, to 236 in 2010. During the Lafarge administration, safety and environmental measures were top priorities along with the voluntary redundancies of older employees who had been in receipt of high salaries. The administration offered large compensation payouts to union organizers (some got nearly 400,000 euros, workers informed me) in order to voluntarily quit their jobs. In 2010, cement production fell significantly, and rumors spread of an imminent closure. As the workers told me, apart from the great decline in demand for cement at the national level, another factor also played a major role

in the factory's closure. The so-called Arab Spring, and especially the war in Libya, to which the factory had been exporting cement, were also critical factors that determine the fate of the factory in the coming years.

On March 26th, 2013, around 11 am, when the factory was in full operation, a message suddenly appeared on administrative employees' screens, and an announcement was made over the speakers that summoned the workers to the warehouse. The administration abruptly announced to the remaining 236 employees that the factory was closing and that they were going to be laid-off or transferred to other factories belonging to the group. "You should stay at home, and you will receive your salary until further notice," they told us, said Manolis. Of course, "we did not stay at home, we mobilized instantly," he added. Since then, both the factory's Union and Lafarge have been battling in national[9] and international[10] labor courts, and to this today, workers continue to occupy and guard the factory's facilities. "It is not simply our job" they said in a group interview, "it is our life, most of us have been working here since adolescence".

What needs to be noted here is that most of the factory's workers started working at the factory at a very young age - many of the workers and pensioners I interviewed started at the age of 16. Moreover, their work was both hazardous and physically very demanding. Apart from the risk of developing chronic diseases that could lead to early death, their lives were also in considerable danger due to the work accidents which, in the past especially, were frequent. Older workers told me that they used to work outside in severe weather conditions, half buried in mud. Young adolescents used to carry 50 kilo sacks barefoot to load on the ships and trucks that transported cement. As a result, many who could not endure these heavy tasks soon had to leave the factory, for which reason the administration could not find regular employees. This fact of

9 National courts judged the mass redundancies were illegal on several occasions, yet the Lafarge appealed to the supreme courts source : https://www.ert.gr/eidiseis/ellada/kinonia/tsimenta-chalkidas-nea-dikastiki-itta-tis-lafarge/ (last accessed 12/01/2020) I was once at an impromptu celebration at the premises of the occupied cement factory to celebrate another favorable court decision that obliged Lafarge to pay the salaries and compensation of illegally fired workers. On another occasion, the workers organized an open feast to celebrate the cancellation of the first 118 lay offs exactly two years after the factory was closed on March 26th 2015Open call in the local press: https://www.eviazoom.gr/2015/03/tsimentades-giortazoun.html (Last accessed 15/12/2019) Despite of all court decisions in favor of the laid-off workers, the factory has not opened, nor has Lafarge sold it to new owners.

10 On December 21st, 2016, the European Court of Justice judged the collective redundancies in the cement factory as legal referring to the right owners have to "conduct business" Source: https://curia.europa.eu/jcms/upload/docs/application/pdf/2016-12/cp160143en.pdf (Last accessed 12/12/2019)

itself gave the workers great leverage and negotiating power which was expressed in the strong factory trade union which was formed in the early 1980s. As a result, the turbulent events and financial issues that the factory faced were met with strikes, demonstrations and in several cases, violent events in the factory in which the police were called in to resolve the tensions. Unionization in the factory was very strong and had secured various benefits and rights for the workers who in many instances had been working there for many years already and had sacrificed their youth and wellbeing in the pursuit of improving their livelihoods. In addition, looking to make a career at the factory and specialize in cement production was not only an individual livelihood project and strategy, it was also a multi-generational aspiration. I interviewed second and third generation workers whose relatives, usually fathers and uncles, worked at the factory, which made it much easier for them to get employment there. Lastly, a small population of women also worked at the factory but as one can imagine, they were confined to administrative office posts and received much lower pay than the men. The majority of them had been introduced by a relative (father, husband, brother or even in-law) who was working or had worked at the factory.

The struggle of the laid off factory workers of Chalkida's cement plant coincided with the closure in 2013 of Greek National Television (ERT) by Antonis Samaras' coalition government (2012-2014). The cement factory workers were in Athens protesting against Lafarge and the government when the closure of ERT occurred. They were the first to run to the aid of ERT's laid-off workers and to express their solidarity and protest alongside them. Furthermore, they aligned their struggle with the closure of the Coca Cola factory in Thessaloniki that was delocalized to Bulgaria in 2014, and they supported the nation-wide boycott of Coca Cola products. As soon as Syriza rose to power in 2015, ERT reopened and, in December 2016, hosted a debate between laid factory workers and Lafarge's administration.[11] In the video, workers and journalists asked the right questions to the company's representative and deconstructed one by one the arguments that led the factory to closure. Syriza's electoral win had sparked hope for a solution to the laid-off workers' problems, and many of them believed that the newly elected

[11] This event occurred a few weeks after I had left the field and I saw many of my informants appear on TV. I wanted to provide the link to the video, however to my surprise, the video was mysteriously deleted from ERT's online database (Last checked 12/12/2019).

government would force Lafarge either to sell or to reopen the factory. Since they had heard many political promises by local MPs who had visited them, they were skeptical of any promise made to them. Among others, Alexis Tsipras has visited them during his electoral campaign in 2014, and urged them to continue their struggle, stating that he stood with them. In the elections of January 2015, Syriza won 40 percent of the vote on the island of Evia.

Conclusion

The modern history of Chalkida offers us an extended case study for understanding how top-down processes of modern capitalist development were grounded in local, semi-peripheral places. The aspirations and promises of a modern lifestyle were grounded in people's needs and desires, and to that extent they proposed a new model of value creation, that of capitalist development. The major, and perhaps the most significant motive driving impoverished peasant populations to settle in the cities and to accept incorporation into the capitalist system of value production, and hence to be exploited in multiple ways, was that of the income opportunities that urban life had to offer. Thus, peasants started gradually to emigrate from their villages to pursue a better life, both for present and future generations. Top-down processes such as industrialization facilitated the urbanization phenomenon in Chalkida. However, the urbanization of Chalkida, as well as of many other Greek cities (Burzel, 1975) was the outcome of bottom-up initiatives which mostly materialized in an unorganized and unregulated manner through the model of *antiparochi.* People made literal use of the modern resources they could access in order to fulfill basic needs such as housing, and to pursue upward mobility within the project of modern capitalist development

I place emphasis on cement because it is the material that has made possible the materialization of modernity, in the first place, in its industrial applications and in the developing of public infrastructure and the construction of houses, and in the second, in the creation of the cash income that circulated through Chalkida's lifeworlds. It is therefore a material that in multiple ways allows links to be drawn between the upper and lower scales of analysis. Modern capitalism has used cement in various exploitative projects all over the world, and large capital accumulation schemes have become possible. Thanks to cement, the construction sector emerged as the driving force of the Greek economy and opened up new fields for capitalist exploitation. The recent economic crisis has firstly affected the construction sector which collapsed and produced a domino effect. This leads me to the concept of creative destruction which in Marxian economic theory is linked with the processes of accumulation and annihilation of wealth under capitalism (Marx & Engels 2002 [1848]; Marx 1993 [1847]). The financialized innovations in

capital accumulation processes led to devalue and destroy past investments and labour skills. As Harvey (1995: 105-106) puts it

> "*Creative destruction* is embedded within the circulation of capital itself. Innovation exacerbates instability, insecurity, and in the end, becomes the prime force pushing capitalism into periodic paroxysms of crisis. ... The struggle to maintain profitability sends capitalists racing off to explore all kinds of other possibilities. New product lines are opened up, and that means the creation of new wants and needs. Capitalists are forced to redouble their efforts to create new needs in others .... The result is to exacerbate insecurity and instability, as masses of capital and workers shift from one line of production to another, leaving whole sectors devastated .... The drive to relocate to more advantageous places (the geographical movement of both capital and labour) periodically revolutionizes the international and territorial division of labour, adding a vital geographical dimension to the insecurity. The resultant transformation in the experience of space and place is matched by revolutions in the time dimension, as capitalists strive to reduce the turnover time of their capital to "the twinkling of an eye"

The history of the cement factory of Chalkida provides and outright example of creative destruction under the financialized principles of globalized capitalism where profit extraction is above everything. For instance, Lafarge, that recently merged with Holcim, owned a factory in the Syrian war zone. In order to continue producing low cost cement in the war zone, an area that used large quantitities of cement for military purposes and reparations, it paid the Islamic State 13 million Euro that controlled the area in order to allow the continuation of cement production in Jalabiya, northern Syria[12]. Lafarge chose to close the cement factory in Chalkida and paid in order to keep the one Syria active for the sake of profit maximization. The cement plant in Chalkida was a multimillion investment for Lafarge, and as the factory workers elaborated, during the recent crisis of neoliberal capitalism, it became more profitable for Lafarge to restructure its production, drop their existing investments and sell their emission rights to other factories in Europe, than to keep the factory open. In this circle of capital accumulation, the lives of the workers who were left unemployed in the midst of the crisis simply did not matter and the right "to conduct business" according to the European Court of Justice, took precedence over the rights of people. Furthermore, as the workers elaborated, Lafarge did not go bankrupt as did other companies in Greece that closed their production sites. Lafarge chose to keep the factory closed. But it kept renewing the mining rights and the port license for a factory that did not

[12] https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/jun/28/lafarge-charged-with-complicity-in-syria-crimes-against-humanity (Last accessed 13/10/2019).

operate, which showed that economic power entails great political power as well. In 2015, Lafarge had merged with Holcim and had an annual turnover of nearly one fourth of Greece's GDP - thus it could exercise great political pressure through its economic power[13] and impose its interests on Greek governments.

Furthermore, creative destruction pertains the Greek project of modern development. Harvey (1973, 1985, 2001, 2005, 2010) elaborates on the systemic contractions of capitalism in the production of the urban environment. The Old buildings of medieval Chalkida were creatively destroyed and were replaced by modern concrete constructions. Modern buildings of the early 20th century were again creatively destroyed through the *antiparochi* model. Numerous neoclassical buildings were given, via *antiparochi*. to construction firms for the building of apartment blocks and offices. This illuminates Bremman's (1987) point: not even the assets of bourgeois society can escape since "all that is solid melts into air." Creative destruction through the practice of *antiparochi* begun with medieval buildings of the 12th to 18th century that occupied the heart of Chalkida's city; then, it swallowed neoclassical buildings that the upper classes of Chalkida constructed in late 19th and early 20th century; and finally *antiparochi* trend moved to the areas where the Asian Minor immigrants had built their humble houses. Walking in the streets of Chalkida, one can identify when each neighborhood was "antiparochisized".

In the case of Greece and Chalkida, creative destruction has had symbolic meanings too. Chalkida was a significant medieval port which suffered under various foreign occupying powers. The destruction of past materialities, fostered the creation of the modern national identity of Greece. Ottoman mosques, Venetian and Ottoman fortifications and infrastructure were demolished in order to make way for modernity. The inhabitants of the city used these materials to build new constructions and to enable the city to advance according to the dominant western model of capitalism. Advances in capital accumulation processes in the era of cement reshaped not only the economy of Chalkida but also its culture. First of all, when Chalkida was established as a center for the industrial areas around it, industrial income became embedded in its society. Even though other professions and vocations existed in the market, they had largely been created by the circulation of capital that the factories provided. As a result, Chalkida's

[13] https://www.lafargeholcim.com/a-new-leader-a-new-world-lafargeholcim-officially-launched-around-globe (Last Accessed 10/02/2020) Nearly 50 billion euros in 2015, when Greece's GDP was below 200 billion.

cultural capital was shaped mostly by migrant peasant populations who, at least partially, transformed themselves into proletarians. Therefore, the market(s) of Chalkida adapted to serve the needs of industrial workers that sustained it.

It was upon industrial labor that the cultural habitus of the city was constructed. Despite the radical increase in people's purchasing power and knowledge, social and economic reproduction practices in fact reproduced the industrial model of exploitation (Bourdieu 1977; 1990, Narotzky 2007) The livelihood projects and upward mobility aspirations for the residents of Chalkida were shaped by and orbited around the industrial sector, and thus multiple generations were recycled into the industrial labor model.

Chapter 2

The Quest for Modernity: A Brief History of the Greek Project of Development

Introduction

In this Chapter I, address the political and economic history of the modern Greek state in order to lay out the historical processes that have shaped Greek society. In my view, it is necessary to place ethnographic observations within the greater political and economic history of Greece in order to understand how the national and international scales produce local models and grassroots practices. Therefore, I give special attention to the national level of Greece's process of formation which has, in many instances, shaped the social, political and economic habitus of Greeks. One can identify numerous repetitions throughout modern Greek history; one such is indebtedness, which has played a role in political choices and decision making processes for dealing with every economic crisis of the past. No less than four bankruptcies and multiple socio-cultural and political crises are inscribed in the Greek national habitus. In other words, Greek people's habitus has been forged by modern history's crises, hence past crisis experiences inform the present (Knight, 2015; Knight and Stewart, 2016). I want also to show how Greece's economic history is intertwined with various political and social changes and transformations of modern Greek society. Much of my ethnographic data on practices, patterns, and narratives of everyday life in Greece can be better understood by looking back to critical junctures in the socio-political and economic history of the Greek nation-state.

The Greek state was born with external debt within the wider context of the global emergence of nationalism and nation-states. As with many post-colonial states in South America, the 1821 Greek revolution was funded by British and French banks who provided speculative loans to Greek rebels[14] to buy military equipment. Indebtedness has been a means for creditors to impose and direct national development projects, not only in Greece but also in Peru (Palacios, 1983), Chile (Agrawal, 1996; Halsey, 1977), Venezuela and Argentina (Maritchal, 1989). The emergence of nationalism in the new global articulation of power (Anderson, 2016) coincided with the fall of the Ottoman empire in the East and the collapse of the colonial regimes in North and South America. In addition, it is linked with the rise of capitalist accumulation processes that operate, at a global scale, through debt (Graeber, 2014).

From 1827 until the dawn of the 20th century, the borders of the Greek state were expanding and hence a coherent plan of modernization could not be implemented. Channeling most of its resources into fighting offensive wars, the Greek state, which was also severely indebted, had neither the time nor the resources to develop modern mechanisms and institutions. Capitalist advances in the economy and the early 20th century's industrialization project were crushed with the devastating German occupation of Greece during the Second World War and the civil war that followed. As a result, capitalism's advance was significantly delayed. Processes that took centuries in the industrial core countries of the West, were condensed in Greece into the last five decades of the past century. The Greek state was unprepared and lacked the organizational capacity to manage the more powerful force of capitalist invasion and the great transformations that it would bring, such as the massive concentration of people in cities. The widespread application of capitalist models along with the underdevelopment of state structures and civil society produced catastrophic and unregulated development; for example, dysfunctional and chaotic urban areas, unorganized industrial zones and ineffective bureaucratic institutions.

The reasons for which Greece has remained a less economically developed country can be traced to the international scale, as well as to high level developments in the worlds of diplomacy and global dominance. Capitalism and modernity in Greece occurred at the same

[14] Despite the fact that the rebels had no official recognition, Rothschild bank speculatively issued loans to them on predatory terms (Toussaint, 2016). The Greek state was born into a vicious circle of debt and economic supervision which fueled capital accumulation processes through debt and credit. Moreover, the military loans that were granted to Greece were channeled into the developing British and French war industries (Palacios, 1983).

time. The Greek economic habitus' 'modernity gap' was concealed by the uninterrupted capitalist growth that took off in 1950, the radical improvement of peoples' living standards and the emergence of Greek middle and working classes. In contrast with the linear movement of the core industrial economies where modernity produced capitalism, in Greece we can observe the opposite - modernity was instead generated *through* capitalist means.

In order to understand what crisis means and does today, and the grassroots narratives and experiences of it that form the core of my analysis, one needs to identify historical continuities and similarities. In the next sections of this chapter, I provide such an account, closing with a consideration of the very recent history of Greece during the years of 'non development' and imposed austerity. I will focus on tracing an economic history of Greece that also pays attention to geopolitics, and, in particular, the role of western European colonial states in shaping Greece's economic and social destiny.

2.1 Modernity and Development as Longue *Durée* Processes - The First Steps of Modernization (1827-1949)

The First Hellenic Republic to the Kingdom of Greece (1827-1843)

A declaration of bankruptcy immediately followed the foundation of the Greek state in 1827. This allowed creditors to exercise political pressure and control via the financial instrument of debt. Thus, the first Hellenic Republic was dependent on its creditors to provide it with further loans for it to develop and sustain itself, while at the same time having to settle the debts it had accumulated during the war of independence. In 1830, the three superpowers, Russia, Britain and France formed the first Troika (Toussaint, 2017) to ensure both the repayment of the military loans Greek rebels had obtained to fund the revolution against the Ottoman occupation (1824-1825) and agreed to provide a new loan of 60 million French francs. After the assassination of Ioannis Kapodistrias,[15] the country came to the brink of civil war, and so the three superpowers intervened by appointing the Bavarian prince, Otto von Wittelsbach, king of Greece. The three superpowers compelled Otto and his council to follow their own geopolitical agenda and ordered them not to engage in war with the Ottomans. British diplomacy prevailed in 1830s, with Britain aiming to prevent Russian expansion in the Mediterranean. With the imminent collapse of the Ottoman Empire, the Russians, for their part, favored the creation of a Balkan Union of Christian-Orthodox states, which would allow them access to the Mediterranean (Tsoucalas, 1969). Since this time, Greece has remained a field for the waging of higher-level geopolitical struggles over world dominance, a diplomatic battleground which has left little space for the independent evolution of local and national projects. Thus, the Greek state was more a protectorate than an independent entity. It must, furthermore, have been traumatic for the impoverished Greek population, who fought in the war of independence against Ottoman rule, to find themselves hostage to the agendas of their creditors. By 1833, the territories of Greece included Central Greece (including the island of Evia, my fieldsite), the Peloponnese and the Cycladic islands.

[15] Ioannis Kapodistrias was a former minister of the Tsar and was appointed by the three superpowers as the first governor of Greece. He was appointed with forming modern structures of a constitutional democracy.

The 1821 Greek revolution, which was inspired by French liberal democracy, appeared to fail as the new regime reproduced the inequalities of the Ottoman system. Since Otto was only 17 years old when he was declared King, a Regency council, which consisted of Bavarian administrators, took over governance. Hence the modern Greek nation-state's first regulatory mechanisms were developed by an unpopular Regency council that was perceived as a new occupying force that replaced the Ottomans. The period between 1832 and 1835 became known as the Bavarocracy, a period which coincides with early attempts at bureaucratization,[16] a term which one could easily rename "bavarocratization". As a result, the first coherent plan of the modern era to develop an organized state with social, economic and political structures along with regulatory mechanisms, was formulated by the Bavarians. This fact shaped Greeks' initial relations with the state; they viewed it as something that was neither theirs nor designed to protect their interests. On the contrary, it undermined people's interests: the state's higher military and administrative positions were occupied by Bavarian officials who, despite imposing financial austerity on the population, continued to enjoy plentiful benefits. Britain and the Rothschild bank, who had underwritten Greek loans, insisted on financial stringency. As a result, Greeks were soon heavily taxed, more so than when they had been under Ottoman rule (Petropoulos, 1968). Many Greeks, including those who had actively taken part in the war of independence, were excluded from the formal political system that was in the making while others, such as the major general and hero of the Greek revolution, Theodoros Kolokotronis,[17] were imprisoned and sentenced to death for threatening the social cohesion of the nation. The imposition of monarchy in Greece therefore had neither popular support nor the necessary social consent and representation.

In 1833, the capital of Greece was transferred to Athens, which at that time was a small town of 4000 to 5000 inhabitants. As Tsoucalas (1969) notes, in 1832, 95 percent of Greek citizens were living in rural areas. Thus, the majority of Greeks were illiterate and lacked the skills and knowledge for incorporation into the modern social, political and economic system.

[16] The Greek word for state is *kratos*, which literally means 'to hold power'.

[17] He was issued a pardon by the King himself and died just before Otto handed a constitution to the Greeks in 1843. Kolokotronis' prosecution was often used as an example by some of my male interlocutors (above 50) to describe how unjust and problematic the Greek state has always been, as it turned against and prosecuted its own citizens.

During Otto's reign, the public education system was developed in line with Bavarian norms[18] (Seidl, 1984) and Greece got its first university, named after the king. In 1843, Greece was again forced to default, and a new memorandum was signed with the three superpowers. This included austerity measures that bear a striking similarity with current measures, for example, wage postponement, mass lay-offs in the public sector and cancelation of ongoing and future public infrastructure projects. For the next 35 years, while it continued to accumulate debt, Greece's economy was isolated from international markets (Tsoulfidis & Zoumpoulakis, 2016). From the loan of 60 million francs, Greece received 40 million and only 2.7 million of that amounts was used for public investment in infrastructure, while the rest was used to repay the state's existing debts (Toussaint, 2017, Tsoulfidis & Zoumpoulakis, 2016). Shortly after the declaration of bankruptcy, the September's 3rd rebellion forced the King to draw up a constitution and to allow Greeks to participate in the political system, accessing both administrative and high ranking military positions (Clogg, 1979).

It is important to note here that political and financial control through indebtedness was a successful strategy that the British deployed not only in Greece but also in other parts of the world. Thus Britain funded the independence wars in Latin America (Agrawall, 1996; Maritchal, 1989; Palacios, 1983) and then used debt to impose its own diplomatic and geopolitical agenda on the new states. These new states, that emerged from successful revolutions against the rival colonial powers of Spain and Portugal, needed financial aid in order to develop. This gave a great deal of leverage to the lending parties in negotiations over the terms of repayment and of the provision of new loans. As in Greece, very little of the loaned capital ended up in the new states' treasuries (ibid, Toussaint, 2017). At the dawn of the 19th century, nationalism and nationalist projects, which fuelled independence wars in both the Balkans and Latin America, were hegemonic across the globe. This was because they resonated profoundly with the aspirations for emancipation of oppressed and, in many instances, impoverished peoples. Nationalism was a project which, on the one hand was mediated by wealthy western countries and on the other, emerged from an internal grassroots process that constructed its own rhetoric. Greek nationalism and the 'Great Greek Idea'[19] were, for instance, byproducts of global

[18] Elementary school in Greece is still called *dimotikó* which means 'municipal'.

[19] Greek nationalism's popular ideology centered on the idea of recovering those territories it lost to the Ottomans, and reviving Byzantium.

restructurings of power. Moreover, Greece's ancient past, which was rediscovered by the West during the Renaissance and Enlightenment periods - at the same time as the discipline of archaeology was created, made Greece a mythological site. The country's territory abounded with precious antiquities whose possession western bourgeois society hungered after. In this light, ancient antiquities were equivalent to the Latin American gold that colonial powers sought to extract. Although foreign archeologists had been conducting excavations since before the Greek revolution, it was during this period that various archaeological schools were founded in the country, with the most prominent ones being the British, French and American. In many instances, those schools behaved as (crypto)colonial agents that smuggled archaeological material abroad and sold it at high profits to European and US auction houses.

The Constitutional Monarchy (1843-1862)

In 1843, Greece's political system was transformed from one of absolute to constitutional monarchy. Full male suffrage was granted, including both the right to elect and to be elected. This change was welcomed by the three superpowers who thereafter openly and directly shaped politics by controlling politicians. There were three political parties, with each in turn representing the interests of France, Britain and Russia. This fact was stressed by a few of my informants in Chalkida, in order to underline the idea that Greeks have never had an independent nation-state that could define its own fate without the approval of foreign powers. European admiration of ancient Greek civilization had stirred empathy towards the oppressed Greeks and fed into the emergence of Philhellenism, which itself provided material to Greek nationalists seeking to trace their nation's roots back to ancient times, constructing a narrative of historical continuity. Nationalism and Greek nationalist struggles were thereby endowed with nobility in their claims over the Greek lands that the Ottomans had occupied for almost half a millennium. In Greece, therefore, the nation represents an imagined entity not only in spatial terms but also in temporal ones. Greek nationalism's historical interpretations and justifications provided a collective vision for the future for Greek subjects and contributed to maintaining national and social cohesion. (Tsoucalas, 1969, Petropoulos, 1968).

As discontent against him grew, King Otto made a deliberate effort to placate public opinion: he indulged the popular 'Great Idea' by allying with the Russians in the Crimean war in 1853, and opted to annex Thessaly, a region where many Greeks still lived under Ottoman rule. That proved to be catastrophic for the Greeks; since it was a violation of its creditors' terms, the port of Piraeus was blockaded by British and French ships in order to force Greece into neutrality. Despite his unpopularity and his incompetence in the sphere of politics, it was under Otto's reign that the first modern foundations were established in Greece.

The Crown Republic (1863 – 1924)

Otto was overthrown in 1862. The superpowers, favored the nomination of the Danish prince William of Schleswig-Holstein-Sonderburg-Glücksburg as king. Renamed George I, he was crowned in 1863 when he drew up a new constitution. The British ceded the Ionian Islands to the Greek state as a gift to the new monarch who reigned from 1863 until his assassination in 1913 in Thessaloniki. From 1864 to 1874, a period of stagnation and trouble, Greece faced great political instability and had 21 different governments. In 1878, the Treaty of Berlin granted Thessaly to Greece and in 1882, Charilaos Trikoupis, the leader of the Modernist party was appointed prime minister. He succeeded in putting an end to the political instability. The gradual expansion of Greece's territory also generated economic benefits and Greece re-entered the world market after being excluded from it for the preceding 35 years as a result of the default (Reinhart & Rogoff, 2011). As foreign credit inflow permitted, Trikoupis set into motion a modernization agenda to develop public infrastructure (railroads and ports) and to establish an organized army and naval fleet. Greece's largest infrastructure projects to date were the development of the railway network and the opening of the Corinth canal. He also managed to attract industrial investment and the first industrial cores developed further away in Syros, Piraeus, Thebes, Volos and in my field site, Chalkida (Chapter 1). Another important reform that Trikoupis implemented was the land reform and redistribution of large *tsiflikia* to Greek Christians (Patronis, 2015). *Tsiflikia* were large estates run according to the Ottoman empire's land tenure system, similar to that of European feudalism, in which the ruling Ottoman elite owned the land which peasants lived and worked on (Thompson, 1971, 1964). This reform was

made imperative after the annexation of Thessaly in 1881 which incorporated the largest area of agricultural land in Greece, the valley of the Pineios River.

During this period, the industrial sector's development was at a very early stage and Greece's based its plans for economic growth on upgrading its existing agricultural methods in order to satisfy internal consumption (Tsoulfidis & Zoumpoulakis, 2016). Trikoupis' modernization plan required vast loans and as a result the state's foreign debt rose from 75 percent of GDP in 1886 to 220 percent in 1896. In 1893, Trikoupis declared the third sovereign default. Although Greece received 639.7 million French francs, only 20 percent of this sum was ultimately invested in productive uses, since the rest was, once again, used to repay old obligations plus the accumulated interest on the previous 1832 loans (Tsoulfidis & Zoumpoulakis, 2016). The restructuring of the external debt as well as the founding of the 'Etairia ton Monopolíon'[20] were drastic measures that were taken immediately after the default, and which maintained a credit flow that further increased Greece's external debt (Romaios, 2012). In 1897, Greece suffered a humiliating defeat during its 31 day war to annex Crete. It was forced to seek military aid from its allies (and creditors) and to call a cease fire in order to avoid a retaliatory Ottoman invasion. Greece exited the war without territorial losses but with a humiliating war reparation debt to the Ottomans that was added to the existing one. Moreover, the Greeks were obliged to submit to an International Financial Commission (IFC) that consisted of Britain, France, Austria, Germany, Russia and Italy, which extended its jurisdiction from taxation management to the ways in which the government conducted its monetary policy (Waibel, 2014).

The Greek economy managed to recover quickly after the default and the capitalist development of the country was boosted. From 4000 inhabitants in 1833, Athens' population reached 44,000 in 1870 and in 1896, it had 123,000 (Tung, 2001) of the 2.5 million who lived in the Greek territories (Kotzamanis & Androulaki, 2000). As a result, economic growth was centered on the Greek capital which attracted most of the industrial investment and made imperative the development of an infrastructure to serve a centralized capitalist development

[20] A company that imposed a special tax in the consumption of tobacco, playing card decks, petrol, matches, salt and other goods. The company's funds were given over as a guarantee to the creditors. Later it was renamed the Public Debt Administration Company.

(Hadjimichalis, 1987). In the early 1900s the first heavy industries appeared in Athens and Piraeus, however their scale of operation was rather small. First of all, there was no skilled labor force to do the work and since most Greeks were relatively poor and lacked financial resources, the national market could not adsorb industrial production. The high import taxes that the advanced economies had set on foreign goods made it impossible for Greek industries to operate at the international scale. Therefore industrial production remained low as demand in the domestic market was low and the majority of the Greek population lived and operated at the margins of the capitalist system. The leading industries were the textile production and food processing units which were mostly small family owned businesses. The annexation of Thessaly in 1881 enabled the foundation of a small scale textile sector and the upgrading of the means of agricultural production. Therefore, the use of the word 'industry' in those times refers to small scale light manufacturing units that incorporated machinery into the production process (shoe, cloth, and textile, wood and metal processing, ice production) as well as food processing industries (olive oil, soap, alcohol, pastry production) that operated at the limited local scales (Agriantoni, 1986).

The Great Expansion of Greece and the Fall (1910 – 1924)

Venizelos' shrewd diplomatic skills played a determining role in the geopolitical restructurings in the Balkans that the fall of the Ottoman empire provoked. A great number of Greeks wanted to join the military campaigns not only to serve nationalistic ideals but also as a way of prospering and improving their livelihoods. In 1913, after the resolution of the First Balkan War (8th October 1912 - 30th May 1913), Greece expanded its northern borders to include Thessaloniki along with southern Macedonia, Epirus and Crete. Thessaloniki was a major city of 150,000 which in 1913 had a mixed population of Christian-Slavs, Christian-Greeks, Muslims and Jews, equal to the population of Athens. The spoils of war became a matter of dispute among the allied forces of Greece, Bulgaria, Serbia and Montenegro, that led to the second Balkan War (16th June – 18th July 1913). The Greeks captured a big part of Western Thrace while the region of Macedonia was split in three with the Greeks and the Serbs having the biggest share. The aftermath of the second Balkan war found Bulgarians being isolated from having access to the

Aegean fueling revanchist ideas that would take effect in World War I. By the end of the First and Second Balkan Wars, Greece had expanded its territories by 68 percent and its population had grown from 2.5 to 4.4 million (Grenville & Wasserstein, 2001: 50).

In this project of expansion, women played a central role. Until 1910, women, who still did not have the right to vote or participate in the political sphere, were not included in the nation formation process, and were recognized by the state only as mothers, daughters or wives. In 1911, the Lyceum Club of Greek Women was founded in order to promote women's rights to work and education. In terms of the timing of its precise goals, the Lyceum Club was established to support and empower women who had been widowed by war. Its main activity was to promote female literacy by assigning women the role of safeguarding and promoting Greek customs and tradition. Folk songs, dances and craft(wo)manship were married with modern ideas, in a sense reinventing tradition and locating it within the dominant national narrative and the nation formation process (Hertzfeld, 1982). As Stoler (1989) has argued, modernity and the social reproduction of the nation were carried out by women who were held responsible for implementing modernity at the household level. The national conscience of Greeks was constructed on tradition which was reinvented to adhere to the nationalistic project. Tradition was facilitated by the Greek state in national formation of Greece in order to produce collective symbols, meanings, and practices and to construct a historical continuity (Hobsbawm, 1983).

On the eve of World War I, Greece was divided between royalists/conservatives who had sympathy towards the Axis powers, and liberals that supported Venizelos who wanted Greece to be allied with Entente. Greece was led to the National Schism (Leon, 1974; Mazower, 1992) and the country was split in two. A provisional government was founded by Venizelos in Thessaloniki and another one with the King's support was formed in Athens. Military pressure by the British and the French navy that, once again blockaded the port of Piraeus, forced the King to change his mind. As a result, Greece entered the war belatedly on the side of the Allied forces of the Entente. Venizelos' diplomacy triumphed once again after the end of World War I, and even though Greece had entered the war late and without any promises regarding territorial gains, Greek demands were all accepted. While Greek nationalism advanced, the Ottomans, who fought on the side of the central powers, suffered major losses. In Asia Minor, the region around

Smyrna - another important city were many Greeks lived and thrived – would hold a plebiscite in 5 years time in order to decide whether it would become part of the Greek state or remain in the Ottoman empire. The Greek population in Smyrna was larger than that of Athens which, in the 1920s, had around 473,000 inhabitants (Tung, 2001) while in the region Smyrna, 400,000 to 620,000 Greeks were estimated to resided in 1910 (Dragistineva, 2011; Montgomery, 1972 Pentzopoulos, 2002; Zamir, 1981), still, a significant number of people compared to the demographics of Greece. Venizelos along with the British support that controlled the Ottoman government launched an offensive attack to secure the area of Smyrna and to liberate other areas that were inhabited by Greek speaking populations. The constant warfare had wounded Venizelos' popularity and he lost the elections to the royalists.

The Royalists who initially planned to disengage from the offensive war in Anatolia continued further instead and marched towards Ankara. The French and British, who were Greece's allies, with the Royalists and King Constantine, withdrew their support. The country was headed to one of its greatest national catastrophes, that which resulted in the population exchange between Greece and Turkey. Hundreds of thousands Greeks had to flee their homes and thousands were murdered or imprisoned during Turkish retaliation. This was a crisis which profoundly marked Greeks and hurt their national pride. A deep wound of the lost *patria* (*hamenes patrides*) was opened which still stirs feelings of collective suffering and has strong nationalist overtones. The crisis of 1922 crushed plans to take back *Konstantinoupoli* (Istanbul) and wounded Greek national ideals.

The Interwar Period (1924-1940)

After the end of the Greco-Turkish war, a compulsory exchange of populations between Greece and Turkey, based on religious identity, was agreed in the treaty of Lausanne (1923). Turkey formalized the flight of its native Greek population while Greece redistributed the lands of the nearly 400,000 expelled Muslims to the population of 1.6 million displaced Orthodox Greeks (Howland, 1926; Motta, 2013). As Shields (2013) asserts, the population exchange was an internationally administered ethnic cleansing process that produced a homogenized population, in which citizenship became equal to nationality, and nationality in turn was defined by language

and religion. Greeks saw that their allies had betrayed them, doing nothing to stop the Turkish army's slaughter at Smyrna. The exchange of Christian and Muslim populations between Greece and Turkey completely reconfigured the demographics of the Greek state, which also lost Eastern Thrace and the Islands of Imbros and Tenedos to Turkey. Major Greek cities filled with refugees who were piled up in camps and temporary reservation settlements. These events produced an identity shock for Greeks who not only saw the Great Idea collapse, but who also viewed the new Christian populations as a threat to the nation (Clark, 2009). Those populations who had lost almost everything had to build a new life in Greece from the ground up. They were an exploitable workforce for the developing capitalism in Greece, and their bodies were used as vehicle to advance industrialization (Hirschon, 1989). The population of Athens nearly doubled after the population exchange. New neighborhoods and districts appeared on the Greek map which were exclusively inhabited by immigrants from Asia Minor (in Greece the term *prosfigas* or refugee is used). The exchange of populations created a homogenous social body with distinct national characteristics. Greeks citizenship was granted on the dual basis of language and religion. The annexations of southern Macedonia and the migration flows from Asia Minor almost tripled the number of inhabitants of the Greek state before WWI. These new inhabitants did not share a common language and in many instances, with the exception of the Slavic speaking populations who were Orthodox Christian, the new populations were Muslim, a fact that was largely a product of the population exchange and the acculturation project in those areas where non Greek speaking populations used to live. As a result, the 1821 revolution was reinterpreted on the basis of Greekness instead of the general discontent that Ottoman rule had caused in the Balkans, and which united oppressed people regardless of their language and religion. The class characteristics of the independence war and the organized revolution in the Balkans were therefore disregarded, and the focus placed on its national characteristics. From 1925 to 1928, the Greek state changed the names of over 2500 villages and towns that did not have a Greek name. It did so in order to support nationalistic discourse and the myths of the Greek nation, and to put an end to Bulgarian claims over the regions of Thrace and Macedonia (Lithoksoou, 1991; Karakisidou, 2000). However even today and all across Greece, many Slavic, Turkish and Vlach toponyms survive.

The aftermath of the catastrophe and the population exchange created one of Greece's largest social and political crises. The radical increase of displaced populations created the need for extensive urbanization and produced a wave of unorganized urban expansion that provoked structural shocks for the underdeveloped Greek state. The state's formal regulatory mechanisms were not fit for coping with the migratory flows and as a result, anarchy prevailed. For a great majority of the impoverished masses, economic growth was not evident and the development of modern structures and cultural paradigms was delayed by ongoing warfare.

In economic terms, political instability was expressed in an economy that lacked the modern bases of industrial development (Patronis, 2015, Dertilis, 2005). Thus far, economic growth in modern Greece had been achieved through territorial expansion rather than through rationalization or an overhaul of socioeconomic structures. At the national level, the focus was mostly on expanding the nation's borders. Very little attention was paid to improving the living standards of the people, which was a secondary political project, bound up nevertheless with territorial expansion. In an extensive study of Greek economic history, Patronis (2015) shows that the state was the sole large-scale employer in Greece and half of the urban population got permanent or sporadic access to the job market through it. The job market was not yet a capitalist one and the state was the sole employer providing modern waged labor contracts. Industrial waged laborers were therefore very few and there were no organized labor unions, no protests for labor rights or other organized, class based claims regarding labor. The state was a rather privileged field that everyone sought to have access to as it could provide a stable cash income and a radical improvement in livelihood. Further, until the dawn of 20th century, it was also the exclusive agent of modernity. Since that time, it has been a common perception that becoming a civil servant is an employment move that can solve an individual's economic struggles.[21] The rural to urban migrants who sought employment in the city had very few regular employment opportunities outside the public sector and, according to Patronis' figures (2015), one fourth of the working population was dependent on the public sector in 1870, with the rest being occupied

[21] The Greek folk expression that people often use to describe the condition of being a civil servant is 'minas mpainei, minas vgainei, vreksei, hionisei, o misthos mpainei' (Month comes in, month comes out, [whether] it rains [or] snows, the salary comes in), which means that one does not have to worry about one's monthly income as it flows every month. This folk expression has its roots in the peasant background and habitus of rural to urban migrants.

mostly in agriculture and to a lesser extent in self-employment, ratios that remained unchanged until 1923.

During the interwar period, established patterns of making a living changed. The peasant populations who sought to improve their livelihoods in the cities had to compete with the large migrant populations who settled in the centers of the major cities. In many instances the question of Greekness - which was tied to nationality and citizenship, along with the privileges these entailed - was raised, and the newly arrived refugees faced social racism and exclusion (Clark 2006; Hirschon, 1989). The state was faced with the task of socially, culturally and economically assimilating more than a million displaced people, and finding employment for them. The job market for the growing industrial sector became very competitive among unskilled workers who sold their labor cheap. The upper class shifted their interests to industrial investment as they had at their disposal a large, desperate labor force with no established working rights, no class conscience and a political system which, easily manipulated, favored their interests. Industrial capitalism was thus established late in Greece, which up until the 20th century it had a pre-modern, pre-capitalist economic base. In 1926 the heavy industrial sector was almost non-existent (Agriantoni, 2011; Tzokas, 2002) and, as Pizanias (1993) shows, due to the lack of waged labor, during the interwar period, impoverished populations in the cities developed self-employment as a survival strategy. Street vendors sold items that people needed, from food to commodities, and various service providers (transportation, construction, on-demand labor, tailors,[22] waiters) literally invented themselves in order to fulfill various social and modern needs, thereby becoming what we might call petty entrepreneurs. The state could not control these grassroots economic activities and self-employment was to a great extent unregulated. In many instances, when the task required it, they employed others (kin and friends) in varied working patterns (Pizanias, 1993). In this way, they created informal co-operatives to adapt to the lack of regular employment and resource scarcity. This so called informal economic sector proved life saving and ensured the social reproduction of the impoverished masses in the cities. More interestingly, this informal economic sector was produced *by* capitalist development. It is therefore not the case, as mainstream economists (Lewis, 1954; ILO, 1972) argue, that the

[22] Women who owned a sewing machine.

informal economic sector in undeveloped countries fades as soon as industrialization is completed.

In 1928, a project to settle refugee populations in rural areas by providing them with land ownership rights so that they could cultivate the land was implemented. More than 140,000 families benefitted from the project and settled in rural areas of Greece that had previously been inhabited and exploited by Muslims. In the cities, the state created settlement schemes and provided loans to develop small, usually cooperative workshops and small (in terms of employment) production units (Patronis, 2015: 167). The government promoted cooperativism as a way of tackling the refugee crisis, and various cooperatives emerged. However, as Mazower (2002)notes, most of the cooperatives' members did not develop mutual responsibility and a sense of solidarity, rather, they saw the cooperative as an instrument for extracting credit from the banks (Patronis & Mavreas 2004). Another major economic development was the foundation of the Greek Central Bank in 1927, which tied the Greek drachma to the gold standard. The Bank was in fact a private institution, its shareholders were unknown to the public and the state could not hold more than 35 percent of its shares. Until 1927, the National Bank of Greece (NBG) counted amongst its duties the printing of money, and its was argued that since it was also a commercial bank, it should not operate at that institutional level and design monetary policy.

In 1929, the Agricultural Bank of Greece was founded in order to provide loans to farmers, while the National Bank of Greece dominated the industrial and manufacturing sector. During the Great Depression, the Agricultural Bank issued loans equal to 1.3 billion drachmas to support agriculture (Stefanides, 2006). In addition, in 1929, EOT, the Greek Tourism Organization was founded and it attracted tourists from all over the world who came to enjoy Greek summers (Tzokas, 2002). Last but not least, between 1928 and 1932, 3167 new schools were built all over Greece (ibid). In 1929, Venizelos foresaw that Communist and Anarchist ideas would appeal to the emerging urban proletariat.[23] As a result, he passed a special legislative act known as the *Idionymon* which prosecuted those who tried to apply or express ideas that could pose a threat to the established liberal democracy.[24] Strikes and unionization

[23] Indicative of industrial advance of Greece was the foundation of Seke (The Socialist Labor Party of Greece) in 1918, the period in which a proletariat first appears in Greece.

[24] Interestingly, two of Venizelos' major political collaborators, Papanastasiou and Kafantaris, suggested including fascists in the *Idionymon*, an idea that Venizelos refused, probably because he was in diplomatic negotiations with

were regarded as acts that threatened social cohesion and by 1930, most workers' organizations had been banned or dissolved. Hence unions and protest became illegal, and this was the first legal act against the left-wing in Greece (Mazower, 1992). Venizelos was after all a liberal influenced by French and British political philosophers of liberalism, and he wanted to modernize Greece according to western principles of liberal democracy and using Britain and France's capitalist economic development as models. For example, anticommunism was very well established in Britain, given that the Russian Revolution and Stalin's plans had constituted the most important threat to their global domination.

The effects of the Great Depression, a consequence of the 1929 U.S. crisis, became evident in Greece in 1932. Economic growth once again ceased and a fourth declaration of sovereign default became inevitable. Venizelos' government took measures such as devaluing the drachma by 60 percent in order to boost exports of tobacco and raisins, and to promote domestic self-sufficiency by boosting production and limiting imports. For instance, in 1924, two thirds of national wheat needs were fulfilled by imports while in 1932, Greece had become self-sufficient (Tsouflidis, 2015; Agrıantoni & Panselina, 2003). Moreover, the government refused to pay foreign creditors and in April 1932, when national debt had risen above 70 percent of the government budget, declared a default (Tsoulfidis & Zoumpoulakis, 2016; Tsolufidis, 2015) which prompted Venizelos to lose the following elections.

Between 1933 and 1936, Greece experienced three military coups and five governments led by the royalist Laikó Kómma (People's Party or Popular Party). In 1935, a heavily rigged plebiscite to reinstall the monarchy was held, and the Royalists won it with 98 percent of the vote. A year later, after failing to form a government, one of the main representatives of the Royalists, Ioannis Metaxas, organized a coup and installed a totalitarian regime that was in tune with other southern European authoritarian regimes such as in Mussolini's in Italy, Franco's in Spain and Salazar's in Portugal. Metaxas was a military officer and a Royalist who had taken an active role against the Venizelists during the National Schism of 1917. He banned political parties, prosecuted the Communists (using Venizelos' *Idionymon*) and imposed harsh

the Italians who were still occupying the islands of the Dodecanese .

censorship.[25] In 1937, industrial production increased by 51 percent (Tsoulfidis & Zoumpoulakis, 2016), a development that was led by Greek magnates such as Mpodosakis, the patriarch of Greek capitalism. Despite his ideological affiliation with Franco, Metaxas did not hesitate to collude with Stalin and provided large quantities of ammunition to the anti-Franco forces in Barcelona, thereby securing massive profits for the regime and for PYR-CAL (ΠΥΡ-ΚΑΛ) a Greek ammunitions factory that Mpodosakis had founded. Under the Metaxas regime, the slogan 'Patris, Thriskeia, Oikogenia' (Fatherland, Religion, Family) was widely used in order to describe the three pillars of Greek society. Gazi (2011) examines the history of the slogan which has been used by extreme right wing parties and regimes since 1880. It links the Greek nation with religion and tries to recuperate the idea of the lost Fatherland that was expressed in the Great Idea. Family was understood in the patriarchal sense, with fixed gender roles. The use of the slogan not only pointed to the three terms' moral values, but was also used in order to highlight that these were undermined by traitors, enemies of the nation.

The Second World War and the Greek Civil War (1940 – 1949)

Greece's capitalist elites were strongly Anglophile, and even though Metaxas himself was ideologically closer to Mussolini and Hitler, when Mussolini demanded the right to occupy strategic Greek posts, he refused. After this, Greece entered the Second World War on the side of the Allies. Metaxas was proclaimed a national hero for having said the famous *Oxi* (No) to Mussolini that led to the heroic victory of the Greeks against the powerful Italian army in 1940, generating international admiration for the Greek resistance and fueling the national pride of Greeks all over the globe. He died in January 1941, a few months before the German invasion. Metaxas remains a controversial figure in Greek history. Greece entered the Second World War and suffered great losses under its occupation by Nazi forces. For instance, despite being a very small country, the number of the human casualties it suffered was larger than those suffered by Britain. Apart from the major losses in human lives, the country's wealth was either dispossessed

[25] Many books were banned, including Plato's *Republic,* Goethe, Freud and Shaw (Petrakis, 2011; Koestler, 1969). Under his regime, IKA, the social insurance institute (which exists to this today) was founded, and he established the eight hour working day and founded the National Labor Service, for which Mussolini's regime served as a model.

by occupying forces or was completely destroyed by the war. Modernization was once again at a halt and worse still, whatever developments had been achieved to date were, in one way or another, destroyed.

The German occupation was another collective traumatic experience, which this time took place within Greece's borders. My elderly informants, those who were more than 80 years old, still have vivid memories from this period. Ordinary people's armed resistance to the occupation forces, which had been the first such resistance during the course of WWII, faced severe repression by the Germans who sought to exploit Greece's economy by any means necessary. Hitler's policy on Greece was based on retaliatory measures, and to that end, a company named Deridges was formed with branches in all major Greek cities. Its purpose was to requisition the economy's assets in order to sustain the German army. The plunder of all Greece's productive means resulted in the Great Famine of 1941 in Athens, when more than 40.000 people died. Overall, it is estimated that by the end of the occupation, more than 300.000 people had died of hunger and malnutrition (Mazower, 2008; Voglis, 2006: 22-24), and the industrial sector was severely destroyed as was major infrastructure such as roads, ports and bridges. The Jewish population of Greece was decimated with only around 10,000 out of the 77,000 surviving, either by going into hiding or by joining the resistance (Munoz, 2018). The Germans forced the collaborationist Greek government to issue a compulsory war loan of 471 million reichsmarks to Germany, and to pay the costs of occupation, in this way producing hyperinflation.

The Greek resistance was formed mainly around EAM (The National Liberation Front) and ELAS (The Greek Resistance Army) led by communist guerillas. Both however also had a base of non-communist support. EDES (The National Republican Greek League) was formed later and consisted of liberal Venizelists. They both fought on the same side and faced the so called *Tagmata Asfaleias* (Security Battalions) of the Nazi collaborators who were hunting communists just as Metaxas had done in the years before the war. Moreover, at this point Bulgaria seized the opportunity to fulfill the revanchist dream it had harbored since 1913, and occupied most parts of Greek Macedonia and Thrace. By 1943, as the war came to an end, these groups were fighting each other and preparing the ground for the Greek Civil war that followed. When the war was over, Greece became the site for a struggle between the superpowers of the

era. Britain supported EDES, while the Soviet Union dreamed of installing communism in the Balkan region and furthering its influence in the peninsula. Since EAM-ELAS was the strongest military formation of the time, and had great popular support - mostly by non-communists, Churchill feared that Greece might elect a communist government and the incidents known as Dekemvriana therefore occurred.[26]

When the Germans left the country in October 1944, it was agreed that all parties that had taken part in the resistance struggle would be included in the government as well as in the formation of a new national army under the command of the British. Britain's commander Ronald Scobie demanded a unilateral disarmament of EAM-ELAS on December 1st. EAM-ELAS's ministers resigned and called a rally on December 3rd in Athens to demand the punishment of Nazi collaborators and the retraction of Scobie's order. More than 200.000 people participated in the peaceful demonstration. Nonetheless the British and the Greek government, in order to prevent the possibility of Greece becoming a People's republic (Gerolymatos, 2017), released many of the imprisoned Greek Nazi collaborators and positioned them in key roles in the police and army. These forces ordered the crowd to dismantle and 28 people were killed and hundreds wounded during the ensuing repression. Athens fell under British occupation, even as the majority of Greeks thought of the British as liberators and allies.[27] This caused a direct armed confrontation between EAM and the government and later with British forces in Athens. EAM-ELAS managed to take over Athens by mid-December 1944 and the British, being outnumbered, were forced to flee. The armed conflict in Athens with the British did not escalate outside of the Greek capital. Eventually EAM-ELAS could no longer hold Athens and signed an agreement to disarm known as the Varkiza Treaty. At the time the country was in a state of anarchy with numerous anti-communist gangs roving Athens and hunting communists and their supporters. The historian Dunny Gluckstein (2012) suggests that the British deliberately delayed German

[26] See https://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/nov/30/athens-1944-britains-dirty-secret (last accessed 3/12/2019)

[27] "The 1944 December uprising and 1946-49 civil war period infuses the present," says the leading historian of these events, André Gerolymatos, "because there has never been a reconciliation. In France or Italy, if you fought the Nazis, you were respected in society after the war, regardless of ideology. In Greece, you found yourself fighting – or imprisoned and tortured by – the people who had collaborated with the Nazis, on British orders. There has never been a reckoning with that crime, and much of what is happening in Greece now is the result of not coming to terms with the past." (source https://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/nov/30/athens-1944-britains-dirty-secret).

withdrawal in order to prevent the liberation of Greece by ELAS. They did so, he writes, both for symbolic reasons and because the Germans would have handed their weapons over to ELAS. However, most of the countryside had already been liberated by EAM-ELAS before the allied troops had reached them. As a result of these events, Greek society was devastated, highly polarized and terrorized by the armed conflicts that continued to occur. The Greek Communist Party had followed Stalin's order not to engage in armed conflict with the British, yet EAM-ELAS did not follow, especially given the ongoing attacks on communists by the other side's armed forces.

In 1946, the royalist United Nationalist Party won the elections and in the same year they held a plebiscite on whether to keep monarchy, which they won. This move caused an escalation in the war and ELAS-EAM formed the Democratic Army of Greece (Dimokratikos Stratos Ellados – DSE) which had its operation bases outside national borders (battalions in Egypt, the Middle East and Northern Epirus) had support from Albania, Bulgaria and Yugoslavia and expected help from the Soviet Union. On the other side, the National Army of the Greek government was backed up by the British at first and then by the USA (Gerolymatos, 2017). With the support of its western Allies, both in terms of weapons and the definition of tactics, and helped by the political split between Stalin and Tito (Service, 2010), the government Army gained decisive ground. The war ended in 1949 when the National Army, backed by the US air force, dropped Napalm bombs on the mountains of Pindos, Grammos and Vitsi,[28] the last remaining strongholds of the Democratic Army. Thus Greece acquired a new protector, the USA and, as various historians suggest, the Greek civil war was the first act and the initiation of the Cold War between the USA and the USSR (Gerolymatos, 2017).

[28] The first use of Napalm bombs was in the mountains of Pindos. The Greek civil war was a military test and experiment for the emerging US hegemony.

2.2 Greece in the Post War Period (1950-1974)

The Advance of Greek Capitalism (1950s – 1973)

The pre-war history of Greece is characterized by significant political developments while at the same time, economic progress and modernization were disrupted. In the post war era, the country experienced sudden economic growth that was facilitated by its commitment to capitalist development. The Marshall Plan which the USA elaborated to help Greece recover had tremendous impact on developing advanced capitalist structures. In 1950, The drachma was tied with the US dollar and devalued by 50 percent, thereby boosting tourism and foreign investment (Thomopoulos, 2012). By 1952, although the economy had recovered to pre-war levels, Greece remained a poor country. In the early 1950s, most of the population lived in rural areas and towns with less than 10,000 inhabitants, a situation that was about to change. Industrialization went mostly hand in hand with urbanization as Greeks began to be able to aspire for a better life. The war reparation project boosted the national job market while the factories that started to be built provided diverse employment opportunities to the country's impoverished and devastated populations. The first heavy industries and large capital investment appeared in Athens, specifically in Piraeus, and in the area around Thessaloniki. Until the postwar era there was a dense concentration of industry around the two biggest cities which was directly connected with internal migration and with the development of these cities at the expense of the rest of Greece (Labrianidis & Papamichos, 1990; Patronis, 2015). Critical developments in the industrial sector were firstly the foundations of ΔΕΗ (Dimosia Epiheirisi Ilektrismou – The Public Power Corporation) in 1950, the Scaramagkas Shipyards and the oil refinery owned by the magnate Stavros Niarchos. The Public Power Corporation was critical for providing power to households all over Greece and it played a significant role in the modernization of households. Moreover, it enabled the installation of heavy industry factories as it was able to supply them with adequate energy. The Scaramagkas shipyards and the oil refinery upgraded the position of Piraeus which became the most important port in the Eastern Mediterranean. From 1948 to 1962, during a period of economic stabilization, the state created various incentives and funding schemes that promoted industrial growth and took into account the relocation and housing needs of the mobile work force which mostly consisted of unskilled workers who had previously been agricultural

workers and/or small land owners in their hometowns and villages. In spite of the apparent 'progressiveness' of these incentives, the implementation of an industrial growth model (Pagano, 1993) was very confused and further enhanced uneven regional development (Labrianidis & Papamichos, 1990). The Athens region absorbed the major capitalist investments and absorbed Greece's cultural capital as its population increase had been radical. From 1.3 million in 1951, it grew to 1.8 million in 1961 and to 2.5 million in 1971, nearly 30 percent of the total population (Kotzamanis, 1997: 5, Table 1). The concentration of the general population in Athens condemned small and medium-sized provincial cities to developing mono-cultural economic bases in order to serve the national model of development. Athens and Thessaloniki became the only university cities where graduates could find adequate employment relevant to their skills, while smaller cities could not sustain the country's emerging human capital. Uneven regional development led to abandonment and emptying of rural areas as people had no other alternative to improve their living conditions but to move to the big city centers or abroad.

Greek society, both in terms of its cultural dimensions and traditional values, started to change and adapt to the principles of modern life. In 1954, women were allowed to vote, and in 1956, for the first time in Greek history, women were elected to the Greek parliament. In fact, the first woman who was appointed as a minister in the Karamanlis government was Lina Tsaldari. Both her father, Spyros Lambrou, and her husband, Ioannis Tsaldaris, had been Prime Minister in the past. Indeed a vast gender inequality gap existed that was reproduced by the model of development being pursued, that was based on male income and female reproductive labor. The model of the male bread winner was the established cultural and structural norm of household organization and the idea that women served the nation through their reproductive household labor (Mazower, 2000) was normalized. Delayed capitalist development created a strange marriage between modernity and tradition, where in many instances, modernity produced and reproduced pre-modern aspects of social life and also naturalized them. While adhering to a liberal economic orientation, the political system remained deeply conservative in terms of facilitating cultural change and progress. During the 1960s, a large movement of male economic migration to West Germany took place to fill the need for industrial laborers after the

construction of the Berlin wall prevented migrant workers from Eastern block countries from entering West Germany.

The pace of capitalist expansion and economic growth in the 1960s were so rapid that they provoked radical changes in the political geography of Greece which the state and its structures were unable to control and regulate – both at the level of capitalist development and also of grassroots practices and initiatives. Pre-modern social structures were reproduced in urban environments and kinship played a significant role in the structural organization of everyday life. In many instances, entire extended families would follow younger male members and move, in phases, to the city. In this period, a boom in construction occurred to fulfill the increased need for housing and since no state-led housing policy existed, illegal construction of houses was tolerated and in many cases encouraged. Despite its informal and extralegal nature, the housing construction sector nevertheless contributed to boosting economic growth. Urban plans were continually readjusted to include new residential areas of sprawl urban expansion. As I show in Chapter 1, Chalkida was a typical example of that process, a fact confirmed by my informants' life histories and socio-economic backgrounds. Rural to urban migration was an intergenerational project of upward mobility that was supported by the pre-modern structure of the extended family. In the 1960s, child labor shrank significantly, yet it did not disappear. Most adolescent males (and many of my male informants, today over 50) of the lower classes worked in a kind of apprenticeship to support family income which itself consisted of multiple, usually kin-based sources of earning such as family businesses, agriculture and waged labor.

Economic growth also stabilized political life, especially after the economic recovery in 1952 and the accession of Greece to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). The aftermath of the civil war had placed Greece outside of the sphere of Soviet influence and the left was widely accused of having caused the civil war. Although the left was ostracized from political life, in 1951, the EDA (Enomeni Dimokratiki Aristera – United Democratic Left) was founded. It was the only legal leftwing party and become a significant player, despite being excluded from decision making processes. In 1958 it won 22 percent of the vote and became the main opposition party. New politicians, who did not come from military circles, emerged such as the prime minister Kontantinos Karamanlis of the ERE party. As there were no financial problems with resources flowing in from the US, foreign policy was the main issue that troubled

the government. The Turkish state's hostility towards the Greek minority in Istanbul and the pogrom of September 1955, as well as the Cyprus dispute were the hot topics of the day with the potential to threaten Karamanlis' government.

The governing ERE (Radical Nationalist Union) party was the descendant of the Popular Party which had become hegemonic after 1932, and which held conservative political views on social issues. The rise of the EDA in the 1958 elections concerned the government, the crown and the USA, so Karamanlis had to take action in order to politically isolate the EDA. He was given funding to carry out a propaganda project against the left through the Greek Intelligence Organization. He funded the creation of secret organizations whose mission was to collect information and devise measures for fighting communism and the left (Stefanides, 2011). The Cold War era was a critical period for the nation formation process, and Karamanlis was a confidant of the USA both in terms of geopolitics and also of economic policy. Royalist conservatives and liberals excluded the left from the national narrative, as they had already done with non-normative political and national subjects in the past (Muslim Greek speaking populations or non Greek Orthodox). The displacement of the Greeks who fled the pogrom in Istanbul sent another shock through national identity since most of them were bilingual and lacked the Greek national habitus and collective experiences and understandings that had developed within national borders.

In 1962, Greece became an affiliated member of the European Economic Community (EEC), which had been a major aspiration within liberal ideology in Greece. The Common European market was thereafter open to Greece, a fact which empowered export oriented capitalist investment in the industrial sector. The period from 1962 to 1973 was one of unprecedented industrial accumulation through large scale metallurgical, chemical and textile factories along with investments in the energy sector. During that time, industrial investors acquired great political leverage and were able to influence state bodies to act in their favor. A number of large industrial investments by foreign and domestic capital require special mention. One is Pechiney, a French business in the region of Vioitia, which focused on aluminum production through the exploitation of the nearby bauxite-rich mountains, completely transforming an area which in the past had been used exclusively by small shepherd

communities. Pechiney's extractive practices caused severe damage to the natural environment around the bauxite mining and processing zones and changed the way in which local people made a living.[29] Pechiney's project was endowed with a discourse that promoted it as part of a masterplan for more even regional development and the relocation of factories to zones outside the urban centers (Labrianidis & Papamichos, 1990). After Pechiney, other large aluminum plants[30] were established in Greece, which made aluminum one of the country's main exports (Kostis, 2013). The other major industrial venture was the foundation of Esso-Pappas oil refinery by Tom Pappas, a Greek-American businessman with a shadowy involvement in the country's internal politics. His initial investment was in a large oil refinery unit in Thessaloniki, along with a number of smaller fertilizer factories. Another significant industrial enterprise was Larko, which was involved in the production of ferronickel. It was founded in 1963 by the Greek magnate Mpodosakis and later became one of Europe's major ferronickel producers, owning mines all over Greece, including on the island of Evia. Along with the industrial restructurings that took place and the regional development 'plans', several waves of internal migration followed that co-determined industrial activity, shaping the country's modern industrial landscape (Katohianou, 1994; Kanelopoulos, 1995; Kotzamanis, 1990).

The 1963 national elections were won by the EK (Enosis Kentrou – Union of the Center), a liberal party led by Georgios Papandreou (the former prime minister who had resigned after the Dekemvriana events of 1944). Georgios Papandreou's government put forward socialist policies and proposed a restructuring of the labor sector, a fact that troubled large industrial owners. Pappas, who had signed an agreement with the previous government to monopolize the national fuel market, used his contacts in the US government to subvert Papandreou's government. As Drousiotis (2002) reveals in his book, Tom Pappas admitted that he bribed several governmental members of parliament to defect in order to cause the government to fall. The political instability

[29] In 1987, Greek National Television produced a documentary on the effects of the Pechiney plant that was entitled 'The Valley of Fluorine.' Fluorine is a by product of the aluminum production process and its disposal causes great damage to the natural environment. Near the factory, Pechiney built a small town called Aspra Spitia to host the workers and their families. Indeed this small town in the middle of nowhere, inhabited by industrial workers and their families, is a subject of great anthropological interest. The documentary can be found here: https://archive.ert.gr/72640/

[30] Indeed as I describe in Chapter 1, several of my informants either had worked or still worked in the aluminum plants that were later founded near Chalkida, including in ELVAL (Greek Aluminum Industry) which is now owned by the Belgian multinational Viohalco.

created by the defections led to the installation of the military regime known as Junta, on April 21st 1967. One of the members of parliament who were bribed was Konstantinos Mitsotakis who, in 1989, was elected prime minister of Greece.

The Junta (1967-1974)

During the junta, the industrial growth model was accelerated and national and foreign capital invested in industry, while spatial concentration continued together with increases in regional disparities in the distribution of income (Leontidou, 2006). Pappas managed to monopolize the internal fuel market and acted as a link between the Junta and the USA. The industrial growth rate reached a peak in the late 1960s and during that time the Coca Cola Company invested in Greece. Like Pinochet's Chile, Greece became an attractive country for capital investment, even under a totalitarian regime. Indeed, liberal economists from the Chicago school, describing the Chilean Miracle and praising Pinochet's regime, showed that capitalist growth performs better in totalitarian regimes (Friedman & Friedman, 1998). Another major development that played a critical role in economic growth was the private construction sector, and in particular the *antiparochi* (see Chapter 1). The Junta drew up a plan to create road infrastructure all over the country using the Greek Army's construction units. Public transport and the railroads remained significantly underdeveloped in Greece since there had been a vast expansion of the private automobile market after 1970s. In the 1970s, material indicators of upward mobility and success centered around the possession of modern equipment such TV sets, home telephones and electric appliances and of course, private cars.

During the Junta, the regime's political rivals were imprisoned, tortured and exiled, all with the consent of the USA. The USA found in the Junta a naive, inexperienced and easily pliable puppet government that could be exploited in order to promote its own geopolitical agenda in the critical area of the Middle-East (Miller, 2009). The Church also supported the regime which imposed censorship on the press and media and prohibited the circulation of various popular music albums. Civil rights were reduced to a minimum and Greece became isolated once again from the on-going socio-cultural revolutions in Europe and the USA.

According to the regime's ideological doctrine, the modern ideas of socialism, education and women's rights, as well as rock music, were threats to social order. In many respects, the Junta closely resembled the preceding regime of Metaxas, whose slogan 'Patris, Thriskeia, Oikogenia' (Fatherland, Religion, Family) it frequently referred to in framing its ideology. As a result, it had the unconditional support of the leadership of the Greek Orthodox Church (Gazi, 2011).

The Junta fell in 1974, after its failure to resolve the foreign policy problem raised by Cyprus' invasion by Turkey. Apart from the students' uprising on November 17th 1973 at the Polytechnic school in Athens, which was violently suppressed by the police and armed forces, who killed 21 people, there had not been any serious acts of resistance in the seven years of its lifetime. An artful act of passive resistance was carried out by school students who, obliged to listen to a speech by the dictator Georgios Papadopoulos, pretended to be so overwhelmed that they did not stop applauding, in that way preventing him from speaking. During the dictatorship, more than 8000 people were arrested of whom an estimated 3500 were tortured, 6188 suspected communists and political opponents were imprisoned or exiled to remote Greek islands (Blum, 2014). Citizens had no right to assembly, political parties were banned, and there was constant open surveillance of public spaces and of people's activities. While films and rock concerts representing the dominant cultures of the UK and the USA were allowed, citizens were nonetheless living under a police state in which a culture of fear was widespread.

The Dictatorship faced little resistance and in propaganda terms tried to present and justify itself as a modernizing force that aimed to protect ordinary people from the Communist threat and 'cure' the nation from those elements that were holding it back. It therefore implemented large infrastructure projects and because of the expansion of the industrial sector, unemployment fell dramatically all over the country. Papadopoulos' popular image as a benefactor of the poor was backed by the populist tactic of writing off agricultural loans of up to 100,000 drachmas. Public infrastructure as well as the intensification of industrialization provided diverse employment opportunities and increased living standards significantly. However, the unregulated growth of the industrial and touristic sectors ravaged the natural environment and condemned whole areas with pollution. Greece's largest industrial area, the triangle of Inofyta - Schimatari – Tanagra (see Chapter 1) was established in this period, an area that attracted sprawl and unregulated industrial activity especially after the ban on new units in

Athens in 1980s and the incentives for old factories to relocate and upgrade their old polluting equipment. As an informant told me, when he started working in one of the aluminum factories near Chalkida at the age of 20, his salary was almost double that of his father who was a low ranking civil servant. During the Junta years, the great demand for industrial workers provided many peasant populations with the opportunity to change and pursue a career in the numerous small and heavy industry factories that were founded.

2.3 The Metapolitefsi[31] (1974 – 2009)

The re-establishment of democracy in 1974 was followed by a referendum in which the people voted to abolish the monarchy;[32] thus the Third Hellenic Republic was born. The republic was defined by a bipartisan model rotating around two large parties, Pasok (The Panhellenic Socialist Movement) led by the son of Georgios Papandreou, Andreas, and ND or Nea Dimokratia (New Democracy), a successor of ERE. Although in 1975 the leaders of the military coup were tried and imprisoned, still the police and military continued to be dominated, both in the higher and lower ranks, by pro-fascists, supporters of the dictatorship who were left untouched (Katris, 1979). Karamanlis was considered a balancing force and the face of a kind of general acceptance that would not overly shake the state and army's established order, which was accessible only to right wing political subjects. In 1979, Greece was on the verge of becoming a full member of the EEC and was therefore about to rescale its economy to meet European standards. Karamanlis signed Greece's accession to the EEC and then, in 1980, resigned. The elections of 1981 were won by Pasok and Andreas Papandreou, who had tremendous appeal for the masses. The 13.5 percent vote that Pasok got in the national elections of 1974 rose to 25 percent in 1977, and in 1981 it won the elections with 48 percent of the votes.

Andreas Papandreou was a charismatic leader who appealed to the general public's discontent with the hegemonic powers and their neocolonial interventions that had caused great suffering in Greece and elsewhere. He strove to incorporate a large section of the population that had remained isolated from social and economic progress. He also managed to win over voters from the KKE (the Greek Communist Party) and to reshape the Greek left which was now, for the first time in Greece's history, in power. Thus in 1981, the Greek state officially recognized EAM as part of the national resistance and allowed the civil war's exiled leftists to return. Pasok and Papandreou's discourse promoted nationalistic themes which made him appealing to the military and police as well. The police force was restructured and the archives and personal records that they had been collecting since 1936, of thousands of Greeks who were suspected of holding communist ideas, were shredded. This development opened up the state to leftists who

[31] *Metapolitefsi* in Greek refers to the transformation of the political system and the birth of 'The Third Hellenic Democracy' that was signaled by the abolition of the monarchy.

[32] The precise result was 70 percent against and 30 percent for the monarchy.

had previously been banned from acquiring jobs and administrative positions if they did not sign a formal letter of repentance that denounced their political beliefs and ideology (Carabot & Sfikas, 2004). Moreover, he renegotiated the terms of Greece's accession to the EEC, which he partially achieved by acquiring the IMPs (Integrated Mediterranean Programs). In 1985, the IMPs were established by the EEC following Papandreou's initiative, and he did not hesitate to threaten Jacques Delors, the newly elected president of the European Commission, with a veto on Spain and Portugal's accession to the EEC. This was the first time that a Greek prime minister stood up to European elites to defend Greek social interests. IMPs were later used in order to facilitate the integration of semi-peripheral countries of the European south (Spain, Portugal and Greece) in the EEC's enlargement project (Clogg, 1988).

Andreas Papandreou's political discourse managed to unite diverse social and political forces that longed for profound social, cultural and political change. During the two consecutive Pasok governments (1981-1985 and 1985-1989), heavy industries belonging to the country's economic elite became public or were rescued by the state following its socialist agenda. Pyrcal, Larko, the Scaramagas Shipyards, Esso-Pappas, Peraiki-Patraiki and AGET-Heracles (a leading cement factory) were among them. Numerous labor unions were founded in this period and employment rights were granted to workers in order for the country to comply with European standards. Noteworthy here is the restructuring of health care and the foundation of the universal national health care system which, according to a World Health Organization report in 2000, ranked 14th worldwide and 11th in terms of service, leaving Germany and the UK (who ranked 25th and 18th respectively) behind (WHO, 2000).

During the 1980s, social aspirations began to be geared toward social progress rather than rational economic growth based on Weberian principles. Many Greeks first gained access to higher education, including many women who managed to enter the job market and political life on equal terms with men. On the one hand, women's entry into the labor market restructured intra household relationships and on the other, it started to de-naturalize their apparently predetermined fate which was tied with marriage and housekeeping, and thus economic dependence on men. Yet in many instances, reproductive labor tasks were and still are unequally distributed in modern households, and women, whether working outside the home or not, usually

undertake most of them. Because of women's proletarianization, many public nursery schools and kindergartens were founded as the modern solution to child rearing. In addition, civil marriages were instituted late in Greece, in 1982, though they would only become popular in the 2000s. Moreover dowry, which had remained enshrined in Greek law, was cancelled in 1983.

Between 1974 and 1990, public debt increased from 25 to 80 percent of GDP, yet over the same period, inflation also fell significantly, from 30 to 13 percent (Konsolas, 2017). 80 percent of total public debt was owed to Greek banks that were under state control. Public expenses rose greatly to 50 percent of GDP due to the government's socialist policies on developing welfare structures. The socialist project was funded by national credit and not foreign loans (Varela, 2002). The 1980s signaled the beginning of a period of over-consumption for the low and middle classes who could now fulfill not simply their basic needs but also their desire for upward mobility. The drachma was devaluated twice in order to battle inflation and to boost consumption of nationally produced goods, as well as exports and tourism, a strategy which once again proved successful. Upward mobility was established as a life aspiration that could be achieved through hard work, thus an era of abundance was initiated. The working classes indulged in over consumption and conspicuous consumption practices, enjoying various the privileges and benefits of socialist welfare. Industrial growth followed the western trends of de-industrialization and therefore became negative. At the same time, a huge expansion of the service sector occurred, and this was dominated by small and medium-sized firms that operated at the local scale. The commercial markets and the retail sector in small and medium-sized cities such as Chalkida was almost exclusively dominated by petty local entrepreneurs and retailers. The first supermarket chains and department stores were only to be found in Athens and Thessaloniki.

Papandreou's governments have frequently been characterized as populist, and that populism is suggested in the fact that many Greeks referred to him by his first name, Andreas, even when he was prime minister. He had a personal charisma which was reflected in the international recognition he received and the various initiatives he took to promote global ideals of peace and prosperity, all of which even his political rivals could not help but acknowledge. His political presence gave Greece international prestige as a country that was concerned with global problems such as imperialism and the need for nuclear disarmament (Clogg, 1996). The

populist aspects of his policies can also be seen in the promises of prosperity that were made, and in the expansion of the public sector. Civil servants' salaries increased significantly with Pasok and in the 1990s, becoming a civil servant once again became an aspiration for many. In this sense, the public sector continued to facilitate and reproduce a patron-client culture and indeed to scale it up; from that time, civil servants were guaranteed permanent job positions that ensured their future socio-economic reproduction.

Another significant development were the numerous decentralized public infrastructure projects that rescaled the country's political geography (Hadjimichalis, 1987). After 1978, an increasing number of regional incentives led to a geographically more even development model. This was in part due to the materialization of the adverse consequences of inequality in the spatial distribution of population, resources, financial development, cultural activities and so on. It was also a result of the prospect of Greece becoming a full member of the EEC, and specifically, of the fact that EEC policy discouraged almost all state incentives except those concerned with regional development. This fact led to a gradual shift of emphasis in the Greek incentives system towards regional development (Gianitsis, 1983; Vaitsos, 1982). The first incentives of the 1950s, together with those that followed, were non-transparent and very complex, and due to a lack of capital markets, only large and well organized firms could benefit from them. The evaluation of those investment projects and access to such incentives was under the regulation of the banks which at the time were under the tight control of the state (Xanthakis, 1986). The state sought to promote relocation of industries to poorer regions by providing various benefits such as interest-free loans, taxation relief and low cost access to building etc. (Labrinidis & Papamichos 1990: 462-464, Table 1). However, due to a host of factors including irrational administration, confusing laws, complex bureaucracy, corruption and the role of the EEC, the plan was doomed to fail (ibid). Moreover, the state's inability to impose and manage such incentives led to the fostering of unregulated industrial activity that caused severe environmental degradation in major industrial zones.

In 1991, a privatization project was launched and the cement giant AGET-Heracles, which had been public since 1983, was, along with other public assets, privatized. The 1990s were an era of financial capitalism during which most public and private companies sought entry

into national and international stock markets. As soon as the Maastricht Treaty was signed in 1992, EU economic policies were oriented towards monetary union and national economies were therefore placed under restructuring schemes. The fall of the Soviet Union along with the collapse of Yugoslavia and other global geopolitical developments shifted US interests from the Balkans to the Middle East. In 1992, the American government voluntarily closed some of the NATO bases in mainland Greece, while however maintaining the one in Souda bay in Crete, which has always been a major operational base for NATO during wars in the Middle East. In the same year, the dispute over Macedonia's name erupted. This was an event that revitalized nationalistic interpretations, manipulations and justifications of history, and which challenged Greece's national habitus with the prospect of a neighboring country having the same name as the historic region of ancient Macedonia with its exclusively Greek heritage. Massive mobilizations were organized in which priests were at the front lines. Even school teachers, in violation of their code of conduct, urged high school students to take to the streets and join the manifestations. . The political crisis which this foreign affairs incident created led to the fall of the ND government and Pasok's return to power in 1993.

In Greece, until the late 1990s religious belonging was specified on citizens' identity cards. In order to comply with Schengen Treaty standards and the unionization project, Pasok introduced new identity cards. which did not state religion. The Greek Church and extreme right wing organizations saw this as a direct attack on religion and picked up the famous slogan 'Patris, Thriskeia, Oikogeneia' in order, they argued, to prevent the dissolution of Greek national identity within the project of europeanization. The Church, along with a relatively large segment of the conservative opposition and extreme right wing organizations cooperated with each other against the globalization and 'digitalization' that they saw the new millennium as bringing. Protestors employed various conspiracy theories on globalization that spanned from the coming of the age of the Anti-Christ to the EU and US backed Zionist interests of Israel and, as the new millennium approached, these were often endowed with apocalyptic references.[33]

[33] I need to note here that the vast majority of Greek citizens are officially recorded as Christian-Orthodox. The Greek Church has always played an active role in the regulation of public and social life and has accumulated a large amount of tax exempt assets and wealth. Despite capitalist development and modernization, the relationship of the Greek state with religion and the Church continues to enable the latter to hold great economic power and the ability to intervene in and influence political affairs if needed.

Greece entered the Eurozone in 2001, after having met the structural and economic criteria set by the Maastricht Treaty. The devaluation of the drachma by 12 percent in 1998 established the exchange rate 1 euro for 341 drachmas. Entry into the eurozone made imported products cheaper while radically increasing domestic production costs and as a result, both Greek exports and national production and consumption of Greek products declined. As a consequence, many industries merged and delocalized their productive activities abroad. The entrance of Greece into the eurozone happened shortly after the Greek Stock Exchange crash in 2000, and many listed companies had seized the opportunity to gain profits by bubble schemes and then when the bubble exploded they delocalized abroad (see Chapter 1) thereby adhering to the methods of financialized profit extraction. A credit boom occurred that created a false image of abundance and unlimited economic growth. Banking products were aggressively advertised and many Greeks became indebted while public debt increased. In addition, with the adoption of euro as a currency, the prices of everyday goods and the cost of living radically increased. Socio-economic reproduction was based on loans and many households and family firms based their activities on credit that the banks provided. Credit became the instrument of neoliberal governmentality which scaled down to the level of household and family organization (Vaccaro, Hirsch & & Sabaté, 2019). This was due to the overcapitalization of German and French banks and the low rate of the interbank credit market. It was with force that indebtedness and credit entered into the organization of people's livelihoods and the dreams and expectations which the influx of credit itself made possible.

In the years leading up to accession to the eurozone, the Simitis government had to make Greece compliant with the Maastricht Treaty's prerequisites. He presented data to Eurostat that showed great progress on the issue of battling inflation which, in 1999 had fallen to 3 percent, and on reducing both the public deficit and public debt. Purchasing power and living standards improved greatly between 1996 and 2003. Salaries in the public and private sectors grew along with various sector based benefits that increased the state's income from taxation and boosted consumption. However the statistics on debt and public deficit were later revised and questioned both inside and outside of the country. In 2003, the dismantling of the state monopoly in the field of telecommunication enabled the country to enter the information age as for the first time, fast

internet connections became available to businesses and households. OTE, the National Telecommunication Organization, a leading firm in the Balkans, was privatized. In 2004, Nea Dimokratria came back to power and Kostas Karamanlis, Konstantinos Karamanlis' nephew, became prime minister. 2004 to 2008 were the years during which the Greek bubble was inflated to its maximum capacity as credit penetrated every aspect of daily economic life. Indebtedness trickled down to the scale of households and individuals, constituting a new form of economic enslavement. In 2008, Greece's GDP reached a record high of 354.5 billion USD, however Karamanlis was pressed to impose mild austerity measures which were met with great disappointment by the people. In the aftermath of the financial crisis in 2007, Greece was entering a recession.

Karamanlis resigned and declared early elections in 2009. The bad omens in the global economy and the discontent his policies had caused in the social body assured Pasok's victory, under the leadership of George A. Papandreou, son and grandson of two former prime ministers. Papandreou claimed that 'lefta ypathoun' (there is money, or money exists). He did so as a way of addressing the worries of many Greeks who, since the 1950s, had experienced continuous improvement of their economic situation, with the majority never having lived through a recession, with the exception of a few minor crises.

2.4 Modernity in the Years of Non-Development (2010 – 2015)

After the global financial crash, the banks stopped providing new loans. As a result, all productive activities that were based on credit were halted. This had a tremendous impact on the construction sector that had been the Greek economy's driving force since the 1960s. George Papandreou initially tried to revert the previous ND government's self-imposed austerity and fulfill his government's promises. Yet at the 2010 Davos summit, he agreed to introduce austerity measures to control foreign debt and the public deficits that had appeared. The great popular enthusiasm for the new government (which was probably due to its bringing back memories of the Andreas Papandreou government) was replaced with disappointment. From 2010, when the first memorandum agreement was signed, till 2017, fourteen austerity packages were introduced. These included numerous cuts in pensions, salaries and benefits, as well as cuts in public expenditure within the provisioning sector and a radical increase in taxation on lower incomes. Austerity measures firstly targeted the public sector and consisted in wage reductions and pension cuts, coupled with the neoliberal restructuring of the welfare state. Mainstream discourses around crisis centered their critique on the public sector as having contributed to the public deficit. However, the shock that Greeks experienced in 2010-2011 was nothing compared with what happened in 2012 when, in less than six months, unemployment doubled to reach 30 percent (Giannitsis & Zographakis, 2015) which fact forced Papandreou to resign. A 'national unity' government was then formed with MPs from Pasok, Nea Dimokratia and Laos (Laikos Orthodoksos Synagermos – People's Orthodox Alarm), which agreed to appoint the former manager of the Greek Central Bank, Lucas Papademos, prime minister who had as a mission to implement the austerity policies as Troika dictated and prevent Greece from defaulting. Seeing their livelihoods threatened, people organized protests, demonstrations and strikes at the national level, which became a regular part of the everyday reality of crisis.

As in other historical crises, economic failure translated into a total failure of the political system. The current crisis has revealed the shaky foundations of the so-called Greek miracle which began in the 1950s and which produced major reconfigurations and fragmentations of the voting body. The imposition of austerity has not made any positive difference, on the contrary,

the financial situation of businesses and households has been deteriorating. In the May 2012 elections, Pasok collapsed and Nea Demokratia recorded a historic low while Syriza emerged as the major opposition party. At the same time, a neo-Nazi anti-austerity party, Gold Dawn (Chrysi Avgi), gained votes. These results suggest that Greeks have lost faith in the mainstream parties of Pasok and ND, that have ruled since 1974. New parties appeared on the right and for the first time in the *metapolitefsi* period, the right was fragmented into 4 parties with parliamentary representation. The economic crisis had challenged unity amongst the right under the umbrella party of ND[34] which lost a large share of its voters to the new, smaller right wing parties that emerged during the crisis, notably To Potami,[35] Anel[36] and Chrysi Avgi.[37] Because ND and Pasok had too few seats, negotiations for forming a coalition government failed. A new round of elections that polarized the vote around ND and Syriza took place a month later and it led to the formation of a coalition government of ND, Pasok and Dimar.[38] Votes were polarized between pro- and anti-austerity parties and the established bi-partisan order collapsed. Minority coalition governments became the new crisis norm as voters evaluated crisis conditions and sometimes partially or fully blamed those who 'have been governing the country for the past 40 years'.

The pro-austerity coalition government led by Antonis Samaras (2012-2015) applied severe austerity measures and reforms, and the crisis deepened as hope was exhausted and no light shone at the end of the tunnel. In addition, ND tried to win back the extreme right voters it had lost and put forward a nationalistic project of protecting the nation from the invasion of immigrants. Lower and middle class incomes shrank by 50 percent while direct and indirect taxation on lower incomes increased by 337 percent from 2010 to 2014 (Giannitsis &

[34] Antonis Samaras, in his effort to win the Greek right back to ND and prevent a further loss of votes, opened up the party to representing extreme right ideology and rhetoric that appealed to their voters.

[35] To Potami (The River) was a neoliberal party that attracted a younger generation of voters. It incorporated many former MPs who had abandoned ND.

[36] Aneksartitoi Ellines (Independent Greeks) was a right wing anti-austerity party that expressed the traditional popular right ideology of former ND MPs.

[37] Crysi Avgi (Golden Dawn) was a neo-Nazi party appeared with force in Greece. Even though the party openly stated that its ideology was national socialism or *ethnikosocialismos* in Greek, their members denied any relationship with Hitler. The Greek term *ethnikosocialismos* is made up of two elements that have always had positive meanings in Greek society, 'nation and socialism'. These appealed as something good to the masses who were ignorant about how the abbreviation 'Nazi' was coined. The Greek version of Hitler's national socialism proved very useful in attracting the uneducated poor.

[38] Dimokratiki Aristera – A leftist party that was founded in 2010.

Zografakis, 2015). At the same time, unemployment established itself at around 30 percent, one out of three of the working population. In 2010, in order to combat tax evasion and undocumented labor, the state introduced a law that obliged employers to pay their employees via the banking system, and stipulated that any transaction above 500 euros should be conducted through the banks. By 2012, when many private households and businesses had become indebted to the banks, a large portion of the population was blacklisted because they could not repay their loans and thus, could not access the banking system. Exclusion from the banking sector was catastrophic for businesses that were increasingly obliged to operate through the banking system, and small personal and family businesses that were indebted to banks could not survive. Lack of creditworthiness creates a state of exclusion and systemic isolation, and what was occurring to individuals was similar to what was happening to Greeks as a nation and to Greece as a country – for having 'behaved badly,' they were being financially isolated and restrained. The punitive aspects of austerity, as if Greece were the *enfant terrible* of Europe, trickled down to affect indebted firms, households and individuals who had been behaving badly. Society was once again confronted with overtaxation through the new austerity packages. Moreover, tax evasion and informal activity were in the spotlight. Mainstream media referred to tax evasion as a 'national sport' and traced its origins to the Ottoman era when tax evasion was an act of patriotic resistance.[39] In 2014, the cost of tax evasion was estimated as 11 billion euros.[40] During this time, austerity measures aiming to eliminate tax evasion and informal economic activity were introduced while the self-employed (one third of the working population) were publically accused of having created the public deficit. Tax evasion and the informal sector were propagandistically blamed for having caused the public deficit and hence needed to be controlled and minimized. Further, austerity measures systematically ruptured organic solidarity among the different labor sectors, divided people and encouraged accusations that traced crisis in the so called 'pathologies' of the Greece society. These discourses on tax evasion failed to acknowledge

[39] In an interview, Jean Claude Junker explains tax evasion through history and frames it as a national habit that has is originates in the Ottoman state. In this way, he obscures the intervening history of Western hegemonic domination through indebtedness and Greece's military dependence on its 'allies' (the EU, NATO). Source : http://www.politiqueinternationale.com/revue/read2.php?id_revue=135&id=1099&content=texte&search= (Last accessed 11/10/2019).

[40] Source: https://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/world/the-roots-of-the-greek-tragedy-bloated-bureaucracy-and-tax-evasion/article582943/ (Last accessed 11/10/2019).

how austerity measures, overtaxation, bankarization and resource scarcity made tax evasion and informality imperative for survival, and therefore multiplied informal economic arrangements. To the contrary, these discourses, which continue to circulate today, demonized and criminalized those who sell goods and services without receipts, namely the self-employed.[41]

A major social transformation that is unrelated with the current crisis but which in my view played a critical role in the way people interacted and experienced it is the spread of the internet and social media. In 2000, nearly one million Greeks had access to the internet via slow dial-up connections. In 2003, when fast internet became available, that number doubled. From 2004 to 2010, there was significant annual growth of internet penetration amongst the general population, and in 2010, 5 million Greeks had access to the internet, while in 2016, the number of internet users surpassed 7 million.[42] The crisis therefore coincided with the IT revolution. In 2010, social media, and especially Facebook dramatically increased in popularity, and by October 2018, almost 5.5 million Greeks were using Facebook.[43] The internet is by default a bottom up structure that enables peer to peer interaction among users and the bypassing of hierarchical flows and control of information. Thus the general public was exposed to a much broader web of information that included varied sources. As a result, the way in which people were informed and the information they were exposed to was no longer filtered by hegemonic top-down 'traditional' media such as television networks. With public discontent increasing, people's access to online information exposed, to a great extent, the propagandistic nature of most traditional media sources. Today, most Greeks do not trust traditional media anymore because they believe that the media are a means of gaining political influence and manipulating public opinion, given that they are owned by political and economic elites. Indeed, the distrust is such that Greece has the lowest level of trust in traditional media in the world.[44] In addition, in 2010 smartphones were introduced to the market, and by 2018 almost everyone possessed an internet-enabled smartphone, which gave them instant access to information. A trend emerged,

41 Tax evasion is correlated with the high rate of self-employment in Greece (31 percent) compared to the EU mean (15 percent) (Skartios, 2014).

42 Source : http://www.internetlivestats.com/internet-users/greece/ (Last accessed 11/10/2019).

43 Sources: https://napoleoncat.com/stats/facebook-users-in-greece/2018/10 and http://www.digitalnewsreport.org/survey/2017/greece-2017/ (Last accessed 11/10/2019).

44 Source: http://www.pewglobal.org/2018/01/11/publics-globally-want-unbiased-news-coverage-but-are-divided-on-whether-their-news-media-deliver/ (Last accessed 11/10/2019).

especially from 2012 onwards, of discovering alternative news and sources that were more credible and trustworthy based on the fact that they were at least financially independent. The above facts contributed, in the January 2015 elections, to Syriza's victory and coalition with Anel. It was the first time in modern Greek history that a leftist party had come to power with an anti austerity agenda, managing to convince the social body. After six months of fruitless re-negotiation with Greece's creditors, Syriza called a referendum. The question that the population was called to answer with a 'yes' or 'no', was whether they agreed with the measures proposed by the creditors.

Conclusion

In popular understandings of history, an interesting articulation can be observed, one that blends lived with non lived experiences to construct a linear evolution in terms of the sequence of events and causality. Past historical events and collective memories, as Knight (2015) elaborates, inform the present crisis experiences of ordinary people . In this sense, the past is a domain that is constantly being re-envisioned and re-interpreted in the light of present day reality. History is crucial for understanding not only how people think about the past and use it to explain the present, but also how past events and practices create the conditions of possibility for ongoing processes in the present. In this chapter, I have focused on key historical events and facts from modern Greek history which have shaped both Greece's social formation and its relationship with national and international power. Taking account of these events is critical for framing the ethnographic data I present in the following chapters as these events suggest numerous similarities with the past, appearing as either continuations or repetitions of it (Knight, 2015; Knight & Stewart, 2016).

The Greek state was born with a debt that the three superpowers provided though British and French banks. This was during an era of industrial advances in the growing war industry and the establishment of banks as global regulatory mechanisms which, through indebtedness, controlled the resources of the new states. Neocolonial control and repeated interventions by hegemonic powers have been critical features both in the foundation of the state and in its social, political and economic transformation. The Greek economy has always faced problems with its creditors and the external public deficit in a system in which, after an agreement was reached and certain measures taken, new loans were issued to cover previous debt obligations. The vicious circle of debt reveals Greece's dependence on its protectors, which fact transformed the country's territories into a battleground for geopolitical restructurings at the global level (Chomsky, 2003).

While it bares striking similarities to previous crises, the recent iteration of crisis in Greece, which I explore ethnographically in this thesis, is different from these in one significant sense: it is the first time in Greek history that the future appears bleaker than the past (Sarkis & Amarianakis, forthcoming). The recent economic crisis has provoked an existential crisis for

several generations of Greeks who had been accustomed to constant growth and improvements in their livelihoods. The potential for upward mobility was shattered by austerity and the economic scarcity that prevented people from making any attempt at new beginnings. Unlike past crises in which the majority of Greeks lived at the margins of the capitalist system, in this most recent crisis, Greeks have been more integrated into capitalism than ever. This high level of capitalist organization of society made the crisis more profound, penetrating deeper into people's lifeworlds through the economic suffocation of household resources which produced challenges at the level of social reproduction.

Crisis has made numerous appearances in Greek and world history. In Greece, one can discern multiple repetitive patterns which are reproduced in the present iteration of economic crisis. Indebtedness, military and economic dependence, hegemonic interventions and social division and exclusion have repeatedly appeared during almost every critical event that has shaped modern Greek life. In the next chapters, I address the ethnographic rather than the historic dimensions of life under austerity and crisis.

Chapter 3

Austerity, Employment and Income: Working Lives in Crisis

Introduction

Work is a constitutive aspect of contemporary societies, and through it people organize their lives. In sociological terms, work is an institution of socialization which produces and reproduces social relations. In distinguishing between "relations of production" and "relations in production", Burawoy (1979) gave emphasis to the social and cultural relationships that are enacted in the workplace. Furthermore, varied anthropological and sociological studies have shown that specific types of labor produce not only material goods but also manufacture identities based on gender, nationality and class (de Neve, 2001; Salzinger, 2003; Cross, 2012). Goffman (1978), in his extensive study of the presentation of the self in everyday life, showed how during almost every new social acquaintance, people ask and speak about their profession and what they do in order to make a living. This then becomes an index through which they frame their social relationships and act according to their established social identity.

The first step in approaching my field sociologically was to investigate people's work trajectories through personal work-histories and participant observation in diverse workplaces and settings. The work histories of many families in Chalkida were tied with the industrial income that funded their livelihoods and aspirations for improving their situation. Narotzky and Goddard's (2016, 2015) approach on industry, work and livelihoods in relation to the crises of contemporary capitalism demonstrates the interconnectedness of labor projects and models and their relationship with global economic and cultural power structures. Indeed, the rise and fall of industry in Chalkida is tied with several inter-scalar processes and restructurings that were imposed on Greece as a means of modernizing it and turning it into a consumer society, thereby facilitating the establishment of a capitalist culture that would be to the benefit of industrially advanced economies (Escobar, 1995). From industrialization to de-industrialization, the multiple

restructurings of the industrial sector that Chalkidians have experienced in the course of local, national and international history have produced specific, place-bound understandings of political and economic power. In the crisis context, industrial work in Chalkida could be approach through its absence, therefore I follow, Mollona, de Neve, & Parry (2009) who provide an extensive account of industrialization and modernity and the global capitalist processes that make and unmake identities. I therefore wish to expand this approach not only to the industrial laborers but also, to the whole city of Chalkida, and add up to the discussion on the reconceptualization of the concept of labour (Narotzky, 2018) in the contemporary world.

Changes in labor conditions and income that affected the majority of Greek society (Giannitsis & Zografakis, 2018) have produced multiple socio-cultural ruptures of fundamental aspects of the organization of everyday life. In this chapter, I provide an ethnographic examination of how austerity and crisis have affected distinct labor sectors and challenged historically constructed approaches to labor income and to work culture itself. I assess how, people employed in diverse settings reacted to the resource scarcity brought about by austerity, and how they sought to maintain their social reproduction in times of work insecurity and precarization. The severe devaluation of labor provoked numerous socio-cultural changes and shifts in the ways in which people got by and interacted with each other. Here I explore how people from different work backgrounds and situations approached work and strategized in order to make ends meet and confront the socio-economic challenges to social reproduction that the recent crisis has created. In my account, I pay special attention to the generational dimension.

Over the course of my fieldwork, two key facts became apparent to me. When I arrived in Chalkida and started speaking with locals about the recent crisis, everyone, regardless of their age or gender, began their narration of the crisis in Chalkida by referring to the multiple factory closures. Through my interviews and participant observation, I soon realized that every economic activity in Chalkida was related with the factories. The presence of heavy industry acted as a capital interchange node which linked the local society of Chalkida with the global economy and with financial capitalism. This is an uneven, inter-scalar relationship that makes the social organization and cohesion of a local place vulnerable to global economic trends and fashions. The second thing that stood out was the preservation of the rural habitus, which was

due to the fact that people have not lost contact with the land and sea. People knew how to produce their own food and had the means to do so.

I begin by looking at the impact of crisis and austerity on industrial labor, given that this is a prominent sector of the local economy. According to the president[45] of Evia's trade union, between 2009 and 2015, 3100 people lost their jobs due to multiple factory closures and mass lay-offs. The severe contraction of the industrial sector was a shock not only for those who were directly affected by it, but also for Chalkida more generally, as a traditionally industrial city, shaped by the presence of industrial workers. By the time the global financial crisis of 2007 hit the industrial sector, the whole city of Chalkida entered the crisis earlier than other places in Greece. The Greek economic crisis has epitomized the post-industrial era, as it has made the de-industrialization process more acute. When I arrived in Chalkida, in 2015 the whole city had already fallen into decay. In several of my interviews, people from diverse backgrounds provided both logical explanations and evidence (Narotzky, 2019) that the city's wealth was its industrial background that had created a dynamic local economy that had allowed people to improve their socio-economic position.

Next, I examine precariously employed people in the public and private service sectors. In this category I also include people who had fixed term job contracts in the public sector and who were paid by state and EU funds. While the industrial sector was dominated by male laborers usually above the age of 35, jobs in the service sector were mostly oriented towards female employees. This was especially true for serving, customer service and secretarial posts. Precariously employed people have a different approach to life than those in other employment structures. The crisis has had a very different impact on those already precariously employed, who, because of their employment status, were more resilient and adaptable to crisis conditions. For precarious workers, the economic crisis has not been a major, sudden shock as they have always been in 'crisis'. Although they have felt the impact of the economic crisis in their economies, the changes and lifestyle reconfigurations it caused were minimal. In this category, people below 35 who were university degree holders but had not secured a permanent position in their vocational field, had to wade through part-time jobs and workfare projects to get by.

[45] Source: https://www.ert.gr/eidiseis/ellada/sto-40-i-anergia-stin-evvia-o-proedros-tou-ergatikou-kentrou-s-basinas-milai-sto-ert-gr/ (Last accessed 12/12/2019).

Another broad category of employees is that of civil servants. In this category I include people who possessed permanent, indefinite contract jobs in the public sector. Civil servants constitute a distinct cultural category because of the security that the public sector historically offered and the fact that many Greeks aspired to gain state employment. Employment in the public sector created a different labor culture and livelihood organization since economic planning was based on a steady and secure income, and it was also rare for a civil servant to lose their position. After the imposition of austerity measures, wages in the public sector were the first to be affected. The combined reduction of benefits and salaries challenged civil servants' livelihood arrangements as their annual income decreased by 30 to 50 percent (Giannitsis & Zografakis, 2015). This unprecedented development produced various ruptures that shook the foundations of civil servants' lifestyles. These reductions were catastrophic for those who had gotten loans based on their pre-crisis salaries. Further, austerity measures not only reduced their salaries but also introduced public employees to precariousness, as they started to fear being made redundant. Moreover, cuts in public expenditure decreased the number of auxiliary employees who had been hired under fixed term contracts, in this way burdening permanent employees with additional tasks beyond their responsibilities. The lack of funds and personnel have produced a deterioration in public services. Major cuts in the provisioning sector and especially in public health, which from 2012 has been totally restructured (see Economu et al, 2017, Liaropoulos, 2012), further fueled the population's accumulated discontent with public administration and services.

Self-employment is another pillar of the Greek economy, since nearly one fourth of the working population is self-employed. Petty entrepreneurial activities that historically provided a viable alternative to waged labor were hit hard by the recent crisis and austerity measures (Williams & Worley, 2015). For self-employed people, the process of capital accumulation varies depending on the specific object of their labor. However in all cases, there is no guaranteed income as market demand follows seasonal patterns,[46] and for that reason, self-employment consists of another cultural category as it imposes a totally different approach to grassroots economics and household organization than the waged laborer of other sectors. Self-employment

[46] For instance, taverns earn money during weekends and national holidays while during the week they have far fewer clients. Consumption of clothes is boosted when seasons change, and during those times clothes, retailers get most of their annual income.

has proven to be a resilient labor sector which partially subsumed past crises caused by industrial restructurings and provided an outlet to the wageless. In many instances, self-employed businesses orbited around services and supplies for factories and the construction sector. Moreover, many industrial workers who wanted to stop being subordinate to others and aspired to be their own boss sought to become entrepreneurs. The president of Evia's trade union has stated that 60 percent of small and medium sized firms closed during the first years of crisis. The recent austerity crisis has produced great shocks in self-employment and entrepreneurialism. It is unlike past crises which boosted grassroots economic initiatives and practices that allowed money/capital to circulate among people who worked at the local economic level. The small and medium sized enterprises, personal and family firms with 0 to 10 employees (these consist of 99.9 percent of all firms in Greece, (see Gianitsis, 2013; Kapsinis. 2017) that used to dominate regional markets, have faced multiple challenges from the austerity restructurings.

Once they retire and start getting paid by the state, pensioners, even though they might have a diverse work history, tend to become institutionalized. In this sense, austerity restructurings of public expenditure have affected civil servants and pensioners equally. In times of crisis, younger generations rely more and more on the stable incomes of their elderly kin and these are considered by many not simply as a safety net, but as an essential income resource that ensures intergenerational social reproduction. In several instances, pensioners households cover the large gap that the austerity restructurings and cuts caused in people's income and public provisions. Moreover, the restructuring of the pension system and the vast reduction in pensions revealed the collapse of the national project of progress and prosperity. The retirement system is essential for modern societies as it institutionalizes intergenerational solidarity at the national level. Apart from an economic redistribution structure of the modern state, through the institution of retirement, modern cultural values and moralities are expressed and exercised. Those who had managed to enter the pension system saw a dramatic reduction in the anticipated pre-crisis pension which disrupted the plans of younger pensioners. Older pensioners usually already had their lives settled and their financial needs were limited to the basics; their savings and part of their pensions were channeled to sustaining the social reproduction of younger generations.

I conclude by elaborating on the distinct micro-cultures of each labor sector and how people in diverse sectors evaluate their labor income. Important here is that all the above mentioned sectors are interdependent. Capital in Chalkida was generated by industrial and

agricultural production, by the sale of people's labor in production related activities that created capital. Capital was also channeled from the national scale, to the local space of Chalkida through pensions and salaries of civil servants. This capital was accumulated and circulated in Chalkida's markets, and linked the society of Chalkida through the various commercial activities that are inherent in local societies. The local economy of Chalkida was severely challenged by the time the de-industrialization escalated during the crisis along with the austerity cuts on pensioners and civil servants. The organic solidarity of the different labor sectors has failed since money in many instances is the social "glue" that keeps the social organization together, and the lack of money leads to several ruptures beyond the economy.

3.1 The Disappearance of Industrial Labor

Historically, industrial employment has been the most prevalent livelihood pattern for Chalkida's local population, and it used to be a stable and secure income resource. Almost every local person has had a relative or a friend that used to work at the factories. Historically, livelihood projects in Chalkida departed from industrial income and over the course of time livelihood patterns in Chalkida have diversified, especially after 1980s. Industrial labor was the most prominent livelihood strategy towards upward mobility for the lower strata of the Greek society. From the 1980s onwards, many of the local industries factories that used to operate in Chalkida had started gradually to close, and by 2009 only five heavy industry plants remained near the city. These five industrial factories were Chalkida's Cement, Shelman, Neoset, Interkem and Ellinika Solinourgia, all of which had been closed down by 2015. The closure of the cement factory alone, which had been in operation since 1926, produced a major identity shock for the city which thereby had lost a constitutive aspect of its character. Narotzky and Goddard (2015) highlight the importance of heavy industries that link local livelihoods with the global economy and materialize global economic procedures into lived experiences (Katz, 2001).

From the 1990s on, the factories' working force was mostly male, with very few women employees. Before the 1980s, when the living standards were relatively low and many working class households were in need of extra income, women in the lower strata found low level posts in some of the several small and bigger food processing industries in the area, and from 1960s to early 1990s in the textile factory of Peraiki-Patraiki (see Chapter 1). In that time women occupied low and badly paid job posts which, as soon as their husbands started to earn more, they left, especially after having their first child (Janssens, 1997). After the 1980s, when men's industrial wages greatly increased, several women chose to dedicate themselves to reproductive labor tasks and through unpaid labor, saved income instead of producing it. Grigoris, a 53 year old cement factory worker told me that by the time overtime at the factory became well paid, his wife, earned less than his overtime wage, decided to quit and dedicate herself to householding. Male multi-employment has also undermined the emancipation of women from the male breadwinner model. Lastly, many women that entered the labor market and become self-employed had their business initiatives funded by their husbands' labor income

and thus depended on them. Husbands were in their majority industrial laborers or had professions related with the industrial sector.

As a result, the industrial labor force of Chalkida shaped the male identity which was unavoidably wounded by the gendered reversal in income opportunities that the crisis brought about. Very few, usually older women worked in low level industrial jobs, mostly in food processing factories, one such was Maria (56) who had been working in a poultry production unit for many years when I interviewed her. On the opposing end, Georgia (42), a highly specialized chemist, had a well-paid job (even during the crisis) at a pharmaceutical factory and earned more than her husband. After the 2000s, very few women managed to become technicians or managers and to outrank men in high posts in the production process, this they usually achieved through education. Low administrative positions in the factories, especially in logistics, were another field in which women could find employment. The cement factory laid off 12 women out of 232 employees in total. In addition, men who pursued a career in the industrial sector and developed their skills accordingly were most affected by the disappearance of the factories. They were the ones who lost not only their jobs but also their specialization and the object of their labor. This implied the loss of a constitutive part of their identity that was constructed around the ability to fulfill, through work, the social expectations of the hard-working male breadwinner ideotype (Goffman, 1978). This was mostly the case for laid-off cement factory workers given that the production of cement relied solely on male labor. The loss of their jobs also had a profound impact on their identities and their sense of self-worth and dignity, because the skills which they had devoted great effort to developing were suddenly rendered useless.

How did the wageless masses who were laid off from the factories during the crisis manage to get by, and what did this loss mean to them? The case of the cement factory workers with whom I spent many hours sheds light on the wider sociological question. Most of them were aged between 45 and 55 and had spent most of their adult working life in cement factories. This is mainly because before the crisis years, the factory administration provided incentives for early retirement. As many workers told me, the company had initially targeted unionists and offered them amounts from 70,000 to 400,000 euros, depending on their years of service, their position/salary and their age. Quite a few had accepted the offer back in 2007, and voluntarily left. On the other side, there were very few workers under 40 when the factory closed in 2013

since the last round of hiring regular personnel had occurred in 2005. I met only a few people who were between 29 and 40 years old, and they were the ones who got fired first. The main age group was from 40 to 55 years old, which means that the main body of the factory's workers had spent most of their lives as cement factory workers, and had invested in skill development accordingly, in the field of cement production. Those above 45 had started to work at the factory when they were as young as 16 and referred to the factory as their "second home", the place where they had spent most of their lives.

The cement factory provided a stable income that was used as a financial base for investment in other sectors. Several cement factory workers had done so, usually by founding firms in their wives' and children's names. Even though they were attached to what we might call an industrial lifestyle and culture, they never considered themselves traditional proletarians in the Marxist sense, since as Mingione (1995, 1990) has shown they developed other labor income resources. They made use of the resources their hard work generated to enhance their household's economic resources by investing in other members of their household. As a result, when the factory stopped operating, they automatically put their efforts into supporting their household-based ventures. One person was working informally in a kiosk that he had opened in his son's name in the 2000s. He had also opened a clothes-shop in his wife's name during the same period, which they had to close due to the crisis. In another case, a factory worker had started to develop animal breeding and dairy production units before the factory closure. After the closure, he started to employ laid off colleagues while supplying free meat and dairy products to his colleagues families who were in need. All of the laid-off workers supported his venture, shopped at his store and promoted his products. Another factory worker who got fired a year before being able to retire lived in a nearby village where he owned and maintained with his wife a small animal breeding production unit. Cement factory workers were never proletarians in the traditional Marxist conceptualization, even though they used their profession to present themselves to me. "Emeis eimaste tsimentades" (We are cement producers) was their collective discourse about what they do for a living. In general, Greeks were never fully proletarianized as most of the lower classes had private assets that provided them with supplemental income. Since people could not rely on a sole means of income generation, they struggled to make a living through a combination of waged labor and self-employment, a tactic that was prevalent in the years during which multiple opportunities emerged through the expansion of capitalist markets.

Many informants referred to a period of abundant employment opportunities in the 1970s. Local factories were in desperate need of workers and placed job adverts not only in Chalkida but all over Greece. Recalling the first years after he finished his training, Theofilos (62), a graduate of the *Dimokritos* technical school in Chalkida, said: "One day you worked there, and the next another company offered you more. Work was plenty then, they needed you." He said he had received numerous personal letters offering him jobs in the industrial sector. He used to be employed in several settings in the construction and the industrial sector, and then later he opened up his own construction firm (see Chapter 4, Household 2).

In Greece's growing socio-economic centers, internal economic migrants were in their majority. Employed in multiple jobs, they strove to develop more than one source of labor income. As soon as they were able to, rural migrants in Chalkida purchased private means of transportation and maintained ties with the countryside, developing agricultural incomes out of small plots of land that they owned or had inherited. Construction was another important field in which industrial waged laborers worked for extra money and it provided them with the potential for finding employment on a regular basis. Others used their industrial wages to develop entrepreneurial activities and to exploit market dynamics to accumulate more capital in their pursuit of forging a life worth living. In the midst of the economic crisis, Sotiris, 50, another cement factory worker, decided to develop a small wine production unit and upgrade the vineyards he had inherited. He had worked at the cement factory since he was 16 and was specialized in welding, a middle ranking post. "I am not only a worker (*ergatis*)," he said, "I am a boss too, I hire people." He explained that throughout the year he employed agricultural laborers on a seasonal basis to work in his olive groves and vineyards. Shortly after he was fired, he started subcontracting out the harvest and maintenance of the olive groves. Sotiris lived in Vathi, a small town near the cement factory's industrial zone, an area which has long been known for its vineyards, even after the industrialization of the surrounding areas.[47]

[47] Inofyta literally translates to fields "planted with wine". In 1970, during the Junta, the region was transformed into Greece's biggest industrial district and as Panagiota, 78 (see chapter 4, household 1), informed me the people in Vathy, next to Inofyta abandoned the field and actively supported the Junta's plan of sprawl industrialization. They were right wing supporters during the civil war and the Junta of 1967 recompensated them for their support. They sold their land at high prices for the sake of industrialization. Nowadays, it is one of the most polluted areas in Greece. Nowadays, due to the de-industrialization, the environment has, slowly, started to recover.

Industrial employment was once the driving force that transformed the peasantry into waged laborers (Narotzky, 2016), and in some cases, recent industrial unemployment has sent people "back to the earth" in order to get by. After the 1970s, when private car ownership eliminated the spatial barriers that the transportation needs of the work force imposed, rural to urban economic migrants no longer had to abandon agricultural activities. In the past, when factories needed working hands, people in nearby villages combined industrial labor with agricultural income, and they were employed seasonally. This arrangement allowed for the maintenance of an agricultural income for industrial workers who owned small plots of land. Up until the 1980s, for instance, several factories employed people seasonally, during the months in which agricultural activities were not demanding.

This pattern continued into the late 1980s with subcontracted labor, and even the regular factory workers who owned small plots near Chalkida maintained petty agricultural income sources. I encountered only a few cases in which factory workers relied solely on their factory wage and had, as they stated, no other source of income. Grigoris (55) was one of them. After being fired, he rented a kiosk with another laid off factory worker, and they did so by using their wives' names. As first-degree relatives of the owners they could legally "help" their wives without having to be registered as employees. This constituted another gender reversal - in the past, it was usually wives who were formally recognized as supporting the ventures of their husbands. I will return to this issue later in the self-employment section, as well as in the next chapter on household organization.

Through the life histories of industrial workers, it became apparent that industrial labor income was in many instances used as a basis for funding other livelihood projects. Industrial laborers, especially those who had in the past experienced extreme resource scarcity, did not simply receive a salary and grow complacent, on the contrary, they sought to maximize their income's potential by investing in their household reproduction and in strategies for upward mobility. Thus they managed their waged income from the factories in such a way as to secure the present and future social reproduction of their families. The principal investment that they aspired to, initially, was to obtain a house, an asset that would be used by generations to come - both in terms of having a roof over their heads and, in some cases, as collateral for getting a loan from the banks to fund intergenerational projects. Moreover, investment in their children, either in terms of education or of helping them to develop their own businesses, was also common. For

instance, the children of two cement factory workers who had retired a year before the factory's closure had used their fathers' severance pay to open a bar in Chalkida where many cement factory workers hung out. In another instance, a cement factory pensioner used his severance pay to fund his two sons who opened an internet café, and who got a business loan by using the family house as collateral.

For these reasons, industrial workers in Chalkida endorsed the capitalist spirit and were not simply exploited by capitalist development, but also exploited its opportunities to their benefit in order to secure their assets by investing their capital in other income generating schemes. This was a recurring strategy for the majority of cement factory workers, and this is mainly how they managed to get by when they lost their waged employment. In this sense, they were in tune with capitalist culture and pursued livelihood improvement through capital investments. The problems started to occur for them when financialized capitalism became dominant, since they were in line with the traditional, liberal capitalist culture which they nurtured and favored. Most of them did not want to be proletarians and remain stuck, both as persons and as families, in a working class "caste", and they nurtured individualistic capitalist ideals of upward mobility and progress for their households.

The ways in which job losses affected livelihoods and identities can be divided into two categories which are determined by the generational factor. On the one hand, there are the older, experienced cement factory workers who conceptualized the loss of their job as an identity shock that threatened their established livelihood arrangements and the representation of the self in everyday life (Goffman, 1978), as well as provoking a major deskilling of their labor. For instance, cement "millers" (*mylonas*) or "bakers" (*psistis*), two of the highest ranks in cement production, could only find adequate positions in another cement plant. The majority of specialized factory workers over 45 did not want to lose their skills by being formally employed elsewhere, and they were the ones leading the struggle to reopen the factory. On the other hand, younger workers, those with less experience (and labor rights/claims) at the factory, faced a severe crisis of social reproduction since they had not managed to create a safety net for themselves and their families.

The latter were not in a position to take leading roles in the union's struggle and sought other jobs, usually in factory settings and warehouses near Chalkida They relied mostly on their

kin and social networks to access resources while many of their wives were also forced to seek extra employment. Of course there were some who were not married and lived with their parents. Aliki (49) moved in with her father after being laid-off: “I did not have the money to pay rent, so I moved with my father. I take care of the household and he financially supports me. It’s demeaning having to live with my father and rely on his money as if I were a teenager.” Jimena (48), my Spanish tutor, whom I ran into, informed me that she was hired at the factory as a translator/interpreter in 1992 when the factory needed someone to translate documents from Greek to Italian and vice-versa and to help in the negotiations with the Calzestruzzi group that wanted to buy the factory. “I come here and see the factory, it feels like it’s sleeping, everything is sleeping here, and I hope we will wake up from this bad dream,” she said. Thanassis (42) never left his parents’ house in a village nearby. He worked as a driver in the factory and after he was laid off, was occasionally employed at a transportation company where his cousin worked: “I also used to work in construction, there are many builders in Fylla (his village) nowadays, with the crisis and the rest, the scaffolding material has all been burnt in peoples fireplaces.” He informed me of this in order to stress the fact that there was no future in construction anymore. Among younger workers there were some who were thinking of migrating, especially after their unemployment benefit ended.

These internal inequalities were soothed and made invisible by their common interests. The process of completely laying off all remaining workers took nearly 2 years to complete and the older, high ranking factory workers and unionists continued to receive their monthly wages which they used to fund the expenses of their union’s struggle against Lafarge. Through their longstanding struggle, the cement factory workers developed strong ties of solidarity. The union even received contributions from pensioners of the factory. However, the cement factory stands as an exception to other industrial closures. In other large factories that closed, laid-off workers did not react dynamically and “accepted their fate.” Their stance was severely criticized by the cement factory workers who took pride in the uniqueness of their struggle and idealized their cause. For them, the significance of their labor was not only confined to their own interests, but extended to the wider local and national good.

Another aspect of the economic crisis is that many factories produced less and on demand, therefore they did not want to have a regular working force. These needs were covered by subcontracting firms that become prevalent in the 1990s. Many of these firms closed during

the crisis and the employees they hired did not have the same working rights as regular industrial workers. Subcontracted workers were not insured as having worked in arduous and unhealthy conditions and had significantly fewer working rights than regular employees. As I was told by several interlocutors who had first hand experience of these arrangements either through having worked for a subcontracting firm or through co-working with subcontracted workers, large employers such as the factories appeared smaller in official documentation and thus avoided paying high taxes while having at their disposal an alienated work force that had no legal rights over the company. Moreover, some of the high ranking cement factory workers had also been subcontractors and had employed other specialized workers in construction and regular maintenance of the factory's machinery. The outsourcing of the servicing of the essential, periodic needs of the factories led to the creation of a secondary service sector that orbited around these needs.

What is also interesting is the fact that since industrial labor has become precarious, many younger people who used to find employment in the industrial sector, have started to think about migration. Migration of workers was a common pattern in Greece especially during the 1960s, when they sought employment in the industrial sectors of Northern Europe, especially in Germany (see Bottomley, 1984; Fakiolas & King, 1996). This is a pattern that has re-emerged in times of crisis. Migration abroad was a difficult choice not only for those who had families but also for those who did not. Industrial employment possibilities were scarce in European countries and most former industrial workers considered migrating, in the short term, to the Middle East where there were many jobs in the construction sector.

Dimitris (28) had worked in various construction schemes since adolescence as well as in Chalkida's shipyards where he learnt the profession of welding. He got fired from the shipyards in 2012 and luckily for him, he quickly found a job at a small fertilizer (compost) production unit in Nea Artaki in 2014. He felt happy with his job and confident enough, especially because he had managed to find a relatively good job despite the crisis. One day in 2015 I received a call from him saying that he wanted to speak with me. He had suddenly been fired and shortly after that, got a job offer from a Greek construction firm to work in Bahrain on a two-year contract. He was dubious about it and sought my advice on what to do. For him, crisis was not something relevant to his present condition even though it had directly affected his livelihood. He told me

that he had never been integrated into the “system” and had never followed the capitalist consumption culture and ideology that was widespread during the pre-crisis years. He drew a clear line between his own conceptualization and “philosophy” of life and that of others, especially the older generations who had gone on the “trip” of conspicuous consumption. To him crisis was not the problem, and he distinguished himself from other people who had based their lives and their identities on being able to consume. He engaged with the dominant discourse of crisis as being caused by the bad behavior of the older generations who had indulged in a capitalist lifestyle. Moreover, he broke up with his girlfriend Marina (27) who had just been hired for an administrative job at the public Greek Aeronautics Factory (EAB) in Tanagra. This happened thanks to a favorable law; her father, who had recently died, had been a military officer, and in order to compensate the family, the state offered a job to one of his children. Marina said “it was an offer that simply could not be rejected.” Dimitris explained that he despised civil servants’ lifestyles: “being stuck in a petty job that earns little and ruins your creativity and freedom to move, making you settle and conform to the miserable life aspirations” of the Greek capitalist dream. As soon as Marina accepted the job, she started thinking about marriage and having children, something that clearly frightened Dimitris who finally decided to take the job in Bahrain and put an end to their eight year long relationship.

3.2 Precariously Waged Employees in the Public and Private Service Sector

Private employees in the service sector were also profoundly affected by the crisis. The crisis created difficulties for their employers who in many instances could not maintain their businesses if they had to pay extra salary for employees. Many were left unemployed, underemployed or habitually underpaid. In numerous cases, employers asked them to understand the difficult situation and help them survive the crisis together ("*na valoun plati*"). That usually meant delays in payment and wage cuts, and many employees complained that their bosses owed them several months of pay. This forced them to confront several dead-ends and they were ambivalent about what to do: stay and work without pay or leave and face long term unemployment and the possible loss of the money that their employers owed them. In many cases, service sector employees consented to having their salaries delayed and accepted salary reductions for fear of losing their jobs. They described their situation as one of being trapped and unable to do anything because in many cases they had known their bosses for years and were friends or, in some cases, relatives. Within the private sector, there were several generational and gender aspects that are worth mentioning as they shaped how employees approached the recent crisis and life in general.

Waitressing and service jobs are usually an entry point into the job market for many young adults (and in many instances adolescents) who work for pocket money and to fulfill personal aspirations such as traveling, purchasing a bike or a car. In today's crisis reality, these seasonal jobs have transformed into permanent ones, and many people in their 30s and in some cases 40s have found themselves in this situation which reminded them of their youth. This peculiar time reversal was conceptualized as a failure by my interlocutors, a failure both of the "system" and a personal failure to do something meaningful with their lives.

Young people who struggled to enter the job market in a field relevant to their studies, found seasonal or part-time jobs. It was usually easier for women to find waitressing jobs than men, due to the gendered social stereotypes that find wide application in the market. Cafes and taverns at the nearby beaches that attracted myriad locals and Athenians during the summer months absorbed the younger generation's labor. Others tried their luck in tourist destinations in

other, cosmopolitan Greek islands. These seasonal jobs were usually considered well-paid, especially during the pre-crisis years, in comparison with other types of employment, yet they did not offer the security and convenience that might allow a person to settle down and design projects for the future. Most of the younger people who juggled through seasonal labor, preferred to work uninsured and thus earn more net income from their labor thus avoid paying income taxes.[48] This situation existed even before the crisis when many younger and older, in many instances well educated persons, used this as a pattern for generating their annual income. What has changed with the crisis is that this seasonal labor has tended to become the main income source for many younger people who have limited incomes and hence rely on their parents' assets to cover basic needs such as housing. Panos, a 20-year-old university student back in 2009 when the crisis hit, quit his studies to become a waiter, a job that he started for pocket money but which by 2015 had become a regular job for him. He rented a small apartment of 30 square meters (possibly less) for 150 euros in the center of Chalkida, which every summer he sublet to people who came to work in Chalkida, while he went to work at a hotel on the island of Skyros. Dimitra (32) was precariously employed in work-fare schemes and had worked on one of the Greek islands as a salesperson for 4 months during the past three summer seasons before she was accepted on the municipality's latest workfare program. Fanis (25) who had studied at the technical university, had started as an apprentice in Chalkida's shipyards. With the recent crisis, he could not find employment in the shipyards after having finished his studies. During the winter, he worked as a delivery boy at a coffee shop and sold marijuana for an income. In the summer, as he told me, he would quit the delivery job to work as a waiter either in one of Chalkida's all-day beach bars and taverns or at a big hotel in Crete where a cousin of his worked. He was living at his grandmother's house in a village near Chalkida. Christos, 31, was employed at his mother's small clothes repair business. He had quit his studies in graphic design in order to get a job and sustain himself. After spending 2 years searching for a job, he became desperate: "I was asking around in companies, both here in Chalkida and in Athens. I submitted CVs everywhere, they were telling me to leave my CV on top of a pile of other people's CVs. It was impossible to find a job." And so his mother encouraged him to work in her small venture. As he understood it, unlike older generations who had left their jobs to study, his generation (20-30) of

[48] In 2009, the annual income from salaries and pensions below 12,000 euros was not subject to taxes. Today this amount has fallen to 6500 euros and there are talks reduce it to below 5000.

the lower working class did the opposite; they quit their studies in order to seek employment. Christos had a strong class-based discourse and was a member of the KKE (Greek Communist Party). He went on to say that even his mother was acting as every other boss in capitalist society did and was exploiting her own son; he criticized his mother's view that he should be grateful for having a job. With the money he earned he was unlikely to be able to marry and have a family of his own. Although he was in a long term relationship and both him and his partner wanted to marry, have a proper household and start a family, they could not do so with the financial obstacles and impossibilities created by the crisis. I followed Christos on Facebook where he shared posts on a daily basis about various lottery competitions he had taken part in (to win furniture, TV sets and household appliances). Each competition post he shared on his personal wall gave him a chance to win electric appliances, living room and kitchen equipment and trips abroad, in what appeared as a frantic effort to be able to enjoy what pre-crisis generations had been able to. To my knowledge, he did not win. One day I saw a post of his about a smartphone competition that said "Oh my precious phone, come to my hands please."[49] Younger generations who were raised in the pre-crisis society of plenitude did not have the consumption power or the amenities that older generations enjoyed. Consumption of high tech goods was fetishized. Commodities such as smartphones were in such instances treated as if they were persons, the (post)modern commodity fetishes of neoliberal capitalism. This resonates with what Meyer (1998) says about failed consumption practices in Ghana after the crisis of the 1990s and the restrained consumption of western goods and commodities that most Ghanaians could not afford after Structural Adjustment. TV advertisements of western commodities during that time "fed desire without ever granting satisfaction.(759)." To a certain extent, those younger generations who were just beginning to establish their lives or were about to do so, were severely affected by the crisis. They were accustomed to the abundance of the pre-crisis yet were unable to make a livelihood of their own. Commodities which the older generation had the money to invest in the past, for younger generations remained in the sphere of unfulfilled desires. Austerity meant restrained consumption which signaled a rupture in society's capitalist, economic habitus which had cultivated and nurtured consumption practices as a means of socialization (Bourdieu, 2015).

[49] That expression in Greek rhymes and goes "Oh Agapiméno mou kinitó, Éla sta héria mou se Parakaló."

During the crisis, several EU and state funded programs were targeted at unemployed people below 30 who held a university degree but could not acquire the necessary work experience to advance their careers. However, the jobs/internships on offer were usually irrelevant to the subject they had studied. For instance, Dimitra, who held an MA in migration studies and had several times applied for the work-fare programs that were launched in 2007, told me that she was asked for many forms of accreditation such as the ECDL (knowledge skills for operating MS office) as well as other skills like certified knowledge of one or more foreign languages. Laughing, she told me that back in 2008, when she had first entered one of these yearly "internship"[50] programs at the magistrate's court of Chalkida, the office she was appointed to did not have any PCs. After having worked as a salesperson for three seasons, she applied as an administrative worker to the latest work-fare program for youth unemployment in the new institutions and social solidarity structures that the EU and the state had funded to combat poverty in Chalkida. After having been prolonged for three months, their contract ended, and Dimitra and her co-workers were not eligible to apply for the new contracts because they had far fewer employability credits than others who had been unemployed.[51] Starting in 2014, the recently hired employees had to develop the new services (time bank, soup kitchen) from scratch; these included acquiring basic equipment such as chairs, desks, tables and PCs through donations. A few months before the funding was due to end, they were told that the project was going to be discontinued and transferred to the regional administration. This meant that their effort of building up and developing the social solidarity structures would end up in the rubbish. "They are throwing our efforts into the bin … this is really frustrating and disappointing, our work simply does not matter to them" said Katerina (29), an administrator working in Chalkida's social structures. These working conditions were severely disruptive to the mental health of my interlocutors who felt unworthy and disappointed at seeing all their effort and hard work destroyed. A few representatives of those precariously employed at social solidarity structures across Greece had a meeting with the general secretary of the Ministry of Labor in 2015, a few months after Syriza won the elections, which was considered by many an opportunity to end

[50] Workfare projects that target young people in order to give them work experience.

[51] Each applicant for these workfare programmes summed credits according to the number of months of unemployment, social and economic status, age and education. Precariously employed in short term projects were thus, technically excluded from upcoming ones since others who were unemployed for months or even years had priority.

austerity policies. As a government official explained to Dimitra when they protested against the termination of the project and its re-initiation, "the EU does not want to recycle workfare beneficiaries." In terms of employment, young people have been facing numerous difficult realities since before the outbreak of the recent crisis. People with higher education in Chalkida, whose labor potential could not be applied in construction or in the industrial sector, migrated to Athens or Thessaloniki where they had a better chance of finding employment in their field of study. Nowadays, even this option has been closed off by the crisis and migrating abroad seems to be the only "choice". A "forced choice" as Dimitra, who did not want to leave Chalkida and her friends, told me. Before the crisis, young people who were trained such as Nikos or Dimitris and who possessed technical skills could easily find employment either in construction business or in the factories and hence the population of Chalkida was dominated by manual laborers. Those with higher education were absorbed into Athens' large market which used to offer more diverse employment opportunities.

Older people above 45, faced multiple challenges in times of crisis and feared losing their jobs. Unlike their younger counterparts, they did not have the same flexibility and were not accustomed to working with the latest technologies. Moreover, the multiple closures of both small local firms and larger nation-wide firms during the crisis created a culture of fear and precarity that made many employees feel thankful for having employment even if it was badly paid. Increased unemployment in the industrial and construction sectors, where mostly men worked, and which had been the main source of income for many households in Chalkida, put the pressure on secondary household incomes such as a female wages from the service sector.

Another set of practices which also became prevalent were the numerous workfare projects that aimed at alleviating the social exclusion caused by unemployment. Most of the workfare programs targeted unemployed people aged between 18 and 30 and above 50 - the age groups that faced the greatest difficulty entering the job market. Those above 50 who had been left unemployed could apply for fixed term contracts in public institutions such as the municipality. Their only chance for accessing the job market was through the public sector as private firms hardly ever hired 50+ individuals, especially if they lacked basic qualifications and had lost their jobs. For instance, a 56 year old unemployed man had been hired by the municipality of Chalkida for 9 months to help a high school principal with her excess workload.

Yet he did not know how to operate a PC and, in practical terms, could not deliver the task he was hired for. Another 55 year old man told me that in the past, he had worked for many years in the municipality of Chalkida's cleaning sector. When austerity cuts were implemented, he was made redundant, but thanks to his personal relationship with the vice mayor, he had managed, the past 4 years, to get hired on the municipal programs. In the past, when he had had a stable job contract at the municipality, he had also been informally self-employed in the construction sector where he used to take on tiling jobs. Since the construction sector had collapsed, he did not have enough clients and relied solely on the 6 month job contracts the municipality offered for half of each year and the unemployment benefits he was entitled to receiving when the contracts ended.[52] He was not married, had no children and lived at his mother's house. For those who had not created a family, their parental household played a central role in their livelihood organization.

Younger generations, including those who had managed to find some type of employment, were in the odd and contradictory position of not being able to live on their own and having to rely on their older kin to sustain themselves. More and more people relied on their parents, a pattern which was common even in the pre-crisis years when many young people continued to reside with and be financially dependent on their parents during their 20s. During the past 10 years of crisis, the situation has further deteriorated hence the average age of people who continue to reside with their parents has increased. Several of my younger interlocutors resided with their parents to avoid paying rent, including Niki (23), who had just finished her studies. When she returned, instead of staying at one of the flats her parents owned, she returned to her parents' house so that they could rent out the other properties they owned in a family block of flats they had built on credit before the crisis, which was now at risk.

The minimum wage in Greece fell below 600 euros in 2012, while for people below 25, it was even less. This prompted large companies to seek out young, low paid and disposable personnel to cover their needs, thereby further marginalizing the 25+ unemployed masses. A project to tackle youth unemployment was first launched in 2012 and continued until 2015. Through it, the state provided a fixed amount to vocationally train and find internship positions at private firms for people aged between 25-29 – these were the so-called voucher programs. "It was a waste of time, at least we got some money out of nothing. But with many months of

[52] The salary he earned was around 640 euros per month and then the unemployed benefit was around 420 euros.

delay," a 28 year old university graduate of psychology told me. He was employed through one of these workfare programs at a big private clinic in Athens, in the administration department. "I had hoped that I would learn something and I might be hired afterwards since I believed that they would assign me to a position relevant to my studies. But I was there from 9 am to 3 pm everyday doing nothing and learning nothing. Also, the permanent staff in the company saw us (the workfare people) as a potential threat. I stayed for six months and got around 1800 euros net, two months after the project had ended." He explained that the total amount that they were entitled to get was 2500 euros, which was subject to taxation. He later gave me his own explanation of what these funded workfare programs actually did:

> The KEKs (Kentra Eppagelmatikis Katartisis - Centers for Vocational Training) that took on implementation of the workfare programs got large amounts of money to place us in one of the firms that participated in the project. I heard that for each person who was appointed at a company, the center got 1000 euros plus 500 for a training course that we had to attend. In (name of the company) there were around 100 people like me. I saw them when I had to sign the attendance book everyday. In my office there were 4 others, all university and postgraduate degree holders. We just sat there waiting to be delegated pointless tasks like changing the labels on the office doors or making sure that company leaflets were distributed in the guest areas.

He had applied to the voucher project in 2012 when he was 27 years old, and did not want to apply for the next voucher program in 2015. Instead, he found a job at a bar in Athens where he was employed 3 days a week and shared a flat with his brother who was studying at the university. In 2016 he applied to work for an NGO at the refugee camp in Ritsona near Chalkida, where I had met him. Three of my interlocutors who had applied for these programs stated that many of the firms that participated in them did not actually opt to hire anyone, but took advantage of the programs to get free working hands. The positions they offered were very vague and hence beneficiaries did not have a specific work focus which they could learn and advance in; they were the "kid" for all types of work ("to paidi gia oles tis douleies"[53]) and most of the time they did not have any work to do and just sat at their desks doing nothing.

[53] It is derogative term for someone who does not have a responsible job position and is asked to do many insignificant tasks (such as bringing coffee to others).

In their majority, younger generations were university degree holders, yet that was not enough for them to find employment. As soon as they finished their studies, they entered a race to certify their knowledge and skills and to accumulate degrees which in the end could not provide them with employment (Papagaroufali, 2018). As a deliberate strategy, they volunteered to work for free so that they could have better chances of being employed, since most positions demanded work experience. Chalkida's younger generation of people with higher education had almost no chance of finding employment in the city in a field relevant to their studies.

3.3 Civil Servants

Civil servants' wages and benefits were the first to be affected by prescribed austerity measures which demanded cuts in public expenditure. On the one hand, the extensive restructuring of the public sector significantly downsized civil servants' salaries and on the other, the state stopped employing special personnel to cover essential positions. As a result of the understaffing these measures created, many civil servants were overburdened with additional workloads. Moreover, understaffing led to poorer services which in turn fed anti-civil servant narratives, which charged them as incompetent and incapable of serving public needs. In a populist manner, civil servants in general were targeted as being unworthy of their salaries. My interlocutors were schoolteachers, tax officers, employees of the urban planning bureau, officers in the citizen services bureau, nurses and doctors at Chalkida's public hospital. Apart from complaining about the reduction of their salaries, everyone pointed to the understaffing that cuts in public expenditure had caused as well as the fact that they were recipients of negative criticism from people who worked in other economic sectors. "We are de facto considered corrupt and incapable," said a high ranking civil servant in Chalkida's public water company. This image was widely cultivated by mainstream media and politicians who wanted to justify the cuts that they had been enforcing since the start of the crisis.

To begin with school teachers, one can say that the crisis has had a multilayered impact on their profession. Apart from the general cuts which they estimated amounted to about 30 percent and the cuts on their 13th and 14th month salary which were combined with increased income and indirect consumption taxes, they faced various other challenges and problems in their work. Firstly, they had limited resources at their disposal in order to teach and do their job properly. Schools lacked basic resources and relied on donations from children's parents who contributed whatever they could according to their own good will. Moreover, general unemployment and the loss of industrial jobs caused many economically challenged families to move into their paternal houses resulting in a change of school district for many children. As a result, some schools were left with very few children and others were flooded with new students who had recently moved with their families to the areas where older generations of industrial workers had built their houses. The generalized socio-economic crisis which parents were

experiencing affected their children who behaved difficultly, making school teachers' jobs even harder. The anxiety and instability that many children experienced at home was transferred to the school environment. In some cases, teachers had to deal with critical incidents in which children fainted because of malnutrition, and anger and anxiety were common amongst children and adolescents alike. Thus teachers were confronted with the immense psychological burden of dealing with and managing the effects of the crisis in the wider social body.

Similarly, I was shocked by the recollections of nurses and doctors who worked in Chalkida's public health system and the situations and incidents they experienced daily. Apart from the incidents that they had to deal with, they also faced extreme scarcity of medical supplies. As they told me, the hospital did not have bed linen so many patients in need of hospitalization had to bring their own sheets and in many instances, if an operation was required, the patient had to buy the basic supplies in order for the surgery to be carried out. To keep the system running and to be able to provide dignified care in emergency cases, hospital staff had to disregard work protocols.

Other civil servants whom I interviewed worked in the taxation agency of Chalkida. The agency had moved to a new building in 2011, outside the city. Administrative restructurings along with the austerity measures that coincided with them had overburdened existing personnel with additional tasks. Moreover, they had to face public anger towards the state and citizens frequently shouted at them as if they were the ones who made the laws and invented taxation. The public was confused and infuriated by unjust taxation on homeownership, car ownership and lower labor incomes (Giannitsis & Zographakis, 2015),[54] and they were angry about them. I encountered a similar situation at Chalkida's urban planning bureau where one of my informants worked. Vangelis (53) pointed to the administrative restructurings and the transfer of personnel and responsibilities; he was burdened with training the employees who were transferred to his agency. Moreover, since he had a loan and his wife was dealing with severe health problems, the cuts to his salary were catastrophic. In order to save his house, he appealed to the national courts and made use of the Katseli Law that protects over-indebted households of waged employees from losing their main residence. He was not from Chalkida and along with his wife had decided to move there from Athens in 1990s because of the better quality of life it offered. Having been

[54] Before 2012, a civil servant for instance earned around 16,200 euros (14 pays) annually, and would have gotten a tax return (nearly 500 euros) after the clearance. In 2012, salaries were reduced and the same employee earned 11,000 euros (12 pays) and would have to pay income taxes (300 euros) instead of receiving a tax return.

self-employed before, he seized the opportunity to become a civil servant in his area of expertise, civil engineering. When he became a civil servant, he was not allowed to undertake construction jobs, however, since he was in need of money, he continued taking on jobs as a civil engineer by using a fellow engineer's signature for the jobs. Once one of his superiors discovered this and asked him about this informal arrangement, he justified his actions by saying "I have been working in this job for more than 20 years and I have never stolen money or taken bribes, this is my work and I am in need. If I did not do this I would be forced to steal and to accept bribes. I am not a thief, I am just doing what I know best."

A critical moment which every civil servant mentioned was the restructuring of the regional administration system in 2011, the so called 'Kallikratis' project that was designed with the pre-crisis standards, however it was executed parallel with the austerity restructurings of the 2010 bailout agreement. Public administration agencies were merged and acquired more responsibilities with fewer employees. Merged agencies such as the taxation agency or the urban planning bureau faced several organizational problems and conducting coherent archival research on their database was nearly impossible. Another issue which was raised by all of my informants who worked in the public sector was the increased bureaucracy which was introduced in order to battle corruption. However, the steps that one had to follow in order to comply with the formal, bureaucratic procedures were so complex that they led to many delays even with those issues that demanded urgent resolution. For instance, if something broke in a public school, the principal had to follow a time-consuming procedure, get offers from various professionals and wait for the responsible funding institution's approval, a process that took weeks or months to be resolved.

Alexandros (47), a high ranking official at Chalkida's public water company, described how they were obliged to go through a painstaking process in order to fix a problem in the water system, a process which ended up being more costly. The maintenance of water equipment became the monopoly of the official service in Athens and not of local professionals who used to fix problems instantly. "I used to call a local professional who could fix it. He would come, identify the issue and buy the necessary material to fix it by himself." Alexandros' office would then prepare all the necessary paperwork in order to proceed with the payment. "Nowadays, if something breaks we have to wait for the official service to come and evaluate the cost, and then

wait more time for them to come and fix it." Such informal practices and manipulations of the system came handy when something urgent happened, and civil servants came up with innovative solutions and improvised. They had the flexibility, Alexandros explained, to fix the problem and then follow formal procedures afterwards, while now they had to wait for a slow-moving bureaucratic structure to verify the problem that they reported and approve the necessary funds. With increased bureaucracy, the state's structure became more problematic and this inevitably fueled general popular discontent with the public sector. As Periklis (55), the head of Chalkida's taxation agency (*eforia*), told me: "we [civil servants] have been stigmatized as being incompetent corrupt thieves. People blame us and complain but they do not care that recently, according to the last MoU, the ministry of economics will co-manage the Public Financial Office with a board of foreign officials." Becoming a civil servant had been a historical aspiration for many people since the foundation of the Greek nation-state as it was considered the solution to resolving one's livelihood. This is a notion that continues to hold even in the face of severe wage and benefits cuts. However, the prospect of acquiring a permanent position in the public sector has ceased to be a possibility for two main reasons. Firstly because of cuts in public expenditure and secondly because of the gradual increase in the retirement age to 67 for all civil servants who were below 60 in 2009.

All of my civil servant informants who had permanent positions were above 40 and most of them had (at least) a university degree. Having a university degree used to be a competitive advantage in searching for employment in the public sector, which certainly fueled grassroots aspirations for higher education and shaped patterns of upward mobility. Only two women who were close to retirement had basic education and occupied low administrative posts in Chalkida's taxation agency. One of them admitted that she 'entered the public [employment]' ("*mpika sto demosio*") in the 1990s thanks to a local MP who owed her father a favor and 'helped' in the approval of her application. According to the principal of a high school in Chalkida, the mean age of the teaching staff in their school was 50 and the last time the state hired permanent teaching staff was back in 2010.

3.4 Self-employment

Self-employment is a prominent economic field in Greece and has historically absorbed almost one fourth of the working population. Tsoucalas (1986a, 1986b) observed that a majority of those who could not find waged positions in the public and private sectors turned to self-employment in order to prosper. In Chalkida, thanks to the expansion of industry and construction that began after the civil war ended, self-employment offered various possibilities for upward mobility projects and contributed to the modernization processes. The continual increase in purchasing power over the past 70 years enabled the commercial and the service sectors to evolve, and after the 1980s, many women, usually the wives of industrial workers, entered the labor market dynamically by becoming self-employed. In this section I deal with small firms which employed up to ten people, with the majority of cases being ones in which the owner(s) was the business' sole worker.

The self-employment sector was a dynamic economic field which had partially subsumed previous crises in Chalkida's industrial sector by providing an alternative path to prosperity for many individuals and households. During the present crisis, the self-employed sector has been profoundly affected by neoliberal restructuring which has creatively destroyed outdated small firms which could not complete and sustain themselves in a hostile neoliberal environment. In numerous instances, small businesses that could not leverage large capital profits and adjust to the new free-market principles were considered an impediment to neoliberal economic growth. They therefore had to be closed down and their market share taken over by large – usually foreign - neoliberal firms.

Small firm owners who based their income on the sale of goods suffered as a result of the major decline in people's purchasing power. Their annual planning was very different from that of waged employees and, as many said, their income varied significantly throughout the year. For instance, for those who owned clothes shops, their main workload and the months in which they made significant profits were at the beginning of each season. In September, when the school year starts, parents bought new clothes and footwear and this period used to be high season for the clothing market, as were the periods before and during Christmas, before and during Easter and of course when the summer season began. The dead months when their

incomes fell were the in-between periods when in order to boost consumption and sell their stock, two sales periods were set. When the crisis began in Chalkida, and especially after 2012 when austerity showed its full impact, most merchandise remained unsold and as a result, offers and sales were instituted throughout the year in a desperate effort by local chambers of commerce to boost consumption.

Dina, a 57-year-old clothes shop owner, explained with great energy how she had managed her shop for the past 27 years. For her, the present economic crisis came as something unforeseen. She was unable to meet all her monthly obligations and therefore prioritized her monthly payments. First of all she covered her bank cheques with her suppliers, then she paid the electricity and telephone bills and the monthly shop rent. She was a few months behind with the rent, and when I was interviewing her, the owner came by and asked her for money. She left for last her fees to her Social Security Fund (OAEE), which constituted a fixed amount of money the self-employed were obliged to pay on a bimonthly basis, which was calculated regardless of their actual income. In 2015, these fees, which gave one the right to access public healthcare and pensions, amounted to nearly 900 euros every two months. Dina had been unable to pay since 2012 and had accumulated a large debt (around 20,000 euros in 2016). Because of this she did not have health insurance, yet as part of her overall debt, healthcare fees were still calculated. Half of the self-employed were in the same position of being indebted to the state and excluded from the public healthcare system - if they paid their insurance fees would have no money left to cover even their basic needs. As Dina elaborated, it was with the money she did not pay to the self-employed insurance fund that she managed to get by. Moreover she was furious with the state because, even though she did not have access to the public health system once she had stopped paying social contributions, her insurance fund was charging her fees for it. She said “It is not only me, everyone is more or less in the same position. What are they [the state] going to do? Shut us down, shut down half of the market? I do not think that can happen.”

Nikos (56), who had owned a small shop with electric appliances for the past 25 years, was unable to cover his bank cheques in 2012. In 2009, in order to cover his outstanding cheques, he took out personal consumption loans and, in in his attempt to keep his business afloat, ended up deeper in debt (James, 2014). As the austerity crisis progressed over the following years, he was black listed and excluded from the banking system and his suppliers no longer trusted him and only accepted cash. That caused an immediate and severe rupture in the

way his business operated, from which he was unable recover. He became deeply indebted to the state (the insurance fund and taxation agency), to several banks and some of his suppliers. As a result, he could barely find merchandise to sell and based his activities on repairing rather than selling electric appliances. This provided him with a small, usually informal income. Austerity's overtaxation of the self-employed was designed on the presupposition they that they evaded tax and hid income from the state de facto[55]. This had the opposite of the desired result for the state's coffers, as it made tax evasion a survival tactic. High taxes made it impossible for small ventures to sustain themselves in neoliberal free market competition with large, multinational firms that benefited from state incentives to attract investment. As Stavros (55), self-employed, who closed down his shop in 2015, elaborated: "when I first opened my shop in 1987, I had low taxes and social contributions which made it easy for me to cope. From the profit I made through the sale of a solar boiler, I could pay my monthly fees for Social Security, my monthly rent and my electricity bills. After 2000, I had to sell two solar boilers just to pay for my Social Security fees." On the one hand, inappropriate taxation of the self-employment accelerated the restructuring of the welfare state. On the other, it forced many small and medium sized enterprises that could not follow the markets' rescaling, to close down.

During the crisis years, the retail sector in provincial cities was penetrated by large multinational firms which were able to operate at a large scale and sell products with smaller profit margins. Small shop owners could not compete with the low prices these firms were able to offer to cash-strapped consumers. Moreover, the penetration of the internet into everyday life changed the way people accessed the markets and acquired information. People searched online for the lowest prices in the national market and shopped online. Local retail businesses faced harsh market competition which jumped from the local to the national and even the international scales. Online nation-wide price comparison platforms such as skoutz.gr first, followed by bestprice.gr changed market rules, and many small local firms could not keep up with the free-market economy.

Businesses that based their activities on food and beverage services had different patterns of capital accumulation. These businesses saw their greatest workloads from Friday night to

[55] Self-employed were asked to pre-pay taxes based on the previous year's annual turnover. As everyone said "Kathe Persi kai kalytera (Every last years is better)" that suggests for another time reversal the crisis has brought

Sunday evening when they made up for the rest of the week when they did not have many clients. An exception to this are the main name days which are usually celebrated with group outings. Holidays are the other high season during which these types of businesses have the greatest workload, and as several owners of bars and taverns told me, they waited for the holidays to make up for the rest of the year. Taverns, coffee shops and bars were severely hit by the effects of the crisis since one of the first things that people significantly reduced under the pressure of austerity was spending on outings.

Andreas, a 46 year old canteen owner who had strategically located his canteen in Ritsona, one of Chalkida's industrial zones, suffered greatly from the mass job losses and factory closures. He had worked at an industrial warehouse in Ritsona and in the 1990s, opted to pursue an entrepreneurial livelihood in Ritsona's industrial zone, where he had built up a social network with former co-workers. After the closures and mass lay-offs in nearby factories, he estimated that he lost 80 percent of his clientele, moreover, since his former clients were regulars, he used to provide most of them with an informal monthly credit. When his clients were fired, their outstanding debt was above 3000 euros. Although he continued to operate his canteen, he had to stop employing the woman who used to work there. Describing his situation, he said that he kept his business open because he had nothing else to do and through it, he managed to earn a few "euros" so that he could financially move. Metaphors of financial and economic movement as a sign of life were often used by self-employed people "Na kinoumaste stin agora (to move within the markets – to exchange)" or "I agora kinitai" (the market moves) are widely used to describe the movement both of people and resources in the market. Of course he was not able to pay fees and taxes.

Another business that I devoted attention to was that of Manolis (51, see Household 6, Chapter 4) who had inherited and continued his father's family business in hosting and catering for wedding and christening feasts. Most of his work took place during the warmer months of the year, from May to October, though in the pre crisis years he told me that he used to have some customers during the winter as well. During the high season when he hosted an event, he employed around 10 to 15 people (not on a daily basis), including him and his wife who worked without being registered as an employee but was recognized by the system as a 'helping hand'. Employing family members either formally or informally was a common pattern in the self-employed sector, and younger generations could also work in the family business. Quite often,

the children of business owners wanted to work in their parents' businesses. This could be either as an intentional choice, in which case they studied something relevant that could be adapted to the family business, or as an emergency solution to unemployment.

Kostas (55) was a commercial retailer of a well-known brand of vacuum cleaners and cleaning appliances, and he also offered cleaning services to industrial facilities. He had started as an industrial worker in the Greek Aeronautics Industry (EAB) and had then decided to change occupation. As he explained, he wanted to be his own boss as he did not like being an employee and taking orders. For him, owning his own business was a major step forward as it improved his social status. EAB was a public company, and he therefore had a permanent job position; still, he was unhappy being an employee. At first he worked two jobs simultaneously, keeping on the one in the factory that provided capital, while at the same time setting up his venture and repaying the loans he had taken out to invest in machinery and the private venue which he had bought in the 1990s. He made use of his contacts in the industrial sector and quickly managed to develop a clientele of several factories in and around Chalkida. When he expanded his business, his younger brother who was employed at Shelman, decided to invest in Kostas's firm and became a partner.

Both of the above cases are of successful business ventures which, despite the crisis, managed to maintain some of their profits. They were both challenged by the austerity crisis, Kostas by the multiple factory closures and Manolis by the sharp decline in marriages. Manolis explained that new couples initially have civil marriages and when their first child is born, they have a religious marriage alongside the christening of their child, and it is then that they arrange a big celebration. This new trend became the prevailing one in the 2000s. Moreover, notwithstanding the limited amount at their disposal for organizing a celebration, fewer couples decided to proceed to marriage because there was also a severe decline in births. Shifts in people's grassroots economics and the ways in which they design livelihood projects and envision the future inevitably provoke socio-cultural shifts in practices, structures and institutions of social organization such as marriage. For Manolis' family business, the period during which he earned income got reduced to 6 months per year, and so during the rest of the year, he was occupied in maintaining and upgrading his venue's facilities on his own. "When times are tough you need to adapt and see how to gather yourself/ put yourself together (*na*

mazefteis), to invest in your own skills and not get stuck." he said. While Kostas had lost some of his regular clients, he still maintained some industrial clients in the neighboring industrial zone of Inofyta-Tanagra-Schimatari which enabled him to sustain his business and not become indebted to his insurance fund. However he had a business loan which had been restructured according to his creditors' demands. For this reason, he had to reduce the working hours of 4 of his employees and negotiate salary reductions with them. In the end, two had voluntarily decided to quit after their contract become part time, and he kept the other two on full time but at reduced pay. As he stated, the worst years were 2012 and 2013, while in 2015 he had brought his annual income back up to its 2010 levels and his business was back on track.

Self-employment is a very vague category and includes various types of business owners who sell their goods and services directly to the market. In this section I examined only cases in which self-employment was formalized. I intentionally left out various informal self-employment initiatives and well-organized ventures. Since the informal market in goods and services was significant and expanded further during the crisis, I dedicate a whole chapter to it. Thus, in Chapter 5, I provide a detailed analysis of my interlocutors' informal economic arrangements and of the role of the informal sector in Chalkida's local economies. What is important to note here is that self-employment has always been a node that has mediated formal and informal economic practices and arrangements.

A productive field for observing grassroots economic activities were the local open-air markets. I spent many hours with small agricultural producers and retailers of raw and processed foods who ran stalls in Chalkida's daily open-air markets as well as with consumers whom I followed during their shopping. The open-air market (*laiki agora*) is a market for the people, as the Greek term *laiki*[56] suggests. In times of crisis, cheaper products, which in many instances were sold directly by the producer, provided an outlet to the economically challenged masses. Yet, the "entrepreneurs" in the open-air market also experienced crisis in their businesses as people spent much less and consumed significantly smaller quantities, while not caring about quality as much. The reduction of individual/household consumption at the open-air markets was counter-balanced by new consumers who sought cheaper products there, especially raw fruit and vegetables, while more and more people started buying cheap, imitation clothes there. New stall

[56] *Laiki*, an adjective that derives from *laos* meaning 'the people' or general public, can often acquire derogative overtones and can mean plebs and the masses.

holders appeared, especially after the state, in order to help new farmers, gave out licenses and lowered taxation for those who wished to sell their products themselves. In the open-air market, I encountered people who had had proper shops in Chalkida and who had been forced to close them because of the crisis. Others, by contrast, had been doing both: they had a regular shop and participated in the open-air market as well. In many instances their wives worked full time under the informal but legal status of first degree relative.

Vasilis (38) used to work at a factory that produced plastic cables, that closed in 2012. The company owed the workers several months' worth of wages as well as severance pay. However, since the company had declared bankruptcy, Vasilis was unsure if he would ever get his delayed pay at the very least. He and his brother decided to rent a kiosk and become self-employed as a solution to the lack of waged labor. He explained that he had never gotten into the mindset of being an "entrepreneur" and preferred his previous salaried position. Formally the business was registered in his brother's name yet they operated the kiosk on a 50-50 basis and shared the workload, profits and risks. For him this type of work entailed detailed calculations and demanded many more hours of work than a salaried position which was more suitable for him. Several other self-employment schemes such as coffee shops and bakeries opened up in Chalkida in the crisis years, as a response to the contraction in the availability of waged labor positions, yet they struggled to survive and usually closed shortly after.

Many self-employed people stopped declaring their activities to the taxation agency and their insurance fund and continued to offer their services informally. This included car mechanics, electricians, plumbers, hairdressers and other service providers. For instance, in the same street where I was living, Evdokia (42) had built a two-story house with her husband a few years before the outbreak of the crisis. The ground floor hosted her business, a small hairdressing company whose main customers were women from the neighborhood. In 2016, I noticed one day that Maria had suddenly taken down the hairdresser's sign and I wondered what might have happened. As I soon found out, she had discontinued her formal registration and continued informally to offer her services to her regular customers. I asked her what had happened, and although she was reluctant at first, she explained that she could not afford to pay taxes and her insurance fund, to which she had started to be indebted. She did not want to become more indebted and had therefore decided to go informal.

Another noteworthy case is that of Theofilos (62) who had started working at the factories and had been switching employers until he founded his own firm which undertook petty construction activities, as well as having a shop with construction materials which he closed in 2001. After this he bought a taxi license which he sold in 2012 when the demand for taxi services was very low and he had started getting indebted to his insurance fund. He decided to stop any professional activity and to get by on the money he got from the sale of the taxi license, and to wait 4 years until his retirement. As he told me, he had accumulated the necessary working stamps needed for retirement, yet with the pension system restructuring he could not retire before the age of 62. He finally managed to get his pension in 2016, but it was only two thirds of what he had anticipated that he would receive (from around 1200 he got only 850). Giannitsis & Zografakis (2015) show that people who were close to the retirement age and who lost their jobs hardly ever entered the formal job market. Instead they tried to take advantage of early retirement schemes, a trend which put extra weight on public pension funds.

The new neoliberalized regulatory framework for the self-employed sector, along with increased taxation and the dramatic decrease in purchasing power made formal self-employment no longer worth the effort. Several self-employed interlocutors who had owned small firms for many years described their situation as being similar to or worse than unemployment since they barely had clients and could not make a profit. The firms they owned and had devoted great effort to building and maintaining had, in just a few years, become unprofitable and they were confronted with a harsh dilemma: close down their businesses and become unemployed, or try to endure the crisis and wait for it to pass as they went deeper into the hole of indebtedness. The invasion of multinational firms created ruptures in the way capital circulated locally, and the ways in which the market socialized people in Chalkida. Ordinary people who made a living from commercial activities reasoned that the crisis was a condition in which money stayed still and there was "no movement" in the market *de kounietai fylo*[57] is an idiom they used to describe the condition in the market, Furthemore, a common expression was that "every last year has been better" in terms of their annual turnover and their psychological condition (Apostolidou, 2018). When people shopped at the local shops, a great part of the surplus value was channeled back

[57] This literally means there that "the leaves (figuratively of a tree) do not move" to suggest a condition of stillness

into the local market thus making possible the city's social reproduction, as both buyers and sellers, regardless of their economic background, were interdependent.

Self-employment initiatives were crucial for the development of regional economies and provided an economic structure which capital circulated and from which the state extracted taxes. After the 2015 referendum and the imposition of capital controls, the banks seized the opportunity to reintroduce POS (point of sale) machines and e-banking services to consumers and businesses. From 2015 on, every business was obliged to accept card payments, a fact that gave the banks a more central role in petty, everyday economic transactions. Businesses with outstanding debts either to the bank or to the taxation agency, could not access the banking system as their money would be automatically confiscated from their bank accounts. Moreover, in Greece the banks charged higher commissions on plastic money payments[58] than in other countries. As becomes evident, self-employment recycles locally produced wealth and fuels local socio-economic activities with money. Regional markets were dominated by firms owned by local people who lived in Chalkida and spent their profits locally, whilst large multinational firms extracted local capital and accumulated it centrally. Greece's centralized development model and regional underdevelopment (Hadjimihalis, 1987) made entrepreneurial initiatives crucial to the development of provincial cities. Self-employment, whether forced (Parker, 2004; Tsoucalas, 1986a, 1986b) due to the lack of waged labor positions or chosen, was primarily a bottom-up initiative that developed to interconnect economically local communities and societies with market structures, to facilitate capital circulation and tax collection, and to serve the needs of the growing population.

[58] See https://www.keeptalkinggreece.com/2015/12/21/greek-banks-charge-higher-commission-for-cards-payments-than-in-other-eu-countries/ (Last accessed 12/12/2019).

3.5 Pensioners

Pensioners are a broad category of diversely situated people with varied work backgrounds and distinct work and life histories. By the time they retire, they become institutionalized and standardized under the protection of the state. The public pension system, which is universal, obliges working people to pay social contributions to the state which guarantees pensions and other social provisions. The pension system is an intergenerational solidarity structure that maintains social cohesion and it has been a fundamental aspect of Greece's social contract. The multiple cuts in welfare, benefits and the net pension had a severe impact and affected middle to high income pensions,[59] which were reduced by 30 to 50 percent (Gianitsis & Zografakis, 2018). Moreover, the cancellation of the two additional pension payments during Christmas and Easter were also a major setback which my pensioner interlocutors pointed to along with cuts to the welfare state, access to the public health system and the state's contributions to their medication.

Pensioners consist of a diverse category in which formerly employed people from all the above-mentioned labor sectors are included. In Greece's case, pension income is a male dominated field and very few women have entered the pension system.[60] New pensioners were dispossessed of many benefits and provisions. For instance, civil servants as well as some industrial workers who had special social security funds, paid a monthly, obligatory special contribution from their labor income with the future promise of a one time payment (ΕΦΑΠΑΞ)[61] when they retired. However the amount of the ΕΦΑΠΑΞ was either significantly reduced or even completely eradicated even though working people had paid for it. Civil servants for instance were still paying for it though obligatory automatic contributions from their monthly salaries even though they knew they would either get much less than expected or get

[59] The maximum pension that an interlocutor of mine used to earn was 2900 euros. Stefanos (80) used to work at Dei (the public electricity company). After the cuts his pension fell to 1700. Spyros, a former head teacher at one of Chalkida's high schools saw his pension to fall from 1800 to 1250 euros in 2012.

[60] In Greece, every person above 65 who has not formally worked before is entitled to receive a minimum national pension. Unmarried women who in the past were very few and had no other source of income, were eligible for it. Given the conservative political situation in Greece, a working class woman was hardly ever able to pursue a career. Women's livelihood aspirations were centred around managing the household and having a family thus they were de facto under the protection of male bread-winners. Therefore, married women who had not paid social contributions were not entitled to receive any pension. If their spouses died, they received a widow's pension.

[61] Pronounced EFAPAX which in Greek means "once and for all".

nothing, depending on their age. ΕΦΑΠΑΞ used to be a significant sum for people who entered retirement and many counted on it for their long term plans. Restructurings created generational inequalities among those who managed to get it and those who had paid for it but would not be able to get it. Age played a determinant role in internal differences amongst pensioners. For instance older pensioners who had been retired for more than 10 years had the capacity to accumulate wealth especially when their expenses were minimal. Pensioners below 70 could not enjoy all the benefits that older people had enjoyed before the introduction of austerity. Moreover, people in their 40s and 50s, having seen sweeping austerity restructurings and the economic condition of public pension funds which had been radically reformed, complained that they might never get a pension.

The restructuring of the pension system has been the apple of discord over the past decades. Several governments tried unsuccessfully to reform it since 1991, but at high political cost in the form of massive mobilizations of pensioners and working-class people. In the midst of the recent crisis, the restructuring of the pensions system occurred and finally the Greek crisis era government managed to reform it. As soon as the crisis hit Greece, the pension system was the first to be affected by austerity measures, and almost every new austerity package has further reduced pensions. This created multiple shocks, especially to younger retirees who had based their plans for life after retirement on certain calculations of their pensions, and who confronted many ruptures and discrepancies between what they had envisioned and what they experienced.

Despite pension cuts, there was an accumulation of wealth amongst the elderly who supported the younger, unemployed or underpaid generations in their struggle to get by. Pensioners were transformed into valuable assets and the economic organization of the extended family model reappeared. An increasing number of people relied on pensioners, both in terms of housing and in terms of capital funds. The death of a pensioner, beyond constituting an emotional loss, also entailed economic consequences for their close kin who lost a stable source of income. In some ways, pensioners can be viewed as a new type of “employer” who provided capital and housing to their children in exchange for care. In many instances, pension income was recycled within the kinship network and created a kin-based grassroots job “market” for the unemployed.

Nikos, a 79 year old pensioner felt extremely uncomfortable when the government cut the 13th and 14th pension payments and he could neither give pocket money nor presents to his grandchildren, something which grandparents had traditionally been expected to do. He felt ashamed of being in that position after having worked hard all his life. Nikos' pension had been reduced from 1300 euros per month (14 pays) to 890 (12 pays). He used to work at a union of transport of goods in the port of Chalkida, an egalitarian scheme in which every employee had equal pay, a share of profits and an equal workload. He had managed in his lifetime to fulfill his duties towards the next generation and since he was a homeowner, he had very low monthly expenses. His wife had worked in the household; hence she did not receive a pension at all. His main concern was about the future of his grandchildren and the coming generations who were the ones whose future was ruined. In the course of my fieldwork, I encountered only one woman, who was 76 years old, who was receiving a pension because of past employment. Other elder women received the widow's pension of their deceased husbands. Widow's pensions were further cut and older women in need of medication have been challenged. I encountered one 80-year-old woman who had never married and who received the minimum national pension everyone in Greece is entitled to, regardless of whether or not they have working stamps, if he or she has no other household income. Georgia had never worked formally in her life and she managed to get by with her tailoring skills and a sewing machine while living next to her brother's family.

I also encountered a couple who were both pensioners in their 80s, Christos and Panayiota. Christos had worked in several sectors and for the last 16 years of his work life worked at the cement factory from where he retired. Panayiota had worked in several factories such as Darigk. She described the working-class struggles and corruption scandals that led the factory to close, as well as memories from the civil war and the social exclusion they had experienced since they both had leftist family backgrounds. Panayiota received a small disability pension (less than 400 euros) since she had a severe health issue and could barely walk. She said that she had stopped working as soon as she became pregnant with their first child and never worked formally thereafter. All of their children were facing severe economic difficulties due to the recent crisis and they described their life as always having been full of toil and trouble. The livelihoods of three more households were dependent on their two pensions and, because they were over 80, Christos and Panayiota were preoccupied about what would happen to their

children if Christos, who received around 1100 euros a month, died. Their older son was divorced and used to work at the cement factory as well. Their two daughters (43 and 40), both married, were unemployed and found occasional day labor; both their husbands were underemployed. The daughters, especially the youngest who was living upstairs in the same family building and taking care of them, cooked and cleaned and conducted all the necessary household tasks for them. Otherwise, they said that they would have hired a nurse or another woman to help them.

When their parents died, younger generations who relied on their pensions had to face not only the emotional burden of losing a loved one, but also the economic casualty that would make life much harder for them. In many cases, younger generations could not even afford to receive the inheritance of their deceased relatives because of the taxes attached to them. There have been many cases around Greece of children renouncing their inheritance rights to assets that belonged to their relatives because apart from the assets, they inherited debts as well.[62] In terms of inheritance tax but most importantly, if someone possessed assets that their income could not justify, they would automatically but elevated in the taxation scale and would have to pay an enormous amount of income tax. Owning a house for instance requires that one justify it with an adequate income resource. A house of 150 square meters presupposes that the owner demonstrates at least 17,000 euros in annual income. If someone earned, for example, 10,000 euros, they would be taxed as if they earned 17,000 euros. The same applies for cars. This is a Greek particularity that is called *tekmirio* (proof) and it was devised in order to battle tax evasion. Greek tax payers, when they appeared to possess a car, their un-taxable income increased and they had to present proof that they had the sufficient income resources to maintain it. Many unemployed people who did not have formal income to present, transferred their cars to their pensioner relatives to avoid income taxes for a car they possessed and an income that they did not have.

The crisis has created various abnormalities: wealth has become concentrated amongst the elderly while young people have become unable to imagine a future worth living since, they have been excluded from the job market. Access to public resources became mediated by older

[62] Source : https://www.kathimerini.gr/963619/article/oikonomia/ellhnikh-oikonomia/stis-130000-ektinax8hkan-oi-apopoihseis-klhronomiwn (Last accessed 12/12/2019).

pensioners who provided money and supported younger generations who had limited access to capital for all the reasons described above. An incident that occurred while I was out having dinner with some of my interlocutors, which made me feel uncomfortable, is worth mentioning. Out of ethnographic curiosity, I asked the waiter, who was a man of around 55, about his work as a waiter. He informed me, in front of everyone, that he was a military pensioner but that the money he got after the cuts was not enough, so he worked informally at the tavern. My informants were rather irritated by his response and attitude, saying "he is stealing the job from a younger person in need", they found his stance immoral, individualistic, self-centered and since it was illegal, one of them was thinking of reporting him to the work inspection authority. That made me feel guilty, and made me realize how sensitive ethnographic knowledge can be. One of my co-diners was Andreas (59), a chemist who, after an accident at the age of 52, was receiving a disability pension (half of the pension he would normally have received on reaching the age of 62). He had been multi-employed in the past, both in industrial settings and in several entrepreneurial initiatives he took in Chalkida which his expertise allowed.[63] The money was not enough and so he had been informally renting out some flats he owned at one of Chalkida's popular beaches. Renting out properties was a passive income resource and many Greeks invested in private property as a rental income. Second home-ownership has been a livelihood strategy in the countries of southern Europe (Allen et al, 2004), and in times of crisis, income from rentals aided social reproduction. There were a few instances in which people move out of the houses they owned so that they could rent them out. In Chalkida, though, the demand of housing was not high, firstly because of the underdeveloped tourist industry and the lack of jobs. There were, however, several summer rentals for Athenians, who wanted to stay close and do their summer vacations. Furthermore, since 2010, private property has been severely taxed, which has caused much distress to the masses of homeowners.

There were a few cases in which people could retire early. Military and police officers could retire in their 50s before the restructuring of the pension system. Women aged 50 who had an under-aged child could retire early too, though I did not have such an ethnographic encounter. In addition, a contradictory and outdated law that enabled unmarried daughters, regardless of their income, to receive their deceased father's pension if their mothers had died was canceled after public outrage at a 50 year old politician's daughter receiving her father's pension. The

[63] Chemists were amongst those who had the strongest employment potential.

pension system was designed around the male breadwinner model. Pensions usually covered the needs of two or more household members and insured generations of Greek housewives who normally married older men and had never worked outside of their households.

The pension system's construction is informed by the cultural values of Greece's national project for prosperity and a better future for coming generations. Pensioners, especially the older ones who had experienced hardship and struggle making a livelihood, wished for a better future for their children and were shocked by the crisis' resource scarcity and austerity. In this way, crisis was seen as a movement backwards in time, a time reversal that resembled past lived experiences and collective memories (Knight, 2016). The experience of leading an austere life was common amongst people over 70 who, in one way or another, had endured numerous crises and passed through multiple struggles in order to build the bases of a life worth living, if not for themselves, then for coming generations.

Lastly, most retired people in Chalkida were actively engaged in agricultural activities since they had plenty of time to maintain and further develop the plots of land they owned. With both capital and personal effort, pensioners funded the development of the assets that the next generation would inherit. Moreover, the elderly were actively engaged in the rearing of their grandchildren and in offering vital childcare services to their children. Households with pension income acted as a family based welfare institution for younger generations in numerous ways which I explore in the next chapter.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have shown how different employment sectors have been affected by crisis and austerity, and illuminated the intergenerational and gendered divergences that emerge. Labor is a constitutional force of modern societies which has shaped social and economic life and organization. The different labor sectors make organic solidarity structures necessary as a web of multiple relations of interdependence and thus social cohesion is maintained. The implementation of austerity as a remedy to the crisis has caused severe ruptures in labor income which in turn accelerated the neoliberal process of the rolling back and rolling out of the state.

On the one hand, the neoliberal restructuring of labor followed the dominant recipe of trying to attract foreign capital investments to absorb the radical increase in unemployment. On the other, austerity governments opted to tackle tax evasion and the informal economy, combining them with cuts in public expenditure, in order to eradicate the public deficit. The austerity reforms that were implemented caused a general devaluation of labor and created a generalized uncertainty that introduced precarity into every labor sector, for which reason people sought out other sources of income. Neoliberal restructuring of the ways in which people accessed income sources led to the financialization of everyday life, as calculative reasoning prevailed.

The disappearance of industrial employment was a great shock to Chalkida as it had sustained local markets. The many employment opportunities it had offered since the 1920s shaped the industrial culture and character of the city. Industrial laborers often took pride in their profession that generated capital and contributed to the economic growth of Greece. Working in the industrial sector was a livelihood strategy that used to provide a stable and secure income, and after the 1980s when most modern working rights were established in Greece, industrial laborers started to earn sufficient income to pursue upward mobility projects. The crisis has accelerated the process of de-industrialization that started in the 1980s, and which is based on neoliberal, financialized principles of global economy. Production costs were higher in Greece than in other countries where multinational firms had branches. The case of the cement factory is an example of the neoliberal financial logic in which speculative profit matters more than people's livelihoods. The closure of the cement factory was a social index of Chalkida's very difficult position. In financialized capitalism, neoliberal economic projections have the power to

affect the way people earn their living and thus penetrate further, triggering social restructuring and transformation as well. Crisis is a process that originated at the higher scale of the global financial system and trickled down, passing into Chalkida's local society through the industrial restructurings and closures it provoked. Goddard (2017) acknowledges that the disappearance of industrial labor and restructuring in the globalized industrial economy led to the emergence of new types of workers and provoked intra class reconfigurations (Hardt & Negri, 2000; Codellupi, 2008; Fumagalli 2011). Radical shifts and abrupt transformations in the industrial sector affected other economic sectors and activities that emerged out of the capitalist model that was facilitated by industrial income (Narotzky, 2016).

As I have shown in previous chapters, Greece's industrialization and thus its industrial labor, were linked with modernity and industrial commodities had a modernizing agency (Appadurai, 1986). Various industrial workers linked their profession with the national collective project of modernity and differentiated themselves from other professions that instead of producing, recycled capital. Industrial workers' identities and subjectivities were systematically constructed as the driving force behind the national economy's development, as producing consent with the capitalist model of development (Burawoy 1979). Industrial production not only improved the living standards of those who were directly involved in it, but also those of the nation/society as a whole, and to that extent the local decline of industrial labor was understood within the wider context of the national failure of Greece in times of crisis.

Wages and pensions from the state were another channel which brought capital into Chalkida's local economy. Austerity cuts in wages and pensions paved the way for restructurings in waged labor at private firms and established precariousness in the job market. Civil servants constitute a distinct cultural category as once someone secured a position in the public sector, they could enjoy a care-free life and design livelihood projects based on stable income resources. Civil servants had the best profile for the banks to provide them with credit based on the fixed monthly amount they earned. Those who had gotten loans based on their pre-crisis salaries were unable to socially reproduce and pay their monthly installments to the bank, as the money they earned was barely enough to cover a family's basic needs. Cuts in wages and pensions provoked shocks in the commercial sector as many small and medium sized firms had waged people and pensioners as their main clients. For this category of people, austerity and crisis have brought an

end to life as they knew it. Feelings of being grateful for at least having a job were also widespread as unemployment escalated and remained above 25 percent in the austerity ridden economy.

The economic culture of the self-employed, a constituent part of the Greek middle class, is characterized by uncertainty and instability and includes taking risks and conducting varied calculations about profit making. This particular aspect of its culture made many affected self-employed people who believed that "it will pass,"s unable to face the certainties and impossibilities that crisis brought to their sector. Many small firms were on the verge of closure and their owners trapped in the financial stagnation that the markets had fallen into after the imposition of austerity and the country's unstable economic and political situation. The rational choice to close down their businesses appeared frightening and uncertain since there was no alternative. Many self-employed people who had set up their businesses from scratch saw their businesses as an extension of themselves, a livelihood investment and longstanding commitment that sustained their family's needs. In other instances, the firms they owned were intergenerational projects that they had inherited, continuing their parents' and grandparents' businesses. To close down a three generation old firm was a prospect that presented a heavy emotional burden. In the midst of the crisis, numerous mainstream economists and the media reproduced popular discourses around the significance of small and medium sized firms, using the cliché "the backbone of the economy." They also frequently suggested (Kotsios & Mitsios, 2013) that Greece's entrepreneurial model had to be upgraded and "rationalized" to meet the demands of the global economy. These trends favored capital accumulation at the upper scale while condemning ventures that operated at the local scale.

Harvey (2003) has pointed to the fact that the working classes can be divided into two levels, a lower and an upper strata, with certain intra-class hierarchies apparent (Kasmir and Carbonella, 2008) in relation to skill, education and age. The majority of cement factory workers who, since the 1980s, had enjoyed hard won labor rights and unionization, struggled to maintain those benefits and preserve their former pre-crisis situation and the abundance that the pre-crisis model had offered. Walter Benjamin (2002) argued that the last stage of alienation that the capitalist model achieves is for it to become incorporated and naturalized in people's emic way of thinking and to acquire the socio-cultural power of an economic religion (Mirowski, 2013; Benjamin, 2002; Peck & Tickell, 2002). Numerous people who witnessed the collapse of

capitalist promises of growth were brought to realizations and conclusions about the pre-crisis period's problematic lifestyle. As one said, "we only cared about buying the latest car model." They did not understand the faulty model of development and, struggling to preserve the past, resisted neoliberal restructuring of the labor sector which had reconfigured their living arrangements in a negative way. To that extent the pursue of capitalist dreams and consumption patterns in pre crisis years, as well as concrete beliefs and ideals towards prosperity and leading a good life have failed. In that sense some people redefined what a "life worth living" means while their ideas are entangled with notions of dignity. "We [refers to the society] judge people according to money, is he rich, oh, *kalos gampros* (good groom) they said. Money matters more than dignity and other qualities a person can have. That is how we ended up here" said Manolis (51). Money and commodity fetishism on the one hand reveal the power and the great importance of money in all scales. Wherever there is a lack of money circulation there is crisis. This neoliberal austerity that was enforced in Greece underscores the importance of resource circulation which maintains social cohesion. Money may not bring happiness as the popular saying goes, but definitely, the lack of money and resources brings about great anxiety, stress, depression one the one hand, and on the other, an introspective process that might lead to greater but subtle revolution and a new renaissance.

The multi-employment model (Mingione, 1995, 1990), in which people combine various sources of income, has not produced a homogenous proletariat and the working class is marked by diverse intra-class variations, interests and contradictory claims. Income was a male responsibility that was embedded in people's social habitus. The organization of labor and the formation of the public pension system in particular, reproduced several gendered and generational inequalities. Women in Chalkida hardly ever had the opportunity to pursue a career and earn more than men. The gendered reversal of income that households experienced wounded masculine pride and the social identities of traditional male breadwinners. Austerity restructuring of the labor sector affected distinct age groups differently, with the unemployment rate for people below 35 as the highest, despite the fact that these generations constituted the most educated and specialized workforce Greece has ever had. Younger generations did not only lose income, they were dispossessed of their future. This is illustrated in the decline in birth rates and marriages as younger generations do not have the capacity to envision a livelihood in the way that older

generations could. On the other hand, the hard-won livelihood achievements that older generations had accomplished were at stake, a fact which caused great discontent and social unrest amongst the new class of the dispossessed.

The male breadwinner model in Chalkida established itself, not only because of the presence of heavy industry, but also through the multi-employment. Thus it reproduced the traditional, conservative household and social organization into capitalism even after 1980s. Male income creation potential, especially with multi-employment and the increasing salaries of industrial labor, enhanced the gendered division of labor within the household. Indeed, after 1980s, women started to become multi-employed too as they entered the formal job market dynamically, yet they were almost exclusively responsible for unpaid reproductive labor within their kinship networks. It took several decades for the shifts in household organization to show, mainly due to the massive access of women in higher education and the cultural shift towards more progressive ideas that have shaped the liberal west in the 1960s. To date, with the recent iteration of crisis, the male breadwinner model in Greece has been questioned and altered. In Chalkida, male employment in Central Greece decreased nearly 30 percent (42.000 men) from 2007 to 2012 while female employment during the same period decreased 13 percent (nearly 10,000 women) (EIEAD, 2013: 50-51). As a result, women not only in 2010s have had more equal income opportunities at the labor sectors, but also, after the outbreak of crisis, women's income got promoted as the main income resource of many households, especially in Chalkida, an area which the labor sectors were male dominated. Thus it remains to be seen, how all of these structural and cultural shifts that the crisis has provoked in the local society of Chalkida, will evolve over the course of the coming decade and how younger generations will reproduce, reform or abandon traditional socio-economic practices and livelihood models based on gender and what other implications these cultural shifts will have, in other aspects of social life.

The recent crisis and the imposed neoliberal austerity in Greece have brought about a reconfiguration in the way people understand work. In the capitalist system, production came to be segregated from reproduction as "work" from "life" (Kasmir & Carbonella, 2014). In the next chapter I investigate those shifts in meaning and practices of work have at the household level and in social reproduction practices and assess how production as reproduction came to be reintegrated under neoliberal austerity. What is particularly relevant to the present iteration of crisis, is that austerity occurs within a capitalist market that despite the crisis has abundant

commodities for sale. Crisis in neoliberal capitalism in Greece derives from the impossibility of people to consume. Crisis is therefore expressed as restrained consumption (Chatzidakis, 2018) while the market supply of all sorts of capitalist commodities remains high and people through new means such as the internet, can access national and international markets from their homes. Austerity in the context of market abundance is a paradox that Greeks have never experienced before in the course of their modern history.

Chapter 4

Household Economics, Livelihood Patterns and Austerity from Below: Social Reproduction in Times of Crisis

Introduction

Households are dynamic grassroots structures which provide their members with the necessary bases for socialization. Within the space of the household, people learn basic socio-cultural norms and use resources to develop various skills that help them integrate into the wider socio-economic system. In his book *Economics as Culture*, Gudeman (1986) shows how everyone is an economic actor. Economic practices are learned and reproduced in everyday life and stem from what Bourdieu (1977) has termed habitus.[64] Much of the research conducted at the household level builds from the assumption that both intra and inter household relationships, structures and functions are determined by the wider sociopolitical and economic context. The formation of household units can trigger changes to the wider cultural system. Chayanov (1966) found that peasant household organization in the USSR posed an obstacle to industrialization and the maximization of production. Collins (1986; 1985) elaborates on how nuclear family organization fostered capitalist development in the Peruvian Andes where the extended family household production model was prevalent. Shifts in household organization mirror greater transformations of the wider cultural, economic and social context (Goody, 1972; Kertzer, 1991; Mayer, 2018; Janssens, 1997; Narotzky, 1997, 1991; Smith & Wallerstein, 1992; Wilk, 1991; Wilk, Netting & Arnould, 1984; Yanagisako, 2015). Therefore, one must assume that the recent

[64] Such knowledge is crystalized in various folk sayings about the grassroots economy in general which are of great ethnographic and sociological interest.

economic crisis in Greece has provoked changes and reconfigurations in household organization and social reproduction practices. In this chapter I examine the practices and structures of 9 households in Chalkida in which I conducted participant observation, both in the space of the household and by following members as they went about their everyday activities and I further elaborate on the household economics and life histories of some of the interlocutors I introduced in Chapter 3. Some of the fixed household expenses in contemporary societies include electricity and water and telecommunications which vary according to the number of people each household hosts[65]. I was interested in how household functions and morphologies were being altered or adjusted by the current crisis and how crisis and austerity were re-configuring inter and intra household relationships. Before proceeding with my ethnographic analysis, I need firstly to define what a household unit consists of. According to Eurostat's census guidelines, "a private household is either: a) A one-person household, that is a person who lives alone in a separate housing unit or who occupies, as a lodger, a separate room (or rooms) of a housing unit but does not join with any of the other occupants of the housing unit to form part of a multi-person household as defined below; or b) A multi-person household, that is a group of two or more persons who combine to occupy the whole or part of a housing unit and to provide themselves with food and possibly other essentials for living. Members of the group may pool their incomes to a greater or lesser extent" (Eurostat 2010: 107).[66] This conventional definition enables statistical standardization and cross-country comparative analysis of the household unit. However, it ignores what really happens in practice and underplays the relationships of interdependence which can only be grasped through ethnographic methods. Narotzky (1997) suggests that we should instead discriminate between household morphologies and household functions. In the current Greek social context, households are based on the nuclear family model. This is a consequence of modernization and the construction boom of the past 6 decades of continual capitalist growth (1950-2007). The individualization of household units was mediated by the specifically Greek model of *antiparochi* which made it possible for nuclear families to be

[65] For a two person household electricity bills were around 50-60 euros per month on average, that amount nearly doubled for a family of four members. Landline and internet was fixed to 20-30 euros per month while watering bills were 10 to 20 euros per month.

[66] https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/3859598/5916677/KS-RA-11-006-EN-TOC.PDF/5f1defb8-0c5c-4bed-b7a9-4d849620cd38?version=1.0 (Last Accessed 14/01/2020).

accommodated in separate housing structures and to have their own distinct household spaces and created a particular model of housing and welfare system in Greece and the European South (Allen et al, 2004). The extended household which was common to rural and urban settings in the past, both in Greece (Dubish, 1974, 1986; Friedl, 1975; Hirschon, 1978, 1979) and in other parts of the world (Chayanov, 1966; Collins, 1985; Janssens, 1997; Kertzer, 1991; Mayer, 2018; Narotzky, 1997) was reproduced in the growing Greek cities where many of the rural to urban immigrants settled. Chalkida's neighborhoods were initially formed by kin households and were created by people with a common rural origin. The Greek *antiparochi* housing project reconfigured the dwelling practices of extended family households and produced the infrastructure for hosting the growing population of modern Greek cities. As Wilk (1984) contends, household morphology can change while its functional group remains the same; conversely, household morphology can remain the same while its functions change. In my fieldwork, as I show below, I encountered both. Moreover, household morphologies and functions need to be considered together with the social system's social, economic and cultural components and its preconfigured power relations. After the 1960s, Greek middle class household structures (Cavounidis, 1983; Hirschon, 1979; Hirschon & Gold, 1982; Pollis, 1992; Vaiou, 1992) were based on the male breadwinner model, with reproductive labor tasks being the near exclusive responsibility of women. Through the family histories of my interlocutors, I show how the male breadwinner/female housewife model was structured over time and I argue that this naturalized model has been challenged, amongst the younger generation, by the present day crisis. Moreover, through my ethnographic data, I assess how the extended family has been transformed by a process which I call the individualization of the household unit, and how this segregation of the extended family household has created new forms of interdependence between generations. Following Narotzky (1997), who emphasizes function over morphology, I examine the inter and intra household relationships that place the household unit within the web of intimate social relationships. The forms of interdependence among kin households blur the limits of the household unit and open up a field of inter-household relationships or household networks which resembles the extended family organization of the past, when housing resources were scarce and more than one nuclear family shared the same household space with their kin.

Unlike mainstream statisticians, Smith and Wallerstein (1992) define a household as a resource pooling, collective consumption and distribution unit, and they do so by focusing both on intra and inter household practices and structures. This definition has many advantages for understanding household dynamics in which people are closely dependent on each other but might be living in separate spaces. It also enables us to grasp relationships of interdependence among kin households, and how resources circulate. For instance, transnational households (Basch et al., 1994; Jones and de la Torre, 2011) or ethnographic examples from my fieldsite, such as the adult university students who live in other cities and are financially dependent on their parents, cannot be considered as having a household of their own. Resource pooling and distribution bring to the fore kinship networks which have developed relationships of interdependence similar to the domestic networks which Stack (1974) analyzes.

I argue that the recent economic crisis has bolstered such relationships and shed light on the soft boundaries of the household as it is defined by dominant (macro)economic models (Narotzky, 1997). Smith and Wallerstein's definition (1992) enables us to unpack the inter-household relationships of dependence which are crucial for understanding the transition from the extended family to the nuclear family model. The idea of households as resource pooling units enables us to unpack the grassroots dynamics of resource management. I focus on the grassroots economic organization of households in order to assess how people cover their basic needs and design intergenerational livelihood projects in the midst of the current austerity crisis in Greece. I give special attention to care and reproductive labor relationships which are highly feminized (Narotzky, 1991) and have naturalized females as caregivers. These embedded gendered inter and intra household roles have in many instances shifted the burden of the crisis onto women's shoulders (González de la Rocha, 2001).

4.1 A Household that Provides Income Resources and Receives Care

Household 1

Panayiotis (82), a pensioner from the cement factory and Maria (79) live on the ground floor of a family compound building. Their 43 year old daughter Anthi lives upstairs with her family. Both Panayiotis and Maria come from poor backgrounds. Panayiotis' family settled in Chalkida in 1923 after the population exchange. In the 1950s, the state granted his parents a plot of land with a one room house in order to compensate them for having lost their homes. Maria's mother was also from Asia Minor and her father was from Avlida. Her father died during the civil war fighting for EAM-ELAS and from then on her family were persecuted as communists. Panayiotis' father had opened a tavern where leftists used to hang out. He told me stories about his father's tavern and how the police had persecuted his family and raided their home numerous times. In the 1950s, the neighborhood was gradually populated with other working-class families whose male members worked in Chalkida's factories. The state provided them with low interest loans for building or buying houses in the area.

Maria had grown up without her father, and her mother had to work various petty jobs in order to make ends meet. She was hired by the cement factory to cook for the seasonal workers who lived near it. Maria started to work at the age of 16 at a small pastry factory in Chalkida and later, from 1958, worked for a few years at Darigk which by then had been transformed from an ice production unit to a metallurgical factory. Later she took a job at Peraeiki-Patraiki, a textile factory, and got married to Panayiotis in 1960. Panayiotis's parents were unable to raise him and when he was 9 years old, they had given him to a rich family in Athens to serve as a "maid".[67] He stayed there until the age of 14 after which he returned to Chalkida and became an apprentice (*kalfas*) to a tailor. After he had learned the profession, he started working for a clothes and shoe production unit in Chalkida as a subcontractor. Maria and Panayiotis had their first son Anestis in 1963, and then started to extend Panayiotis' parents' house in order to host their growing family. They had two more daughters, Georgia and Anthi in 1968 and 1970. The money from his tailoring business was not enough to raise three children, so Panayiotis found employment at the cement factory where his work consisted in lubricating the factory's machinery (*ladas*).

[67] He used the Greek term *ypiretria* which means servant in its female form.

However, he did not abandon the tailoring business and his wife and son carried it on at home. In the 1990s they added a second floor to the house, in which their son, who was actively engaged in its construction, lived with his new wife. The upstairs house was intended as their youngest daughter's dowry. As soon as she married in 1996, their son rented a house for his family. Anestis, as the son of a former cement factory worker, found employment at the cement factory and worked there from 1994 until 2015 when he was fired. Their second daughter got married and moved to her husband's house in 1991. Since having an operation at Chalkida's public hospital in 2005, Maria faced severe health issues and could barely walk. For this reason, their youngest daughter took care of their household while their other two children helped them move around, do their shopping and go to the doctor for their monthly checkups. The culture of austerity proved to be intergenerational. Panayiotis received a pension of 1080 euros and Maria, a disability pension of nearly 400 euros.[68] All of their children had lost their jobs due to the crisis and relied on their parents' financial help, who distributed their pension income among three households. Their main expenses were medication and medical exams, and they paid nearly 200 euros per month for medication.[69] Anthi, who lived upstairs and had two children, was the one who cooked for both her own and her parents' household. Food expenses for these two households were mostly covered by Panayiotis and Maria's pension incomes. They had also been giving some financial help to their son's son who was studying at university. This was especially true after 2015 when Anestis had lost his job and started to work informally at a tavern. Clothing expenses for their younger grandchildren, aged between 10 and 16, were also covered by their pensions. The elderly couple also provided financial help to their children's households in order to cover their electricity bills or any other emergency expenses. For instance, their grandson who was doing his military service in Evros at the Greek-Turkish border, did not have the money to pay for the train ticket. Given his age, Panayiotis was worried about what would happen if he died. "With this situation, with the crisis and everything, what will happen to them if I die?" he said. Maria suffered continuous pain and often exclaimed that their lives had always been difficult, "but what to do? That's life" she said. As she lit another cigarette, she continued "and this is the life we have to live." She was a heavy smoker and her son supplied her with smuggled

[68] Before the cuts, he used to get 1400 euros. The disability pension remained unchanged.

[69] Before the restructurings of public health care, they paid 50 euros less per month for their medicines.

cigarettes. During the crisis, the price of cigarettes has radically increased. This has led to a growth in the smuggling of cigarettes of unknown quality, especially after the imposition of special taxation on ‘luxury’ (sic) items such as tobacco and alcohol.

4.2 Care Giver Households

Household 2

In the second household, Theofilos (62) and Panayiota (58) live. In 1969, at the age of 11, Theofilos moved to Chalkida with a cousin of his and two other adolescents. They all came from the same mountain village in Evia. Theofilos' father had sent him to Chalkida so that he could get access to elementary education and then apply for admission to the *Dimokritos*[70] school in order to develop his technical skills. His family economic background combined petty agricultural production with petty trade, since his father regularly visited Chalkida to sell both his own and others' - kin and non-kin -agricultural products. While he was studying at evening school, Theofilos started working as a waiter and then as an apprentice to a carpenter. His father and uncle pooled their savings together and bought a plot of land in the city in 1967. A few years later, Theofilos and his cousin started to build a house. First they built a basement where they could sleep and little by little, started adding adjacent rooms and the rest of their kin gradually moved in. Theofilos' father, who had a general store in their village, planned to move to Chalkida and expand his business in the city. The house in the village had been left to Theofilos' older brother who took over their father's shop and the family's small agricultural property. Their mother had an active role in her husband's business although she was formally registered as a farmer. In 1976, as soon as he finished his military service, Theofilos married the woman he had fallen in love with, Panayiota, whose family lived in the same street. Unlike past generations, for whom marriages were arranged by elders, during Theofilos and Panayiota's generation, the established cultural norm had started to change and the institution of *proxenio* (matchmaking) to decline. Panayiota was born in Chalkida and her parents ran a general store in the neighborhood from 1959 till 1999. Their house was at the back of the general store, which fact blurred the boundaries between their workplace and household. Her parents had built their house through informal means as soon as they had married in the late 1950s. It was built on a plot which was

[70] A technical high school, founded by the commercial and industrial chamber of Evia in the 1950s, that trained young males in skills that could be applied in industrial professions.

split between four sisters (*adelfomoiri*),[71] which their parents had bought to give as a dowry to their daughters who were born and raised in Setta, a mountain village in Evia One of the four sisters was Panayiota's mother. Panayiota was an only child and hence was due to inherit all of her parents' assets. Her dowry was therefore considered as something that would ensure her future. Thus she was raised and trained to be a good housewife (*noikokyra*) who would not have to work outside of her future household. In those times, a married woman working outside of the house (family businesses excluded) was a shameful thing, an index of poverty and a man's inability to provide for his family[72] (cf Horrel & Humphries 1997). Panayiota and Theofilos got married in 1979 and their first child was born in 1981, after Theofilos had finished building a second floor above Panayiota's parental house. Before that, they had cohabited with Theofilos' parents who lived nearby. Their daughter was born in 1984. In 1988 Theofilos begun the construction of a third floor with a smaller apartment that was intended to provide them with a rent income. Theofilos worked hard and even helped in his in-laws' business, and in 1992 he started building another house on another plot of Panayiota's inheritance that was intended as a dowry for their daughter. Theofilos worked for several factories that were in desperate need of specialized laborers in the 1970s, then in the 1980s, he founded his own construction firm. In 1991 he opened up a shop with his brother that sold construction materials. Due to numerous disputes between the two siblings, the venture failed and they closed it in 1996. Theofilos decided to leave the construction business as he had several health problems with his knees, and instead bought a taxi license. Both Panayiota and Theofilos were preoccupied with providing their children with all the necessary skills and resources for a good life. Their common goal, a vision which they both shared, was to give their children more than they had received from their parents, and this they presented as an intergenerational moral obligation that older generations have always had towards the younger ones, "to live the country in a better shape." Of course with the crisis and the austerity regime, future livelihood projects were blurred, and many of the young, people in their productive age were forced to leave the country. When Theofilos narrated

[71] *Adelfomoiri* is the folk term which literally means the "fortune of siblings" [*adelfia* (siblings) + *moira* (fortune/destiny)]

[72] The social control of women's labor was stricter in smaller societies like Chalkida's. There, the conservatism which characterized Greek society in small cities was personified. In Athens, by contrast, despite the dominance of conservative socio-political ideals, people could maintain their anonymity and avoid stigmatization. The latter is another reason why many people opted to migrate to the Greek capital; in this way they could escape from the backwardness of small cities that upheld retrograde social dynamics.

the hardships he had endured during his childhood and early adolescence, he explained that he had never mentioned these to his children. “I have struggled for my children not to experience the hardships I have endured in my life,” he said.

Apart from the housing assets which both Theofilos and Panayiota struggled to develop, they invested in their children’s education. Their son who studied medicine moved to the UK in 2009 in order to specialize.[73] He was offered a job after he completed his specialization and decided to stay in England. Panayiota, who was responsible for managing the household income, informed me that their son’s education cost them around 100,000 euros in total (private lessons to pass medical school + housing and expenses while studying in another Greek city + expenses for him to move abroad). Although Panayiota and Theofilos were disappointed by their son’s decision to settle permanently in the UK, they justified it as the only way for him to progress with his career and live a life worth living. “There is no life anymore in Greece for young people” both said, wondering “how can a young person begin his life here?” Their son got married to a Greek woman he met in the UK and had his first child in 2015. Their daughter studied at a public institute for vocational training (IEK) to become a secretary. When she got married, Theofilos and Panayiota decided to sell the house which Theofilos had built in the 1990s for their daughter. They sold it for 150,000 euros, nearly 8 times its initial cost.[74] They used some of this money to fund their son’s emigration, with the greatest part given as a dowry for their daughter’s marriage. Moreover, Theofilos helped with the construction of the new house which the groom’s parents gave to the newlywed couple. In the meantime, Panayiota’s mother and Theofilos’ father died, and they had to take care of their elderly parents. Theofilos’ mother was independent enough and could take care of herself, however, she did not know how to handle bureaucratic procedures and to operate within institutions and formal structures. Thus, Theofilos took over his deceased father’s responsibilities. The exact opposite was true for Panayiota, whose mother died. Her father was unable to cook and clean, in other terms to undertake any reproductive labor task. Thus, Panayiota was burdened with her deceased mother’s responsibilities, and transformed herself from a daughter to a “wife” for her father. She

[73] The queue for acquiring a specialization at a Greek hospital was long and one had to wait several years before being admitted to a trainee position.

[74] For Theofilos, the cost of building a house was low - since he was the one who undertook the construction work.

had to maintain two separate households and nurse her father who died in 2015, a few months before I arrived in Chalkida. When the crisis set in, Theofilos and Panayiota decided together that Theofilos would stop his professional activity as a taxi driver/owner, sell both his license and the taxi in 2012, and wait for four years until he could retire at the age of 62. Because of this, in order to get by they had to manage their income and savings carefully. This was Panayiota's task. She made detailed calculations of everything that their household spent so that they would not run out of money. Their difficult economic situation was obvious to me because they were my landlords. I was renting Panayiota's deceased father's house, which they rushed to rent shortly after his death. I had asked Panayiota to hire a house cleaner on my behalf to clean my house while I was away, and she agreed. When I returned, I asked her to introduce me to the cleaning lady she had hired. Then I figured out that it was her who had been cleaning the house but was ashamed to admit having done so.

They managed to save money by cutting back and keeping strict accounts of their expenses while at the same time engaging in household production to save money resources. They started selling the surplus of their olive oil production which during pre-crisis years they had usually gifted to friends and relatives. Theofilos' construction skills were also very important in helping them save money resources. For instance, he did the necessary renovations and repairs to the house which I rented and also maintained their property. In addition, they stopped hiring agricultural workers to harvest their olives, and instead did it by themselves with the help of their kin, as they had done in the old days. From May to October, Theofilos' mother stayed in the village where she cultivated seasonal vegetables such as tomatoes, cucumbers, zucchinis, green beans and carrots which she gave to Panayiota who, by processing or refrigerating them, managed to cover their household's needs for the whole year.[75] Panayiota took care of their 5 year old granddaughter and she informed me that "when I have my granddaughter here, I want to have freshly cooked food for her, so I plan my shopping accordingly. When she is scheduled to stay with us I plan ahead and cook her favorite food." They restricted their household's expenses to covering basic needs in order to be able to provide what they believed they should to the younger generations. For instance, they would not pass over buying a present for their

[75] Our team regrouped in Barcelona for two months between December 2015 and January 2016. Panayiota noticed that I had not unplugged the fridge in my house and asked if she could store some carrots there while I was away since her own refrigerator had run out of space.

granddaughter, but in order to do so they restricted themselves from even petty expenditures and, as Theofilos told me, he had stopped going to the local coffee shop (*kafeneio*) as often as he used to do, thereby managing to save 5 euros per week. "I try to save even a euro, even a euro matters," he said. They did their shopping at the open air market where one can find cheap raw vegetables, fruit and fish, and they had regular suppliers who gave them discounts. They also had access to certain types of raw food, such as eggs, cheese and wine which the producer, Panayiota's second cousin, delivered to their house on a weekly or bi-weekly basis. Theofilos became a pensioner in 2016 and earned 850 euros per month. This was 450 euros less than he had been expecting before the implementation of austerity measures and the restructuring of Greek pension funds. Before 2016, their income resources came from three rentals which brought them 700 euros per month. The imposition of the property tax (ENFIA) in 2010, burdened this household with 500 euros annually, a significant amount of money that they desperately needed. They therefore reduced heating expenses to a minimum and became obsessed with heating costs.

Household 3

Next to Panayiota and Theofilos lived Katerina (67), Panayiota's first cousin, and Vasilis (70). Their household organization was similar to that, of Household 2. They had two daughters in their 40s and four grandchildren aged from 3 to 12. Vasilis and Katerina married in 1968, and the dowry that Katerina received consisted in some money and the plot of land on which they later built their home. Vasilis had settled in Chalkida with his parents in 1949 when his parents had chosen to build a better life in the city. His father got a job at Chalkida's port through a relative of his and joined the docker's union. They rented until his father bought a house in 1960, which

he did after selling some property in his village of origin in a remote part of Evia. Vasilis started an apprenticeship when he was 13 as an electrician and later specialized in vehicle maintenance. After finishing his military service, he got married, through a matchmaker, to Katerina who had been born in a village near Vasilis' place of origin. Katerina lived with her in-laws until they completed the construction of their house in 1970, which was adjacent to the house of Panayiota's (Household 2) parents. Vasilis changed occupations several times and during certain periods of his life, was multi-employed. His main expertise was in vehicle maintenance and he worked as a mechanic in industrial facilities. He also worked informally for a cousin of his who had opened a mushroom production unit. In 1990, Vasilis and his brother in law (*kouniados*) decided to open a car repair workshop, which they closed two years later after having several financial disputes. As he told me frankly: "one should never start a business with a relative." After having closed his business, he worked at Theofilos' (Household 2) shop for a while and as a bus driver for the municipality of Chalkida, before finally finding a job at the port of Chalkida as a truck driver, in which position he worked until his retirement in 2007.

Katerina's parents lived in the village. Her father had been much older than her mother and had died in 1995 at the age of 73. Dimitra (86), Katerina's mother, had a serious health issue and had to move in with Katerina and Vasilis in 2006. For the past 9 years, Katerina had been taking care of her mother who lived in an independent room that Vasilis had built at the back of their single-story house. Apart from the responsibility of nursing her mother on a daily basis (changing diapers, feeding her, giving her medication), Katerina had to take care of her 3-year-old granddaughter who had been diagnosed with autism, so that her daughter could go to work. She therefore had to cook three different meals, one for her own household, one for her mother would could only eat specific foods, and one for her granddaughter who also followed a special diet. The whole neighborhood witnessed Katerina's everyday struggle and was critical of her brother's stance: he did not offer any kind of help to his mother, even though he had received the lion's share of their parents' property.

In this household's nuclear kinship network, Katerina acted as a care giver and offered unpaid services that were comparable to those of a professional nurse, cook and tutor. As far back as she could remember, in her life she had never rested and had always been on call to serve others. When I asked why Katerina had never sought paid work, the answer that Vasilis gave was

clear: “why would she work? And then what? Paying another woman to raise our children? The money she would earn would be equal to what we would spend on a housekeeper-nanny.” Katerina and Vasilis’ children found jobs through their social network in the local market and did not go to university. The younger one worked in a secretarial position at a local newspaper and the older one was employed at a bank. They left their paternal household when they got married, even though they could have afforded to live on their own. Both married in their late 20s, much later than the older generation of women.

For this household, the open-air market also played a central role for accessing food resources. Vasilis and Katerina did their shopping twice a week, either on Tuesdays or Thursdays and every Saturday when the open-air market was near their neighborhood. Their weekly expenditure on raw vegetables and fresh fish from regular suppliers, was around 30 to 50 euros. They visited the supermarket on a bi-weekly basis and searched for special offers and discounts beforehand. On an average they spent around 50 to 150 euros for various goods and household items. Supermarket discounts and offers were a frequent topic of discussion among neighbors who exchanged information about what each supermarket chain was offering and had on sale. Since the outbreak of the crisis, they had started buying non branded goods which had lower prices. When it came to their granddaughter who only ate special food, they spent a further 30 euros per week as Katerina wanted to give her top quality food.[76] Katerina and Vasilis also had access to informal networks that circulated food resources, either in the form of gifts or as paid goods. For instance, they bought cheese and wine from a third cousin of Vasilis while one of Katerina’s cousins brought them food she produced (green beans, apples, tomatoes, chestnuts) as gifts. Another cousin of Katerina’s, who lived in the same street as them, bred rabbits which he sold exclusively to relatives and friends. Austerity was something which characterized their lives and especially their childhood years. They had never taken out loans, did not consume excessively and followed a humble lifestyle. The crisis had had a major impact on their available resources; however, they had a habitus of poverty and hence their economic activities were easily adjusted to a mode of resource scarcity. Vasilis’ pension had been reduced to 950 euros from the 1300 euros he used to get in 2009. A major issue for them were the heating expenses which they

[76] I had Katerina write down the food she cooked. For instance, Vasillis and Katerina had green beans, Katernia’s mother boiled rice with chicken breast, and their granddaughter, bon fillet and expensive part of the beef.

could not avoid because of Katerina's mother, who received a widow's pension of 450 euros. In 2016 the price of oil was relatively low (0.85 euros/liter)[77] and Vasilis arranged to fill their tank in April 2016 and save it for the coming winter when prices were expected to increase.

[77] Heating oil prices were as high as 1.5 euros in 2012 due to the austerity taxation on fuel.

4.3 Households with Adult Children

Household 4

Dina (57) and Nikos' (64) household was structured differently from those discussed above. Dina was born in the prefecture neighboring Evia, Voitia. In 1976, she moved to Chalkida where she met Nikos, in order to find work. Nikos was born and raised in Chalkida and worked at the cement factory. They got married in 1977 and rented their own house in Chalkida. In 1990 they bought a plot of land and in the same year built their own house. In order to fund their project of becoming homeowners, Dina opened up a children's clothes shop with financial help from her husband. They had three children who had grown up in their mother's shop since their grandparents lived in the village and could not babysit for them. As a result, Dina's husband was more supportive with the daily running of the household. He learnt how to cook basic recipes and helped with some of the housework. However, it was still Dina who was the one primarily responsible for their household's reproductive labor.

She and her husband had struggled to provide their children with higher education and to equip them with the tools for having an easier and better life, "not to start their lives from zero as we did," Dina explained. As is common in Greece, their children's education was the common ground of their family's aspiration and what they struggled to offer to the younger generation. Stefanos (36) had a university degree in Information Technology (IT). Tassos (34) initially started studying IT in Athens, but then quit his studies and went to London to study website development and graphic design. Angeliki (29) had studied business administration and management at the Technological Institute of Chalkida and had thus never lived away from her parental household. Two of Dina and Nikos' three adult children were co-habiting in their house and contributing financially to some of the household's expenses. Their younger son Tassos, had quit his studies and returned to Chalkida in 2013. Since then, in the midst of the economic crisis, he had been informally employed in a part time job at a local bar. Their older son Stefanos had married in 2010 and had a 4-year-old daughter. He had been hired as a high school teacher in

2011 and was transferred to a remote island for the first two years. In 2014, he managed to move to Kymi, a small town in Evia, about two-hour drive from Chalkida. He was the only one who had formed a household of his own and hence had received a part of his inheritance. This included his share of a large family olive grove of 200 trees and a smaller vineyard in Viotia which his uncle (his mother's brother) was responsible for cultivating on behalf of his mother. Dina told me that the agricultural income that she received varied from 8000 to 10,000 euros per year, of which a third was given directly to Stefanos. Tassos implied that his uncle took advantage of their absence and was cheating them. Even though their parents' assets were to be equally divided between the three siblings, he was not sure about his little sister's attitude. According to Tassos, she had always, since she'd been a child, wanted more than her fair share.

Nikos took advantage of the early retirement schemes that the cement factory's administration was offering and had voluntarily left the factory in 2007, two years before retirement. He had received a good severance pay of 90,000 euros, for which reason he had not kept up good relationships with the rest of the cement factory workers. In 2008, Tassos and his older brother decided to open up an internet cafe. They got a business loan of 40,000 euros using their parents' house as collateral. The first three years had been successful, and they had nominally employed their father for it to appear that he was paying national insurance contributions which would entitle him to a full pension in 2009. Their father kept the shop's books since he was skilled at accounting and very knowledgeable about economics and, as Tassos informed me, he was the one who managed their household economics and kept track of their financial situation. In 2011 the internet cafe's annual income started to drop and after consulting their father's books, they saw that profits and expenses had equalized. In the intensifying crisis environment and with the projected deterioration of the situation, they decided to close their business. They repaid the outstanding 4000 euros of their loan by using their father's severance pay. While Tassos went to London, Stefanos had already applied to ASEP (Anotato Symvoulio Epilogis Prosopiko – The Supreme Council of Personnel Recruitment) for the civil service in order to become a schoolteacher. He was hired in 2011. After multiple austerity cuts, schoolteachers' initial salaries had been reduced to 850 euros and, in the first years of their employment, teachers were sent to remote areas. Stefanos had to move in the island of Skyros to teach, taking with him his wife and their newborn child. In order to help them make

ends meet, his parents Dina and Nikos, together with his wife's parents, had provided them with financial help. Finally, he managed to return to the vicinity of Chalkida where his wife could work at her parents' company's mini market.

In this household, adult children contributed to expenses when their parents ran out of money by for instance paying for food or electricity. Tassos told me that his father had asked him several times if he had any money to contribute since they had run out of food. Both children contributed to the household's expenses, yet both also had their own money for personal needs and managed their own budgets. As Tassos explained, they always had a "solid family", meaning that they had close relationships and supported each other. Over time his father's pension was significantly reduced and the severance pay he had gotten disappeared because he had to support his wife's venture.

When Tassos moved to London, his parents funded his tuition fees and covered his relocation costs. He found work easily, yet as he explained, even though he found a job as a graphic designer, he did not like the way of life: "it was not something that I wanted to do, in the end I was just working and the money I earned was only enough to cover my basic expenses. In order to make money there you have no life. So, I packed up my stuff and came home." Since 2013 he had been living with his parents and was informally underemployed at a local bar. He worked nights and got paid from 0 to 40 euros depending on the night and how much money customers left at the bar (usually he got 10 to 20 euros except on Saturdays and holidays when the bar had more customers). Tassos managed to earn at best 450 euros per month, which barely met his own expenses and struggled with mild depression, an issue which both he and his mother, who was worried about her son, raised.

Their sister was not in a relationship and had never lived alone. She was comfortable with her present living arrangements and, as her mother and brother told me, showed no signs of wanting to leave the parental household. She had a regular job that paid a 790-euro salary and she contributed to some household expenses such as electricity bills and food. In 2010, their parents had started to build an upstairs floor which they intended to give to their daughter. However, the crisis had halted its development, and it was left half built. Reproductive labor in this household was shared among its members and the children who had always "helped their

mother with housework." However, the main caregiver was Dina, who organized the household. She continued to cook the night before as she had done in the past when her husband worked, and she had to juggle her three young children and the shop. Doing the shopping for their household needs was Nikos' responsibility but always under the Dina's strict instructions. Moreover, Dina sometimes did the daily shopping on her way home, going to selected vendors who have been her clients too. The household's income counted on a stable income resource, Nikos' pension. He was receiving 1180 euros; 600 euros less than he had received in 2010. If we count the fact that she was indebted to her social insurance fund, Dina's business did not make any profit, on the contrary it was making a loss. However, since she did not pay her insurance fees, she had capital with which to move and shop around. She explained that if she paid her fees she would not have any money left to buy food or pay rent and bills for her shop.

Household 5

Household 5 was formed by Georgia (59), a high school teacher, and her mother Fani (83). Georgia had never married and had lived abroad for several years, returning to Greece in the 2000s. They lived in an apartment which was built through *antiparochi* in the 1980s, and which had been Georgia's father's parental house. Next door, in a much smaller apartment, Georgia's aunt from her father's side, Elpiniki (80), lived. She had also never married. Georgia's father had been born in Chalkida and had worked at the cement factory. Fani was born in Xanthi, Northern Greece, and met her husband during his military service. They married and moved to Chalkida in the 1950s, where they cohabited in Georgia's father's parental house. They had three children - two sons and Georgia, their youngest child. In the 1980s they decided to give the old house they were living in over to *antiparochi* and in return got two new apartments, a big one for Georgia's father and a one-bedroom apartment for his sister. For its part, on the ground floor, the construction company got two shops. It sold these for a high price as they were located in the center of Chalkida.

Fani had persuaded her husband that all of their children should study, and she had been adamant about this. She had given great importance to her children's education, and her husband

had agreed to save money so that they could go to university. Fani had understood the benefits of higher education and wanted to ensure her children's future, especially after being encouraged by their high school teachers. Georgia studied pedagogy and later German literature in Thessaloniki. She migrated to Germany in the 1980s were she lived and worked at a private school for the children of Greek migrants. She returned to Greece in 1996 and worked as a tour guide and a private German tutor. Later she decided to apply for a position as a German teacher at a public school in Athens. In 2003 a position opened in Chalkida and she returned to her hometown. After the death of her father in 2007, she moved in with her mother. She had planned to build a house on a plot of land that she had bought, however she was cheated by the real estate agent: one could not get a building license for the plot. Therefore, having taken out a loan that she had to pay back, she moved in with her mother.

Georgia looked after her mother's needs. However, since Fani was able to undertake numerous household tasks, they often competed about who was the head of the household. Georgia's two older brothers regularly visited their mother and they very often held family gatherings there bringing along their own families. Although Georgia's aunt's house next door was separate, it can be understood as a common one. That is because the three women had lunch together almost on a daily basis and cooperated with the cooking and cleaning, and shared heating and other common expenses. Georgia was a progressive woman who had travelled a lot and nurtured feminist ideas, while her mother was a traditional housewife who criticized her daughter's lifestyle and choices, especially that of choosing not to marry. Georgia, inspired by progressive political change in Greece in the 1980s, had assumed a revolutionary stance and chosen to break with traditional household reproduction strategies, gendered stereotypes and conservative social practices and institutions, "that kept back society " and this fact had affronted her mother's cultural ideals. Moreover, since their household was Fani's "queendom", there was much friction between the two women around issues of hierarchy.

Georgia's salary had been reduced to 1200 euros from the 1800 euros she had earned before the implementation of austerity. Fani's widow's pension had been reduced from 850 to 650 euros.[78] Their standard common food expenses (including those of Elpiniki) were around

[78] Since 2011, apart from the cuts on their monthly salary and pensions, they lost the 13th and the 14th extra pay for Christmas and Easter.

400 euros per month. They spent 100 euros on other household items plus another 50 on various items. Fani's medication cost 70 euros per month, Georgia spent around 60 euros per month on gasoline and nearly 200 euros in outings, and she paid 400 euros per month for her bank loan. Through the course of the year, various other expenses came up which could not be calculated on a monthly basis or even on an annual basis. These included clothing, visits to the doctor and other household expenses that popped up unexpectedly. Fani was at an age in which she could not provide care, on the contrary, she required care from her children. The burden of taking care of her had fallen to her daughter Georgia, who was responsible for her and took advantage of her mother's house. Fani pooled her resources and had specific demands about how these resources were managed by her daughter. She told me in private that she was secretly saving money for her funeral expenses. Fani had vivid memories of the Nazi occupation in her home town in northern Greece, an experience which shaped the way in which people understood poverty. For her, she explained, the present-day crisis was nothing compared to the hardships that Greek people had endured during the German occupation (cf Knight, 2015). She was deeply religious and often challenged her daughter's leftist and feminist ideas. Georgia, who had been a schoolteacher, experienced a great reduction in her salary, as did Fani with her widow's pension. However, since they were two women with modest needs, they did not face any issues with their social reproduction. Fani's major expenses were her medications which her doctor prescribed. Along with the cuts, people had been obliged to contribute more to buying medication since costs were not fully covered by their insurance funds. Georgia, who had a loan to repay, could no longer afford visits abroad and the long summer vacation trips that her profession allowed. This was the major expenditure cut she was forced to make in her lifestyle when her salary was reduced. She explained that she did not have any responsibilities as families with children did, and that was why she could handle her salary reduction more easily than them. After all she did not have to pay rent and upon her mother's death, she would inherit the house.

Food resources were mostly accessed through the open-air market where Georgia went every Saturday when she was not working. Georgia introduced me to her regular suppliers and informed me about which products to go for and which to avoid as they might have been polluted by industrial waste. They had an extensive kinship and social network and varied resources entered the household in the form of gifts. These were not hugely significant yet were

appreciated by both of them. For instance, in September, a neighbor of theirs would always bring them grapes from his vineyard, while in August, another friend would bring them a bag of figs. During the winter, Georgia's cousin supplied them with tangerines, lemons, oranges and bergamots. Fani liked bergamots a lot and processed them which sugar to make a traditional sweet that she offered to her guests. Through small gifts, the household was full of sociality, and on numerous occasions (name days, religious feasts), they held dinners for the whole extended family.

4.4 Independent Households with Dependent Children

Household 6

Households whose main income resource was the family business preserved traditional models of organization. This was the case with Manolis and Maria's household. They were a couple in their early 50s with three dependent children who lived in a family block of flats that Manolis' father had built in the 1980s. Their older son Miltiadis (21) was studying political science in Athens and had chosen to join a master's program in International Relations. Their second son Makis (17) was about to go to university and join his brother in Athens where he was renting a house, and their teenage daughter Asimina (13), had just started high school. Both Manolis and Maria had been born in Chalkida. In the 1960s, Manolis' father had been the first person in Chalkida to develop a family business hosting wedding banquets and by the 1980s, he owned three venues which hosted wedding celebrations for the local middle and upper classes. Maria's parents were descendants of Asia Minor refugees. They were born in Chalkida and lived in an area originally designated for Minor Asians (*Mikrasiates*). Maria had an older brother who was married and lived in Crete and she was therefore responsible for taking care of her parents. Her father had recently died and since then she had been supporting her mother. On numerous occasions, they shared cooked food and had lunch together, either at their place or at her mother's. Manolis had an older brother who had lived next door and had suddenly died at the age of 56. When I met Manolis, the family was organizing the 40 days memorial service for him which I attended. On the top floor, Manolis' parents had their own apartment, yet they rarely stayed there. They spent most of their time in a new house they had built next to their business venue, outside Chalkida's city center. When Maria first met me, I was looking for a house and she thought that I could rent the fully furnished apartment upstairs. Manolis was sure that his mother would not consent. "Agree to rent their house with their furniture, to a stranger! No way, I'm telling you, I know my mother too well," he said, discouraging his wife who had been hoping to get a rent income from me.

Manolis and his brother had inherited their father's family business when he had retired in 2007. His brother chose not to work and had appointed Manolis to run his share. He therefore received a monthly payment from Manolis as a rent, which in the pre-crisis years could be as high as 2500 euros per month, and which fell to 1500 or even less after the start of the crisis. Manolis did not look up to his older brother and described him as a rentier, implying that he was rather lazy and self-centered. Although Manolis had significantly upgraded and developed his father's business, he operated it following his parents' model. Manolis' mother was actively engaged in the family business and worked on the preparation of the banquet dinners, as did Maria. Both women took an equal part in the decision-making process of their husbands' businesses and their opinion counted, yet the officially recognized owners were their husbands. At the level of the household however, roles were reversed. The wives were the ones who directed their households while their husbands played secondary, supportive roles. Manolis inherited not only a family business, he also inherited a model of household and business organization.

Neither Manolis's mother nor his wife were formally employed but were providing a legally recognized helping hand to the family business. This status was formally accepted by the state, but only for first degree relatives who could not as a result establish pension rights for themselves, and instead accessed the state's provisioning sector through their husbands' social insurance. After the death of Manolis' brother, ownership of the business was officially transferred to Manolis' mother, because his father was already a pensioner and could not have the dual status of being a pensioner and a business owner. Yet it was Manolis who did the management. His brother's share was paid, thereafter, to his widow, and since they were childless, Manolis' children would eventually inherit all of it.

Maria once complained of not having legal status as an employee. She raised a feminist question about housewives who, as many feminist scholars and activists have noted (Federici, 2013), should at least receive work stamps and be eligible for a pension. "What if we broke up, what would happen to me given that the business is not in my name?" she wondered. With compassionate, her husband replied "darling, isn't it ours? Are you thinking of breaking up with me? Don't worry, as soon as you decide to, I will grant you half of it." I had a one to one

conversation with Manolis on this issue, in which he explained that Maria had graduated from EPAL (vocational senior high school) and was trained to be a childcare assistant. Manolis recalled suggesting to Maria "do you want me to open a nursery school for you to run?" and Maria refusing the offer.

Maria had a clear understanding of the value of the women's unpaid reproductive labor that enabled men to focus on income creation. Moreover, she regretted not being registered as an employee at her husband's firm; by now, in her 50s, she would have been eligible to receive a pension as the mother of a dependent child. As she explained, when her second son was born in 1998, her and her husband had decided that she would stop working in their business and dedicate herself to raising their children. In addition, she said, she did not want their children to grow up spending most of their time in the business, and she was against having another woman take care of them. She was on top of her children, pressing them to do their homework and pass their exams. "I learned all the subjects the children were examined in by heart. If I were to take the exams someday (*panellinies*), I would definitely pass," she said and laughed. Since neither boy performed very well at school and did not manage to get into a "good" school that offered good employment prospects, both were steered towards inheriting their father's business. The weight of pursuing a career outside of the family business was put on their daughter, Asimina's shoulders. When she began high school, her parents worried and pressured her to do well so that she could study law or medicine.

As a professional in the catering sector, Manolis had access to a wholesale supermarket, which only those with a professional tax registration number (*ΑΦΜ*) could use. As a result, he bought food both for his business and his household at the same time, which further blurred the boundary between the two. Thus family business arrangements were inseparable from those of the household. Moreover, his two sons occasionally worked in the family business in order to learn the ropes so that they could take over in the future. This household was oriented towards the present and future reproduction of the family, as well as the family name which was embedded in Chalkida's local society as their business' brand name. The boys' future, especially after the crisis, was attached to the venture, and the parents encouraged their second son to study something that could be used in the family business. The older son aspired to a political career and joined a mainstream political party early on during his studies. His father was opposed to its

ideology, but his grandfather encouraged him and used some of his connections to promote him within the party's hierarchy.

One day, when I was interviewing him in a relaxed manner at his workplace, a topographer came by to map and register the geolocation of Manolis' property in order to be able to transfer it to his children. That is how it came to my knowledge that Manolis owned a couple of venues more which he rented and earned roughly 1000 per month and as he told me he used to earn nearly double before the outbreak of crisis. Manolis and Maria had already calculated how they were going to split their assets among their three children. The family business would pass down to their sons, while the house in which they lived would be given to their daughter. Their older son had already started to take an active role in their business as he had struggled to find a different job from which to make a living.

Within their standard household expenses Manolis and Maria had to include the rent plus pocket money for their son who was studying in Athens, as well as the cost of private lessons for their second son who was about to start his studies in September 2016. The total amount of money spent on their children's activities amounted to 1500 euros per month. As soon as their second son managed to get into a management school in Athens, their two sons lived together. They visited Chalkida quite often, almost every week, so that their mother could wash their laundry and cook for them so that they had homemade food during the week. The household's expenses had increased substantially while income from the family venture had significantly decreased. Manolis estimated a 50 percent decrease of their net annual business income, down to 30,000 euros. In order to support their children's education they had restructured their spending several times. First of all, Manolis invested in buying an advanced pellet and wood stove, which decreased heating expenses significantly, saving 2000 euros annually. Moreover, he invested his own labor during the business' dead time, upgrading and maintaining the facilities on his own and with the help of his friends. This household's social status, unlike that of the others discussed, entailed numerous social obligations which in turn required extra money. For instance, when they were at school, the children were frequently invited to parties, so they had to buy presents for their friends. In addition, parents had to pay for school trips and spend elevated sums on clothing accessories. In the pursuit of conforming to social expectations, the household's

budget was burdened with additional expenses that were aimed at socially reproducing their position and status in local society.

Household 7

Giannis (44) and Georgia (43) were also homeowners. Both worked and shared reproductive labor tasks. They divided their household tasks according to what each one could do best. Giannis was born and raised in Chalkida and had worked at the cement factory from 1995 until 2014 when he got fired. Georgia was born in Pyrgos, a town in the Peloponnese, and was raised in Athens. When she met Giannis in 1998, she moved to Chalkida where she found employment in a private English school.[79] In 2001 they got a loan to buy a new house in Chalkida. As soon as their children were in nursery school, Giannis encouraged Georgia to open up her own English language school. Although he helped his wife in her new venture both psychologically and financially, it still demanded more working hours from her. Since Georgia's work was in the afternoon and evening and Giannis' shifts at the cement factory in the morning, the two shared the housework. However, with both continuing to work long hours, even after they had their second daughter in 2006, they had to hire a child minder. They did not want Giannis' mother to be responsible for their children and have her interfere with the couple's arrangements. It had been Georgia who had first objected when that possibility had been put on the table. Giannis supported his wife which, he told me, caused friction with his parents and especially his mother who felt rejected. As his wife explained, she did not want her mother in-law to interfere in their domestic matters, especially when they could afford to pay a child minder. The household's social relationships were Georgia's responsibility, and she was the one who kept track of their social obligations and managed the family's public image. Interestingly, Giannis took care of the household's economics. He described how they had come to a mutual decision about this by holding a competition. Each had a month to manage the household's economy and in the end,

[79] Even though she did not have a university degree she could teach English with a proficiency certificate that the universities of Cambridge and Michigan granted. Any high school graduate with an English proficiency certificate (and in the 1990s there were very few) can legally teach English in Greece. Learning English is a must for every child and parents register their children, usually at the age of 7, in private *frontistirio* schools to learn English in order to improve their future employment potential.

they evaluated the money spent and their level of satisfaction. They agreed that Giannis' management had been better, and since then, it was he who handled their income. From the beginning of their common livelihood, in this household gender stereotypes were de-constructed. This continued even after they had children, and when Giannis lost his job. The loss of Giannis' employment rescaled the intra household economic hierarchy and promoted Georgia's income as the main and only stable resource. Giannis did several informal jobs in order to earn some money and also helped to bolster Georgia's clientele. He came up with the idea of offering free transportation to children who lived outside Chalkida. The general contraction of wages and over taxation had directly affected Georgia's venture since many of her clients could no longer afford their monthly payments and she had to restructure her prices. Giannis was infuriated with the situation they had been put in and vented his anger at the gym. He also became actively engaged with their daughters and started taking on more responsibilities in household reproductive tasks. Since the potential to earn more was slim, the household focused on saving money through consumption. His father in law, who bred animals in his village, supplied them with their annual meat requirements. For this reason, Giannis invested in a big refrigerator. In exchange, when his in-laws visited Chalkida, they didn't pay for anything while being hosted.

Giannis estimated that they spent 400 euros at the supermarket, plus 100 euros for both daughters' activities (ballet & basketball training) and 100 for their pocket money. Since they were in the first grades of high school, they did not have to spend extra on private tutors for schoolwork. They had just repaid their mortgage which was a great relief for them. Giannis had managed to save money from his former job at the cement factory. His wife's business generated around 20,000 euros annually and with that money, plus some sporadic income Giannis could obtain through informal employment, they managed to get by and to maintain their social reproduction practices. Georgia's business was going well despite the crisis, as most people continued to invest in their children's education and skills. Knowledge of the English language was an essential skill for the younger generation to progress and prosper in the future.

A critical factor which shaped the household's calculative reasoning was the loan which they had gotten in 2001. Moreover, when Giannis lost his job, his extended kin helped him find employment. When I met him, he had been informally employed in a pellet production unit for

the past ten months in which the manager was his best man (*koumparos*). Since it was relatively new, the unit's owners, who owed money both to the state and the banks (from their previous venture), demanded that staff work for less pay with the promise of better future pay and a stable position. Giannis was furious with the owners' position, especially after several delays in his payment. He was not registered as an employee at the company and had been promised a high position when the venture's economics stabilized. Pellet production was a dynamic sector since during the crisis, many households and businesses sought alternative and cheaper methods of heating. Moreover, the fact that his best man was the manager was the main reason that he had not already quit, and was putting up with the undignified position he was put in.

Household 8

Takis (45) and Eleni (45) had two sons aged 14 and 16. They had both studied chemistry in Thessaloniki and had stable jobs. Takis worked at Chalkida's public water company and Eleni at a pharmaceutical company in a demanding position in which she regularly worked long hours. As Takis started work at the same time as Eleni, it was imperative that they hire a house helper to clean, cook and take care of the children. Finishing work earlier than his wife, Takis took care of more of the household responsibilities and reproductive labor tasks such as cooking, shopping and child rearing. Takis and Eleni met during their university studies and as soon as they graduated in 1995, they married and moved to Athens. They lived in a house in Acharnes (North East of Athens) which Eleni had received as a dowry from her parents. In 1996, Takis found a job at a paint and coating factory in Inofyta near Chalkida, to which he commuted every day by train while Eleni worked at a chemical company in Piraeus. As Takis explained, even though the distance from Acharnes to Chalkida was greater, it took him less time than it took his wife to commute from Acharnes to Piraeus by car. He therefore persuaded her to move to Chalkida where they could enjoy a better quality of life. By the time Eleni got pregnant with their first child, Takis' father, who had already retired from the cement factory, moved with his wife to his maternal house in Nea Lampsakos (Chalkida), giving his paternal house in the center of Chalkida over to *antiparochi* in 1999. The newly built apartment he got in return was granted to Takis and

Eleni. When Eleni had their first son, her mother moved in with them in order to help her daughter with her first child, and she stayed for almost a year.

Monthly expenses for their children's education were around 650 euros (400 euros for their elder son's private lessons and around 150 euros for the younger one's English lessons). In addition, they paid 650 for the house helper. Since they were both employed and had above average salaries, with Eleni earning significantly more money than her husband whose pay had been severely cut, they could get by quite easily and were in position to save money and help close kin who were in need (Takis earned 1490 euros while Eleni earned nearly 1900 euros). Takis told me that he did the shopping at the supermarket where they spent about 600 to 700 euros a month (food + other items). Eleni's kin in the Peloponnese owned olive groves that her father cultivated, supplying households in his close kin with olive oil for their annual needs (60 liters of oil per year).[80] Takis' parents, who were both descendants of Asian Minor immigrants who had settled in Chalkida, did not possess any agricultural land. Household 8 did not face social reproduction issues, although the austerity cuts have affected it's income along with the new austerity taxation on income and property. For that reason it took a supportive role and acted as a 'bank' that provided credit to first degree relatives in need, or helped and reciprocated with money resources their parents households[81] who were challenged by the pension cuts and could not for instance afford the maintenance of their summer house.

[80] On the market, bulk olive oil costs between 4 and 8 euros per liter.

[81] Both Takis' and Eleni's parental household had a male pension as the only source of income.

4.5 The Formation of a New Household

Household 9

During my fieldwork, I had the chance to investigate a household in the making. Household 9 constituted a peculiar case which traditional economic models are unable to account for. This is because, lacking a space that we could call a "house", it raised multiple theoretical and methodological questions as to what a household is. A young couple, Alexandros (33) and Sofia (28) had been in a relationship for two years and had decided to live together. At the time, Alexandros was renting an office at a very low rate (150 euros) through a friend of his mother's. Since it was an office space, it lacked basic utilities and was very small. It had only one room with a small sink and a small bathroom, for which reasons Alexandros relied on his mother's household for numerous jobs such as doing the laundry. When it presented itself, Alexandros and Sofia seized the opportunity to buy a tavern and work together. This was the first act of their marriage and common life which symbolized the creation of a new household. In order to save money, they left the office space that they had used as a home, and for the first year they slept on a couch in their new business, planning to find a house in the near future when their economies allowed it. In the meantime, they went to Sofia's father's house to bathe and ate at the tavern. Both were officially registered as living in their parent's houses. Both Alexandros and Sofia's parents were divorced. Alexandros' mother had married in 1982 in order to escape her father's authority and village life,[82] an arrangement that did not turn out well, and she got a divorce when Alexandros was eleven. She opened up a book shop and studied psychology at the Greek Open University and now practices her profession. In the meantime, she re-married, had another son and ended up divorcing again. Alexandros' father had also remarried, had two more daughters and got divorced as well. Sofia's mother had been working at a poultry production unit for the

[82] Before the 1980s, because of its conservative cultural, religious and political context, there were few divorces in Greece. Since the 1980s, when women have become more emancipated and can access the job market more easily, the divorce rate has been increasing (Eurostat: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=File:Crude_divorce_rate,selected_years_1960-2017(per_1_000_persons).png Date accessed 20/11/2019.

past 23 years and her father, who was near retirement, had been working at ELVAL, a heavy aluminum plant in Inofyta, for 25 years.

Alexandros did not go to university. He said that he had never been a good student so studying something would have been a waste of time and money. He started working in an insurance company in 2003 and earned good money. He bought a new car and had a credit card at a very young age. However, he did not enjoy his work and life as an insurance broker and chose to quit his job in 2006. He used the credit card unwisely and the bank had been "chasing" him until, after the outbreak of the crisis, they gave up. However, he was not worried about this as he had nothing to his name. Over the past decade he had made a living as a DJ at local bars and clubs. He worked informally up until 2011, when strict labor regulations and large fines were introduced for employers who did not register their employees. This had created a problem for those in his profession since many employers did not want to hire them, and so DJs were forced to register as self-employed and to provide services rendered on receipt. For a DJ who worked only 2 to 3 days per week, being registered as a self-employed would be catastrophic since they would have to pay more to the self-employed insurance fund (OAEE) than what they earned.[83] Sofia had studied civil engineering in Larissa, however she had never found a related job and made a living out of waiting (*servitoriliki*).[84] Even though they had lived on their own since their 20s, neither Sofia nor Alexandros were accustomed to maintaining a household and lacked basic housekeeping knowledge and skills.

Household 9 provides a striking example of how difficult the formation of new households and new families has become during the years of austerity crisis. Alexandros and Sofia faced multiple difficulties in their struggle to make a living. They took up the chance to buy a tavern which had a regular clientele and operated mostly during lunch times. The idea of working during the day was appealing to both of them. The former owner of the tavern had explained that he did not want to keep the tavern anymore and had showed them the rental

[83] The nightly fee for a DJ used to be between 60 and100 euros before tax during pre-crisis years. This amount fell to 30 to 60 euros after 2011. After deducting taxes and fees, the amount comes to even less.

[84] An emic term which people usually use in a derogatory sense. I deduce that it connotes another derogatory term, *chamaliki*. *Chamalis* (χαμάλης) is a noun that refers to unskilled workers who do heavy jobs and are paid very little, usually in the docks and other industrial settings. This neologism, which has become a very popular way of referring to the profession of waiter, was coined by combining *chamalis* with *servitoros* (waiter).

agreement as well as the daily budget. They started opening during the same hours and maintained the original clientele while also keeping the tavern's name. They made an arrangement to pay 7000 euros upfront and the remaining 8000 in 10 monthly installments. The initial capital was covered by Sofia's uncle who provided 6000 euros as a loan to Sofia's mother. They experimented a great deal in the beginning with different approaches to Chalkida's public. First, they turned to their social and kinship networks. Sofia's mother went almost every day to help out, as soon as she finished her job. Sofia's father also provided some financial support and the couple used his household's facilities while living at the tavern. He was housing his son who had recently gotten married and had a little baby. Sofia's parents did not have a good relationship after the divorce, however they put their differences aside and it was mostly Sofia's mother who tolerated the presence of her ex-husband. Sofia's mother was preoccupied with her son's family and with helping Alexandros and Sofia with their tavern on a daily basis. In addition, Sofia's mother claimed that she was alone and that, when she had been raising two children, she had received help from no-one, for which reason she expected Sofia to manage the same way she had. However, she did not have the same expectations of her son who was in a similar position to Sofia.

Since both Alexandros and Sofia were accustomed to working at night, when people not only eat but also drink, they put emphasis on night hours. As they told me on many occasions, booze was more profitable than food. People went there and ordered multiple alcoholic beverages but ate only one dish. Locally produced, non-standardized alcohol such as wine and tsipouro have much greater profit margins than other types of alcohol and can be obtained through informal or semi-formal procedures and arrangements with the supplier. Moreover, most of their clientele were friends who in many instances demanded discounts and sometimes "forgot" to pay. Sofia said that "the largest *fesia* (unpaid bills) are left by our supposed 'friends'." Alexandros' father gave them advice as he was subletting and operating a *kafeneio* on behalf of its owner.

They expected to start earning an income after the first 10 months when they had repaid their debt. Their venture was registered as new form of company – an "IKE",[85] which paid lower

[85] Law 4072 of 2012 introduced a new type of company, the Private Company ("PC") ("Idiotiki Kefalaiouchiki Etaireia" or "IKE" in Greek) in order to meet the growing needs of modern and flexible middle-sized companies. The Private Company is a company with legal personality. It is qualified as a commercial company,

tax but entailed higher costs in terms of accounting services. Alexandros said that it was very important to have a good accountant who knows how to wade through the complex tax legislation. In their business, Alexandros was the owner and had the right to work and employ other people while Sofia was registered as a shareholder. In that guise she could be present at the tavern and observe, but she was not allowed to work as she was not officially registered as an employee. Further, because she was not married, she could not either provide a "helping" hand as a first degree relative of Alexandros'. This arrangement enabled them to save money by paying less for social insurance. Moreover, they took advantage of a special law for new business initiatives which granted reduced taxation fees for the first 12 months. After settling their debt, they were planning to rent a house, however this plan got postponed as they decided instead to rent the neighboring shop and expand their tavern to accommodate more people, especially in winter. They mobilized a wide network of social acquaintances in order to renovate it and bargained the rent with the owner. Most of those who worked on the renovation project were clients and in many cases suppliers of Alexandros and Sofia's tavern. For the next year, the couple continued living in a small attic on top of the tavern's kitchen.

Although the search for a house had been postponed, it became a priority when Sofia got pregnant. In terms of reproductive labor, neither Sofia nor Alexandros were capable of sustaining a household as their mothers had. Yet neither of them had a problem with that, nor did they expect the other to take the initiative. Things changed however, when Sofia gave birth and took on care of the newborn while Alexandros assumed a greater share of the responsibility for their venture. However, Sofia did not know how to do household jobs and it was Alexandros' mother who tried, in vain, to school her in proper house cleaning and basic reproductive labor. Since they all ate at the tavern, they rarely shopped for anything for their household. The house lacked even basic utensils such as dishes and cups and, for instance, they only had a refrigerator but no cooker. Their monthly expenses were 320 euros for their two-bedroom apartment, 350 euros in rent for the original space of the tavern plus 400 euros for the adjacent property. They had a

even if its object is not to carry out commercial activities. A Private Company may be incorporated by several persons (called "members" or "partners") or by a single person, in which case it is termed "single-membered". Members may be natural or legal persons. The PC's capital is determined by members without any restriction in terms of the law as there is no minimum share capital requirement. Members may participate in the company either through capital contributions, non-capital contributions or guarantee contributions.

friend install a switch in their house so that they could bypass the electricity meter, as they had an increased need for heating with the newborn baby.

They married in a religious ceremony two months before Sofia went into labor. They managed to receive a considerable sum of money in gifts (15,000 euros), which they used to pay off their business' outstanding debts. Sofia's mother continued to support them by providing free labor in the kitchen. They were focused on earning more money and stopped offering free drinks and discounts to their old clientele who were accustomed to eating and drinking for free. Thus, their social circle and their clientele was renewed. Alexandros and Sofia tried to open the business up to a wider public with a higher disposable income than that of clients for their social network. Alexandros started working late at night to boost alcohol consumption amongst clients and managed to make better profits, while Sofia stayed at home with their newborn son, working at the tavern whenever Alexandros' mother could babysit.

Conclusion

Households embody wider social, political, cultural and economic systems; thus the study of household and family histories unravels the greater transformations taking place in society. In today's austerity ridden Greek economy, restructuring was also grounded and embodied in inter and intra household relationships. Krezmer (1991) suggests that we adopt "an approach that focuses on the interplay of political economy, demography and culture" (ibid :157) in order to study household formation. In Greece, there was a continual increase in living standards from the 1950s on, when urbanization intensified throughout the country and changed dwelling practices. Peasant household and family organization was reproduced in cities where many rural immigrants concentrated. Having a roof over your head had been the longstanding aspiration of the emerging middle classes since the 1950s and the primary investment they made for the future. Thus, homeownership was the investment that enabled intergenerational projects of upward mobility to unfold. Owning a house meant owning the means of social reproduction in Marxist terms. In that sense, Greek people had a clear understanding of how capitalism worked and aspired to become homeowners – this was the ultimate expression of the working class dream. Older generations were usually the ones that provided housing assets to their children and they did so either through the *antiparochi* system or though the investment in land and self-built housing.

One of the great transformations of the Greek family and thus of Greek households was the transition from the extended family to the nuclear family household. Housing practices through private initiatives such *antiparochi* and self-built houses on private property, made possible the transition to nuclear family households but in a very particular sense as kin networks of proximity replaced intra household relationships of the extended family and household structures. The cultural and economic trend towards homeownership enabled intergenerational projects to evolve in the wider project of modernization and development of Greece. Gendered and generational aspects of household organization of the extended family were reproduced in inter and intra household relationships of dependence. Another great transformation of household

structure had been the dynamic entrance of women into the job market since the 1980s. In households with female labor income, reproductive labor tasks were more evenly balanced, and males started acquiring housekeeping skills and engaging more with child rearing. Hence, the generational factor is highly significant in order to identify cultural shifts in intra-household practices.

Along with the generational discrepancies, both the educational level of household members and household income shape intra-household relationships. Men and women with higher education and income had the skills and knowledge to question and at least partially deconstruct, past generations' gendered stereotypes upon which social, economic and political organization were constructed. Increased unemployment in the male dominated industrial and construction sectors promoted female labor income as the main income resource in many households in which men lost their jobs. Apart from housing provision, education was another main concern for Greek households. Since the 1960s, people had struggled to equip the younger generation with the skills to develop professional careers. Even today, in an austerity ravaged society, household expenses on children's education remain a priority for parents.

Access to higher education has dramatically affected household formation processes. There has been a generational shift in marriage and family formation as young men and women have started to marry later in their lives. Marriage postponement has delayed the formation of new households as in many instances, unmarried children chose to reside with their parents and/or were dependent on their mother's reproductive labor in their late 20s and early 30s. As a result, the younger generation, regardless of gender, lacks basic house-holding skills such as cooking and cleaning. The current crisis has pushed up the age limit of co-residing adult children in their parental households and increased the dependence of the younger generation on their parents' household resources.

The austerity crisis squeezed income resources which were compensated for by unpaid labor at the household level. Self-subsistence and self-maintenance practices by men, and reproductive labor by women enabled households to save money (na kanoun oikonomia).[86] The role of middle-aged women is critical for inter-household relationships. On the one hand, as

[86] In Greek the expression *kano oikonomia* literally translates as to "make economy", which means to wisely manage household resources and thus save income. That conceptualization adheres to the original ancient Greek concept of *oikonomia* which means household management.

mothers they provide help with their children's household reproduction practices, especially in child rearing. On the other hand, as daughters, the are the main caregivers to their elderly, pensioner parents whose pension income takes the form of grassroots welfare and is used to sustain the social reproduction of their challenged first-degree relatives. Further, households in Chalkida have maintained agricultural income and access to subsistence resources thanks to second- and third-degree kinship relationships. Mutual help and support among kin households has also been critical for social reproduction. During the current economic crisis, a certain resurgence of the extended family's functions can be observed in relation to the ways in which people access resources.

Throughout modern Greek history, the state's underdeveloped welfare structures have maintained the function of the household as an informal welfare institution which has always been the safety net for social reproduction. In the aftermath of the collapse of the welfare state and organic solidarity structures that austerity produced, Chalkida's society had to establish a new balance in order to achieve social reproduction. To a certain extent, this fact sparked a re-invention of the mechanical solidarity structures of the extended family.

Chapter 5

Renegotiating the Social Contract and the Grassroots: Austerity, Informality and Social Solidarity

Introduction

In this chapter I argue that the austerity measures that were imposed by the Troika and implemented by crisis era governments have reconfigured Greek society's social contract. The restructuring of power that the imposition of austerity and foreign supervision has entailed has reconfigured the ways in which Greek people relate with power and with each other, and this discontent has also altered their economic relationships. Greek citizen-taxpayers have been transformed from subjects of a sovereign state to subjects of a state in default who were, moreover, held liable for paying back the country's sovereign debt. The rolling back and the rolling out of the state (Peck & Tickell, 2002), the deregulation of labor, privatization and the financialization of ever more aspects of daily life along with over-taxation (Giannitsis & Zografakis, 2015) and cuts in public welfare have undermined the value of life in the country. Such extreme measures were unilaterally accepted by crisis era governments who had neither public consent nor legitimacy for jeopardizing future generations' prospects. Mainstream economic models undermined the fact that the dictated top-down policies lack the social consent that is necessary for formulating a viable solution, one that would be publically debated. With the 2015 referendum, Greeks at least had the opportunity for open discussion about possible

solutions to the crisis and their respective costs. However, a serious debate between pro and anti-austerity projects did not occur. Instead of relying on knowledge about recent economic research, which "is highly critical of economic retrenchment in times of crisis, the public must rely on which politician sounds most plausible" (Hopkin & Rossamond, 2018: 645)

Top down imposition caused a bottom up reaction to austerity policies, and their implementation was resisted on the grounds of everyday life. However, the divisive dynamics of a society in crisis were reflected in mutual accusations made by different groups from across the various labor sectors. Intra-class conflicts became prevalent, as did the need for people to defend themselves by supporting each other and enduring the hardships of crisis together. Both social solidarity and social disunity were core repercussions of the severe attack that austerity made on middle- and working-class livelihoods. In this chapter I explore how austerity's ramifications and reconfigurations of the social contract provoked both divisive and uniting practices and discourses and created new moral economies at the grassroots level.

Firstly, I examine the multiple facets of social solidarity and disunity that are at play in the formulation of the social contract and shared ideals, memories and experiences. I bring together Kropotkin's views on social solidarity and community dynamics in the provision of mutual aid with the sociological theory of solidarity in order to unravel how solidarity relationships are inter-played in the intimate and ongoing socio-economic relations of everyday life. In an innovative approach, Komter (2005), combines sociological theory on solidarity with anthropological theory on gift exchange and argues that solidarity structures require the circulation of material assets. González de la Rocha (2001, 2007) argues that informal economic resources are critical in the maintenance of social and kinship networks of mutual support. However, she stresses the fact that informal resources by themselves are not sufficient, but rather form a band aid for resource scarcity. Reframing the gift economy (Godelier, 1996) in relation to how it unites, connect and organizes people, gifts can be seen as a socio-economic investment which sustains social and kinship networks that are critical for the social reproduction practices of a whole society. Money, therefore, can take the properties of the gift (Mauss, 1990 [1925]).

Keith Hart (2008, 2007) identifies that money is a social token, a commons at the base of social organization of the human economy and can both take the personal and impersonal form

and function in modern societies. Parry and Bloch (1989) in their book *Money and the Morality of Exchange,* show that people personalize money and attribute to it social character. *The* cash based Greek economy started to change when capital controls were imposed shortly after the declaration of July's 2015 referendum. Capital controls resulted in a lack of cash and pushed people into electronic economic transactions using debit cards. After the imposition of capital controls, every retail shop was obliged by law to accept e-payments and Greeks started using their debit cards instead of cash even in petty economic transactions. A general store owner explained that if for instance, someone bought a packet of cigarettes, his eventual profit would be captured by the bank's commission fees. The introduction of cashless transactions through e-banking services and POS (point of sale) machines reconfigured the ways people evaluated, calculated and used cash in their everyday economic transactions and produced new moral distinctions between cash and cashless payments. In many instances, cash was intentionally used by people in order to help local shops and businesses to avoid paying commissions. On the other hand, shop owners could not offer discounts had the customer wanted to pay by card. Money, in the form of cash became endowed with a sense of social solidarity, a grassroots pact against the banks and the state that aimed to control even petty economic exchanges. Payments with cash, maintained the personal and often informal character of economic exchanges, whereas, card payments open a new domain of impersonal relationships between bank accounts. The fetishisization of money in neoliberalized environments (markets), passes into digital numbers, however, people who were (re)introduced to that new money fetishisism often rejected using e-payments in their economic relationships that are embedded in social relationships. Instead of pay by card, they paid in cash in small local shops, while in big ventures such as supermarkets, they preferred using the debit cards.

As I have shown in previous chapters, many of Chalkida's inhabitants come from rural backgrounds and have, maintained the structures and habitus of village life. This characteristic of my fieldsite resonates with Kropotkin's (1902) view on social solidarity and the institutions of mutual aid that were predominant in what he calls village communities. Grassroots structures of micro-communities such as neighborhood, kinship and social networks are formed on the basis of common interests and mutual help, thus ideas of social solidarity are inherent to them. I argue, moreover, that the social contract has two dominant expressions. One of these is its formal

expression through the state's structures and power agencies (such as social welfare, the police, courts, etc.). It can also assume an informal expression through what Rousseau names the "general will". In Greece, society is misrepresented in politics, and over the years there have been various struggles to include people in decision making processes. Until 1974, for example, a considerable portion of the population was excluded from political and economic life (leftists, women). Thus, the grassroots "general will" and its practices were often not in accordance with the regime of power. In the recent iteration of the crisis, a major discrepancy between grassroots "general will" and top-down austerity policies can be traced, which is indicative of the reconfiguration of the social contract through economic practices and stances. Grassroots economic practices evade institutional control and thus, in the creative process of getting by, (re)produce locally based institutions of mutual aid and support and solidarity is expressed through economic means, through money whch takes the form of the gift.

Economic crisis in Chalkida's local market economy materializes in the lack of moneycirculation. In times of crisis, the informal capital that circulates locally becomes vital for the maintenance of the local economy. Central in my analysis are the role of taxation, as it provides the basis for redistribution, and the materialization of organic solidarity through the state's structures and resources. Taxation under austerity and foreign financial supervision has lost the redistributive qualities through which it maintained social welfare and provisions. The economic solution which was fixed at the political level between Greek crisis era governments and the Troika shifted the burden of austerity to citizens who did not agree with the idea of paying for a "debt and a crisis that was not of their making". Reinhart & Rogoff write in 2013 that: "Austerity seldom works without structural reforms – for example, changes in taxes, regulations and labor market policies – and if poorly designed, can disproportionately hit the poor and middle class." [87] The austerity treatment has caused both a liquidity trap and the paradox of thrift[88] (Keynes 2016) as people instead of circulating and investing their capital withheld their money and spent wisely.

[87] https://www.nytimes.com/2013/04/26/opinion/debt-growth-and-the-austerity-debate.html (Last accessed 12/02/2020)

[88] See https://krugman.blogs.nytimes.com/2010/03/17/how-much-of-the-world-is-in-a-liquidity-trap/ (Last accessed 14/02/2020).

The recent austerity crisis has provoked grassroots reconfigurations of everyday life and economic activity. On the one hand, as I discuss at the start of this chapter, the lack of resources has broken social and economic relationships and reconfigured economic practices and activities. Thus social cohesion in Chalkida has been affected by the financialization of everyday life, by new modes of resource management by households and individuals, and the fact that people access consumption and the market through multinational firms. The old, pre-crisis model of regional economies that was dominated by local SMEs has been reconfigured to meet the neoliberal standards of the free-market. Calculative reasoning and self-interested consumption practices have broken local socio-economic relationships and promoted savage market competition. This Darwinist approach to economics further deepens social division. At another level, necessity[89], as the folk saying goes, is the mother of invention. In the creative process of getting by, people invent new ways of sustaining social reproduction. Crisis has in many instances made it imperative for people to collaborate in order to get through everyday life. This collaboration, I argue, takes place outside of formal structures and can only find expression through interpersonal relationships.

Next, I explore the informal economic activities and practices that proliferate in times of crisis and that provide people with the means for remaining socially and economically active in local society. Recent interdisciplinary approaches (Chen, 2012, 2006; Hart, 1992, 2006; Narotzky, 2000; Peebles, 2011; Portes, 2005; Sassen, 1994) do not treat informality as a marginal phenomenon, but rather as a concrete reality that unfolds a history of power relations between people, the state and the global economy. Therefore, informality should be considered as a constitutive part of economic life in every part of the world. Regardless of the underlying reasons that drive people towards informality (self-interest, survival, undeveloped formal structures, cultural and moral traits or, recently, political projects), informal economic activities produce and circulate capital which is partially channeled into the formal market structures of the national economy. In many cases, most of the money which people earn through informal means, either by avoiding or refusing to pay taxes and social contributions, is channeled towards social reproduction, with much of it ending up in the formal economic system. For instance, by not paying their social contributions to the state, shop owners can then afford to pay for rent,

[89] The original saying comes from Greek, it suggests that poverty or hunger (*penía)* is the driving force of social breakthroughs.

municipal fees, electricity, employees and business partners and suppliers. In times of resource scarcity, informally produced value, derived either from the provision of services or material resources, provides people with the means of sustaining social networks. In other words, it allows them to socialize and to remain active members of society. Thus the formal and informal economies are two distinct sectors marked by collaboration, contradiction and intersection.

5.1 Social Solidarity and the Gift Economy

Gifts are not simple, disinterested gestures, but rather socio-economic practices which reproduce cultural affinity and establish unity. After all, no network can exist in which members are disconnected or in disunity. Numerous religions use the idea of solidarity to ensure prosperity and promote peaceful symbiosis, and applaud the strong social unity and harmony that is produced through moral obligations such as generosity, hospitality and mutual aid. Solidarity is a practice in which people give and receive not only goods but also acceptance, a sense of belonging and material and immaterial gestures. Further, the utility of gifts is not limited to the economic; through gifts, people exchange cultural modes, communicate and show their social commitment. Instead of focusing on the object that circulates, I highlight the practice of exchange, circulation itself, which is what the gift economy brings to cultural anthropology's table. Society is maintained through the circulation of people and ideas and of goods and services - anything that its members share becomes social in a way. In Christian tradition, sharing and solidarity[90] were among the duties of a good Christian. A point of confusion is the well known parable of the good Samaritan. The story opens up a false interpretation of solidarity as many confuse it with charity, Margaret Thatcher, for example, being one of them.[91] Solidarity is not a two way relationship or one that joins two "ends", instead it has no ends since the expectation is that it continue perpetually. Its conceptualization derives from *anarchy,*[92] an everlasting process with no end and no beginning. Indeed it is impossible for social life to exist without any type of solidarity amongst its members. Studying solidarity amongst animals, Kropotkin (1902) argued that group solidarity helps members to survive food scarcity, extreme weather and attacks. In addition, he suggested that all social animals have an instinct for solidarity. He showed, moreover, that it was cooperation rather than competition that leads to social progress and growth. One cannot prosper without sharing, contributing, giving and receiving from others, no matter how much money one might have. The French revolution reinvented and reinterpreted the

90 In addition to austerity, leading a plain, self-abnegating lifestyle, which was Christianity's ascetic ideal.

91 https://www.prospectmagazine.co.uk/politics/from-thatcher-to-corbyn-why-are-politicians-so-fond-of-the-good-samaritan-parable (Last accessed 29/01/2020).

92 In Greek Christian texts, God is often represented as an *anarcho on* (timeless, infinite being) with no beginning and no end.

ideas of social solidarity, institutionalizing it within the power of the state. Solidarity was central in the formation of the modern welfare state and in the definition of human needs. Indeed, the state incorporated social solidarity as a central element of the social contract (Baldwin, 1990) which materialized through welfare. Kropotkin criticized the paternal role that the modern state takes in mediating social solidarity relationships. He wrote:

> The number and importance of mutual-aid institutions which were developed by the creative genius of the savage and half-savage masses, during the earliest clan-period of mankind and still more during the following village-community period, and the immense influence which these early institutions have exercised upon the subsequent development of mankind, down to the present times, induced me to extend my researches to the later, historical periods as well; especially, to study that most interesting period – the free medieval city republics, whose universality and influence upon our modern civilization have not yet been duly appreciated. And finally, I have tried to indicate in brief the immense importance which the mutual-support instincts, inherited by mankind from its extremely long evolution, play even now in our modern society, which is supposed to rest upon the principle "every one for himself, and the State for all," but which it never has succeeded, nor will succeed in realizing. (Kropotkin 1998 [1902]: Introduction)

During the same period, Durkheim was developing his ideas on social solidarity. He formulated a theory to explain the transition from less organized, primitive societies to the advanced sociopolitical formations of the early 20th century. He coined the terms “organic” and “mechanical solidarity”, which a few years later he came to reconsider. For Durkheim, organic solidarity was an institutionalized form that was a byproduct of advanced societies with their division of labor, while mechanical solidarity was predominant in ‘primitive’ societies. The latter constituted an unconscious reaction that allowed the group to survive. As Hawkings (1979), who thoroughly examined Durkheim’s texts concluded, even Durkheim was forced to reconsider some part of his theory. Nonetheless, he argues that Durkheim’s concepts are useful in sociological theory given the fact that mechanical solidarity, does not exist exclusively in less organized, primitive societies, but in fact exists in modern societies as well in the form of *conscience collective*. “To see society only as an organized body of vital functions is to diminish it, for this body has a soul which is the composition of collective ideals” (Durkheim, 1974: 93 cited in

Hawkings, 1979). Hawkings suggests that this affirmation of Durkheim's implies that he had reconsidered his theory about mechanical and organic solidarity. Collective ideals and moral disciplines are to be found both in primitive, small social formations with high levels of homogeneity, as well as in complex social organizations. "Diversification is essential for an advanced society whose members should receive an education which equips them for the performance of specialized roles; but in addition they must also be imbued with common sentiments and values in order to prevent this structural differentiation from attaining pathological proportions" (Hawkings, 1979: 159). For the purposes of my research, I found it very fruitful to bring together Durkheim's sociological theory of solidarity adjusted, and institutions of mutual aid, with Kropotkin's village communities and the anthropological theory of the gift economy. Based on a cross-pollinations of these various insights, I examine the process which I call the "mechanicalization" of social solidarity, as it takes place during the collapse of organic solidarity structures.

5.2 Conditions of Solidarity During the Greek Crisis

The idea of social solidarity has been brought to the fore by the recent economic crisis and austerity, and varied grassroots initiatives have appeared across the country. The Greek solidarity boom during the first years of crisis, and the formation of grassroots self-organized groups sparked the interest of numerous anthropologists. Through a series of publications, Rakopoulos (2014, 2015, 2016, 2018) has thoroughly mapped the anti-middleman movement in Thessaloniki; examining its practices, organization and political demands, as well as its challenges and internal conflicts. The "movement without intermediaries"[93] was very popular and enjoyed widespread social support in big city centers as it made political arguments and demands for an alternative model for the consumption, production and distribution of food. These claims were articulated along the principles of social solidarity and they advocated radical social change and a shift to bottom up organization that could foster 'healthy' economic relationships among participants. Some of these initiatives were organized by anarchist groups, and maintained an informal status was an ideological stance which was inspired by Kropotkin's ideas that opposed formal regulation. Leading role in the organization of markets without intermediaries have various anarchist groups and collectives all over Greece, with the most prominent one being in Exarchia, Athens (Poulimenakos & Dalakoglou, 2018). The initiative was formed by food producers in rural areas (Angelopoulos 2018) and channeled resources mainly to the three biggest cities of Greece, Athens, Thessaloniki and Patras. Rakopoulos (2016) attributes the movements' success to the rural habitus and embedded peasant values and practices that rural migrants reproduced in the city (Panourgia 1995). Cabot (2016a, 2016b) has investigated the resurgence of social solidarity in self-organized social clinics in Athens. These aimed to provide primary health care to the public and to compensate for the large gap in provision that austerity restructuring has created. Her research shows how participants understood crisis through solidarity and *vice versa* and, as they said, that solidarity emerged out of need. Thus, many participants in solidarity clinics stressed the

[93] The movement without intermediaries was started in 2012 by the so called "potato movement" (see Angelopoulos 2018), in which potato producers distributed low cost potatoes to the country's large urban centers. It later expanded and organized in other areas of production.

fact that solidarity emerged because of capitalism and its crisis, and that their initiative offered only a short-term solution, a 'bandage' (Cabot, 2016).

Solidarity is a concept that several groups and political formations used to give meaning to their activities. Anarchist groups in Exarchia, Athens (Poulimenakos & Dalakoglou, 2018) organized grassroots structures of sociality and social inclusion. Rozakou (2012, 2016, 2018) has investigated the formation of groups that aimed to provide legal and social support to detained immigrants and refugees. Such groups, who self-identified as "solidarians", not only provided material and legal support but also social support to detainees. Social inclusion is another facet of solidarity which appears as a necessity in times of crisis, given the multiple conditions of exclusion that crisis fosters (for example, in terms of unemployment, political status, illness). The refugee crisis also set the ground for extreme right wing groups to launch their own demonstrations of exclusive solidarity. Golden Dawn members organized free food distribution to Greeks nationals excluding immigrants. For them, the migrant population did not deserve help as in their logic, migrants were scapegoated as those who were stealing national resources from Greek citizens. Support should therefore be channeled towards Greek citizens who were struggling because of the crisis, and not to foreigners.[94] By contrast Syriza, which in 2012 became the main opposition, strongly promoted inclusive social solidarity; indeed it appropriated solidarity in its political discourse as a way out of crisis and social depression. Thus, it endorsed the political claims of the solidarity movement, incorporating them into its anti-austerity discourse, and many members of the movement hoped that Syriza could bring about change. As a result, the crisis has created a new economic field for neoliberal exploitation: the management of crisis. In a very short space of time, a large number of NGOs came to Greece. Their mandate was to tackle the humanitarian crisis and to help Greece get through either the national economic crisis or the refugee crisis. In 2013, an NGO called Solidarity Now emerged. Solidarity Now aimed to institutionalize grassroots citizens' organizations and was funded, among others, by the Open Society Foundation, the UN Refugee agency, UNICEF, and the Iceland, Lichtenstein and Norway Grants. Last but not least, the Orthodox Church also ran many charities and owned NGOs that framed their activities with the concept of social solidarity.[95] Anthropological approaches to social

[94] https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-19084584 (Last accessed 22/10/2019).

[95] The NGO *O Kalos Samareitis* (The Good Samaritan) is a clear example of how solidarity is used and often misunderstood as charity.

solidarity in the context of the Greek crisis have focused on robust expressions of it (Papataxiarchis, 2016) that required a certain level of organization to become possible. Writing on the anti-middlemen movement, Rakopoulos (2018, 2016, 2014) traces an extensive network of consumers and producers which local solidarity groups have to coordinate. Cabot (2016, 2014) shows how municipalities first supported and later institutionalized the solidarity clinics' grassroots initiatives. Rozakou's case study (2018) unravels the extensive networks that offered legal support to detained migrants and refugees.

In my field site I did not encounter a strong presence of the anti-middlemen movement. I did however, meet several producers from the rural areas around Chalkida who regularly sent their products to the solidarity market in Exarchia square. People in Chalkida already had social and kinships networks through which they could access food and thus they did not need the anti-middlemen movement. In my research, I depart from the notion that austerity has produced great ruptures in organic solidarity institutions which have been substituted through the creation of loosely organized grassroots institutions of mutual aid based on friendship and kinship. Instead, through a process which I term the "mechanicalization" of social solidarity, I choose to focus my analysis of social solidarity on intimate social and kinship relationships and economic practices. These are usually referred to as "support" or "help". Further, I argue that apart from solidarity, social discord and disunity have also assumed forceful expressions. Greek society has been deeply divided by the austerity crisis and neoliberal policies that have increased levels of alienation as people adapted to the new forms of economic practices and resource scarcity. The imposition of capital controls in June 2015, for instance, produced a lack in cash based transactions (Amarianakis, 2016). Small shops and local ventures that did not have the infrastructure to accept card payments and could only accept cash as a method of payment struggled to operate while large chain firms such as supermarkets had their sales boosted by the possibility that consumers had to do their shopping without cash.

5.3 Divide and Conquer: The Calculated Imposition of Austerity Measures

Austerity measures were introduced in Greece in 2010, through the stealth of divide and conquer. They were assembled in packages that the Greek government had to impose under ongoing surveillance by the Troika. Each austerity package targeted different social groups and interests. At first, they affected the interests of those who were paid directly by the state: civil servants and pensioners. The gradual implementation of austerity provoked social division among the Greek working classes. Mutual accusations and blame (Theodossopoulos, 2013) among working class people proliferated. By the time people realized what was happening it was too late for them to coherently and effectively resist, since they were divided. Further, many saw the restructuring of the public system and the economy and markets as a process that was setting things straight. People from distinct labor backgrounds reacted when their direct economic interests and privileges were at stake. Demonstrations and strikes proved ineffective in resisting austerity and over time, they became normalized as part of crisis reality. What's more, fragmented strikes and demonstrations produced and enhanced social discord, especially when violent incidents were manipulated to disorient, frighten and dishearten people (Herzfeld, 2011). Herzfeld makes explicit the fact that politicians and technocrats followed the doctrine of austerity in dealing with the public debt crisis, and that this was a unilateral move which the majority of Greeks had not agreed to. People were furious with politicians who, in the midst of the crisis, continued to enjoy financial privileges and legal immunity while presenting austerity measures as necessary in order to avoid a default and exit from the eurozone.

Mainstream media disseminated popular discourses that framed the high number of civil servants as the main cause of the increasing public deficit. Moreover, the high levels of corruption and patron-client relationships that were inherent to the state's structures and the public sector were also singled out. In the midst of the crisis, with their incomes suddenly reduced, the self-employed asserted that civil servants were in a privileged position because they at least had a stable income, and private sector employees argued that if they had been as unproductive and incompetent as most civil servants were, they would have been fired. Even civil servants themselves agreed that the public sector was the main enclave of generalized

corruption that was partially responsible for the public deficit, and was therefore in need of restructuring (Theodossopoulos, 2013). Because of crisis and austerity, the onetime dream of becoming a civil servant for whom "vrexei, hionisei, o misthos erhete (whether it snows or rains, the salary comes in) has faded. The destruction of this dream occurred both morally and economically (if we are to think them separately), and at the same time. Many of my interlocutors realized that long-standing aspirations of becoming a civil servant, "na voleftoun se mia thesi sto dimosio" (to settle down in a public post) had contributed to the present-day crisis and had enabled the development of patron-client relations.

When I asked people to specify which civil servants they were referring to, because they had mentioned the very broad category of "public employees", almost immediately, they would identify bureaucrats in the public administration, those who sit behind a desk and are usually appointed by the government to managerial positions. In divisive discourses, civil servants were homogenized and demonized, grouped together in the public's mind by the fact that they were paid with public resources. Many of my interlocutors spoke negatively about the quality of services provided by the public sector. Almost everyone has had a bad experience with the state, either because of its complex, time-consuming and irrational bureaucracy, or because of civil servants' uncooperativeness or incompetence. In the public imaginary, civil servants were lazy, unproductive people who acted as if they owned the state (Theodossopoulos, 2013). Such manifestations legitimized the process of rolling back and rolling out (Peck & Tickell, 2002) the state since everyone believed that the public sector was overstaffed, irrationally structured and ineffective, wasting public money and resources. In other words, it needed "rationalization".

Many of my non-civil servant interlocutors argued that civil servants should not complain about the crisis and their income reduction because they, unlike others, still had a stable income resource. This statement downplayed the struggles against austerity that public sector labor unions organized. The social unrest caused by prolonged austerity indicates that austerity has not (yet) become part of the social contract. In other words, people in their majority did not consent to taking responsibility for "a debt they did not create", or to keep funding a state that had been reduced to a puppet tax collecting mechanism for Greece's creditors. The state was conceptualized as an alien structure which, instead of protecting its citizens, acted against them,

with its main concern being to attract and protect large capitalist investment. These discourses drove the imposition of neoliberal structural reforms in the public sector and shaped the collective narrative of what went wrong.

That corruption exists in public administration was common knowledge and provided a tangible way of explaining the malfunctioning of public organizations. The enforcement of austerity in the public sector opened the way to structural reforms that dramatically affected salaries in the private sector, in addition to which, hard-won work rights came to be renegotiated. As a result, the self-employed, whose clientele consisted of public and private employees and pensioners whose income had been severely cut, saw their annual income drop dramatically. Because social division disrupts both organic solidarity institutions and intra-class solidarity ties, social disunity enabled the gradual imposition of austerity shocks in every economic sector and a vast rescaling of the country's regional economies to the standards of global markets (Narotzky, 2000). In Chalkida, social discord was directed towards those groups of workers who earned most. For instance, the cement factory workers who used to earn high salaries had very little support from the local community in their struggle to reopen the factory. "Do you know how much money they got?" was a common rhetorical question people posed when I asked them about the *tsimentadiko* (cement factory worker) struggle. For example, to celebrate *Tsiknopempti* (Fat Tuesday),[96] the cement factory workers held an open barbecue at the factory, inviting locals to join them. However, some people criticized them for being inconsistent, arguing that while on the one hand they claimed that the decision to close the factory had led workers into misery and despair, at the same time they wasted all that money on a party. Public opinion in Chalkida regarding the closure of the cement factory was ambivalent and many asserted that those to blame were the cement factory workers and their union. Even quite a few pensioners from the factory stressed the fact that it had closed down because their trade union would not accept proposed wage cuts. The workers' stance was considered arrogant and self-centered, and one that eventually backfired, resulting in a major, multilayered social, cultural and economic loss for the city. For their part, the workers believed that their struggle was leading the way for the working

[96] The exact translation would be smoky Thursday the week before Carnival and the beginning of the pre-Easter period of fasting. It is celebrated widely in Greece and people roast meat *souvlaki* at home or even at the streets in front of shops, where owners treat those who pass by.

classes to resist the "neoliberal invasion of capitalism."[97] Their common struggle enforced the solidarity bonds within their group and they idealized their cause as a struggle for hard-won labor rights at the national level. These rights were being renegotiated in the context of the crisis and in order to enhance the national economy's competitiveness so as to attract investment.

Another pillar of the social state which has been molded by the notion of solidarity are the social insurance funds. The state administers this system of funds in order to provide health insurance and pensions to everyone, with the system being based on intergenerational solidarity. This means that each generation is obliged to pay and sustain the public insurance system with the future promise of reciprocity. The problem is that given current economic prospects and considering the ageing of the general population and high unemployment rates, the pension and health care systems have become unsustainable (Symeonidis, 2016). Hence the restructuring of the sector and of welfare mechanisms started with the 6th, 7th, and 9th austerity packages (2012-2014) on public health cuts and reforms, and pension reforms and cuts were included in almost every austerity package from 2010 to 2017. The restructuring of the pension system, or more accurately, what the state will be able to pay for pensions in the future, alters the established social contract. Many people believed that the system would eventually collapse and they would lose the national insurance contributions that they had been obliged by law to pay.

Despite the cuts, pensioners have in many cases taken up the financial burden of the crisis and provided capital to sustain the social reproduction of the unemployed masses (as described in Chapters 3 & 4). Thus, a weakening of structural solidarity was counterbalanced by a strengthening of mechanical solidarity between kin and social peers. In the past, caring between generations was a moral obligation, a form of reciprocity from children to their parents, and it revealed the lack of social structures to support the elderly who had to rely on their kin to survive. This particular welfare system in southern Europe (Allen, et al., 2004) has come in use and reinforced the mechanical solidarities of the extended family rural household. In many cases people in their late 50s and 60s, and especially women, are burdened with the care of both their parents and their grandchildren. During hard times, as in the past, people seek to capitalize on

[97] Amongst their supporters they counted the KKE (Greek Communist Party) and in some parts of their discourses they incorporated the communist party's rhetoric.

their family and kinship resources, a process which can be described as the “mechanicalization” of solidarity, a process that reverses modernity.

Public health care is based on social solidarity and the provision of institutional support to anyone in need, regardless of their social status. This fact sparked racist attacks against foreigners who, it was claimed, took advantage of public wealth without having contributed to it. This was a central argument of extreme right discourse which nurtured xenophobia on the basis that migrants used the national health system at the expense of Greek citizens and taxpayers. Between 2010 to 2014, the public health system was restructured (Economou et al, 2014) and its functions financialized. Henceforth, it excluded those who did not have social security, such as undocumented immigrants and unemployed Greeks alike who had to pay for the medical services they received. Instead of promoting public healthcare as a prerequisite for social well-being, austerity reforms have reduced human rights to financial principles. Institutional forms of solidarity divided people between those who had established economic citizenship rights and those who did not (Athanasiou, 2018). Through austerity, organic solidarity institutions and structures such as public healthcare have been financialized and assessed at a strictly financial level.

5.4 The Financialization of Everyday Life and New Forms of Grassroots Economic Solidarity

As the crisis progressed, it was the turn of the self-employed to take the blame. Tax evasion was portrayed as the other major culprit of the persisting economic crisis in Greece, that which had created the public deficit. The self-employed were those who could hide income from the tax agency either through the sale of goods and services without receipt or by hiding some of their profits with the help of their accountants. The self-employed were also accused of stealing from the state. When I was conducting ethnographic observation at the occupied cement factory, a leading figure of the workers' union said: "all these years, freelancers and entrepreneurs have not been paying their taxes. To sum it up, all those years that they did not pay what they should have, and you get a total amount, that is where the public deficit comes from." In this way, he openly accused all the self-employed of *de facto* tax evasion. Small and medium-sized enterprises faced new challenges and were subject to neoliberal capitalism's economic Darwinism; that is, the rule of the survival of the fittest. Many SMEs faced the additional struggle of not being able to compete with supra-local firms because the internet had nullified the markets' spatial barriers. The rescaling of commercial activity that the internet enabled, intensified competition which, according to capitalist doctrine, leads to progress and constant improvement since whatever cannot adapt, dies. Many SMEs found it hard to survive in the savage market. Small shop owners who struggled to make ends meet did not close down their businesses because they did not want to be stigmatized for having defaulted, which would make them socially and economically isolated. Overtaxation was the tombstone for many SMEs that could not cope with the crisis and the rescaling of the regional commercial and retail sectors with the global economy. Complete or partial informalization of their activity was the only option that would allow them to keep going (Antonopoulos & Hall, 2014). Petty tax evasion transformed into a cooperative act of solidarity that sustained local society's social cohesion. As a tavern owner explained when talking about the question of whether to issue tax receipts, "it is because of not issuing receipts that the [local] market still runs, with that money we get by."

Andreas (59) highlighted another dimension of tax evasion by large firms. Andreas had been multi-employed in the past and worked in a high production post in one of Chalkida's

factories. He was specialized in chemistry and food production and preservation and had set up several businesses from industrial disinfection services to a pizzeria and an initiative to create a fish farming unit. He had also worked for other major food production companies in Greece. As he was narrating the history of his working life, he stopped and shared with me what one of his former employers, the owner of a leading Greek confectionery and baking firm, had confessed as being the secret to success. "He told me that the key to success is to owe a lot to the state. He owed millions in the 1990s. The state did not want to lose money and prosecuted his company in a very slow-moving bureaucratic procedure that took years to settle. Meanwhile the company did not close and continued to operate formally[98] and kept producing and selling without charging VAT, which meant that it could sell its production much cheaper. This forced its competitors to adapt to a market price that was unattainable and so they fell out. That is how unhealthy competition that the state tolerates ruins healthy ventures." Andreas identified himself politically with the popular right (*laiki deksia*) which New Democracy used to represent. He had stopped voting for ND as he was in favor of state interventionism and not for the free-market model that the party had come to endorse lately. The forced neoliberalization of the economy and the financialization of everyday life caused great ruptures in people's perceptions of the role of the state.

Taxation is the cornerstone of state formation, where the state bases its existence on the administration of the common fund. Without taxation, there cannot be redistribution. Foreign supervision and the imposition of austerity measures that further dispossessed people caused many to reevaluate their economic obligations towards the state. The austerity doctrine did not yield more income to the state, which would have been the logical outcome of its tackling of tax evasion and efforts to eradicate informality; rather, it had the opposite effect (Antonopoulos & Hall, 2014; Williams, 2015). Being overtaxed, businesses could not afford to pay the increasing fees, and so they stopped paying. Lower annual incomes for firms generated fewer taxes and so the government's tax earnings dropped. Overtaxation in retail businesses had an impact on household budgets and altered consumption practices as it increased the cost of living. In the context of crisis, new methods of shopping were introduced. The crisis structured a new type of consumer-hunter of sales and offers. An on-line *flâneur* in the virtual markets of the world,

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driven by self-interest and the phantasmagoria (Benjamin, 2003) that globalized capitalism offered.

Even though many accessed the markets online and gathered information (on price, specifications, reviews) there, people wanted to support the local economy. The way in which local businesses could lower their prices and increase their margins was through tax evasion. In many cases, the sale of goods and services without receipts occurred as the product of an agreement between buyers and the sellers, with consumers opting for the discount (instead of the receipt). When I was observing the shop floor of a small business selling heating equipment, a customer went in and the following dialogue occurred:

"I've seen that heater online for 100 euros" he said, pointing at the price tag that stated 120. He continued, asking "will you come down to 100?"

"Sure," replied Stavros, the owner, and politely asked the customer "do you want a receipt?"

The customer said nothing in response.

I followed the customer on his way out and persuaded him talk to me about what had just happened. He specified that he preferred to support local businesses and local people since their prices were only slightly more expensive than those of online shops and big chains. He said that he did not care about VAT because public funds were "a bottomless pit," by which he implied that whatever you threw in would be wasted. Peebles (2011) describes an identical situation in Sweden. However Sweden has a strong welfare state and tax evasion there is driven by self-interest that undermines organic solidarity. In the Greek crisis context, organic solidarity is re-imagined through tax-evasion and the tolerance of buying goods without receipts. This practice is also highly political as many define it as the structure of resistance to foreign economic control.

In a similar manner, Manolis (Household 6) wanted to buy a new TV. He searched the web for the available brands and models, prices and specifications. When he had decided which TV to buy, he asked a friend and former client of his, who owned a medium-sized shop in Chalkida, to buy it for him at the price he had found online. Over the years, Manolis had

developed a network of mutual support with his former clients. “If I need something, I will first look for it through my clientele. I want to reciprocate and give them the money back,” he said. The economic attitude that Manolis articulated resonates with the gift economy with the difference that it was money, rather than personal items, that was used. This is the opposite of Marx’s commodity fetishism. Here, commodities are used to maintain socio-economic relationships between people who are not simply driven by self-interest; economic exchanges are personified and shaped around the reciprocity of moral economy (Mauss, 1990[1925]; Hart, 2007). In this instance, self-interest stems from the maintenance of the network of reciprocity rather than the search for the best offer. Over the years, such durable socio-economic relationships have developed their own dynamic. The same is true for many local people who accessed the market through their social and kinship networks and thus bypassed formal market structures. Manolis also elaborated that, if the quality was in both cases good, he would prefer a slightly more expensive product made in Greece to an imported one, even if the latter was cheaper.

Unjust and punitive austerity in consumption taxes has facilitated the solidarization of grassroots economic practices. As opposed to calculative reasoning, political consumerism (Lekakis, 2015), as a stance that aims to boost the local and national economy, has been on the rise. Consumers started to favor and consume goods produced in Greece, even though they might be more expensive. An economic nationalism has emerged in response to the crisis and has spread spontaneously across the country. Within it, social and economic solidarity are mobilized as economic practices that help to maintain the common good. This economic nationalism is based on the argument that if everyone consumed Greek products, this would revitalize the national economy and promote consumer awareness. For example, there were many posts within social media informing the public about the benefits of consuming national products, or instructions on how to identify Greek produced products. These were endowed with a strong narrative of social solidarity based on nationalist discourses that suggested that if all Greeks consumed domestic products (produced or manufactured in Greece), public revenues would increase, jobs could be secured and the public deficit would decrease. Many local trade associations also supported a Christmas campaign against the “big sharks.” It that “when you shop at a small local business, you’re not helping a multinational executive to buy a third country

house. You're helping a little girl to continue her ballet lessons, you're helping a boy to get a new pair of shoes, you're helping a mother to stock the family table, a father to repay his bank loan, a student to complete his/hers studies. Support small businesses – they are the backbone of the Greek economy."

Despite the surge of economic nationalism, the reconfiguration of consumption practices and the financialization of everyday life has had a negative impact on local businesses. A cheese dealer who used to have three shops in Chalkida had to restrict his business to the floating open-air markets. He complained that most of his former customers who had preferred to pay a bit more for quality cheese, were now going to the big supermarket chains. His customers had included "doctors, lawyers and businessmen," he said. Now, he saw their in-laws and parents at the open-air market, and they would pass by without even saying hello. Dina (Household 4) said she felt angry and disappointed when she discovered that the young members of the local communist party, who regularly asked for and received her financial support, did their shopping at Zara. She said: "on Sunday they were outside Zara, protesting against the obligatory Sunday opening of shops and against multinationals… and on Monday they were there again shopping for clothes." In the above examples, the calculative reason that the crisis has engendered, shows how social alienation occurs through the economic practices of local people and may even lead to ideological and practical contradictions. The economic actions of ordinary people entail multiple social meanings and are constitutive of the formation of society (Carrier 2005). In fact, there cannot be society without economic activity and *vice versa*. In both of the above cases, cash strapped peoples' consumption practices fueled social dismemberment. Multinational firms took advantage of the crisis and increased their sales and profits (Zara opened in 2011 in Chalkida). At the same time, they benefited from the various austerity laws that counterbalanced tax increases. As Dina, the clothes shop owner explained, these firms accumulated their profits abroad, which produced a break in reciprocity. A local shop would spend it profits in the local economy, whereas big firms extracted local wealth and accumulated it in Athens or abroad. "How come consumers don't realize that the economic gains from supporting multinationals are only temporary?" She continued: "if you do some market research at the local shops, you can find cheap products there too!"

I was curious about Zara's customers and went there to have a look and talk with them. I talked to a few, mostly women, who were doing their shopping or just hanging around. They told me that they were hunting for bargains and that they preferred Zara's designs to those of other cheap products they could find. Most of them were looking for clothes not only for themselves but also for family members, especially for their children whose clothing needs were high. Thus, they regularly visited Zara, and most of the time ended up consuming more than they had initially intended. In a related vein, a large Greek-owned firm, Jumbo SA, which had been expanding during the pre-crisis years, increased its sales of very cheap household retail items, which it imported, at a massive scale, from Asia. During the crisis, its sales skyrocketed, and its annual turnover has been increasing[99]. At the same time, it expanded all over Greece and opened new branches in the Balkans. When people are in need, they often disregard the labor conditions of the items they consume. Cheap prices are enticing to everyone and despite their ideological positions, people often indulge in low-cost consumption, especially when they must count every cent of their household budget. In free market doctrine, the phantasmagoria which Walter Benjamin conceptualizes as the power that commodities exercise over people, is endowed with the instant gratification that affordable, low cost products offer. Beyond this, new online markets enforced a new mode of doing shopping. The paradox is that in times of crisis and austerity, people got access, through their computers, to shopping in the national and global markets. Thus, restrained consumption practices were coupled with the great availability of products that national and international markets had to offer.

These abovementioned moralizations of economic behavior brings to the fore the social dimension of economic practices. Grassroots economic solidarity can scale up from the local level and recreate the organic forms of social solidarity at the national level that have been destroyed by austerity. Localized and nationalized solidarities make political claims over the economic spaces in which ordinary people make a living. Once again, the national interest and the "nation" shaped notions of solidarity among Greeks who became homogenized as they were confronted by the unforeseen economic crisis which had violently taken hold of their everyday realities. The collapse of the middle classes in Greece became obvious in 2012, when society was impacted by the regime of austerity. Widespread discontent, social depression, and

[99] Source : https://www.spglobal.com/marketintelligence/en/news-insights/trending/ekexiiyccrvcyefu84leag2 (Last accessed 12/02/2020).

hopelessness (Stuckler & Basu, 2014) were prevalent in everyday life and the challenges that people confronted were once again nationalized, and organic solidarity was sustained through nationalistic ideas. The process of rendering middle class livelihoods destitute led to the creation of a new social class; the national class of the dispossessed that was constituted by people from various work and socioeconomic backgrounds. Hence notions of intra-class solidarity were promoted through nationalist and patriotic ideals as a reaction to the deterioration of everyday life and to foreign financial supervision and control.

In smaller cities such as Chalkida, people are less alienated by capitalism, both in social and economic terms. As I showed in the previous chapter, social solidarity was facilitated at the household level through networks of intergenerational solidarity that circulated capital resources and made possible inter-household social reproduction practices that sustained the local economy. Social and kinship networks enabled mechanicalized solidarities to remerge. However, the maintenance of such networks would have been impossible if people did not have the material resources to invest in them. The so-called solidarity boom and the appearance of grassroots solidarity movements, which social anthropologists working in Athens and Thessaloniki have investigated (Cabot, 2016a, 2016b; Rakopoulos, 2015, 2016; Rozakou, 2012, 2018; Poulimenakos & Dalakoglou, 2018; Theodosopoulos, 2016) occurred in a distinct way in Chalkida, a small provincial city. A probable explanation for this is the fact that in small cities, mechanical solidarity is easier to achieve through everyday social interaction. In Chalkida, people did not need an organized movement "without intermediaries" because they maintained various socio-economic relationships that were unmediated by institutions. Furthermore, in Chalkida, social division and mutual accusation could be tamed through everyday interactions between diversely situated people who lived and worked there, and who shared similar socio-economic backgrounds, life histories and experiences. In this sense, smaller cities can produce social consent and achieve harmony more easily than chaotic urban centers such as Athens. That is to say, small cities such as Chalkida promote inter-class interaction, which distinguishes it from the class-based residence and segregation patterns which are prevalent in larger cities such as Athens (Panourgia, 1995). Neighborhood relationships are also very important, and on many occasions, I had the feeling that I was living in a small village rather than a city. Mechanical solidarity, as Durkheim conceptualizes it, is present in these social arrangements of

everyday life in Chalkida. Institutions of mutual aid are therefore shaped by the quotidian needs of people who share the same spaces and similar experiences of crisis and most importantly, have already had social bonds amongst them. It is the case that in order for solidarity and social unity to exist, people need to know and trust each other and to interact socially. Smaller cities promote social interaction and intimate solidarity reactions as people more or less know each other either personally or through their social and kinship networks, or, as in Kropotkin's terms, through their networks of mutual aid.

The village communities which were recreated by rural to urban migrants in growing Greek cities provided the grounds for people to relate with each other in a cooperative manner, based on their common origin. Many of Chalkida's neighborhoods were formed by settlers with common origins who often also shared kinship relationships. For instance, in the neighborhood in which I lived during fieldwork, people recalled how, during the times when the whole neighborhood celebrated important religious festivals such as Easter, childcare was provided by the community and households were kept open. These community structures had been eroded over time with the increase in people's living standards and the growth of individualistic aspirations for upwards mobility. Yet, they were still present enough to absorb some of the crisis' negative impacts.

5.5 Informality and Social Solidarity: Resistance, Subsistence and Metaphors of Survival

The concept of informal economy has been a major topic of interest for varied disciplines that concern themselves with social organization, for example, urban studies, sociology, economics, business and management, and of course anthropology. Keith Hart's (1973) work in Accra, Ghana, which made the term informal sector popular in academia, has shown anthropology and ethnographic research to be the most suitable tools for approaching and untangling its inherent complexities. Early dualist approaches defined the 'informal' as totally contradictory to its opposite, the 'formal'. For liberal economists and international organizations, the development of formal structures (ILO, 1972, Lewis, 1954) in post-colonial states was viewed as something positive that would contribute to the improvement of people's livelihoods. From this perspective, informal economic activities were interpreted as signs of poverty and the lack of socio-economic progress; they were regarded as a survival tactic, an endemic characteristic of undeveloped economies. Indeed even today, academic articles ascribe the increased rate of informal economic activity and tax evasion to a lack of education and social progress (La Porta & Scheifer, 2014). Structuralist approaches (Castells & Portes, 1989), by contrast, bring into focus the articulation between formal and informal sectors, and focus on the investigation of informal economy in advanced economies. Another perspective is offered by De Soto's legalist approach (1989).Despite widespread criticism, it has been very influential within mainstream economic thought and (neo)liberal ideology. The legalist approach is able to account for the fact that rural to urban migration is a determinant factor of informal economies, and it correlates informality with complex bureaucracy, corruption and labor regulations. Lastly, another influential perspective on informal economy comes from another mainstream economist, Maloney (2004) of the Voluntarist school, who suggests that informality is a matter of "free will." Each of the above approaches succeeds in explaining certain aspects of informality and the primary motives that drive people into it.

Today it is widely accepted that the informal economy forms a vast part of the world's economy and that fiscal austerity produces more informality (La Porta & Scheifer, 2014), as it has done in Greece (Bitzenis, Vlachos & Schneider, 2016). Even Yiannis Stournaras, the appointed Governor of Greece's Central Bank and former minister of the economy during the crisis government (2012-2014), highlights the fact that austerity policies and unemployment have lead to an intensification of informality.[100] In Greece, the informal economy is estimated to equal one fourth

[100] Source: https://www.bis.org/review/r190412e.htm (Last accessed 29/01/2020).

of annual GDP (Bitzenis, Vlachos & Scheinder 2016), hence the formalization of shadow economic activities could yield sufficient income to the state in order for it to repay its debts and recover from the crisis.

However, mainstream economists seem to disregard the fact that, to a great extent, the informal economy recycles capital to the formal sector. Ulyssea (2018) identifies three main views on what causes informality. Firstly, that the informal sector harnesses potential entrepreneurs who are held back by the strict legislation, high entry fees and lack of credit (cf de Soto, 1989) in the formal sector. Secondly, the view of informal firms as 'parasite forms' that chose informality in order to avoid taxation and the costs of complying with regulation (cf Maloney, 2004). The third view argues that informality is linked with the survival practices of impoverished people who are not productive enough to formalize their activities. Ulyssea (2018) concludes that the most common cause of informality in Brazil is the parasite form, and for that reason, eradicating informality would be beneficial for the economy. While I am not familiar with the situation in Brazil, I am deeply concerned by contemporary approaches to informality that disregard the socio-cultural aspects of economic life. It seems, moreover, that dualism remains influential in academia. According to the ILO's 2002 definition, the informal economy does not include the criminal economy. The informal sector may not be legal but, unlike the criminal economy, it produces and distributes legal goods and services. In addition, in the ILO's scheme, unpaid reproductive labor and care were also left out of informal income since they do not have profit making purposes. Yet it remains unclear whether corruption is a formal or an informal practice, and whether it is criminal and is therefore excluded from the ILO's definition. If so, this constitutes a grave problem, since corruption in many instances formalizes and renders legal people's illegal actions, thereby producing legal outcomes. For instance, one can consider citizens who, in order to formalize their illegal constructions or building additions, bribed state officials so that they erased fines or registered false data into the system. In practice, corruption not only produces legal outcomes, it makes illegal activities appear legal.

Scheider & Buehn (2012) have conducted statistical research into the informal economy in advanced economies in 39 OECD countries. Between 1999 and 2010, indirect taxes (29%), self-employment (22%) unemployment (16%), personal income taxes (13%) and tax morale (9%) were the main factors that had a major impact on the rise of informal activities. In Greece, which has the highest rate of self-employment in Europe (25 to 30 %), had the informal economy disappeared, the formal sector would have collapsed. As I have shown in the first two chapters, the formal and informal sectors were interwoven during the course of Greece's modern development. Danopoulos & Znidaric (2007) shows how informal economy, which is almost always linked with tax evasion

and tax avoidance, can have both positive and negative effects. On the one hand, informality undermines economic governance structures and tax evasion is linked with underdeveloped welfare states, while on the other, it leaves money in the hands of businesses and consumers, thus boosting investment. During numerous crises in modern Greek history, when formal structures could not cover people's needs, informality provided the only solution for struggling populations. Small scale informal activities generate capital which is reinvested into the local economy and thus they aid the ailing formal economic sector that is struggling to cope with austerity shocks and neoliberal restructuring.

Informal economic structures are resilient and facilitate both intentional and non-intentional grassroots resistance to the dominant structures of economic power. Scott (1990, 1985 ,1976) has unraveled how practices of everyday resistance indicate that people do not consent to dominance. One way for Greek people to effectively resist the ongoing neoliberalization of the economy is to disobey formal regulations and procedures. This practice has proven to be more effective than protests and demonstrations, and many of the imposed policies have been canceled as a result of grassroots disobedience. People act informally across diverse occasions and settings, both in formal and informal venues, and their activities, in the midst of the crisis and harshly imposed austerity, are endowed with notions of resistance to a "regime that wants to enslave and exterminate" them. Even before the crisis, both the extraction of taxes from business activities and the fees to social insurance funds were understood as part of "having the state as a business partner" who demands that its share be paid first. In popular consciousness, the state was crystalized as a rentier structure that, through taxes and social contributions, dispossessed people of a significant portion of their earned income. The increasing discontent with extractive taxation policies and towards the state in general and its social services, led to an intensification of informality and a reconceptualization of it as an act of subsistence, resistance and survival in the hostile economic environment that austerity and neoliberal policies had created.

The health system became inaccessible, especially after 2012, when neoliberal restructuring and cuts to the operational costs of public hospitals made them unable to serve the public's general needs (Cabot, 2016a). For instance, if a person wanted to have a regular checkup at one of Greece's public hospitals, they had to wait for months for the next available appointment. Therefore, examinations were outsourced to private health clinics for which people had to pay part of the cost. In addition, the police, especially after the waves of repression, and several incidents of misconduct during the protests in Athens (see Hertzfeld, 2011), were also unpopular, yet this was the only civil service which was not openly accused of incompetence and corruption - despite the widespread

allegations of corruption in the public sector. Corruption in the police force was overshadowed by the brutality it had shown towards protesters (students, workers, pensioners) in the massive demonstrations that took place all over Greece. Among the younger generations, especially people of the generation of Alexandros Grigoropoulos,[101] the idea circulated of the police as "dogs that guard their bosses [capitalists, banks and the government]." In an informal talk, a car mechanic who had been providing his services informally since 2011, told me that a large nation-wide firm that sold used cars, every year donated a few cars to Chalkida's police force, thus buying them out.

Public education, although it had suffered greatly from the lack of funds it has not collapsed. Children accessed school and universities operated even with limited funds. There were many instances in which my informants talked down about schoolteachers who worked very few hours and enjoyed an extended period of vacations compared to other 9 to 5 jobs. Furthermore, Greeks spend a large amount of money in the so called *parapaideia*[102] (private education) sector in order for the children to have higher chances of accessing public higher education. The system of *parapaideia* absorbed the surplus of university graduates who were not hired in the public education system. Even in times of crisis, Greeks sent their children to private schools in order to learn English, usually starting at the age of 6, and by the time they entered high school, adolescents spent 3 hours more of their time in private after schools (*frontistiria*) to prepare for the highly competitive national examinations (*panellinies*) in order to access higher education. The *parapaideia* sector had a high level of informality, and private tutors did not issue receipts. Furthermore, in times of crisis, many adverts circulated at bus stops, street corners, announcement boards and newspapers, in which university graduates offered low cost private lessons to school children.

Greeks' low tax morality and their discontent with the state were structured over the course of the country's modern history. These attitudes were enhanced by foreign economic supervision and imposed austerity, policies which were perceived on the ground as "deathpolitics" for the lower middle working classes, the *mikromesaioi*, which aimed to dispossess them of their means and transform them into neoliberal subjects. For instance, a special property tax was the first to be introduced, since a large portion of the lower middle classes are homeowners. Property tax was widely referenced to as *haratsi*, a special tax that Christians in the Ottoman era had to pay to the Sultan in order to freely exercise their religion. This grassroots identification of property tax that correlated it with the Ottoman occupation of Greece exposes how the general public perceived

[101] He was shot dead by a police officer on December 6th, 2008 when he was 15 years old. His death sparked nation-wide revolts and even in small cities, violent protests and great unrest followed. See: https://thepressproject.gr/the-murder-of-alexandros-grigoropoulos/ (Last accessed 16/02/2020).

[102]

austerity measures as a new form of occupation through economic tribute. Since 2010, mainstream political parties have tried to exploit widespread indignation at the special property tax, promising that they would cancel or reduce it to attract voters. Yet, even if they wanted to, they could not, as through it, the state extracted significant amounts of money that were vital in the government's budget. In this context, grassroots economic practices that were not taxed by the extractive regime of austerity and public administration were reconceptualized as intentional forms of resistance.

When I asked my interlocutors to elaborate on their informal activities, all used roughly the same arguments, although none of them used the mainstream term 'informal', but referred instead to the black market or black or untaxed money, in some cases, they also used the urban slang expression *sti zoula* which means to do something covertly. Resistance, subsistence and survival were terms used across responses when I asked people to explain the reasons for which they acted informally. Quite a few talked about the injustice of a system which punishes petty informality and criminalizes tax evasion while high level corruption scandals go unpunished, as does larger scale tax evasion by large companies. As a 45 year old tavern owner told me: "if you owe a thousand euros to the taxation agency [*eforia*] you go to jail. If you owe a million, you go to Switzerland." the tax haven for the rich. In another case, a 54 year old formerly multi-employed man who, in parallel with his formal job, maintained an informal construction business at the weekends, said: "I am glad that I did not declare that income. I take pride in not having done so, especially nowadays since all those thefts of public money have been revealed. You want a solution to the crisis? Bring the stolen money back, but instead, they make us feel guilty on top all that, that we [Greeks who evaded tax] are guilty for this crisis."

Informal economic activities which were exclusive to Chalkida included fishing. The locals often owned boats and had amateur fishing licenses, and they had developed fishing as a hobby. Informal commercial activity by amateur fishermen intensifies in times of crisis because fish provide a substantial source of income. I encountered many people, from diverse socio-economic backgrounds, who sold their catch. These included: a 50 year-old laid off factory worker whose only source of income, after he was fired, was his fishing and diving hobby; a 35 year-old insurance broker; an unemployed 45 year-old man who had set up an informal business and hired, on a regular basis, two other unemployed people and an employee at the municipality. For these and others, informal fishing provided a significant source of income and in some cases, constituted their only income resource. Fishing could yield significant amounts of money as fresh fish is an expensive product that is part of the weekly culinary habits of many households. At the same time, it offered the best quality/price ratio available.

Petty agricultural production, on the contrary, could not provide adequate income and remained mostly a self-subsistence practice. Two dynamic products, olive oil and wine, however, were potential sources of extra income. Olive oil is an essential element, in a Braudelian sense, of every Greek and Mediterranean household. Many households owned small and medium-sized olive groves which at the very least could meet a household's subsistence needs, and which might also extend further to cover the kinship network's needs. Olive oil production often takes place in inherited olive groves that are usually owned and managed by the older generation, who then distributes the family's production amongst the households of younger kin.

Wine was also a dynamic product in high demand. Small scale wine producers channeled most of their production, through their networks of friends and acquaintances, to local taverns. They maintained a dual status in terms of their income. They formally sold some of their produce, doing so in order to justify their economic status and appear financially coherent to the tax authorities. As they elaborated, small scale olive oil and wine producers could not make a profit if they operated solely in the formal sector. "The new taxation regime on agricultural firms favors only large-scale production ... Small and medium-sized production units have been made unsustainable because of overtaxation. If I declared everything [income], it would not be worth the effort for someone to do what I am doing here." So said Sotiris (49), a laid off factory worker who found an outlet through the agricultural property he had inherited, on which he had created a small wine production unit. He had broken down the numbers and explained that he had to prepay the following year's income taxes based on the income he had declared the previous year, along with an additional 20 percent of his profit. "I give some of my wine to a big winery in the area that absorbs local production. In order to survive you need to become big, or to operate as I do, *tsoukou tsoukou* (little by little) through friends and acquaintances."

The neoliberal doctrine of maximization had been established in the agricultural sector and large investments had started gradually to absorb smaller producers and retailers. Sotiris explained that the recent prohibition of home-made *raki* and *tsipouro* had been promoted by large multinational firms who had entered the economic field of spirit production and had insisted on banning home based distilleries and the non-standardized informal products that circulated both within and outside of formal markets. The government's discourse centered on public health concerns, as well as on the loss of tax income from products which were widely consumed in Greece without paying taxes. Along the same lines, olive oil could only be sold in a standardized form, and since 2016, taverns were obliged to use only standardized oil for their customers. Taverns are the main recipients of informal food production and have the capacity to formalize it. In

numerous instances, the tavern owner was also a producer or had kin who were producers. Through taverns, homegrown food was processed. For instance, I found one supplier of lamb chops in a small town near Chalkida called Gymno. It was a family owned butcher that produced meat too, while next to it the family operated a small tavern. Gymno was one of the main food production sites around Chalkida, and many of its citizens were multi-employed, thus engaged in a high degree of informality. Restructurings in agricultural taxation produced greater confusion among petty agricultural producers. Even tax consultants identified as complex the bureaucratization of olive oil production and they pointed to the elevated direct and indirect taxation of the different stages of production, from the field to the factory. Moreover, the increased taxation of agricultural income prompted many small producers to declare that the total amount of their production was intended for self-subsistence, thereby fueling the country's informal olive oil market.

Katerina (Household 3) informed me that local, bulk olive oil production was exported to Italy where it was standardized and then sold on European markets as Italian. She further elaborated on the restructuring of agricultural production that had started in the 1980s in order to meet EEC standards, and talked of how national agriculture was being controlled through European funding. Sotiris told me about the EU directives which prohibited new vineyard plantations and enforced the uprooting of unlicensed vineyards. Since the 1980s, the ECC gave incentives to uproot existing vineyards in Greece. According to Katerina, these directives consisted of an orchestrated attempt to control people by dispossessing them of their means of producing food. A similar point that was raised in a group interview at the occupied cement factory. Food production was a basic survival skill which people from rural backgrounds possessed. It was the strong rural-urban relationships that people in Chalkida had maintained and the knowledge for producing their own food which, she argued, proved that the Greek agricultural sector, which was formed by many small producers who were not necessarily registered as farmers, provided the means for people to subsist and resist the crisis and neoliberal and austerity policies. Petty producers within the agricultural sector had always been resilient to power and could effectively resist reforms in the sector.

Small scale food production often supplies a small income to households. For instance, an employee at Chalkida's municipality who owned a few orange trees, managed to cover his annual phone bills by selling the oranges. Many households with a surplus of olive oil, sold it informally, either through their social networks or to formal oil refineries. Giorgos (25), unemployed, and his uncle Nikos (50), an accountant, had set up an informal business and used their contacts in Athens to sell their olive oil. As soon as their informal venture was established, they started buying and

selling olive oil from other producers as well, and they also sought access to the movement without intermediaries.

Conclusion

There is a correlation between informal economic activities and social solidarity. During the crisis, ruptures in the redistribution model and in institutionalized forms of organic solidarity were substituted by informal means and expressions of solidarity. The rolling back and rolling out of the state reconfigured the social contact, reframing the pre-crisis terms under which Greeks had consented to be dominated. The state's inability to provide made people turn to their close kin in order to cover their needs, and thus an emergent mechanicalization of solidarity occurred through social and kinship networks, which circulated both formal and informal resources.

As I showed in the first two chapters, capitalist development and the modernization of the Greek economy occurred late. The transition to capitalism relied on informal, extralegal and often illegal means and initiatives and the formalization of those developments occurred afterwards, as a *fait accompli*. Historical evidence suggests that capitalism grows faster in unregulated environments thereby contradicting traditional approaches to the informal economy that view it as an index of the lack of capitalist progress.

It was not only big capital that reshaped the country's landscape. Small, private illegal/informal and semi-formal construction schemes that enabled people to access basic needs such as housing, were also prevalent ways of making a living. Indeed, from the 1950s until the outbreak of the economic crisis in 2009, the housing construction industry was the economy's driving force. Until this day, many illegally constructed buildings exist all over Greece, for which reason entire neighborhoods and settlements lack basic infrastructure such as streets, pavements, drainage and so on. At the same time, the state cannot intervene as these settlements do not appear in official records and documents, hence officially, they do not exist. This incoherent reality, in terms of organization, makes it difficult for the state to reach into every area and as a result, self-regulated cores arise. In these, people need to collaborate and negotiate in person without having those relationships mediated by the state and its authorities. These informally produced urban spaces reproduce the rural habitus of their residents, thus village communities are recreated in the city. Uncontrolled social spaces where the state cannot reach favor the development of institutions of mutual aid. These village communities were indeed recreated and transformed into neighborhood communities in urban centers (Hirschon, 1979; Panourgia, 1995).

Urban spaces were produced by private initiatives since the state was unable to implement a housing policy to accommodate the radical increase in the population of cities such as Chalkida. This situation became established as a norm and was intensified during the economic boom years as peoples' incomes increased (Allen et al, 2004). The *antiparochi* phenomenon is a clear example of both the state's inability to fulfill people's housing needs and of the exclusion of the lower working classes from credit. The unregulated and chaotic "antiparochization" of urban lands created spaces in which the state had no presence at all, not even in terms of basic infrastructure to guarantee minimum standards of urban life such as the neighborhood which I stayed during fieldwork. People therefore developed an economic habitus and learned to disregard formal regulations and structures. This played a significant role in the formation of the social contract and the emergence of the Greek middle classes (Mouzelis, 1978). Thus, both citizenship and socio-economic habitus were shaped by widespread informal activity, and this occurred at all levels of analysis.

Historically, informality has been deeply embedded in Greek society and in the way in which people understand the economy of everyday life. As Foucault has argued, "people know what they do, they know frequently why they do what they do; but what they do not know is what they do does" (Dreyfus and Rabinow, 1983: 187). This holds true for many every day, habitual economic practices that can be classified under the broad term of informality. In times of crisis, however, informal economic practices and structures acquire new grassroots meanings and definitions, as the social and economic reproduction of an increasing number of people relies on informal economic arrangements. Very often, people conceptualize their informal economic arrangements as acts of subsistence and resistance, with the very fact of surviving the crisis regarded as a form of resistance (Scott, 1990, 1985, 1977). During the crisis, informality has become a primary income generating activity for many, for others, it allows them to cover their basic needs and enables them to "survive" and reproduce in the decaying formal economic environment.

Market structures are vital for any social organization and ruptures in economic organization produce socio-cultural shocks. In the case of Chalkida, the rural habitus of its citizens and the proximity to food production sites, allowed social cohesion to be sustained through people's informal arrangements. Furthermore, due to the lack of economic resources, many incidents occur where formally employed actors at the public services, such as school teachers, municipal officers and doctors act on their own good will and bypass formalities to make things happen so as children can have toilet paper and drawing materials, patients can be able to receive proper treatment and citizens can resolve their issues. These aforementioned practices are often illegal, and these people could get prosecuted for not adhering to formal protocols. In this sense, informality was a

countervailing force to the austerity which had taken over formal structures. Anti-austerity could only be exercised through informal means which enabled people to keep enjoying life, to have fun and socialize against the austerity regime that, as some of my interlocutors put it, "wants us to stay inside" or "makes us depressed and isolated." Hence, in the neoliberal context, grassroots informality can be a force of disalienation, that that counterbalances the social and economic isolation that the austerity crisis has brought. Informal economic practices sustain the social life in Chalkida and support many families and individuals in getting access to various resources (occasional employment, food, access to health structures, extra income). Grassroots informality is also regarded as a "survival tactic". However, the way in which people used "survival" in their discourses should not be confused with mere positivistic notions of covering one's basic biological needs. People used "survival" with social connotations in order to express various ideas: that they were able to meet with their social obligations, to participate in social life, to have social and economic relationships, to be active members of society and to have the capacity to enjoy life.

The Greek social contract is thus constituted by grassroots informality which enjoys nation-wide tolerance and acceptance. In this sense, informality did not undermine the development of organic solidarity, on the contrary, informal economic activities were embedded in the organic solidarity project of modernization and progress. Organic solidarity was formed by the common struggles and mutual aspirations of the rising middle classes in Greece who made use of informal means in their effort to improve their socio-economic status. Almost everyone could sympathize with petty informal activities that transgressed the formal economic framework and evaded taxation, while the widespread corruption of the Greek public sector has had a formative role in capitalist progress. In the current moment, in which the economy's formal sector has collapsed, organic solidarity is practiced, imagined and materialized at the grassroots level through informal means and ways.

Chapter 6

Everyday Life in Crisis – Grassroots Experiences and Analyses of Crisis and Austerity in Chalkida

Introduction

Since the beginning of the so-called financial crisis in 2008, mainstream economists, politicians, journalists and other "experts" from across Europe have employed organic and corporatist images of southern Europe in crisis. Three core ideas shape their discourse. First, the crisis is a (class-blind) state of disruption that affects the entire social body. Second, national entities share responsibility for producing the economic meltdown through their collective *bad southern* behavior (the product of corruption, conspicuous consumption and the lack of an *ethos* of hard work). Finally, the discourse lauds austerity as the "cure" for crisis that will promote regeneration of the social body (Hadjimichalis, 2017; Mylonas, 2014; Narotzky, 2012; Raudon and Shore, 2018). I use the Gramscian concept of "common sense" to understand differences and tensions within subaltern models of crisis as part of a fragmented consciousness that both reproduces and challenges hegemonic models. On the one hand, this contradictory conception of the world reflects tensions between material experience (practical activity) and hegemonic ideology (explicit language); on the other, it reworks the cumulative sedimentation of past tensions and struggles in relation to the present conjuncture (Gramsci, 1977, 1997, 2010; Crehan, 2011; Hall and Massey, 2010; Narotzky and Smith, 2010; Roseberry, 1989, 1994). Methodologically, this focus on common sense points towards the shared everyday experiences and discourses of dispossessed women and men, despite differences in their voting choices or formal political positionings.

The financial crisis of global capital that begun in US, in 2007, produced one of capitalism's greatest structural shocks. The crisis scaled down and transformed as it gradually started to affect nations and local spaces, and austerity diffused and produced multiple crises at the grassroots level

of social reproduction and daily life. In this chapter I present how crisis unfolded in people's everyday lives and I examine understandings and explanations of it. People's narratives entangled several scales of analysis. In this way, they bring to the fore the articulation of local practices with national and international power structures and form an extended case method (Burawoy, 2000). Firstly, I examine how people apprehended the crisis and realized that there was a crisis. Next, I look at how people use historical evidence to construct an explanation, what one might call a grassroots analysis of what crisis is and what crisis does. In addition, I assess how the recent economic crisis has produced multiple social, cultural and ideological crises in the social body. There has been a scalar crisis of meaning between the institutional approach to the phenomenon and the formulation of austerity policies, and grassroots judgments. I focus on the events before and after the Greek referendum in 2015, and then I examine the grassroots interpretations of crisis and austerity as neocolonialism.

In my analysis, one of my points of departure are the various socio-economic indices that prompted people to identify crisis in their everyday life. These included concrete economic downturns and social observations and signs which people interpreted using sociological, political and financial arguments. At times, their arguments tended to reproduce dominant discourses around crisis and the economy. At others, they reworked those discourses and challenged dominant approaches to the economy by using a language of contention (Roseberry, 1994) that brought to the fore the fact that crisis has been favorable to foreign interests that came to control the country and its wealth through neocolonial methods. I give theoretical value to grassroots analyses, explanations and judgments regarding what crisis is and what it does. My aim is to grasp the structures of feeling (Williams 1977) of the crisis experience and to explain how people reform their ideological stances, political interests and economic practices. Koselleck's (2006) analysis of the concept of crisis in the modern world shows that crisis has been endemic to modern development, and that it was through crisis that capitalism prevailed to become the global economic paradigm for socio-economic organization.

In addition to its economic model of social organization, capitalism advances a set of moral values. Capitalist production is not oriented towards covering human needs, but rather to the exploitation of those needs, which it strives to multiply in its endless pursuit of profit. As Marx and Engels elaborate, writing on capitalist overproduction crises: "How does the bourgeoisie overcome these crises? On the one hand, by enforced destruction of mass productive forces; on the other, by the conquest of new markets and by a more thorough exploitation of old ones. But how then does it do this? By paving the way for ever more extensive and devastating crises and by diminishing the means whereby crises are prevented" (Marx & Engels, 1978: 478). In this chapter, I investigate the

ambivalent meanings and explanations of crisis held by ordinary working, middle-class people. On the one hand, I examine the uneasy fit between these and "expert" discourses, paying attention to how they are grounded in gendered and generationally differentiated lived experiences. On the other hand, I highlight their ties to particular historical topographies (Katz, 2001) and memories of domination.

I provide an alternative grassroots approach to current analyses of crisis which enriches existing ethnographic knowledge of how people adapt, counteract, think of and understand crisis in their real life, and how new metaphors are generated (Turner, 1967) under the condition of "being in" and "living with" crisis. What becomes evident is that solutions to the crisis have been worse than the problem itself. Austerity has created more crises through its implementation (Katz, 2001; Peck & Tickel, 2002), since it violently and unilaterally reduced people's income, which produced several crises in social reproduction. Focusing on grassroots reasoning and analyses of crisis, I explore discourses of what went wrong, who and what were to blame, discourses that emerge when people speak about the economic crisis and the subsequent austerity.

In people's conceptualizations of the crisis, I observed an interesting reversal of dominant discourses. In mainstream economic theory, austerity comes after the crisis and is considered a treatment for it, while in my interlocutors' discourses, crisis is the outcome of austerity, not the other way around. Moreover, the foreign supervision which was imposed on Greece in 2010 with the first MoU between the Greek government and the country's creditors, unmasked crypto-colonial relationships. For many, the Greek debt crisis and imposed austerity were understood as a new form of neocolonial domination. After the events surrounding the Greek referendum in July 2015, in which the anti-austerity government of Syriza and Anel was forced into continuing austerity, it was obvious to people that Greece was a powerless debt colony, a protectorate of its creditors (see Chapter 2). Thus the recent crisis appears to many as a continuation of foreign intervention and the hegemonic domination of Greece. In grassroots conceptualizations and theories about the crisis phenomenon, people often, revisited history and traced the root causes of the present economic crisis to the past, to specific moments in modern Greek history that led the country to its present position. Moreover, the economic crisis was understood as a national catastrophe, and was represented as a hardship that Greeks, who found themselves confronted with yet another crisis, had to endure. "Our parents and grandparents endured wars and famines, and now it is our turn to suffer" said Giannis (56) who understood hardships and sacrifice as something that pertains to Greek history and culture.

6.1 Grassroots Experiences and Understandings of Crisis in Chalkida

The first signs of crisis that people noticed were the gradual reduction of their incomes. Therefore, most people started to grasp what crisis does through their income. At the grassroots level, crisis was understood and materialized as a crisis in social reproduction. Until 2011, most people had been able to get by. However, after 2012, the economic downturn escalated and the first evidence of ruptures in social reproduction appeared. As Dina (57), a shop owner, explained, she had realized that there was a crisis as soon as she could no longer meet her monthly obligations (social insurance, rent, bills and payments), circa 2012. A civil servant, Vangelis (54), who was a civil engineer, told me that for him, the crisis became an issue in 2011 when, after cuts to his salary, he started to struggle with his mortgage payments. He explained that 2012 was one of the darkest years of his life, filled with anxiety and impotence at the fact that there was nothing he could do to change the difficult economic situation he had been put in, in which he risked getting his house foreclosed.

Takis (Household 8), identified crisis by the multiple closures of factories. As he specified, he realized the extent of the economic depression and that "the worst has yet to come" as soon as he heard rumors about the imminent closure of the cement factory in 2011. Then he observed how people did not have money to spend on a day-to-day basis and for that reason did their shopping in small, neighborhood shops that accepted informal credit. These were the so called *tefteri*, named after the ledger in which the *mpakalika* (general stores) kept tally of their customers' debts, a very popular cultural and economic practice of the past which had reemerged to balance the lack of money flow and enable the market to function. Takis understood the depth of the crisis through his social circle, when people close to him were challenged by the crisis and could not maintain their livelihood arrangements, both in Chalkida and elsewhere in Greece. For example, this was the case with his wife's sister (*kouniada*) who had no money to send to her son who was studying in Athens.

The factories around Chalkida, especially the cement factory which had been a landmark of Chalkida's economy, were used by many as an index for describing the extent of the recent economic crisis. The closure of the cement factory, as I showed in Chapter 1, signified both a major crisis in Chalkida's local economy and society, and a nationwide crisis in the construction sector. Chalkidians were accustomed to small scale crises that industrial restructurings (Narotzky, 2016a) had caused in the past, and they quickly interpreted the recent crisis as an escalation of deindustrialization. For those directly affected by factory closures, crisis meant a rupture in their livelihood arrangements. At the larger scale it was not a rupture but a continuation of de-

industrialization, a process that had begun in the 1980s. The factories around Chalkida had a symbolic meaning for the city's residents as they materialized its history and character. Given that local livelihoods and intergenerational projects depended on them, they were thus the emblem of its economic prosperity. According to Dina (Household 4), the factory closures created a deep economic crisis in Chalkida and its market since money, in the form of industrial wages, stopped flowing into the local economy. This had a dual nature, on the one hand, the decline in industrial jobs which used to bring money into Chalkida's economy, and on the other, the cuts in public expenditure (civil servant's wages, pensions, service provision) that obliged people to adopt a new approach to their economies. The factory closures and the massive losses in industrial positions quickly became a matter of concern for local society. The loss of industrial sector jobs and the surge in unemployment were the first indicators of what was about to happen. Crisis and the austerity that followed affected the finances of many working people and thereafter, their social reproduction practices were affected. Once austerity measures took hold of people's financial arrangements, the economic crisis expanded in society and was thus culturally appropriated. Economic as well as social activities were affected as shrinking household incomes produced ripple effects in the local economy.

Many of the unemployed became socially isolated and depressed. Widespread anger, despair and depression were other indicators with which people identified the profound effect that crisis has had on the social body. Manolis (Household 6) explained that economic scarcity and the social isolation it produces had been counterbalanced during the first years of the crisis by social gatherings in homes. He said: "We held many dinners and were invited to other peoples' houses instead of going out. Nowadays [in 2016] all these dinners [*trapezomata*] have stopped, people cannot afford it anymore." Quite a few of my informants noted that they had seen taverns and cafes that used to be full, empty even on Friday or Saturday nights. "People have no money to spend and stay at home," several tavern and cafe owners explained. There were ruptures in sociality among friends, and those who could not afford to go out for dinner were ashamed of not having money and stayed in. Dimitra (32) told me that she had lost several of her social contacts and that in her close circle of friends, they pooled their resources when they went out so that they could include members who lacked the financial resources. The image of empty taverns was a strong indicator of how crisis, which affected income resources, produces ruptures in the grassroots institutions of sociality such as the tavern. In another example, once austerity had set in, Katerina (Household 3) and her cousin Panayiota (Household 2), who lived next to each other, stopped exchanging gifts at

Christmas. Further, austerity also caused crisis in intimate social relationships and alienated people further by enclosing solidarity within the nuclear family and first-degree relatives (Chapter 4).

Broken hopes, dreams and expectations (Narotzky & Besnier, 2014) quickly become a shared reality among the dispossessed masses and framed crisis experiences as a collective form of suffering. Seeing their incomes fall and being unable to meet their monthly obligations, not being able to pay their bank loans, being laid off and being unable to find a job, feeling stagnant and impotent, these were common experiences that a wide cross-section of people lived through at the same time. All the above framed the structures of feeling (Williams, 1977) of a society that was undergoing one of its biggest crises of the preceding 50 years. According to the Greek Statistics Agency (Elstat)'s annual birth and death rate figures, the population had shrunk by more than 180.000 people between 2010 and 2018.[103] This was the first time that Greece has had a population decrease since WWII. Because of the nature of his business and the drop in clients, Manolis (Household 6) was quick to realize that there was a decrease in marriages as well as the cultural shifts that the crisis has created in the traditional celebration of it. He told me: "Before the crisis, when people married, they celebrated it more. Nowadays, people are tight with what they will spend for the wedding banquet and they seem to be more timid and restrained at the celebration. The way people organize their weddings has changed, it is not like before, not even the celebration is the same, it has lost something."

The recent iteration of crisis may not be as lethal and catastrophic as other episodes in modern Greek history such as the Asia Minor catastrophe, or the great famine and the civil war, yet it affected fundamental structures and challenged the past five decades' socio-economic habitus of prosperity and continual economic growth. The break in economic growth and the "austerization" of life prompted an existential crisis that signaled a reversal of progress, a retrograde movement. Greeks felt that they were going backwards in time instead of moving forward and several of my interlocutors said that austerity had canceled the *Metapolitefsi* era's social, political and economic progress. "I learn about all those labor reforms, and people who speak openly about how well things were during the Junta and I feel like we've gone back to the 1970s"[104] said Sofia (59), a high school teacher.

[103] https://www.statistics.gr/en/statistics/pop check birth and death demographic indices (Last accessed 12/02/2020).

[104] A grassroots discourse that praised Papadopoulos' totalitarian regime was present even before the crisis. "We need a junta to get it straight" was a common expression used by ordinary people expressing their discontent towards the state and its democratic structures, and it is a narrative whose use has been growing. Golden Dawn expressed the views of this part of the Greek population. The party took advantage of the political system's crisis and grew to become the third largest party in the Greek parliament in the 2012 and 2015 elections.

Crisis has altered perceptions of time at the personal level too. Aliki (49), who was forced to move back to her father's house when she lost her job at the cement factory, felt like she was being taken back to where she had started. Similarly, people who lost their businesses and assets because of the crisis faced a cold reboot of their livelihood arrangements as they were pushed back to where they began as they started losing their livelihood achievements and investments which were devalued. For instance, houses lost nearly half of their pre-crisis commercial value. Someone buying a house in 2013 would have paid nearly one third of the 2008 price. This is a generational viewpoint of crisis, as younger generations who had not yet established their livelihoods, did not lose anything tangible with the present crisis. For younger people, the crisis was not existential but rather the natural outcome of where things had been headed. Dimitris (27) refused to accept that everyone experienced the crisis in the same way. Surprisingly, he believed that this was not for class reasons, but for cultural and ideological ones. According to him, those who were integrated into the socio-economic system were the ones who suffered, those who "felt that they existed because they consumed and filled their hollow existence with things they bought to show off." Christos (31) who worked at his mother's clothes alterations shop had seen their business grow substantially during the crisis years. He recalled an incident in which a customer of his, a man in his 30s, came in and asked if Christos could switch the labels of his new inexpensive coat with the high-end label of his old branded coat that was worn out. Furthermore, Christos felt the generational injustice of crisis in terms of failed consumption and the inability to lead a prosperous life.

Older generations envisioned a dark and uncertain future as the outcome of the current crisis. This was unlike in the past when, despite people's everyday struggles and resource unavailability, there was hope. Today, hopes for a future that would be better than the present had disappeared. "I realized the extent of the crisis when I understood that my children would live with less than my generation did," said Anastasia (49), an employee at the Central bank of Greece. Regardless of their socio-economic background, people faced significant ruptures in their social reproduction patterns and had to proceed with livelihood restructurings and to reform their plans for the future. It took people quite a few years to adjust to austerity's reality and to start thinking about the future. The political change brought about in 2015 with Syriza's win at the elections showed that people need hope[105] and a vision for the future (Narotzky & Besnier, 2014). In this sense, crisis can be conceptualized as the moment when something breaks, as a rupture or a point of no return. Just as an earthquake shakes the foundations of a building, so the crisis has shaken the foundations of Greek society. However, in this case, irreversibility is produced afterwards, when people

[105] Syriza's main slogan was "Syriza - I elpida erhetai" (Syriza - Hope is on the way).

acknowledge the damages and consider their options. During the first five years of the crisis, the process of collapse unfurled as austerity induced greater shocks in the national economy. Welfare and provisioning structures collapsed, incomes shrank and society fell into a deep depression (Apostolidou, 2018; Simou & Koutsogeorgou, 2014). By 2014, the most radical restructurings had taken effect and people had started to accept the reality of living with "crisis" and to expect the worst. Stavros (55), a solar boiler shop owner, described how his stance towards the realities that crisis brought had evolved:

> At first I was hoping that the crisis would not last for long, you know, in our sector [self-employed retail business] we have had many ups and downs, we are accustomed to uncertainty. So I hoped it would pass, then I got indebted to my social insurance fund, then to the taxation agency (*eforia*) and then I couldn't pay my suppliers and ended up in Teiresias[106] (the credit score agency) after failing to cover a bank check. I didn't know, maybe I should have closed my shop, but what to do afterwards? So I kept going hoping that things would change soon. And guess what... they didn't. Many of my competitors closed their shops, there was no construction. I could not imagine what else I could do if I closed my shop. I ended up owing more than 12,000 euros to my insurance fund and nearly 8000 to the taxation agency. So yes, in 2015 I realized that I should have closed my shop two years back.

It took Stavros almost 5 years to realize that there was no turning back and to accept that the venture that he had built and kept running for the past 30 years was broken beyond repair.

The crisis had a different impact on the self-employed than on waged workers, and small business owners adopted a stance of waiting for the storm to pass. There was nothing they could do to change the situation and they chose an attitude of waiting for the storm to pass (Roitman, 2013). Nikos (53), a small shop owner selling electric appliances, said:

> People stopped buying and the market has been totally stagnated. I asked around other shop owners and they told me the same. From February 2012 until the summer, I did not sell anything. In 2013, I had managed to stay afloat and I was thinking that I

[106] Teiresias is an interbank company that keeps a database on the credibility of traders and consumers. People and companies who have failed to repay a debt are added to its database.

had eaten the whole donkey and now only the tail remained,[107] that the worst was over, so I kept hoping that people would soon have money to spend, but nowadays most people search online for the cheapest price and order things from Athens. This is what crisis does: small shops are swallowed up by large firms. Month after month, four years have passed with me worrying about the day to day, waiting for a change, and now I am indebted to my insurance fund.[108] The only thing I can do right now is to worry (laughs).

Theofilos (62) of Household 2, who had had a taxi license, elaborated that: "I started at 7 am everyday and came back at 7 pm and nothing. I earned tiny sums. Well this is crisis. Work is not in your hands anymore." Unlike others, Theofilos was quick to understand how bad the situation was and stopped his business' activities before getting indebted to his social insurance fund. For him crisis not only meant dispossession of his income, but also a realization that he could not reenter the job market to earn an income and he thus chose to wait for his retirement (Giannitsis & Zografakis, 2015).

Household 2 is a case that represents the structures of resilience and shows how austerity, rather than crisis, is embodied in socio-economic life. Interestingly, the couple sacrificed a great part of their savings and resources to provide for their children and help them as they started out in life. "Parents provide, we give to our children whatever we can," said Theofilos, who presented this as an intergenerational moral obligation. "What I've achieved in my life I owe to my parents, the elders were the ones who laid the country's foundations" he said in order to stress his generation's failure in the face of the country's devastation by the crisis. He had expected his son to stay in Greece and work as a doctor in Chalkida, in order to contribute to the common good through his

[107] This is a Greek idiom/proverb which is used to describe that one should not give up as the worst have already passed, yet there is a little more to be done.

[108] According to the state's records, in 2009, small and medium-sized enterprises' accumulated debt to social insurance funds was 16 billion euros; in 2018, the amount rose to 35 billion euros (KEAO 2019). Moreover, in 2018, accumulated debt to the taxation agency reached 101 billion euros. 3.6 million Greeks owe 10,000 euros or less to the taxation agency (3.7 billion debt). 240,000 Greeks owe 10 to 100,000 euros (6.6 billion debt), and 41,000 people owe more than 100.000 euros which totals 91 billion of debt (Source: https://www.kathimerini.gr/986502/article/oikonomia/ellhnikh-oikonomia/aade-36-ekat-ellhnes-xrwstoyn-sthn-eforia-ews-10000-eyrw). (Last accessed 14/01/2020). However, these figures are inflated because there are many problems in the system. An accountant explained to me that many businessmen who had stopped their activities could not formally un-register from the system since in order to do so they would have to pay VAT on their unsold merchandise which in many cases amounted to a very large sum of money. Moreover, outstanding social insurance and taxation debts are charged high interest rates.

profession, and yet the crisis drove his son abroad in *ksenitia*[109] (foreign land). Economic emigration was another powerful proof of the depth of the crisis, and of the fact that the country could no longer accommodate younger generations who fled *en masse.*

Brain drain became a major issue which intensified with the imposition of austerity, and more than half a million people left Greece from 2010 to 2016 (Lazaretou, 2016). Greece had the highest unemployment rate amongst OECD countries in 2010; young university graduates could not find jobs and one out of five graduates aged between 25 and 29 were unemployed (Pellicia, 2013; Lambrianidis, 2013; Livanos, 2010). One out of every two people below 29 were unemployed even before the outbreak of the crisis and they came to realize the extent of the economic crisis through their parents. Under current conditions, it is difficult for younger people to prosper and sustain a household of their own, and this dependence has been enhanced by crisis. Unlike older generations who were rooted and therefore immobile – this is especially true of homeowners and families - younger people were more eager to migrate and to try to build a livelihood abroad. "Our grandfathers [referring to the generation] migrated to Germany to work in the factories and in taverns as unskilled workers. Back in the 1960s, those with university degrees stayed here and the unskilled laborers left. This time the opposite is happening, university graduates like me are leaving the country, and I'm not sure if they will ever return," said Michalis, a 36 year old archaeologist who worked in a classics department at a German university. Younger people's life trajectories had always followed similar paths, even before the start of the economic crisis which had accelerated ongoing processes and forced many more to migrate.

Precarization and uncertainty were other markers that many of my interlocutors said made them realize that there was a crisis. "We don't know what tomorrow will bring" said Stella (43), a self-employed civil engineer who had stopped her professional activity. Anestis (79) expressed the idea that the worst might be still to come and Manolis said that: "the way things are headed, it is definitely going to get worse and worse." Employed people, including civil servants, said that they had started to fear losing their jobs. Older civil servants who were close to retirement were usually those who had entered public service in the 1980s and 1990s, had fewer skills and qualifications than their younger colleagues and were afraid of being made redundant by austerity.[110] Crisis was

[109] A culturally and emotionally charged Greek word that cannot be translated, only described, in English. It is used for instance when someone is forced to leave the country driven by difficulties and material constraints in Greece. The word often appears in many popular folk songs (see Kavouras, 1990).

[110] In 2013, more than 607,516 people were employed in the public sector. Nearly 40 percent did not have a university degree and nearly 60 percent of civil servants are computer illiterate. This study has fueled arguments against the public sector (see Chapter 5) during the restructuring of the state. Source: https://www.iefimerida.gr/news/126483/%CE%B1%CF%80%CF%8C%CF%86%CE%BF%CE%B9%CF%84%CE

indeed a shared reality for everyone, yet it produced distinct realizations and challenges for different age groups.

Young people framed their understandings of crisis in relation to the older generation's standards. Many precariously employed people in their 20s and 30s realized that they would never lead lives like those of their parents. They would not be financially independent and without fear of unemployment, the two conditions which enable people to form new families. Crisis has dispossessed younger generations of the means for integrating themselves into the adult society of working people and for designing their own livelihoods. Sergios (27) said: "I realized recently that I cannot start a family any time soon. I live with my girlfriend in a small flat and we barely make ends meet." Through our conversation, I learned that Sergios lived according to baby boomers' traditional values and social standards and cultivated similar expectations about life. In cultural terms, traditional patterns of livelihood made family formation the purpose life. The duty was thus to continue the *geniá* (generation) and the family name which was bound to patrilineality. Faced with the impossibilities that the crisis presented him, Sergios understood the crisis-imposed limits to social reproduction practices as signals of ruptures in the cultural system.

Mariana (26) was semi-formally employed by an Athens based marketing firm, who hired her on a needs basis. She was in a long-term relationship and was very anxious about the possibility of becoming pregnant when I first met her. Indeed, an unexpected pregnancy can create a stressful situation at the best of times; in the midst of the economic crisis, however, having a child was nearly out of the question for young, un(der)employed couples. Unlike earlier generations, for whom pregnancy-related worries centered on the problem of pregnancy outside of marriage and the social stigma it entailed in a deeply religious and conservative society, for the younger generation, anxieties around pregnancy related mostly to financial and work issues. Georgia (36), an employee at her father's firm said: "I do not want to have a family right now, but I might want to sometime in the future. Now I realize that the longer I postpone it, the harder it gets to do it. At my age, my mother already had 3 children." Georgia was not particularly hindered by the crisis as she got a secure job in her family's business when she finished university, as well as a house that her parents had given her. She understood the crisis through others, through friends who had been unemployed for a long time or who had left the country, and in a general sense, through people in her social

%BF%CE%B9-%CE%BB%CF%85%CE%BA%CE%B5%CE%AF%CE%BF%CF%85-%CE%BF%CE%B9-%CE%BC%CE%B9%CF%83%CE%BF%CE%AF-%CE%B4%CE%B7%CE%BC%CF%8C%CF%83%CE%B9%CE%BF%CE%B9-%CF%85%CF%80%CE%AC%CE%BB%CE%BB%CE%B7%CE%BB%CE%BF%CE%B9-%CF%84%CE%BF-65-%CE%B4%CE%B5%CE%BD-%CE%BC%CF%80%CE%BF%CF%81%CE%B5%CE%AF-%CE%BD%CE%B1-%CF%83%CF%84%CE%B5%CE%AF%CE%BB%CE%B5%CE%B9-%CE%BF%CF%8D%CF%84%CE%B5-%CE%AD%CE%BD%CE%B1-email (Last accessed 15/01/2020).

network who faced economic problems which permeated their personal and social lives. She said that many of her friends who had been in long term relationships had broken up during the crisis, and she correlated the wider social crisis with crises that people faced in their personal lives. She had recently broken up too and said that the crisis had revealed the incompatibilities between her and her ex's future aspirations. Her ex-partner had become depressed and obsessed, Georgia claimed, with money, or rather with the lack of a substantial and fulfilling labor income, and he wanted to migrate in order to find a well-paid job, while she did not want to leave Chalkida. Tassos (34), from Household 4, said that he realized that there was a crisis when he returned from London in 2013 and found out that almost all of his friends were unemployed. "It was exactly the opposite of London where everyone in my social circle worked, here all my friends were unemployed." Dimitra (32), an administrative workfare employee, elaborated that she had always been in a precarious position in terms of jobs and that she had always lived under these kinds of conditions. The only difference was that she did not expect things to improve anymore. "Haha [in irony], crisis… I have always been in crisis, I am thirty two years old and I have never had a stable job. And it seems unlikely that I'll find one here in Greece. I've started to think seriously about migrating to Germany where my brother lives. I don't want to though, but what else can I do?"

Austerity restructuring and neoliberal transformations of the economy targeted the market bases of the economy which in turn affected its community base (Gudeman, 1990) and prompted subtle shifts within the other spheres of social reproduction and stratification (Doob, 2012; Gowdy, 2006). The vast majority of the population is now very careful with its spending, counting every single penny. People working at supermarkets and at local open-air markets identified the signs of crisis in people's consumption practices. In the open-air markets, street vendors noticed that people bought less food than they used to while new customers came to the markets in search of cheaper food. I met a young couple, both of them supermarket employees, at the children's playground where I took my one-year old son to play and to also conduct participant observation. They had just had a baby too and I approached them because seeing such young people with kids was a rare occurrence. Maria (24) and Giorgos (26) had found jobs on the shop floor of a supermarket chain that had opened branches in Chalkida in 2013. Since they were both employed and had a supportive kinship network, their decision to have a child was made easily. Although both complained about the low wages, Maria said that "at least we have a job" for which reason they should not complain. Giorgos identified the crisis in the consumption practices of the people he observed every day. He recalled an incident that had attracted his attention the day before, which for him captured the crisis condition. He described a man in his 70s who had bought just a one onion and one carrot, "just to

make food for the day." From this he deduced that people had stopped thinking ahead about the future and cared only about the present and how to cover the basics. A decline in consumption is a decline in grassroots investments and, as Narotzky & Besnier (2014) show, the economy mediates the way people think about time and envision and invest in their futures. In times of crisis, when human economies (Hart, 2008; Hart, Laville & Cattani, 2010) are affected, people face not only financial but also existential problems. Economic life is inscribed within people's social habitus, and when this deep structure is challenged, people and society in general face nuclear, organizational problems.

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6.2 Crisis, Critique and History

In this section I examine grassroots discourses around the causes for the unprecedented current crisis in Greece. This ethnographic data provides valuable insights into how people relate with power and how they harness grassroots structures of resilience and resistance to it - such as informality and social solidarity. In order to make sense of the present crisis, people revisited history, citing evidence that located crisis within a historical continuum of the Greek nation. History is a good entry point (Knight, 2015) for assessing how crisis is experienced, and how collective memories inform crisis' structures of feeling. However, it is not only the memories of the great famine or WWII, as Knight suggests, that shape the way people understand the resource scarcity that austerity has imposed. My ethnographic data shows that people perceive a broader history of hegemonic domination and foreign intervention in Greece's domestic political and economic affairs. My informants called up a range of recent historical processes and events in order to interpret the current economic crisis. As I showed in Chapter 2, the German occupation of the country was a node that produced meaning and critique, hence, following Koselleck's (1988) understanding of crisis. Several critical junctures in modern Greek history have been inscribed within the national habitus and harnessed by nationalistic discourses. In popular history and in the history that children learn at school, the national characteristics of the country's historical crises are overstated. The recent iteration of crisis prompted people to revisit history and evaluate what had gone wrong. Once again, the country's social and economic project was re-centered and crisis and the collective suffering it caused were nationalized. For this reason, the history of the recent economic crisis will serve as a point of reference for future generations.

For instance, in separate interviews, Katerina (65) from Household 3 and Maria (49) from Household 6, referred to the hardships that past generations had endured and concluded that "we are going to make it too." "We" was used both to designate the personal household level and a struggling society in general. Maria said: "I was thinking about what my parents went through during their lifetimes. They fled their homes in Smyrna when they were kids, then WWII, and I thought – we have endured worse than this crisis." Among the older generation of pensioners, crisis and austerity had brought back the ghosts of the past, of austerity and suffering. During their lives, they had struggled to overcome material constraints and improve both their own and society's standard of living. Austerity resembled the old days of poverty which they had worked hard to put behind them. Their efforts to support a national development project and its promised improvements in livelihoods had been defeated with the imposition of austerity and foreign

supervision which signaled a loss of sovereignty. They felt that their struggles had been in vain given that the country was falling apart and the crisis had spread throughout the social and economic spheres of life. They said that the crisis had rendered useless the efforts and sacrifices they had made in order to secure the social reproduction of future generations. Their sacrifices *"epesan sto keno"* (fell into the vacuum/gap) that the crisis had created in terms of socio-economic organization, and once again, young people were being forced to leave the country.

Vasilis (70) from Household 3 pointed to the increasing number of people who congregated outside soup kitchens, and to the growing poverty and threat of hunger that people faced in Athens where people scavenged through the garbage. As Knight (2015) notes, the Athens experience of crisis has become the national experience even in places that were not overwhelmingly affected. To a great extent, people realized that there was a crisis and understood it as a social, collective suffering. Through it, national solidarities emerged that recreated the idea of Greeks as belonging to a homogenous social body with national characteristics, whose suffering was due to foreign intervention (Hertzfeld, 2011). For older generations, austerity was a cultural category which had shaped their lives and they identified it through the resource scarcity and the culture of austerity and poverty that many had experienced in their childhoods (see Chapter 4, Households 1, 2, 3).

People who already had had a personal experience of crisis used it as a point of comparison. Many recalled their past experiences of poverty. "I have been through many hardships in my life, and I have not told my children about them," said Theofilos, who had migrated to Chalkida with his underage cousin to work and study (see Chapter 4, Household 2). The generation that was born before 1970 had embodied memories and experiences of austerity. Austerity was part of the cultural practices of the past, when resources had been scarce and people had led much simpler lives than today. Despite material poverty, many said that there had still been hope: "I had very little when I was a kid, you probably can't picture what I'm saying, for instance, we had no shoes to wear and very little food to eat," said Panayiotis (82) from Household 1. Theofilos, who had also grown up in poverty explained that the difference between the present austerity crisis and past experiences of austerity was hope. "In the past you knew that if you were willing to work hard you would find something to do and you'd manage to achieve something." This last aspect of the current economic crisis generated existential angst for the older generation which found it hard to believe that such a thing had happened to the country. Earlier generations' cultural values and models, such as the idea of the male bread winner or of a strong work ethic, were being reconfigured by austerity. According to my older interlocutors (above 60), it was the strong work ethic and the life of thrift and caution that had allowed households of the older generation to pursue their social and economic goals of material stability and an intergenerational project of social mobility through their children's

education. It is worth highlighting here that there is a difference between household projects that based their future wellbeing on austere lifestyles and the impact, at the household level, of externally enforced austerity policies, dictated by faceless institutions and invisible global economic forces.

Many of my informants traced the roots of the current crisis back to the 1980s when Greece became a full member of the EEC, and to the 2000s, when it joined the eurozone. The country's accession to the EEC was the first instance in which it officially handed part of its sovereign power to supranational institutions. Thereafter, Greece's cryptocolonial relationships with hegemonic powers were revealed to the public. Because of this, I do not totally agree with Hertzfeld's (2002) analysis of cryptocolonialism, especially after Greece's accession to the EEC,[111] when grassroots discourses about neo-colonialism and counter hegemonic narratives became popular. The Greek debt crisis and the way it was handled, revealed that the country's "national sovereignty" was a mirage, both in terms of its international relationships and in relation to domestic fiscal policies. Chalkidans experienced the rescaling of industrial and agricultural production to meet with the Common Market standards first hand. For that reason, local analyses of the recent crisis framed politicians and authoritative institutions as having caused the economic crisis, while they traced responsibility on the lower scale of analysis, to individualism and the illusions of capitalist growth as well as socio-cultural practices and grassroots aspirations that legitimized corruption. After the restructuring of the Greek industrial sector in the 1980s, the national economy became dependent on imports, and economic growth was driven by consumption rather than production. In the 2000s, as Greece entered the eurozone, the influx of credit resulted in many households becoming indebted as people in their 20s, 30s and 40s got access to credit cards[112] and indulged in conspicuous consumption. In my discussion, I highlight intergenerational differences in explanations of what caused the economic crisis in the first place. Young people condemned the lifestyle and political choices of the baby boomer generation: it was middle-aged people who bore responsibility for having indebted the next generation, thereby destroying the future and the older generations' sacrifices.

The relationship of Greece and the EU was at the center of the grassroots critique. Katerina (Household 3) referred to the agricultural restructurings that the Europeans had demanded and the fact that they gave funding to farmers to uproot olive groves and vineyards. "Many farmers were

[111] I have to remind the reader here that Pasok and Andreas Papandreou won the elections in 1981 with the slogan "*EOK kai NATO to idio syndikato"* (EEC and NATO the same syndicate) (see Chapter 2).

[112] I remember in 2006, when I was 19 years old, studying sociology at the university of Crete, a bank representative called me to suggest I should apply for a credit card, even after I explained that I was a student and had no income.

tricked here in Evia, you see they wanted the easy money. You earned more money through *epidotiseis* (funds) than from agriculture". Dina's understanding of EU funds goes against the discourses of the pro-austerity Greek technocrats that Gkintidis (2018) examines. As Gkintidis elaborates, they supported a view that Greece had benefited from European funds and developed public infrastructure and social welfare structures thanks to the money that the EEC (and later the EU) gave it (as well as other countries) to catch up with Europe's core countries. They represented Greece as an undeveloped country and attributed Greece's failure to benefit from these funds to "the inherently problematic nature of Greek society … failed implementation of European cohesion policies … was attributed to endemic or acquired 'laziness', 'short-sightedness', 'egoism', and 'greediness' or, in more subtle terms, incompetence and corruption" (Ibid: 39-40). When I interviewed Dina, a days before the Greek referendum of July 2015, we argued about the EU's role and whether Greeks benefited from the EU or not. She challenged the popular pro-European discourses that posited the impossibility of Greece having a future outside of the European project by asking me: "You tell me how *o aplos kosmos* (ordinary people) has benefited from the euro and the EU in general?" I replied by mentioning the funds that had been used, for example, for developing public infrastructure, and also referred to the freedom of movement with the EU. In this way, I managed to elicit her views on these two most prominent arguments in pro-European discourse. She then explained that "European funds for agricultural restructuring made Greeks unproductive, and that because of the euro, the factory owners moved their production to Bulgaria" and later concluded, "...and who got all the European money for public infrastructure? Greek politicians, banks and business elites, certainly not ordinary people."

"The euro has destroyed the Greeks," said Aristidis (42) who operates a stall at Chalkida's open air market. "Greeks [still] do not know how to value the euro … For me, 50 cent, 1 and 2 euro coins, should have been banknotes for Greeks," he said as he placed a coin of each on his stall. "When we entered the euro [he means the eurozone], all the prices went up. I remember oil prices in 2001 were around 50 to 60 drachmas. Do you know, my friend, how much 60 drachmas is in euros? Less than this," he said, showing me a 20-cent coin. "Products that used to cost 1000 drachmas… when the euro arrived, they automatically started costing 5 euros ..." He took out a calculator and made the calculation: "You see, 5 euros! That's around 1700 drachmas! Water at kiosks, it was priced at 50 drachmas, now it costs 50 cents! That, my friend, is the euro bubble. The *hiliariko* [1000 drachma banknote] became, in one year, 5 euros!" Aristidis' understanding of the crisis permits a broader perspective on the economic models that have dominated in Greece and explains the Greek bubble and how the economy got inflated by the euro in layman's terms. He argued that because of the euro, goods and services became overpriced and, following his line of thought, that

is what caused the current crisis. Not only did prices go up, he stated, Greeks also lost track of their micro-economies and the way in which people valued money changed. His argument was that the replacement of drachmas by euros had created a subterranean crisis in people's financial judgment, in the way they calculated, related with and bonded through money.

Echoing Aristidis' view, Theofilos said that the crisis had started when the IMF and the ECB had come to save Greece. "People were having a good time and did not care. We had our eyes closed and then this had happened… In my view, this was where things were headed when we entered the eurozone." Theofilos identified the course that things were taking as inevitable and stressed the widespread ignorance that had made it possible for the country to "be ruled by thieves and criminals." In the same vein, Sofia (59), a head teacher in one of Chalkida's high schools, traced responsibility for the crisis back to people who were comfortable (*volemenoi*) in their own lives and ignorant of their rights. Because of the individualistic interests and aspirations of the working middle classes, the public interest and class-based collective claims had been undermined and left undefended. Ignorance, blind faith and the individualist pursuit of well-being and upwards mobility had fueled the corrupt regime of public administration and redistribution.

The economic crisis in Greece fueled a critique of modernity and the socio-economic organization and model of development that Greece had been pursuing. People judged and reflected upon the failures not only of the Greek but also the European projects. Such discourses implied that corruption in Greece had been mediated through the administration of these funds. In this way, both European officials, investment funds and corrupt Greek politicians were held equally responsible for having fostered corruption in Greece. It was indeed the case that with the Troika and EU dictated austerity, those EU funds were certainly not being distributed for free (Gkintidis 2018). The acceptance of European money entailed certain obligations for the country which had to rescale its economy to meet common market standards, that is; to restructure its industrial and agricultural production, modernize and rationalize the public sector, regulate inflation, develop a modern infrastructure to enable the intensification of capital accumulation processes in order to align with the financialized principles of neoliberal economy . Thus economic development in Greece was bound to observe certain directives, while a few privileged elites, both within and outside of the country, benefited greatly.

Several interlocutors blamed the policies of Andreas Papandreou and the socialist turn in the 1980s for having ruined the country by overstaffing the public sector and inflating the Greek bubble making Greeks believe in prosperity with money that was not their own. The trade unions were also deemed responsible both by left and right-wing people. Leftists accused trade unions of not

defending labor rights and serving the clientilistic state, while right wing people saw unionism as the main cause of deindustrialization, which had coincided with Greece's accession to the EEC and the socialist labor policies of Pasok that enhanced the negotiating power of trade unions. Both left and right-wing people agreed that unions had been integrated into the clientelist system and that they were corrupt. Papandreou was also accused of populism that cultivated unrealistic dreams and expectations for the Greek working classes.

I met small shop owners who criticized the recent European Union's funds for boosting entrepreneurship, arguing that they were not a solution to the crisis. They said that the problem for small entrepreneurs was not their competitiveness but the declining purchasing power that the austerity regime had produced: "If people have no money to buy anything with, what difference does it make if I renovate my shop and upgrade my equipment?" a 49 year old general store owner wondered. A highly skilled 36 year old, pointing out that the initiatives funded by the state and the EU in the area around Chalkida consisted of traditional shops and taverns, asked rhetorically: "How are you boosting the national economy's productivity by funding someone to open a traditional tavern?" Mainstream solutions to the persisting crisis were not only criticized as unjust and inhumane but as irrational and sometimes naive or foolish. "Don't they [the EU, Greek government] see that austerity is not a solution, if people have no money, how are we supposed to overcome the crisis?" asked Stavros, 55. In this sense austerity has had the adverse effect. Stavros explained in layman's terms the paradox of thrift and the widespread critique to austerity. As Harvey (1990) shows, neoliberal solutions to crisis induce more crises during their implementation, instead of solving the problem that they were designed for.

Many informants pointed to the fact that the "crisis has been caused by the banks," and that ordinary people had been asked to pay the cost of saving them. Austerity measures were designed to secure the banking system at the expense of the wider social good, and even the IMF admitted that it had made mistakes in the way it handled the Greek crisis and dictated austerity policies.[113] Thus Paolo Batista, one of the Executive Directors of the IMF admitted on Greek television that "They gave money to save German and French banks, not Greece."[114] The banks, who were recapitalized by the Greek state, never had to face the consequences of their deviant practices and mistakes which, according to many of my informants "were the primary cause of crisis."

[113] https://www.wsj.com/articles/SB10001424127887324299104578527202781667088 (Last accessed 12/01/2020)

[114] https://www.globalresearch.ca/imf-director-admits-the-greek-bailout-was-to-save-german-and-french-banks/5434989 (Last accessed 12/01/2020)

Further, given the fact that it was the banks that had caused the global financial meltdown in 2007, conspiracy theories abounded. There were many amongst my interlocutors who believed that the crisis was nothing but a failure of the banking sector, for which ordinary people had been called to pay the bill. Echoing Batista's claim, Dina elaborated on the structural crisis of the economic system by saying:

> You see there is a pyramid. Capital is on top, there are the owners of the factories that used to operate here in Chalkida. Because of the factories, Chalkida used to be a very rich city and everyone wanted access to the local markets [referring to her suppliers]. That was because money circulated from the top to the bottom, to the workers who would spend it at the local shops. Now, capital is accumulated at the top, and stays there. That's why we have a crisis, and that is why all the small shop owners are suffering. It makes me furious when I hear that Greeks got loans, wasted their money or lived above their means. So what? It's their money and they can do whatever they want with it. All those indebted people have lost their assets, their houses which the banks demanded as a mortgage and then foreclosed. What about the banks? Banks also went bankrupt, but they never paid anything, they never lost anything, instead we paid for them. The state borrowed billions to save the banks, money that we are going to pay back.

Bankers were not only accused of having caused the crisis in the first place but also of having benefited from it as they indulged in speculative games over the national debt. Thus human needs and social wellbeing had been undermined to secure financial profits for capital investment funds. Livelihoods had been ruined and national and international elites benefited from the crisis while ordinary people struggled to make a living. The economic crisis deepened injustice and established the hegemony of the neoliberal economic model over society. Moreover, during the crisis, the banks gradually acquired a more central role in the organization of everyday life, especially after the events of the Greek referendum in July 2015.

6.3 The Events Before and After the Greek Referendum

As soon as the Greek referendum was announced on June 28th, 2015, Greeks foresaw the possibility of Greece abandoning the eurozone and of its impact in the banking sector. Instantly, they rushed to withdraw as much money as they could from the banks and by the next morning, the ATMs had run out of cash. The next day, on June 29th, 2015, banks had closed and capital controls were imposed, limiting the amount of money that people could withdraw from their bank accounts to 60 euros per day from each of their accounts. People lined up every day to withdraw their money from the banks. Queues in front of the ATMs were transformed into a social space where people debated political ideas around the imminent referendum. Several arguments for and against the referendum were widespread among people, and it was clear that Greeks after five years of harsh austerity, were, in their majority, against its continuation. The question, however, that they were asked to respond was rather vague[115], and it did not entail an alternative course of action. The question of the Greek referendum asked if people agreed with the terms that the Troika proposed to the newly elected Greek government. First of all, Greek people were unaware of details that the creditors' proposal entailed. Secondly, and most importantly, had the Greeks decided to reject the bailout agreement, the No vote could not be clearly interpreted as providing legitimacy to the Greek government to leave the eurozone, declare a default and return to its national currency. The question about the leaving the eurozone or not could not be assessed by the result of such a referendum. Among the No supporters, there were many who believed that Greece should abandon the eurozone, while others were reluctant about such a development and opted for a change at the European level.

The Greek society were once again in its history divided, and people have drawn several historical resemblances. For the "No" (*Oxi*) supporters, the Greek referendum has been an opportunity to put an end to austerity and resist the authoritative, at times totalitarian regime of austerity that was understood as a new Junta of Troika. However, it was not only the leftists that supported the No campaign. Eurosceptics both from the left and the right lined up for the No campaign. In general terms the parties of Syriza, Anel and Golden Dawn officially supported the "no" vote. On the antipode, the pro-austerity parties of ND, Potami and Pasok directed the "yes" campaign, while KKE chose to abstain from the process and called its voters to boycott the referendum. For the "Yes" (*Nai*) supporters, the referendum has been an opportunity to put an end to the leftist rise to power. Interestingly both sides had tried to develop nationalistic discourses. *Oxi* supporters were the ones that proposed a historical duty that this generation of Greeks had both for

[115] Se e: https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-33311422 (Last accessed 20/02/2020).

their ancestors who fought against the Axis powers and resisted the Nazi occupation of Greece, and for that reason they had to say "no" to the Germans, to the architects of the EU austerity. On the other side, *Nai* supporters put forth the argument of the civil war, and the dominant discourse against the left that has historically undermined the national project of Greece. In their discourse, the Greek left threatened once again the foundation of the Greek nation and its European future, as it did in the civil war that supported the USSR and the communist project instead of the liberal West. "Greece belongs to Europe" they said and demonstrated with the slogan of "Menoume Europi" (we remain/stay in Europe), stressing the historical relationships and the national project of Greece with the western culture. Their main arguments were that a possible win of *Oxi* would automatically mean a Grexit. Greeks would lose a great deal of their savings, chaos will prevail, and shortages in basic goods such as in medicines and fuel would occur. Moreover, the national territories would be in danger from a possible Turkish invasion. On the other side, the *Oxi* supporters put forth a nationalist discourse against the hegemonic role of the EU, and the outright subordination of Greece to its creditors. As an informant of mine elaborated "When you are wet, you are not afraid of the rain", meaning that Greek people could only gain in the long run if they left the eurozone and thus be able to design their own financial policies. Crisis has not only produced ruptures in people's income and social reproduction, it has deeply wounded the national pride that has been systemically cultivated by popular discourses in Greece. Apart from the glorious past of ancient Greece, Greeks took pride for the resistance to the Germans during WWII. The Greek referendum provided an historical opportunity for Greeks to regain their national pride and resist once again to the German austerity. Resisting to German directives of austerity was understood as a patriotic/nationalist duty.

Interestingly, back in 1944, Theotokas (2005), a Greek novelist and a lawyer who openly supported the Greek liberal party, wrote about two big demonstrations taking place in Athens in October 1944, a few months before the outbreak of the Greek civil war. On the one hand, a big demonstration that occurred on the 13th and 14th of October organized by EAM and the Greek communist party. According to Theotokas, the crowds that flooded the main squares of Athens were heterogeneous with men, women, children and even priests taking part. The crowd was waving red flags, mixed with Greek and other flags of the Allies. It was the biggest demonstration that Greece had known until then, that showed the power of communism in Athens. In response, a counter demonstration was organized by nationalist organizations and addressed to the right-wing Greek bourgeoisie. Given the fact that only the citizens of the bourgeois neighborhoods of Athens took part, the demonstration was smaller, yet it was equally imposing as the crowd was elegantly dressed

and many women had taken part in the counter demonstration against communism. Those two demonstrations bear a striking similarity between the anti-austerity *Oxi* and the pro-austerity "Menoume Europi" demonstrations that were organized in Greece a few days before the Greek referendum.

After the vote, and a big win of *Oxi*, that reached 63%, the pressure was put on the anti-austerity government of Greece. Instead of following the public's decision, the Syriza government finally signed a new MoU in August 2015 and declared national elections. Greek people who have voted for *Oxi* were disappointed by the government's stance, and the inconsistency of its actions. People felt detachment and hopelessness and started to accept that Greece was bound to follow the EU directives. It furthermore revealed the subordinate position of Greece that had no other viable option but to continue austerity as dictated, and *Oxi* supporters justified the austerity regime as a coup that undermined the democratic will of Greeks. The September's elections recorded the highest abstention rate ever (more than 42 percent), however, Syriza won again and formed a coalition government with the anti-austerity right wing party of Anel and continued applying austerity and neoliberal restructurings.

The leftist coalition party of Syriza was totally reformed after the referendum, and many have abandoned the party declaring that they were cheated. Syriza has taken advantage of the collapse of Pasok and transformed from a vernacular party of the left, to a mainstream social-democrat party after the disappearance of Pasok. There were many who had discerned the striking similarities of Syriza with Pasok, as well as of its leader, Alexis Tsipras with Andreas Papandreou. Syriza had had a strong, anti-austerity and anti-imperialist discourse against NATO and the neoliberal EU, however, when it rose to power, the party had to face the pragmatics of international politics, and had to reconsider its stance by the challenges of being in power instead of the opposition. Furthermore, many former members of Pasok had found a place in the post-referendum Syriza party and occupied high positions in the Greek government.

During the crisis, and especially after the declaration of the Greek referendum, the banks acquired a more central role in the organization of everyday life. The Greek economy had a low level of neoliberal bankarization compared to other countries in the EU and everyday economic activities were mediated almost exclusively through cash. The crisis that capital controls created in the way people accessed their money posed a great opportunity for the banks to promote e-banking and the use of debit cards instead of cash, even for petty everyday transactions. As a result, bankarization levels increased and banks took on the role of policing and surveilling capital movements in order to combat tax evasion. At the same time, the state handed constitutional

privileges and power over to the bankers. Increasing numbers of economic transactions were mediated by the banks which created a new field of economic interaction as socio-economic relationships between persons became relationships between bank accounts. Instead of being punished, in the new crisis articulation of neoliberal power, the banks, which were popularly identified as *kleftes* (robbers), acquired structural power over people. This development made people suspicious about the banks' upgraded role in the neoliberal system. The imposition of EU-directed policies was not only a matter of finance but also acquired cultural characteristics. Greeks felt obliged to resist the loss of national sovereign power and, as I showed in Chapter 5, in this process informality and grassroots economic solidarity were endowed with notions of resistance since they provided the means for non-compliance.

6.4 Crisis, Austerity and Neocolonialism

As new forms of economic organization were implanted in Greece (labor, production, provisioning), the majority of my interlocutors, who were from diverse socio-economic backgrounds and statuses, saw the austerity crisis as a form of a neocolonial war, through which hegemonic powers used debt to promote their own geopolitical and economic interests in the Eastern Mediterranean. Neocolonialism includes not only powerful states, but also multinational firms. The closure of Chalkida's cement factory (see Chapter 1) provides an outstanding example of these types of neocolonial domination practices. From 2007, Lafarge had been trying to limit the factory union's negotiating power and to cut wages, claiming that the Greek labor market should align with global free-market standards. At the time, when Lafarge's management threatened to close the factory — a move characterized by the workers as "neocolonial"- the workers and the union had declared a strike. But high national demand for cement at the time - driven by the housing bubble led to a compromise between the union and management. By 2013, however, national demand for cement had reached a historic low. On March 26th, 2013, management seized the opportunity to close the factory and fire the "troublesome Gauls."[116] They did so by making use of the second memorandum's legislation that allowed mass layoffs (Dedoussopoulos et al., 2013). Ever since that date, the trade union had been struggling to reverse the lay-offs and reopen the factory, and the struggle continued through the time of my fieldwork and continues to this day. On several occasions (through personal and group interviews, press conferences, demonstrations), the workers claimed that Lafarge had imposed its terms on the former prime minister, Antonis Samaras, when in 2012 he had met with the heads of 13 multinational companies to discuss how to enhance the country's competitiveness.[117] In a group interview at the occupied cement factory, a worker took the initiative to speak:

> We [the Greek nation] used to produce cars and electric appliances. Greece had a growing industrial sector which was dismantled to serve the demands of the Germans. They wanted to make us dependent on imports and credit, and that is how they achieved control over us. They gave us funds to dismantle both our industrial and agricultural production and made us dependent on them, and many Greeks believed this money was for free [see Gkintidis 2018]. Now with this crisis they are buying us cheap and making the workers easy prey for the multinationals.

[116] Factory workers often used this expression to describe themselves in order to identify with the popular resistance figures in Asterix.

[117] https://primeminister.gr/2012/12/17/9904> (Last accessed 12/01/2020).

These words obscured class differences and exalted Greek capitalism. As I showed in Chapter 2, such discourses resonated with the idea of the national project of development which was part of the mutual agreement between workers and capitalists. Moreover, the agricultural and industrial restructuring of the 1980s and 1990s that integration within the European project entailed (Narotzky, 2016) was the outcome of a social contract and the nation's sacrifice for the European project and the country's modernization. Subsequent reforms only accelerated the accumulation of capital by transnational firms which, in times of crisis, often acquire structural power, that is to say, the power to make structures act on their behalf (Wettstein, 2009; Bourdieu, 2005). Large firms exploited the national economic crisis to accelerate neoliberal restructuring and labor market deregulation, thereby undercutting the hard-won rights of Greek working people. Brandishing the dignity of Greek workers, the struggle was framed as one of national resistance to re-invasion by foreign capital. In an interview in a mainstream newspaper,[118] the CEO of Lafarge explained that the factory in Chalkida had been closed as part of broader plans to restructure cement production in Greece, a move that favored two of their other Greek factories. But the structural violence against the laid-off workers' livelihoods resonated nationally and fed into an image of Greek society under attack by neoliberal austerity. At the same time, laid-off workers blamed Greek governments for selling the nation to multinationals and for being unable to defend its citizens, who in the midst of deep economic crisis struggled to defend the national interests of labor and dignity.

Michael Hertzfeld (2002) defines modern Greece's relationship to the hegemonic cultural and economic models of the West as one of "crypto-colonialism." The outbreak of the crisis and the subordination of Greek governments to foreign control, led working people to realize that Greece, throughout its modern history, had not been an independent nation but a debt colony, a subordinate nation serving the demands of the world's superpowers. "Greece is a protectorate state of the Americans and the Europeans, and it has always been like that" said Agamemnonas (61) a recently retired cement factory worker who took an active role in the workers' struggle. Agamemnonas endorsed the views of the Greek Communist party along with nationalist and conservative ideology. The neoliberal way of dealing with the crisis threatened the national ideals which were embedded in the Greek political habitus. The condition of living under foreign supervision prompted people to argue that their country had lost its sovereignty, and that the state's structures, instead of serving social wellbeing, were serving alien interests. Thus the state became disembedded from the nation,

[118] http://www.kathimerini.gr/484488/article/oikonomia/epixeirhseis/giati-apofasisame-na-kleisoyme-to-ergostasio-ths-aget-xalkidas> (Last accessed 12/01/2020 2019) (cf. Mylonas 2014).

and in grassroots discourses about the crisis, people treated the "nation" and the "state" as different entities.

Dina believed that "we have a crisis because they say so, I don't know who 'they' are. They call them 'the markets.' I cannot understand how Greece, a small country, poses a threat to the world economy and (yet) they are doing this to us, this is a new type of war." In a similar vein, Katerina (65) from Household 3, a hard-working housewife, said that "what the Germans did not manage to get with weapons in World War II, they are getting it now with this crisis. Greece is the best piece of land in Europe, we have the sea and the sun" suggesting that "the northerners envy us." The harsh austerity measures, which the German government insisted on, were equivalent to the resource scarcity and the plunder of Greece's economic resources by the German occupation during WWII. Furthermore, austerity was understood as a cultural project of the North "where the weather is bad, and people do not enjoy life as people in the South do." Counter stereotypes were produced against the German people who appeared in grassroots discourses as another homogeneous nation. As Kalantzis (2012, 2015) has shown about Crete, another stronghold of the Greek resistance again the German occupation during WWII, the resistance the patriotic duty against the austerity regime was the natural thing one should do[119]. In a general sense, Greeks reproduced emic understandings of the nation. Many of my informants discerned punitive, even sadist, characteristics in austerity policies directed at Greeks and the southerners "who misbehaved" and "lived above their means" or "threaten global economic stability."[120] In 2012, anti-austerity leftists generated a grassroots counter narrative of "who owes whom" which grew in popularity and provided the basis for a language of contention to hegemonic discourses and stereotypes (Roseberry, 1994). In that discourse, Greek debt could be counterbalanced with the unpaid war reparations that were estimated to amount to 300 billion euros. In 2016, the Greek parliament formed a commission whose mandate was to officially demand unpaid war reparations. As the prime minister, Alexis Tsipras said about the initiative that was voted through with a wide parliamentary majority "the claim [of unpaid war reparations] is our historic and moral duty."[121]

Many of my informants believed that the crisis had been imposed on Greece in order to enforce neoliberal policies such as an extensive project of privatization. The crisis was a restructuring of power as the Greek nation-state outsourced its powers to foreign institutions and private firms. Greek crisis era governments were powerless in the face of hegemonic financial

[119] In Chania, Crete, my hometown, the *Oxi* gained nearly 72 percent of the vote in the Greek referendum.

[120] See: https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/jul/14/greek-bailout-angela-merkel-blackmail-athens-opposition (Last accessed 15/02/2020).

[121] https://www.reuters.com/article/us-greece-germany-reparations/greek-parliament-calls-on-germany-to-pay-ww2-reparations-idUSKCN1RT1PL (Last accessed 15/02/2020).

institutions and power structures such as the EU and the IMF many informants told me. Greek crisis era governments were obliged to follow an extensive project of privatization. Public companies, national ports and airports, energy, water, drilling and mining rights, numerous large state factories were all up for sale to foreign investors, who sought to buy them at the cheapest possible price. The crisis caused a surge in the economic depreciation of public assets. Major credit rating agencies degraded the Greek economy and Greek bonds, and public assets were classified as financial garbage. This further weakened Greek governments' negotiating power and they were forced to sell cheap. Privatization was the other pillar which mainstream economic models presented as the solution to Greece's public deficit, and each of the three MoU agreements included extensive privatization prerequisites. The progress of privatizations was overseen in detail by the Troika and a special fund to manage the assets that were to be privatized was formed in 2012. "We will have a crisis until they get what they want. Until we sell everything" said Evridiki (52), an administrative employee at the Greek taxation agency of Chalkida. The idea that the crisis was a neocolonial war was grounded in the fact that the country's mineral resources (Sutton, 2018) and the renewable energy resources of the sun (Knight, 2013) and wind were being targeted by British, American, French and German energy companies. One popular belief was that the "crisis" had been implanted in Greece because of the country's oil reserves in the Aegean, Ionian and Libyan seas. Thus the crisis has been fabricated, it was a "big lie" designed to force the country to sell off its natural resources at cut rate prices (see Engdahl, 2013; Sutton 2018). In Dina's view, the crisis had been fabricated to further dispossess Greece's working middle classes, with the increased unemployment created by austerity policies producing a docile labor force amenable to exploitation by large multinational firms. Dina discerned that multinational firms accumulated locally/nationally produced wealth abroad, further dispossessing local/national society. Katerina (Household 3) said that the EU "wants us to transform ourselves into a nation of underpaid waiters to serve tourists." Others correlated the refugee crisis with the ongoing global population rescaling. "They imposed this crisis on us, and now they're forcing us to keep all these migrants here" said Eftichis (46), implying that European agreements on migratory flows from the war-zones in the Middle East were related with Greece's economic crisis. Crisis and austerity were perceived as threatening national cohesion and xenophobic reactions to migrants were frequent.

Greeks' collective suffering as they witnessed their country fall into decay under harsh austerity triggered a sense of national solidarity, which often acquired exclusive characteristics. As with the Asia Minor catastrophe, during which displaced *mikrasiates* faced racism by indigenous Greeks (see Chapter 2) as the Greek nation-state confronted it first modern existential crisis, the recent crisis produced xenophobic reactions to the perceived, poor migrant populations. The

example of the Greek Asia Minor refugees was used by online media (and went viral in social media) in order to underscore the fact that Greeks had also been refugees in the past, hence they ought to treat the refugees who were stuck in Greece with compassion and understanding for what these people had gone through. "Yes, we have been severely affected by the crisis, but I cannot compare that with what all these people [the refugees] have undergone. We are in a much better position and we should maintain our *anthropia* (human qualities), that is the crisis' greatest challenge," said Georgia (59), from Household 5. Georgia was adamant though, that the refugee crisis was caused by hegemonic countries that wanted to promote their interests, namely to sell their weapons take advantage of the oil resources and benefit from the reparation projects in the Middle East.

Conclusion

In terms of its social symbolism, austerity acquired the cultural characteristics of a totalitarian regime that had invaded the country with the aim of acculturating the natives to the neoliberal world system. Austerity and crisis became public symbols which dominated people's public and private lives. This interpretative approach to crisis and its meaning aligns with symbolic anthropology's object of study. Symbolic anthropology (Geertz, 1972; Sahlins, 1974; Turner, 1988, 1967) has placed emphasis on the power which symbols concentrate. Cultural values and symbols were often present in people's analyses of crisis and counter-stereotypes were produced to respond to mainstream representations of Greeks as lazy and irrational in managing their economies. Turner (1967) shows how in certain circumstances, new forms, metaphors and paradigms are generated by people. Crisis is a symbolic category which is inevitably negotiated though the social sphere.

If we understand crisis as a metaphor, then people certainly incorporated hegemonic concepts within their understandings of it, reworking it and reforming "new" narratives around it. Crisis and austerity symbolized an earlier condition of resource scarcity during which Greeks had been subordinate to hegemonic powers, had very few job opportunities, were confronted with hunger and had been forced to migrate. The recent crisis and the austerity that followed encapsulated past crises experiences of hegemonic interventions of foreign countries in Greece's domestic affairs (see Chapter 2). The imposition of austerity and the neoliberal economic determinism that it entailed, quickly became identified as a form of occupation of the state by foreign powers and interests, which materialized in the Troika. The austerity policies that the Troika imposed as part of Greece's bailout did not have a merely financial character and were understood as instruments of neocolonial governance. In addition, crisis, as a metaphor, transfers meaning, reason and agency back and forth in time (Geertz, 1972). The perception of time unfolds in multiple scales and dimension. It occurs at the personal level (feeling like a child, depended), feeling like history repeats itself as a joke, feeling like the every new year that comes by is de-facto worse, all of those structures of feelings (Williams, 1977) are triggered by the economic downturn people have experienced due to the neoliberal crisis of capitalism that invades violently their lifeworlds and enforces a cultural change through their dispossession of people's means and the crisis of social reproduction.

In this chapter, I addressed multiple facets of crisis and austerity, and how these concepts are reworked and transformed at the grassroots level of social life. We need to be careful to discern the different and often contradictory meanings and definitions of crisis inherent in people's discourses and structures of feeling (Williams, 1977). Thus it can be understood both as a rupture, especially

when we consider social reproduction and established patterns of making a livelihood, but also as a historical continuity relating to modern Greek history. Grassroots analyses, realizations and understandings of crisis and the restructuring process are critical for understanding the multiple ways that economy is intertwined with society. Breaks in social reproduction practices create ruptures in social organization and oblige people to reformulate their social projects. In this sense, crisis acts as a detour which forces people to judge and evaluate their situations and to seek alternative paths through the creative process of getting by. Moreover, crisis can be understood as revelatory, a force that reveals the true nature of things and brings to the surface the concealed and hidden aspects of social organization, including its problematic foundations and its creative counter-balances Chapter 5). In the aftermath of crisis, people judge and reevaluate what is necessary, trace what went wrong, assign responsibilities and identify problematic structures and practices which before the crisis went unnoticed. Moreover, the crisis makes apparent Greece's subordinate relations with hegemonic powers, thus establishing a historical continuity in the country's status as indebted protectorate subject to neocolonial control (see Chapter 2).

Of particular interest is the fact that crisis experiences were once again nationalized, thereby obscuring class-based claims in my interlocutors' discourses. Greeks were homogenized and crisis experiences formed a national language of suffering and contention (Roseberry, 1994). Ordinary people have in different ways reproduced, resignified and contested hegemonic discourses, making sense, in their own words, of the decade's long crisis of livelihoods, hopes and expectations. Dispossessed people place the economic and social turmoil they experience on a continuum with other recent episodes of social upheaval. These include those of the 1980s and 1990s when, driven by the process of European convergence, industrial and agricultural restructuring led to a recentering of the national capitalist project of development Nevertheless, the extensiveness of the latest iteration of crisis — including its cuts to public spending, overtaxation and sovereign debt — topped memories of previous restructurings and reinforced doubts about whether the sacrifices made for accessing full membership of the EU had been worthwhile (Narotzky 2016). However, while at the time the sacrifices people had made in order to support the European project had enjoyed general social consent, the present restructurings had been unilaterally imposed on crisis afflicted countries of the European periphery. In Greece, the unilateral imposition of neoliberal dogmas that appeared as a remedy for the ailing Greek economy, and that were justified through a discourse of salvation, hold striking similarities with religion (Mirowski, 2013; Benjamin, 2002). One can thus view neoliberalism as a New Age economic religion that makes use of concepts such as "austerity" and "crisis", whose origins can be traced back primarily to Christianity and its ascetic ideals (Nietzsche, 1998).

Grassroots analyses of crisis and austerity enable us to assess the social impact of crisis and austerity in everyday life, and to grasp the ideological and practical shifts in people's reasoning, together with the ways in which they seek to adapt to and make sense of change. The reflexive experiences of "crisis" examined in this chapter also reworked specific histories and memories of contention.[122] Grassroots understandings of austerity as a neocolonial regime can be traced back to the formation of the modern Greek nation-state and through the numerous past crises that generations have endured, as I showed in Chapter 2. Nationalist discourses remerge in every critical moment as they have done in the recent iteration of crisis. The nation appears as a bed rock in Greek social conscience, a domain which unites the common interests of Greeks. In this way, class based claims are downplayed and crisis experiences and structures of feeling are once again nationalized.

During the crisis, nationalist discourses have been used by both left and right-wing populism in order to appeal to the struggling masses to describe the national interests which were threatened by neoliberal doctrine. After Syriza's election, leftists gained a chance to participate in nationalist rhetoric. Until then, they had been excluded from nationalism or seen as a threat to it and to Greece's Western orientation. Austerity's neoliberal attack strengthened solidarities based on collective symbols and identifications, and it was conceived of as a new method of economic war, waged through top-down policies. These further dispossessed people of the livelihood assets and achievements they had made, both at the individual and collective levels of the nation, and they were aimed at enslaving Greeks. Within grassroots perceptions of crisis, it was perceived to be a lie. People noted the fact that during the crisis, numerous large firms and institutions had engaged in and indeed enhanced their capital accumulation. There are therefore, as one can see, different scales and viewpoints which people endorsed in their analyses of crisis, which often revealed contradictory economic logics at multiple scales of analysis. Counter-narratives framed the crisis as a breakdown of expectations of inter-generational social and material improvement, foreclosing the future which could no longer be imagined - or was seen in the past - expressing a circular or reverse temporality, a non-modern temporality of "a crisis without a future." Although history, class and scale informed these counter-narratives of crisis, what was absent was a sense of the possibility of change towards a "better" future. With this view of their experiences, my interlocutors challenged modern understandings of history as unfolding in a steady, linear fashion (Koselleck, 2001; Bodei, 1997). For my informants in Chalkida, the primary issue of concern was "where has our future

[122] I use the term "memories of contention" to refer to historically embodied experiences of conflict and social struggle which, in particular periods in the past, functioned as languages of contention (Roseberry, 1994) and which, in fragmentary ways, are part of contemporary common sense.

gone?” And further, how, given this collapsed temporality, could they formulate and implement life projects?

Conclusion

In this thesis I focused on the everyday struggles and life experiences of crisis in Chalkida, Greece, a mid-sized city that has suffered greatly as a result of the recent Greek crisis. I did so by utilizing a bottom up approach to crisis and austerity in order to highlight the substantive differences between grassroots meanings and understandings versus mainstream explanations of the crisis and austerity. I investigated the impact crisis has had on income and resource allocation at the household level, the impact of crisis in construed labor identities and the experience of long term unemployment, the various temporalities that unfolded in the context of crisis and austerity and how people cope with the challenges in social reproduction. Despite its vulnerability to the global economic crises, the city of Chalkida managed to sustain its social cohesion. Thanks to the multi-employment model, homeownership, social and kinship networks of proximity and access to nature, Chalkidians coped with crisis in a much more effective way than people in Athens. Chalkidian's not only managed to "survive" but also to maintain a certain level of satisfaction from life and reinvented grassroots institutions of mutual aid. Small cities are resilient to the neoliberal acculturation as they preserve traditional values and maintain structures of resilience and produce spaces of resistance either in intentional way or not (Scott, 1990, 1985). Smaller cities are which were belatedly intergrated to the capitalist model of development are indeed capable of opposing to the dominant neoliberal ideology of the free-market since many economic relationships have been embedded and tightly knit into the social web of the city and thus, managed to keep society together. As a result, divisive tensions were dampened, and people managed to find ways to support each other, unemployed people could find an outlet to nature, not only to produce a money income, but to acquire satisfaction from life, to produce goods that would provide an occasion for people to organize food gatherings and feasts. In their understandings, being able to enjoy life despite the imposed austerity which not only aimed to dispossess them from their means to socially reproduce, it aimed to dispossess their hopes, dreams and the things that make live worth living.

Given the importance of modern Greek history, the first two chapters offer a compass and point of reference that provide the reader with the necessary historical background and evidence. In the Chapter 1, I formulated a bottom up historical account of Chalkida's political economy and of the numerous historical transformations that enabled specific livelihood projects and strategies to evolve, such as urbanization and modern capitalist development's industrialization. In my effort to

explain the relationships between global transformations and local agency, I examined the global history of cement production and its role in capitalist expansion in relation to the life history of Chalkida's cement factory, which was the symbol of its modern, industrial identity as a prosperous city. The factory's story itself narrates a history of both macro processes at the global scale and local processes and grassroots practices and reveals the logics of capital accumulation in its various phases of development, which take tangible form in the everyday realities of locals. Lastly, I examined the struggle of the laid off cement factory workers that since 2013 were struggling against Lafarge, current owner of the factory.

In Chapter 2, I examined Greece's social, political and economic history and its modern, capitalist development until May 2015 when my fieldwork begun. I did so by focusing on certain critical junctures that shaped the national project and produced the particular model of Greek capitalism in which the socio-economic and political habitus of Greek people was formed. I discussed numerous important historical events that had a decisive impact on the ways in which Greek people relate to popular interpretations of history, understand the country's current subordinate position in relation to international institutions, and produce emic understandings of the Greek nation and its international relationships. I highlight several continuities, such as indebtedness and hegemonic (neo)colonial interventions, that affected past crises of the nation-state. In this sense, Greece's current subordinate position is nothing more than a reproduction of its subordination to hegemonic powers.

In Chapter 3, I assessed the impact of authoritarian policies on everyday life in Chalkida. In my quest to unravel the inherent inequalities of capitalism and analyze the new labor regimes that emerged in the context of neoliberal austerity, I engaged in an ethnographic exploration of the effects of crisis on labor income and distinct labor sectors. I demonstrated that specific types of work manufacture identities based on gender, nationality and class (de Neve, 2001; Salzinger, 2003; Cross, 2012) which factors I enriched by also considering generation. I therefore proposed a cultural approach to the different labor sectors that I examined. I showed that industrial labor had shaped masculine identities in Chalkida as it used to absorb the male labor force. Further, it was through the prevalence of industrial labor that the male bread-winner model was structured and reproduced over time. Crisis has led many factories to close and thus there has been a reversal of the male bread-winner model. This has not necessarily meant a reconfiguration of the gendered division of labor, since the burden of crisis - both in terms of income and reproductive labor - was born by working class women, in a similar pattern that González de la Rocha (2001) unravels about the 1990s crisis in Mexico. My research on households demonstrated that other factors apart from income, notably

education and generational characteristics, are critical in the deconstruction of the male bread winner model. I examined the livelihood arrangements of industrial workers who, parallel to their industrial income, developed other income creating activities that were usually related with food production and entrepreneurship. Numerous laid-off cement factory workers had used their wages to fund their wives' and children's entrepreneurial activities and invested on assets such as private property (homes or agricultural land) and thus were managing to endure the economic crisis through their household's resources.

I examined the precarization of labor in the public and private sectors. Precarity was common among the younger generations who did not have stable employment and who, in order to get by, combined multiple sources of labor income such as seasonal employment, fixed term job contracts and workfare projects. "We have always been in crisis" was a generational viewpoint and understanding of crisis among the younger generations. For them, crisis had not produced new shocks in their livelihood arrangements but rather epitomized capitalism's generational inequalities and the impossibilities of making a living in a country which had driven many to migrate abroad. A new feature was that people over 50 were introduced to precariousness. Thus they either lost their jobs or feared losing them and therefore had to learn, as did their younger counterparts, to live with uncertainty. Becoming unemployed at that age, the only options open to them in terms of formal labor income were the various workfare programs that the municipalities offered in order to compensate for the understaffing of public services that restructuring had caused.

Civil servants are another cultural category that had enjoyed the stability and security afforded by their monthly salaries. People who had indefinite job contracts in the public sector saw their income fall dramatically. As a consequence, they experienced a major shock in the ways they had to manage their economics, and thus had to restructure their consumption practices and calculate their spending carefully. Moreover, as new austerity cuts and restructurings threatened their jobs, they started to fear being made redundant; at the same time they were burdened with additional tasks caused by austerity-induced understaffing. They were also stigmatized as being responsible for having contributed to the creation the public deficit, and were accused of being corrupt and incompetent.

Lastly, I examined the capital accumulation patterns of the self-employed who approached their economics very differently to waged employees. Furthermore, owners of small firms who, despite being employed, saw their annual budgets shrink, identified their condition as worse than being unemployed. This was because they barely managed to keep their ventures afloat, and they did so by becoming indebted to their social security funds. As many self-employed elaborated, the

vast decrease on people's disposable income, coupled with uncertainty and precariousness at all levels of social life prohibited social investment through consumption since people withheld their money and their savings in fear of escalation of the crisis and imposition of new austerity measures. Ruptures in the formal market, probed alterations in the ways' money circulates and maintains businesses, professions and households, and connects local people at the social structure of the market. Local shop-owners were against the planned Sunday opening of the markets and reasoned that this would be the tomb-stone of the small family enterprises in Greece that dominate the regional markets, while they accounted for the numerous austerity restructurings that favored large firms and led many to close their ventures which has been a symbolic socio-economic death.

Further, I chose to include an additional category, that of pensioners, since their income derived from established citizenship rights from their former jobs. Pensioners were in their majority male beneficiaries as most of the women who had started to access the job market did so in the 1980s, and had therefore not reached retirement age. Pension income was critical for the social reproduction of the younger unemployed masses. I suggested that pensioners were transformed into modern kinsmen who redistributed money to their children and grandchildren whose livelihoods were threatened by unemployment and wage cuts. In times of crisis, the pension income was transferred to the younger generations and thus, new intergenerational forms of economic interdependence emerged.

In Chapter 4, I focused on social reproduction patterns at the level of the household. I carefully selected nine (9) households and examined the life and work histories of their members vis-à-vis the ways people designed livelihood projects. I thoroughly investigated the ways people accessed and managed their resources at the household level, and looked at the grassroots systems of provisioning (Narotzky, 2005, 1997). I did so by focusing on gendered and generational aspects of household structures and functions and on the domestic networks of proximity. I assessed the historical reconfiguration of the extended family by focusing on Smith & Wallerstein's (1992) proposal that we theorize the household as a resource pooling unit. In the process, I critiqued mainstream statistical and positivist approaches which cannot account for the ethnographic realities I encountered (Narotzky, 2007). Allen, Barlow, Leal, Maloutas, & Padovani (2004) explain that in Southern Europe, underdeveloped social welfare structures were compensated for by homeownership. In the context of the Greek crisis, my ethnographic data demonstrate that home ownership can be conceptualized in Marxist terms as owning the means of (re)production. In times of crisis, private property was taxed horizontally without regard to income or other assets. Even so, I identified that through homeownership the effects of crisis were dampened, and at least

homelessness was not prevalent in Chalkida. In Greece, homeownership was the primary livelihood investment which opened up a web of possibilities both in the present and also for future generations. Furthermore, homeownership has strong generational repercussions since in the context of crisis, younger people are de facto unable to buy or build a house. This distinguishes them from older generations who were able to do so either through the credit that was widely available to the working middle classes from the 2000s to 2008, or through the *antiparochi* that was been prevalent from the 1950s to 2000s, when credit was not widely available. My data demonstrate that ruptures in organic solidarity were counterbalanced by a process which I called "mechanicalization" of solidarity and a reinvention of family and kin-based grassroots welfare system. This was confined to intimate relationships among kinship networks that orbited around the household and circulated and shared their resources, both in terms of reproductive labor and care, and in terms of income, assets or food resources which in times of crisis become increasingly important.

In Chapter 5, I combined Durkheim's sociological theory with the anthropological theory of the gift economy (Komter, 2005). I proposed to theoretically reframe the gift economy by reversing Mauss' (1990) argument that gifts can be treated as a special type of money (Godelier, 1996). Given the fact that crisis and austerity produced a lack of money, I theorized money as a special social asset that is at the center of complex social organizations. In the crisis context, where money resources were scarce, money took the form of a special gift, a social investment that sustained cultural and social reproduction. In the crisis context, notions of economic and social solidarity materialized through the circulation of money in both formal and informal economic practices. In addition, I analyzed informal economic practices and networks which in the context of the austerity crisis and the neoliberalization of the state apparatus aided social cohesion and sustained socio-economic relationships. I proposed a bottom up approach to understanding what informality is and what informality does. Doing so, one can unravel the multiple forms of embeddedness that were inherent in practices that bypassed the formal economic structures which were unable to provide enough in order to sustain social and cultural reproduction practices.

In Chapter 6, I focused on the multiple grassroots meanings, understandings and explanations of crisis and austerity, directly addressing the question of "what crisis is and what crisis does." I gave theoretical value to people's understandings of the concepts that were introduced to Greece and assessed how ongoing austerity restructuring and neoliberal policies were understood as a reversed temporality. A variety of contradictions were apparent in people's discourses and understandings of crisis; these were related with the theoretical viewpoints they

assumed. For instance, by incorporating dominant concepts into their analyses, people referred to the crisis as a structural shock. Yet the systemic failure of the banking system and the Greek sovereign debt crisis were severely critiqued. In my interlocutors' understandings, crisis was nothing but a new way of dispossessing people of their means and facilitating capital accumulation processes. The public debt crisis provided the perfect excuse for foreign institutions and hegemonic countries to promote their interests. Recurrent grassroots explanations of the systemic crisis were: "they [referring at times to the EU or more often to Germany] want buy us out," "they [referring to popular stereotypes that were reproduced by the media] want to make us feel unworthy and unproductive" or "to create a docile, underpaid labor force." Some even argued that the crisis had been fabricated because of the oil reserves that had been found in the country. Crisis was therefore understood as a new type of economic war waged by hegemonic countries that wanted to promote their geopolitical and economic interests in the condensed space of the Eastern Mediterranean. Thereby, counter narratives to crisis and the language of contention acquired cultural characteristics that were informed by national identities.

In such discourses, crisis appears as a fiction and austerity restructurings as having the aim of enforcing privatization and enhancing the financialization of everyday life. However, when I asked people to point to how crisis had unfolded in their social life, an interesting reversal appeared. The scalar shift that I proposed prompted them to elaborate on the crisis of social reproduction and the various impacts that austerity has had on the social body. Thus, crisis acquired a grassroots definition: the socio-economic crisis that people situated in diverse positions experienced was the outcome of austerity. Ordinary people had not experienced the 2008 large scale crisis before austerity measures were unilaterally implemented since 2010. Grassroots experiences of crisis and austerity provided a grassroots critique that deconstructed and challenged mainstream economic models in simple lay terms. In this sense, the crisis was not viewed as the sudden failure of a system that had until then been working, but rather, as a continuation of where things had been headed. In their analyses, people provided historical evidence and traced the root causes of the present crisis to the past and especially in the ascension of Greece into EEC which most people had experienced it (cf Knight, 2015), not simply shared a collective national memory, naming geometries of responsibility. There were two scalar viewpoints. One that scaled up and assigned responsibility to dominant global structures and institutions (EU, IMF, banks) on the one hand, and on the other, responsibilities scaled down to the self and the social body in relation to the generational factor. Different generations had different responsibilities, or no responsibility at all. Older generations (over 45) were mostly deemed responsible for a) allowing corrupt politicians to bring the country

on the brink of destruction, b) having harnessed individualistic aspirations that undermined the social good. Middle aged generations were responsible (40-60) for their over-consumption practices through credit. The youth as well as the future generations yet unborn whose future has been foreclosed by the MoUs bore no responsibility at all. The grassroots definition of the crisis therefore took the form of a moral judgment.

The ethnographic data I systematically collected and analyzed in the thesis, reveal complex structures of feeling of collective suffering produced by crisis and common struggles to make a living which are correlated with the Greek social struggles of the past which especially before 1974 which were nationalized. It can therefore be inferred that the recent economic crisis has, like previous ones, been nationalized, and that the nation serves as a rhetorical mask that obscures and undermines class-based inequalities and claims within Greek society. A homogeneous narrative was established by forceful references to the nationalist struggle in which Greeks were depicted as a national body under attack that had to overcome inherent inter and intra-class differences. Interestingly, nationalistic understanding of crisis tended to reproduce traditional forms of liberal capitalism that ran counter to neoliberal methods of exploitation. People therefore were not advocating for a radical change, but rather expressing a desire to return to pre-crisis standards or, as many said, to get their jobs and lives back. Thus nostalgic structures of feeling (Williams, 1977) towards life during the pre-crisis era were created. As Weber has shown (2003), it was not communism that was capitalism's greatest enemy, but traditionalism. In the recent crisis context, during which people experienced the structural violence of financialized capitalism and accumulation by dispossession in the flesh, liberal capitalism was romanticized and was thus reinvented and embedded within tradition. Although it may sound odd, one can say that neoliberalism's biggest enemy can be understood as its younger self.

My ethnographic research in Chalkida demonstrates how local people are interconnected with each other, either through local relations of production and market structures, or through kinship and social networks - or both. Therefore, multiple forms of embeddedness emerge through my ethnographic description, and these expose the various social and political projects that lie behind these articulations of social and economic proximity. In the city, social cohesion was maintained through informal social and kinship networks that circulated resources which could be attained outside the formal economic system which was in crisis. My research demonstrated that economic practices that are embedded in social relationships tend to be able to resist the financialization of everyday life and calculative reasoning, and therefore cope with crisis in a much more effective way than is possible in large urban centers. Economic relationships were re-

evaluated on the basis of maintaining social cohesion and mutual support, and of reestablishing organic solidarity through economic behavior. In numerous instances, this took the form of political consumerism (Lekakis, 2015) which reworked notions of national organic solidarity that came to be expressed through economic practices that demonstrated both formal and informal characteristics. At the same time, I found that many people in Chalkida accessed the market through their social and kinship networks. Economic practices were in this way regulated by intimate social relationships. Thus many economic practices maintained their embedded nature and were not eroded by the financialized principles of the free-market economy. As a result, informal economic practices bypassed the formal structures that mediated economic relations such as the state and the banks, and formed their own regulatory framework based on reciprocity, trust and mutual support. In small cities, such as Chalkida, the social, political and economic life is governed by the 'unwritten laws' of reciprocity that opens the gate for social solidarity. Solidarity that is crystalized through grassroots political and economic attitudes, stances and beliefs.

In the context of the Greek crisis and the escalating processes of rolling back and rolling out the state (Peck & Tickell, 2002), grassroots informality aids social reproduction and sustains social cohesion. Furthermore, grassroots welfare systems of provisioning and the institutions of mutual aid that evade formal regulatory frameworks, enable us to theorize the concept of embeddedness as a reversal which emerges in the form of human economy (Hart, 2017). This human economy counters the alienating, disembedding tensions inherent in the market's financialized principles. It is nonetheless the case that under the pressure of resource scarcity, calculative reasoning prevailed as people sought to maximize the use value of their disposable income in order to achieve social reproduction. Further, economic relationships that did not have a solid social foundation were easily broken by the financialized principles that were imposed through austerity and which scaled down to affect everyday life. However, as I have shown in this thesis, people in Chalkida who accessed the market through their social and kinship networks offered spaces of resistance and resilience to the neoliberalization of the economy. Yet it is not clear how much longer these social networks will be maintained in the face of the relentless and ongoing financialization of everyday life and the re-establishment and stabilization of the neoliberalized structures and patterns of accessing resources in the post-crisis period. "Crisis is over", said prime minister Alexis Tsipras, who announced the end of foreign supervision in August 2018.[123] It remains, therefore, to be seen how the experiences of the recent economic crisis are going to inform the new post-crisis social contract and how the

[123] https://www.economist.com/the-economist-explains/2018/08/21/is-the-greek-financial-crisis-over-at-last (Last accessed 29/02/2020)

Greek society is going to find a new balance after the abrupt multi-scalar reforms of neoliberal austerity.

In this sense, this thesis opens up new research questions that demand further exploration in regards to the ways people reconstruct their social identities and reform their livelihood projects and aspirations after the storm has passed, and how the recent crisis experiences are going to guide their livelihood dreams, hopes and aspirations, especially those of the youth who experienced crisis in their adolescence and early adulthood.

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