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Crisis and Prosperity: Status, Accountability and Time in Central Greece

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Abstract

Crisis and Prosperity: Status, Accountability and Time in Central Greece

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This thesis is concerned with how people negotiate periods of socio-economic crisis and prosperity in the town of Trikala, Thessaly, central Greece. Localised understandings of the global economic crisis are analysed in relation to history, social status and concepts of time. The complex interaction between people within global and local economic networks is also emphasised.

It is argued that certain historical periods are crucial to Trikalini conceptualisations of the current economic crisis. Specific past events significantly inform understandings of the present crisis through what is termed 'cultural proximity'. This is the notion that previous times of social and economic turmoil, apparently distant points in time, are embodied within the context of the present. Some past epochs of prosperity and crisis have proved more significant than others in shaping contemporary crisis experience. As accounts of the Great Famine of 1941-1943 are brought to the fore by the current economic crisis, concepts of lineal time and the nationalisation of critical events must be interrogated.

How economic crisis affects perceptions of social status, mobility and political accountability in Trikala are also explored. Such perceptions are further informed by the consequences of past local and national level crises and the uneven incorporation of capitalist trends in central Greece.

Through the exploration of cultural economic patterns and the social significance of historical events, the impacts of economic crisis in Trikala are explored. By examining accounts of crisis in Trikala, the case is made for understanding crisis trends with global implications within the context of cultural repertoires and historical frameworks. Trikala thus becomes a microcosm through which to conceptualise the current economic crisis in Europe.

Crisis and Prosperity: Status, Accountability and Time in Central Greece

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A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Anthropology

Department of Anthropology

Durham University

Dr Stephen M. Lyon, Supervisor

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Statement of Copyright

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Dr Elisabeth Kirtsoglou first introduced me to the discipline of social anthropology after I originally went to University of Wales, Lampeter to study archaeology. Within six months I was 'converted' to anthropology in no small part due to the dedication of Dr Kirtsoglou. She has provided further support and encouragement in her role as supervisor at Durham. A special acknowledgment must also be given to Dr Àngels Trias i Valls who first introduced me to the wonderful world of economic anthropology whilst an undergraduate at University of Wales, Lampeter. Her enthusiasm for the subject was captivating and her guidance in all things economic has shaped my research ever since.

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Chapter One: Theoretical Overview

This thesis is concerned with how people understand and negotiate epochs of socio-economic crisis and prosperity in the town of Trikala, in Thessaly, central Greece. It is an account of how a period of economic change is shaping the experiences of people of a peripheral Greek town. At the time of this research social and economic change was "part of the lived experience" (Just 2000:7) of the Trikalinoi. To unlock these understandings and to do justice to their complex local, national and global qualities this thesis does not follow a specific trend or theoretical school as there is not one single passkey to open all the potential doors and windows (Serres 1995a:91-92). Instead, it will take as its starting point the local detail, expressed by the informants themselves, and henceforth attempt to analyse the concepts in a way that allows for their multifaceted appreciation.

In Trikala, aspects of culture such as social status and mobility have been affected by the interplay between localised cultural patterns and global socio-economic trends. It will be argued that such social phenomena should be historically contextualised since the negotiation of some periods of prosperity and crisis have proved more significant than others in shaping contemporary experience and particular value judgements. Cultural facets are not locally homogeneous but rather constantly changing and must be considered as simultaneously constructs of history and products of the contemporary. They are the result of the interaction between local cultural and economic patterns and wider global trends, past and present.

Local cultural patterns operate within wider sets of economic structures and trends. Social relations are thus facilitated through channels of nationalised and globalised discourse. Trikalinoi are consequentially implicated in national and global times of crisis as well as prosperity. The cultural patterns give a localised flavour to a multitude of national and global phenomena, contributing to the severity of times of economic crisis, both in formation and consequence.

Just summarises the main theoretical and methodological criticisms of Mediterranean ethnography since the 1970s, many of which are addressed in this thesis. These issues include:

> "a concentration on the marginal and 'exotic' at the expense of the mainstream and the representative … a failure to study the links between rural and urban populations and to situate studies of rural communities within their national (and international) contexts … a neglect of comparison and of history … and a failure to take up such wider issues as state formation, nationalism, urbanization, bureaucratization, class conflict and commercialization … while the related ambition (or pretence) of presenting holistic ethnographic accounts has led to the depiction of rural communities as bounded, self-contained and internally coherent isolates" (Just 2000:20-21).

The links between rural and urban settings, local, national and international contexts and the emphasis on historical contextualisation form much of the theoretical basis of this thesis. Further issues of social stratification, commercialisation, bureaucratisation and nationalism are recurring themes throughout. Far from being a 'check list' of essentials for incorporation, these concerns have been initially addressed through the ethnographic material as they were raised by the people themselves.

The empirical fieldwork on which this thesis is based straddled a period when almost two decades of socio-economic prosperity was drastically replaced by severe crisis and austerity. The crisis became entrenched through all sections of social life – social relations, national and local politics, employment, social memory, public rhetoric and, of course, economic activity. The local experiences of a crisis – or series of crises – played out on the national and global stage form the core of this thesis. History plays a key role in shaping localised understandings of crisis (and indeed, economy [Narotzky 2004]). Cultural proximity to past events – the notion that 'two distant points in time can suddenly become close, even superimposed' in social memory (Serres 1995a:57-59) – informs people's experiences of contemporary events.

Culturally proximate time is a key theoretical theme-come-thread that recurs throughout this thesis, as are concepts of social status and mobility, public representation and blame. The historical basis allows for social change to be tracked throughout the study. The weaving of these specific threads through

multiple layers of social discourse embedded in this thesis reflects how informants 'pick a thread here, drop a stitch there' in daily interactions (Das 1995:1). Hence the structure of this document will follow the metaphor of weaving. The concepts discussed under subheadings in this chapter will introduce key theories and ideas that will be expanded upon and analysed in relation to the relevant ethnography throughout the subsequent chapters. It is the first knot that holds together the multiple stands of yarn before they embark on their complex adventure, crossing each other in places whilst appearing to veer away in opposite directions elsewhere. Therefore a full unpacking of these theories is not intended in this chapter; it is quite simply an 'overview' for what is to come. The intricate pattern of the weave will be tied together at the other end by another knot – the conclusion – where the strands of theory will once again be pulled together, fastened. I hope that the complementary colours of the theory and the ethnography will combine, allowing for the overall pattern to materialise.

Economic Anthropology in Greece: why Trikala, why economics?

When plotting a map of anthropological research sites in Greece there is a severe lack of coverage in central mainland Greece, especially Thessaly. This is particularly the case in the Anglophone literature. Apart from Kirtsoglou and Theodossopoulos' paper on 'Christian' refugees from Anatolia, set in Volos (Kirtsoglou and Theodossopoulos 2001), and Danforth's account of death rituals in Potamia, northern Thessaly ([1982] incidentally and coincidently the first ethnography I ever read as an undergraduate student), the treatment of the region in comparison to others such as Greek Macedonia and the Peloponnese is limited. Trikala has been addressed within the wider context of western Thessaly by human geographer David Bennison (1977) who explores "the sectorial structure of the Greek economy with particular reference to retail trade" (1977:viii). His focus is on how the clustering of establishments within urban centres such as Trikala, Kalampaka and Karditsa, affects the movement of customers from the periphery to 'central places' (ibid.:7). Other publications in English include the work of Greek-university based scholars Marantzidis and Mavrommatis, who address issues of social exclusion among Gypsies in the

town of Sofades near Karditsa (1999). Additionally, Karakasidou refers to Trikala as the area from which Christian merchants relocated to Greek Macedonia after crossing Mount Olympus in the mid-nineteenth century, establishing an economic niche "by feeding and trading with the passing caravans" (1997:12, 41, 220). Bennison's study and Karakasidou's few passing historical allusions are the two significant references to socio-economic activity in Trikala, although the choice of Trikala as my field site was more than merely "filling in the ethnographic map" (Just 2000:1).

I originally went to Greece intending to study 'class' and 'economics', something that at the time I never thought would be approached through the lens of crisis. Although the ethnographic appreciations of Greece touch upon a variety of thematic areas within the discipline, it could be argued that – strictly speaking – the region as a whole has not produced considerable studies in economic anthropology. The reason for such a lack of interest in producing classic economic anthropology on the behalf of Greek ethnographers is perhaps to be found in the noted emphasis on kinship and gender that characterises Mediterranean ethnography as a whole (Goddard 1994). It has been argued that the anthropology of Greece and the Mediterranean was classically closely connected to the analysis of the values of honour and shame in works such as that of Campbell (1964) that attempted to explain Greek culture on the basis of institutionalised marriage and kinship (cf. Loizos and Papataxiarchis 1991, Goddard 1994). According to the code of honour and shame the position of a family and its individuals in the social world of the rural village – the *par excellence* site of anthropological research at the time – depended on its reputation, which in turn rested upon the chastity (shame) of its female members (Peristiany 1965, Cowan 1990:9, Dubisch 1995:196). The values of honour and shame placed the institution of kinship at the centre of anthropological enquiry (cf. Just 2000:5) due to a long established tradition of anthropological training in "African systems of lineage" (Goddard 1994:68). As a consequence, Greek culture(s) – and indeed the Mediterranean – was explained at first on the basis of kinship and gender relations (Goddard 1994).

Despite the aforementioned tendency in Greek ethnography, one can find cases where economic concepts were discussed by anthropologists of Greece. One such case is the concept of 'self-sufficiency' that describes the systematic exploitation of a household's resources and the clear preference of households to utilise such resources instead of buying readily available goods at the market (du Boulay 1974, Loizos 1975). The concept of self-sufficiency relates to the idea of 'self-interest' which however does not refer to single individuals but to whole households (Theodossopoulos 1997:264). Self-interest dictates the protection of a household's economic prosperity but also its prestige. In turn, the latter was described as depending on the accumulation of economic and social capital as well as on reputation that in most cases indeed obeyed the rules of honour and shame (du Boulay 1974, Theodossopoulos 1999). Also connected to self-sufficiency are discussions of reciprocity. In order to remain loyal to the ideal of self-sufficiency, rural households have been observed by ethnographers to foster relationships of generalised reciprocity (Theodossopoulos 1997, cf. Sahlins 1972). Generalised reciprocity in this case describes situations where households exchange labour in order to remain self-sufficient, or more frequently, members of the same household offer their labour without receiving an exact and timely reward for the sake of the household's prosperity (self-interest) (cf. Campbell 1964, du Boulay 1974, Hirschon 1989, Theodossopoulos 1999). The latter case of generalised reciprocity within households could easily be compared and contrasted to ethnographic data that led to major debates in anthropology, such as the one between Josephides (1985) and Strathern (1988) about the exploitation of women. Although in a much later discussion Theodossopoulos (1999) explains the investing of labour on behalf of women in their households in terms of investing in relationships (somewhat following Strathern's perspective) initially this debate never took off in Greek ethnography. The reason for this is to be found in the original emphasis on complementarity that the theorisation of the values of honour and shame entailed (cf. Cowan 1990). The emphasis on honour and shame created a division of the symbolic space of the Greek rural village into the public domain – where men acted to defend the household's honour – and the domestic domain – where women were confined in order to safeguard their chastity and by consequence the prestige of the household and the family's self-interest

(Peristiany 1965, du Boulay 1974, Dubisch 1986). The clear ethnographic division between public and domestic obscured questions of labour and/or exploitation, and even reciprocity patterns since women and men were seen as co-existing in a complementary fashion. Consumption, another major concept in economic anthropology, was discussed by Greek ethnographers mostly in relation to either commensality in the framework of friendship networks among men or women (Papataxiarchis 1991, Kirtsoglou 2004), or conspicuous consumption of aesthetically refined items for the acquisition of social capital (Faubion 1993).

The fact that a number of terms, concepts and practices have not been discussed by Greek ethnographers in the context of classic economic anthropology does not necessarily mean that many issues currently debated in Greek ethnography do not directly relate to economic anthropology. One such issue is Greece's ethnographic predicament of being at times classified as 'West' and at other times as 'Rest' –'East', 'South' or 'European periphery' (Herzfeld 1987:3). The ambiguous position of Greece in today's geopolitical and economic map, the long history of underdevelopment, frequently attributed to 'corruption' and the interference of personal relations in an otherwise expected free-market (Mouzelis 1978, 1980), and the importance of kinship are all issues that concern a study in economic anthropology in Greece.

Furthermore, seen from one perspective, Campbell's original study of patronage was never perhaps fully explored in terms of its consequences for our understanding of the relationship between economics, politics and social values. The criticism that classic Mediterranean studies received in the context of post structural-functionalist anthropology led to the theoretical marginalisation of some potentially useful concepts. If Narotzky is right to say that a "place has a local and a global dimension and is inscribed in history" (Narotzky 1997:223), then modern Greece is perhaps one of the most fertile research spaces to be approached through the lens of economic anthropology.

However, because economic life can never be separated from other dimensions of culture and society, my research efforts focus on "the ways in which the

economy is an integrated part of a social and cultural totality" (Eriksen 2001:176), including notions of historical crisis, prosperity and political rhetoric. This means re-examining notions of patronage, honour and shame and public representation in order to explore contemporary understandings of economic relationships and socio-cultural change.

A Note on Theoretical Direction

> "Theory guides the way which we separate interesting from trivial events experienced during fieldwork. It helps link the observations that interest us into a coherent ethnographic account and points towards particular interpretations or explanations of what we consider related events. Theories do not, however, blind us completely to the complexity of the field experience. Our findings may lead us to modify a useful theory or even reject a theoretical orientation altogether if it appears indifferent to what interested us in the field" (Layton 2000:101).

Despite ethnography-driven theory being central to this thesis, it would be wrong to ignore those scholarly figures and their associated frameworks which have inevitably influenced and inspired routes of analysis. It is inherent that any piece of anthropological scholarship will be either intentionally or unintentionally embedded with the ideas and concepts of those that have gone before, those beacons of light which guide us in the formation of our 'personal' academic identity. Throughout this piece of work it will at times become abruptly apparent as to which line of thought the analysis pays homage; in other places the influence is more subtle. For the most part the ethnography has guided the theoretical associations, yet this research has been influenced and inspired by many esteemed scholars of the Mediterranean region, the field of economic anthropology and the wider anthropological discipline. In addition, scholars from the fields of philosophy (such as Michel Serres), human geography (David Bennison), economics and sociology (Georg Simmel) have been appropriated where their contribution is considered valuable.

Scholars such as Edward Evan Evans-Pritchard and John Campbell were inspirational starting points in informing the approach to the field and the subsequent analysis of the material. Indeed the initial idea of this doctoral research was generated by a desire to reassess Campbell's 1964 masterpiece '*Honour, Family and Patronage: A Study of Institutions and Moral Values in a*

Greek Mountain Community', a research concept which has drastically changed since its inception. Other ethnographies of Greece which have inspired parts of this thesis include Jill Dubisch's 1995 work '*In a Different Place: Pilgrimage, Gender and Politics at a Greek Island Shrine*', especially in the reassessment of the public/private dichotomy which for her, as for me, posed a significant ethnographic and theoretical challenge. As will become apparent, numerous were the occasions when, often at inadvertent moments, David Sutton's work on social memory in Greece (1998, 2001) also became a source of intellectual stimulation, offering theoretical nuances to the significance of historical events in everyday life.

Relating to the field of economic anthropology, although not necessarily classified strictly within these highly ambiguous boundaries, the work of Marcel Mauss (exchange), Georg Simmel (money, value and commodities) Marcel Sahlins (irregular appropriation of capitalism), Arjun Appadurai (commodities), James Carrier (market economy) and Susana Narotzky (social capital) must be acknowledged as influencing the direction of ethnographic analysis. Furthermore, Bronislaw Malinowski's contributions to the study of exchange systems has been both practically and metaphorically implemented at stages throughout this thesis, such as in the discussion of the circulation of blame (chapter six) and 'tournaments of consumerism' (chapter eight).

Economically, although not always ideologically, the work of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels has been a constant source of inspiration. So often a taboo issue in the social sciences, and in contemporary anthropology in particular, as an inescapable category with manifold stereotyped associations – the box from which one, once assigned, is doomed never to escape – Marxist economic theory has its place in contemporary socio-economic studies. When employed in this thesis, the original texts of Marx have been the primary source from which analysis has been instigated. The Marxist renaissance in the guise of structural Marxism during the 1960s was often selective in the analysis of the original material. The reinvention of convenient concepts without fully contextualising the original Marxist thought led to stigmatised representations outside of historical context. These second or third-hand accounts constructed "in a

structuralist fashion" (Narotzky 1997:5) do not always do justice to the original work – taken within the socio-historic context – and seem to have created a new theoretical field in themselves. Thus structural Marxism and the associated texts now serve as the primary referential basis for 'Marxism' in anthropology. Although these works do have a great deal of ideological and theoretical value, one must concede that they have gone some way to packaging the original work of Marx in a specific manner. Once coupled with ethnography, which in some cases is situated in Greece, the material often seems to be analytically restricted through the implementation of strict Marxist terminology and ideology. The potential contribution of Marxism to ethnographic analysis is therefore overlooked and is at once tabooed, categorised and often dismissed outside of the passionate subgroup. Whilst terminology such as 'exploitation' and 'domination' are not appropriate to analyse the social phenomena at play in Trikala, key Marxist concepts concerning capitalism and economic crisis are referred to throughout as an explanatory notation of the observable social phenomena. This is to say that the ethnographic material strongly advises the theoretical direction.

There is also much 'topical theoretical influence' in this study. This is especially apparent in relation to the topic of social change and to theories of time. Studying the work of philosopher Michel Serres has become a fascinating and enthralling undertaking. The complex issue of the projection of historical events into simultaneous moments of contemporary reality has inspired the theorisation of cultural proximity. Here the literature has helped clarify a complicated and at times almost inexplicable cultural phenomenon which goes beyond 'Memories Cast in Stone' (Sutton 1998). But once again the emphasis is on ethnographically driven classification constructed in an explanatory fashion and Serres' often abstract concepts have not been taken uncritically.

On the topic of social change Robert Layton's work in France, '*Anthropology and History in Franche-Comté*' (2000) has been a frequent source of guidance and intellectual stimulation. Charting social change in numerous arenas over the course of thirty years in an Alpine village, his work has also been an excellent resource on the application of complementary theory to ethnographic material.

As he eloquently highlights, the anthropologist is the mediator in the dialogue between theory and ethnography and employs the former to assist the appreciation of 'the social processes that underlie observations' (2000:101). Layton's work is particularly relevant to this study due to the multiplicity of social change in one locale, pertinent here due to his appreciation of historical variables in the formation of socio-economic experience in contemporary everyday life.

Thus there are numerous influences and inspirations behind the analysis of the ethnographic data spanning a range of theoretical trends. From classic structural-functionalist ethnography to the philosophy of time, the contextual application of theory is desired to complement the rich ethnographic milieu of a community coming to terms with the reality of economic crisis.

The Current Greek Economic Crisis of 2008-present

The first rumblings of economic downturn surfaced in the public domain towards the end of 2008 when many principal national economies went into recession. This roused much speculation as to the stability of the Greek economy. By the end of 2009 the world came to learn of Greece's extensive financial problems. Strategies were implemented on the national and transnational level that would significantly affect the socio-economic prospects of most everyday Greeks. A vast range of austerity measures have since been introduced to cut the national deficit. A combined bailout plan worth £95 billion (110 billion euros, $146.2 billion) has been provided by the eurozone and International Monetary Fund (IMF). It remains to be seen whether this money is managed in such a way as to significantly change the critical situation[1] (cf. Horn 1998:135, MacGaffey 1998:38, Osirim 1998:281, Bowles 2002, Trostle 2005:108). Obviously this course of action should benefit the statistics of the 'Greek economy' on the macro level, but will inevitably leave many families without a livelihood as wages are cut and redundancies made (the effects of international competition in agricultural markets since the introduction of the

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[1] Recent predictions show that the Greek economy will shrink by approximately 4 per cent by the end of this financial year (2010-2011) (Hewitt 2010).

euro has been severely felt in central Greece and has led to fundamental changes in the structure and organisation of many small companies [cf. Boutsouki and Bennison 1999, Theodoridis and Bennison 2009]).

As of April 2010 the national debt lay at 115 per cent of the GDP (above 300 billion euros) and is expected to rise to 149 per cent by 2013 before falling. Inflation is at a thirteen-year high of 5.4 per cent (*The Economist, vol. 396, issue 8689, 3rd July 2010*). The budget deficit is at 13.6 per cent with the government aiming to cut this to less than 3 per cent by 2014. The deficit figures for the past ten years do not officially go beyond 8 per cent – it was officially 7.9 per cent in 2004. After being above 10 per cent of GDP in 1995, official figures for the deficit fell to 1.8 per cent in 1999, thus complying with the criteria for European single currency membership (Eurostat 2004:4, also National Statistical Service of Greece). In 2003 the Greek government reported a deficit of 1.7 per cent. Eurostat refused to verify this figure and refused to accept official government debt statistics, asking for revisions dating back to 1997[2]. The Greek government then revised the 2003 deficit to 4.6 per cent of GDP. Eurostat reported this revision as "exceptional", and once again they questioned the reliability of Greek deficit statistics over the period of 1995-2003 (2004:2). Recently (2006-2008) the official figures have been between 2.3 and 3.4 per cent and the projected figures for the following year have always signalled a decrease in the national deficit (Ministry of Economy and Finance 2008). Yet in 2009 the deficit was suddenly announced at 13.6 per cent after an original estimate of 1.8 per cent (ibid.)[3].

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[2] Eurostat is part of the European Commission located in Luxembourg. Its responsibilities are to provide the European Union with statistical information at European level and to promote the harmonisation of statistical methods across the Member States of the European Union and candidate countries.

[3] The liberal policy on trade deficit, we are informed, has accumulated over more than the last forty years in order to encourage foreign competition and modernise industry. Campbell and Sherrard have also linked this aspect of risk to the regional perception of social status. Foreign luxury consumer goods became status symbols for the elite during the 1960s. In "a socially competitive community" conspicuous consumption of cars, clothes and household appliances is converted into political prestige with resulting indignation by those who see but cannot possess (Campbell and Sherrard 1968:303, McNall 1976:29). Such commodities are once again things 'out of sight' for many people during the current crisis and impending austerity measures, much as they were at the time of Campbell and Sherrard's writing.

These macro-scale economic figures have been highly publicised on the global stage; the consequences are felt at the local level among people such as the Trikalinoi, the subjects of this study. As a prerequisite for the 110 billion euro bailout the Greek government had to implement numerous economic austerity measures. These included scrapping bonus payments for public sector workers, capping annual holiday bonuses, freezing public sector wages for three years, increasing VAT from 21 per cent to 23 per cent, raising the retirement age to 65 for men and women (it was formally 57 and 52 respectively [*The Economist, vol. 396, issue 8689, 3rd July 2010]*), raising taxes on fuel, alcohol and tobacco by 10 per cent, freezing pensions, increasing taxes on new construction, and encouraging growth in the private sector[4]. Additional policies include the reduction of an over-inflated public sector and the creation of new haulage licences which are currently highly monopolised.

The roots of the current Greek economic crisis can be traced as far back as the accession into the European Union in 1981 and the subsequent liberal market policy promoted by both the national government and Brussels. The more immediate origins can be found in the economic circumstances surrounding the incorporation of Greece into the European single currency (euro) in January 2001. The culturally specific interaction with global capitalist markets, coupled with mass over-confidence in individual and national affluence during the years of prosperity, contributed to the intensity of the eventual crisis.

After originally failing to meet the Maastricht criteria for eurozone incorporation in 1999, Greece was required to implement a series of austerity measures, including deficit reduction and cuts in public spending, to allow for accession in 2001 (Salvatore 2002:121, Leblond 2004, Portone 2004). For example, by the Maastricht criteria the inflation rate had to be under 2 per cent; it was at 4 per cent in Greece (Salvatore 2002, Portone 2004). The eventual incorporation was not without severe criticism from many economic analysts who believed that the Greek economy and the rate of inflation in the country were not stable enough to support the single currency. Indeed, even Wim

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[4] http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/8656649.stm

Duisenberg, President of the European Central Bank, stated that Greece still had 'a lot of work to do to improve its economy and bring inflation under control'[5]. Despite these general reservations, Greek Prime Minister Kostas Simitis (PASOK – Panhellenic Socialist Movement) stated that 'Greece would have much greater economic stability' once joining the eurozone. This was despite the special measures taken to fix the exchange rate months in advance due to Greece's 'exceptional circumstances'[6].

Investors also voiced their concerns at allowing Greece to join the euro, arguing that this would send out the wrong signal to financial markets – suggesting that in future other weaker economies may be allowed in without complying fully with membership conditions. At the time Greece had one of the highest inflation rates in Europe and public sector borrowing was much higher than would be normally permitted under the European Union rules governing entry to the project. These underlying problems were not tackled after eurozone entry, contributing to the 2009 economic crisis (*The Economist, vol. 395, issue 8688, 26th June 2010*).

As it turns out, the official figures for meeting the Maastricht criteria were probably falsified, as were the deficit statistics (Piga 2001, *The Economist, vol. 395, issue 8688, 26th June 2010*). This was not only a Greek phenomenon as it was proven that the Italian government also 'massaged' economic statistics to facilitate entry into the European single currency in 1997 (Piga 2001). In the context of the current crisis numerous political figures such as German Chancellor Angela Merkel have in hindsight condemned the role of investment banks in helping Greece falsify national statistics[7] and the fact that the Greek government took advantage of the fixed exchange rate (340.75 drachmas to the euro) in order to freeze public wages and round commodity prices upwards. The Greek conservative newspaper *Kathimerini* writes on October 17th 2001:

> "Greece's adoption of the physical euro will have major implications for a country that has traditionally relied more heavily on cash transactions than has most of

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[5] www.bbc.co.uk /1/hi/business/1095783.stm
[6] www.bbc.co.uk /1/hi/business/1095783.stm
[7] http://www.reuters.com/article/idUSTRE61L3EB20100222

Europe … which implies that the actual physical changeover will have at least as much impact in Greece as elsewhere. And an awkward exchange parity (340.75 drachmas to the euro) will not exactly set people's minds to rest as they pore over conversion charts to see what a chunk of feta will cost under the new regime … 75% of citizens fear price abuses on adopting the euro."

Other fears abounded. The BBC reported in April 2000:

"There are also fears that the Greek economy has qualified for the euro by "limbo dancing" – making great efforts to meet the requirements only to let things go as soon as they are under the barrier. Even if the Greek economy can take the discipline of EU membership, there is likely to be tough times ahead. The eurozone's economies may be growing quickly these days, but it is also true that the whole of the zone should now be acting as one giant domestic economy. That is likely to mean that fewer companies will dominate the market and that may well mean that the prosperous areas of Europe will become richer at the expense of outlying regions … For Greece, this means the euro is even more of a risk than it is for other members. As the poorest country in Euroland, it is hoping that the overall economic benefits of membership will outweigh the possible loss of homegrown economic success, as money and business flows to the economic centre of Europe[8]".

In April 2010 German Chancellor Angela Merkel admitted that perhaps Greece should not have been allowed to join the Euro:

"In 2000 we had a situation when we were confronted with the question of whether Greece should be able to join the eurozone. It turned [out] that the decision may not have been scrutinised closely enough[9]".

Due to the stringent management of the euro currency, it has recently been suggested by commentators such as German Christian Social Union parliamentary member Hans-Peter Friedrich that the only way out of the present economic crisis is for Greece to leave the single currency and re-structure the drachma, with further devastating economic and political effects (*The Local, April 24th 2010*)[10].

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[8] http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/business/720570.stm
[9] http://www.guardian.co.uk/business/blog/2010/apr/28/greece-financial-crisis
[10] This view has also been aired by British and German political conservatives, see "Thinking the Unthinkable about the Euro", *Guardian Newspaper, www.guardian.co.uk*

Recurrent Themes of Analysis

There are numerous recurring themes throughout this thesis that are illustrated within the accounts of social and economic change, crisis and prosperity. Each will be analysed in their ethnographic setting within the body of the document. However, it is necessary at this stage to provide an introduction to some of the main threads of discussion pertinent to the analysis of the following ethnography. These are by no means the only themes of investigation but provide an overview of the core topics discussed within this thesis.

Public Representation and Blame

As a range of austerity measures grip the nation, the people of Greece are left to ponder where it all went wrong. Who is accountable, where does the blame lie and how is this reflected in the public domain? As will become apparent, the responses to these questions are multi-faceted and highly complex. Many Trikalinoi identify financial mismanagement and corruption at the governmental level, others emphasise the role of unregulated markets, some cite the meddling of the external Other, the foreigner. Usually blame is directed toward a mixture of the above, but ultimately there is an underlying resignation that the years of indiscriminate bank loans and uncritical consumerism have been put in hiatus. The very fact that many Greeks have become 'economic experts' highlights the intensity of the situation on the ground, yet the Greek economic crisis has had political as well as economic consequences that transcend public and private arenas both within and beyond the national border.

The current Greek crisis has had both local and global consequences. As well as the direct economic impact on local livelihoods and global markets, the 'Greek crisis' has been employed as a metaphorical trope, a filter for political aspirations worldwide. 'The Greek Crisis' has been employed as a political trope (Fernandez 1986, 1993), a persuasive 'story seed' (Carrithers 2007:2), rich in both metaphor and narrative. The phrase 'Greek crisis' is now synonymous with poor government, austerity measures, financial bail-outs, civil unrest and economic turmoil. The political propaganda surrounding notions of the 'Greek

crisis' employed on various national stages incites fear, panic and movement for political change. It is a metaphor of persuasion beyond the national borders of Greece employed to stimulate similar reactions to those demonstrated by people experiencing the crisis first-hand. Rhetoric has been built around the Greek economic crisis which is disseminated on the global stage. As other nations experience economic downturns and political uncertainty, the metaphor is enforced by opposing parties in order to place blame for the circumstances firmly on the national governing bodies. The metaphor of the Greek economic crisis is employed to empower people to strive for political and social change in order to avoid a similar situation to Greece – whether that is a rational potential fate or purely exaggerated rhetoric. Panic and fear is spread by uncontextualised statistics and political propaganda. The Greek crisis has been used to signify governmental mismanagement, unregulated free-markets, corruption and capitalist excess; a model of crisis. This trope has been constructed much in the same way that America was propagated as 'both gatekeeper and model for the free market' after the Cold War. Thus a facet of externalised Greek national identity is 'defined by a perceived set of universal political and economic values' (Chomsky 1996:95). Often rhetoric tenders little absolute empirical truth, for, as Chomsky notes in relation to the perception of American economic policy, many paradoxes fill the gaps between propaganda and reality (ibid.:95, 100-101). Nothing in social reality is quite as simple as portrayed through propaganda or blame; the fact that a critical situation is presented as simple at all must raise suspicion (Chomsky and Barsamian 2001:27, also Gudeman and Rivera 1990:42, Carrier 2009).

Blame is circulated both from the bottom-up and the top-down, as well as intra-strata. This is a central theme to this thesis in relation to public representations of crisis. Public representation in this case relates to media representation, political propaganda and the grassroots understanding of crisis. Basic observations of changes in these three realms unravel a tangled ball of meaning from the governmental to the everyday negotiation of economic situation. This is most apparent in terms of blame and accountability as a variety of narratives criss-cross public arenas. Narratives of blame and accountability are present in public domains in Trikala; the cafeterias of the central commercial street,

Asklipiou, are the loci for topical conversation concerning the economic crisis, its causes and consequences.

Over time the multiple arguments concerning accountability separate the local and the global and also fuse them in historical narrative. When coming to power in October 2009 Greek Prime Minister Giorgos Papandreou (PASOK) blamed the falsification of deficit statistics on the previous Nea Dimokratia government of Konstantinos Karamanlis (2004-2009). He claimed to have uncovered the 'true' deficit of 13.6 per cent when taking office as it had been estimated at 1.8 per cent the previous year. The public initially accepted the news with knowing resignation as it is common knowledge that elements of the government 'eat money' (*trone lefta*). However, when the ramifications of the economic turmoil became apparent in the form of financial bailouts, job losses, wage cuts and austerity measures, the Papandreou administration had to defend itself from increasing public criticism. People had generally become uninterested in using Karamanlis as the target towards which to vent their mounting frustrations. Blaming the previous government was no longer a politically viable option. In turn the Papandreou government turned their attention to directing the blame outwards, towards their European counterparts.

Such is the nature of transnational capitalist economics that the consequences of crises are often portrayed by political bodies as a common and collective responsibility. The causes cannot be traced to a single state or political body alone but blame can be transferred to numerous politically ambiguous sources where local and global historical narratives have merged. Here there is a notable difference between blame and accountability. Blame can be circulated as 'poisonous knowledge' (Das 1995), often in the form of gossip and hollow accusations which aim to both relocate and disseminate the cause of the problem away from the realms of social reality. Accountability implies that someone(s) will be brought to justice; to be held accountable. Due to a multitude of cultural phenomena – which are often far too simplistically categorised as corruption – running through nearly all social and political institutions from the grassroots to the government, there is little chance for any individuals to be held accountable for the Greek economic crisis (even if it were possible to pinpoint such persons

in such an interconnected global politico-economic context). Sometimes politicians shift the blame towards external bodies; nevertheless it is national publics who ultimately deal with the consequences of crisis and the measures enforced by their governments. In the words of a British Chancellor of the Exchequer "we are all in this together" in both cause and consequence, whether we like it or not. The concept that 'we must start afresh' is used to "help people persuade themselves" of collective responsibility (Chomsky and Barsamian 2001:ix). Surely the persuasive rhetoric of the inchoate *we* has never been stronger (cf. Carrithers 2007, 2008).

How blame and accountability are understood within a range of publics – from the representations of economic turmoil on the streets of Trikala to nationalised representations through the mass-media – will form a central ethnographic and theoretical theme throughout this thesis.

Cultural Proximity

The concept of cultural proximity is explored fully in chapter seven (Time, Crisis and Social Memory) in relation to understandings of the Great Famine of 1941-1943 in the context of the current economic crisis. In this thesis what I call cultural proximity will be theorised to propose that specific past events inform the localised understanding of times of crisis. These events may not have necessarily been experienced first-hand, yet the layers of cultural meaning result in an embodiment of historical moments within the contemporary context; 'two distant points in time can suddenly become close, even superimposed' in social experience (Serres 1995a:57-59). Here the central theoretical points concerning cultural proximity will be emphasised followed by a discussion of why some events are considered culturally proximate whilst others are not.

In everyday life there are events and experiences that may appear historically distant or detached due to the passage of time. However, some of these distant events may subsequently be very culturally close at specific moments. With the reoccurrence of periods of crisis, some past events are recalled as if they possess a contemporary quality; they are culturally proximate. As an embodiment of

past events, cultural proximity can be facilitated by collective memory, objects and artefacts, nationalist rhetorics and the education system. The understanding of contemporary moments of crisis is informed by the past through something more than merely social memory. For example, during the current economic crisis engulfing Trikala, the Great Famine of 1941-1943 is felt, is even feared, as if it were a facet of the present-day. Time is thus condensed into a singularly meaningful instant where two or more historical moments are simultaneous (Serres 1995a:57-59).

People can understand and experience current events based on accounts of the past, whether experienced first-hand or whether the events are separated by many generations. Therefore, comparative analysis does not necessarily depend on perceptions of proximity in linear time. The connection between two distant events can be played out through symbolic systems, cognitive categories and local/national vocabularies (Just 1989a, Seremetakis 1991:11-12). Understanding the significance of past events within the context of the present can be facilitated by the analysis of particular aspects of past experience; hunger, violence and discrimination to name but a few. A theorisation of non-linear time is thus required in order to further explain the concept of cultural proximity.

In order to explain the concept of folded, pleated and fluctuating time, Serres uses the example of the handkerchief. He notes that if you take a handkerchief and spread it out in order to iron it, you can observe certain fixed distances and proximities. If you sketch a circle in one area, you can mark out nearby points and measure far-off distances. Then take the same handkerchief and crumple it, by putting it in your pocket. Two distant points suddenly are close, even superimposed. If, further, you tear it in certain places, two points that were close can become very distant. This science of nearness and rifts is known as topology, while the science of stable and well-defined distances is called metrical geometry (1995a:60).

Central to the concept of cultural proximity is the idea that time does not merely 'pass' but is extraordinarily complex with various stopping points, ruptures and

gaps (ibid.:57). Serres offers a theory of percolating and fluctuating time, 'dancing like flames' that allows for a perception of culturally simultaneous temporal points. If we consider time as percolating then we can comprehend how "one flux passes through, while the other does not" (ibid.:58). The flux that gets caught in the percolator is that which remains culturally proximate, meaningful and close. These 'moments of time' remain contemporary far beyond their original context. The cultural filter of crisis is what makes some past events feel very culturally close, such as the Great Famine at the time of the current economic crisis.

The current economic crisis in Greece is not a situation devoid of history; it is rooted in social and cultural practice, global networks and political policy (cf. Narotzky 2004). Similarly, people's understandings of critical events are not devoid of component parts – experience of and cultural proximity with past events contribute to contemporary formations of crisis management. Social memory is the assemblage of different periods of crisis, multiple cultural and familial narratives of socio-historic experience and nationalised rhetorics of times past. The 'advertising' of the new event, the crisis, is embellished through the mass media and is packaged with notions of blame, nationalist rhetoric, and political propaganda (Chomsky 1996, Sutton 1998:175-178). Such an understanding of contemporary events within the wider context of historical time leads to a double understanding of contemporaneity: the event in its own time as part of *our* era, and the event as an assemblage of reconstituted historical parts (Serres 1995a:47).

Hence cultural proximity can also be linked to past accounts of blame and accountability. This can contribute to some events becoming culturally proximate due to their historical significance, whilst others do not. This is associated to patterns in the dissemination of blame during previous political environments (cf. Winichakul 2002). In Trikala, as in other parts of rural Greece (Hart 1992, Hart 1996), the civil war as a period of social, political and economic upheaval is rarely discussed in the public domain. It is in no way glorified in collective memory and despite being of the same historical era – the 1940s – it is not culturally proximate during the present economic crisis. The

communist defeat during the civil war created an intensely anti-communist government until 1974. It was only after the legalisation of the Greek Communist Party and the socialist government of 1981-1989 that interest in the civil war as a topic of debate was substantially revived – and this was restricted to the literary domain (Marantzidis and Antoniou 2004:223). These discrepancies led to two main narratives of blame; the right wing calls this the national-minded (*Ethnikofrones*) versus traitors of the nation, the left wing divides civil war society into patriots versus collaborators-reactionaries (Marantzidis and Antoniou 2004:224). These social divisions in sympathy still run through local communities.

Some historical events are considered sinful and thus a collective notion of 'let us not speak of this again' is engaged (Winichakul 2002:255); "radical differences are played down and denied" (Barth 1969:14). From 1974 onwards any remnants of internal blame for the civil war, brothers against brothers, was supposedly assigned to the pages of history as a collective rhetoric against the external Other was wholly adopted, thus denying any 'internal divisions and ambiguities in Greek society' (Marantzidis and Antoniou 2004:225). Yet at the local level, in Thessaly at least, this attempt to normalise the cognitive process had limited effect. The significance of civil war allegiances means that it remains a suppressed topic at the narrative level. The crossing of internal cultural boundaries and prescriptive judgement has no discursive framework in relation to the civil war (cf. Barth 1969). There is a pre-existing framework for discussing the Great Famine due to processes of nationalising discourse; a process that has so far failed at the grassroots level in relation to the civil war. The killing of brothers is still perceived as sinful and thus continues to be difficult to cognitively frame (cf. Schwartz 1998). This means that the Great Famine remains salient as a collectivising keystone event. Das argues that selective remembering and forgetting are directly related to concepts of collectivisation, unity and division (1995:128-129). In times of social upheaval, people prefer to construct or put together rather than destroy or divide (ibid.:26). This is partially why narratives of famine prevail over civil war as culturally proximate despite being of the same (linear) time. The fluxes in time are therefore highlighted in relation to events with complex social and cultural

histories as some events appear close and relevant at a given moment whilst others are disregarded. These complexities do not only relate to political agendas or economic fluctuations but also to the significance of certain culturally loaded aspects of society such as food (Sutton 2001).

The periodic publicising and silencing of crisis narratives relates to changes in the social and political environment and the level of trauma experienced (Winichakul 2002:245). In some cases there may be decades of silence which are glossed over by official government rhetoric. Hence discussions of these crises do not penetrate the public sphere and are not recalled as culturally proximate due to their fragmented and divisive nature. This selective recollection is not coincidental but usually corresponds with periods of social change and is enshrouded in a plurality of emotion and meaning that is brought to the fore at specific moments.

Political and social ramifications are frequently reasons for sustained silence both on a governmental stage and the level of the village community (Hart 1992). Furthermore, the personal accounts of crisis may not fit the "normative ideology" portrayed by the state or fellow villagers (ibid.:246). The selective silencing and evoking of times of crisis can also be related to concepts of assimilation with cultural surroundings – as was the case with the resettled refugees from Anatolia during the 1920s (cf. Pentzopoulos 1962, Hirschon 1989, Kirtsoglou and Theodossopoulos 2001).

> "In other words, at least three forms of domination are at work in silencing this past: first, the threat of political repercussions; second, the sense of guilt whether of the perpetrators or the survivors; and third, the ideology of national history, which suppresses the 'anomalies', or pushes them into silence, leading to ambivalent memories …" (Winichakul 2002:246).

As social conditions change so does the willingness of people to share narratives of their traumatic experiences (Winichakul 2002:254, 257-258). In Greece today the Great Famine is portrayed as a time of collective suffering caused by the actions of an external Other: Nazi Germany. In Trikala this event which mainly affected the people of Athens some 320 kilometres away has been adopted into local collective experience through nationalist processes. On the other hand, the

civil war is still considered sinful; brothers fighting brothers[11]. In contemporary Trikala, political sympathies relating to this crisis are diverse. The civil war is not a collectivising event in the same manner as the Great Famine, thus it is not embodied as culturally proximate during subsequent times of crisis.

It is this resurfacing and reassessment of accounts of crisis in relation to later social circumstances that is particularly significant in the narratives recited by Trikalinoi. The past and its meanings are framed and comprehended from a present perspective. Culturally proximate historical events are experienced as contemporary understandings of times past which assist the negotiation of present social circumstances.

Patronage at Play: a Trikalini context

Social, political and economic life in contemporary Trikala is comprised of traits associated with western capitalism and more customary modes of relations such as patronage and clientelism. This complex fusion of modes of relations affects all aspects of Trikalini society from the practical matters of securing bank loans and access to medical treatment to notions of social status and mobility. In every situation it is less about one 'option' or the other – capitalist or traditional – but more a synthesis of the two, resulting in the cultural interpretation of underlying socio-economic structures. Hence medical treatment can include access to a prestigious surgeon through patron-client networks as well as bribery[12] in the form of *fakelákia* (small envelopes of money). Getting a job for a large multinational supermarket chain is at the discretion of the local Greek manager, regardless of company policy (Boutsouki and Bennison 1999, Theodoridis and Bennison 2009). Perceptions of social status can involve value judgements based on both consumerism and inheritance. This is a local reflection of global trends in a similar way that there is a localised formation and interpretation of global crisis.

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[11] However, as Winichakul notes, "Time changes public discourses. Apparently, it changes memories and histories too. Time is not an empty passage of orbiting celestial bodies. Nor is it homogeneous. It has subjects, whose memories are caught up in complex contention … It is not uncommon for one to feel guilt only after deep reflections on the views of the present" (2002:258).

[12] Loizos makes the point that bribery should not be equated to patronage (1977:115).

Culturally embedded phenomena such as bribery, tax evasion and favour exchange that may be deemed wholly corrupt[13] within many capitalist societies are part and parcel of the 'Greek way' of doing capitalism (Bratsis 2003, Featherstone 2008 also Moss 1995 for the Italian context). They must be considered within the framework of 'cultural translation' (Just 2001:39, Boissevain 1977, Bloch and Parry 1989). This demonstrates the "incomplete and uneven character of capitalist penetration and modernization in Greece" (Seremetakis 1994:39). Hence preceding concepts of social relations operate simultaneously alongside, or underneath, capitalist systems. In economics such an uneven penetration is termed an 'economic dualism'; when a 'modern dynamic capitalist sector' exists alongside a 'traditional agricultural sector' (Colman and Nixson 1986:32-33). The formation of localised or regionalised economies is culturally specific, based on interpretations and adaptations of wider processes (Taussig 1980:127-128). Hence capitalism is infused with cultural sentiments, meanings and subjectivities (Yanagisako 2002:xi, 32) as well as the imprint of cultural history and state-endorsed rhetoric. "Western capitalism" has been integrated with ways that "strengthen and develop" previous cultural systems (ibid.:xii, Sahlins 1999).

As an economic system, Gellner argues that patronage is not necessarily a form of corruption when observed within its cultural context as it is imbued with notions of pride. This is despite the fact that "it nevertheless knows that it is not itself *the* official morality"; it is a form of 'moral climate' (1977:3, original emphasis, Scott 1977, Moss 1995). The formal economy cannot, Gellner continues, be evoked as a form of patronage as it is impersonal. This leads to confusion as to the boundary between patronage and corruption (cf. Moss 1995).

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[13] According to the international corruption index 2010, published by Transparency International, Greece is ranked 78th out of 178 nations. The index is a measure of domestic, public sector corruption. On a scale of 0 to 10 – 0 indicating high levels of corruption, 10 representing low levels – Greece was placed between Colombia and Lesotho with a score of 3.5. In comparison the first placed nations were Denmark, New Zealand and Singapore (9.3), the worst was Somalia (1.1) and United Kingdom was in 20th place (7.6). The United Sates of America was 22nd (7.1), Australia 8th (8.7) and Italy 67th (3.9). The same body insist that the best way out of the current global economic crisis is through 'a zero tolerance policy on corruption' (www.transparency.org). For anthropological perspectives on corruption see Haller and Shore (2005).

Therefore patronage should be understood as one form of 'doing things' that operates within the same social spheres as other modes of relations; it is part of the cultural repertoire. Some of these social spheres may be more prone to patronage than others (Gellner 1977:5). Furthermore, patronage is one aspect of a multitude of systems that comprise the 'moral climate' of a specific locale where notions of corruption are both bureaucratically and culturally defined – often by ambiguous terminology (Moss 1995:59-60, also Roniger 1994:3).

Changes in the modes of socio-economic relations, coupled with shifting economic contexts of prosperity and crisis, inherently alter the criteria by which Trikalinoi negotiate and define certain aspects of their collective lives. This will be highlighted in this thesis through the discussion of changing perceptions of social status and mobility. Patron-clientelism is indeed discussed primarily in relation to perceptions of social status and routes of social mobility. In each case patronage is analysed within the context of other social processes and not as a stand-alone institution. It is approached as somewhere between a cultural pattern and a structural trait (Silverman 1977). Patron-clientelism is one aspect of a complex social background formed and informed by social beings. Thus accounts of patronage and favour exchange are adjacent to notions of consumerism and (im)moral economy. In turn, patronage has often become difficult to define in a monolithic fashion. However, this does not mean that patronage as a social mode of exchange faces demise when other institutions offer alternative "material possibilities of economic performance" (Kitschelt 2007:299) as the system continues to interact with a variety of others[14].

Patronage has been discussed in Mediterranean ethnography since the inception of the modern discipline. It must therefore not be taken lightly as a process integral to the functioning of society. This is not to say that patronage is a static pre-assumed trait void of spatio-temporal context and immune to cultural and historical variation and manipulation (Gellner 1977). Likewise, it is not a monolithic stand-alone institution but is linked to complex networks of representation (cf. Zinn 2001). The role of this form of social relations as a

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[14] It has been argued by scholars such as Kitschelt that patronage is "at odds with theories of political development, state formation and democratic institutions" (2007:298).

constituent part of wider Greek culture is quite different in 2010 than it was in Campbell's 1964 study.

In basic definition, patronage is classically portrayed as a system of contractual relationships between a patron, usually a person with authority or other form of economic or political power, and a client (Campbell 1964:230). What makes the network of patronage effective is the conceptualisation of power vis-à-vis the patron and client. The client does not necessarily feel inferior in this relationship, due to reciprocity (ibid.:231, Gellner 1977, but see Davis 1977, Eisenstadt and Roniger 1984, Zinn 2001, Lyon 2002). The client demands favours, usually of economic or political nature from the patron, while the patron demands honour or allegiance (1964:234). In some cases, gifts towards the patron aim at enhancing the feeling of obligation in the receiver. Patronage, according to Campbell, apart from the 'distribution of various facilities', protects families from social exclusion "for without friends a man loses all power, influence and social prestige" (ibid.:238). For Campbell, patronage is not simply a social structure as it is endowed with cultural aspects of honour, emotion, and obligation; it is a performance (Weingrod 1977:50). This is in opposition to other studies of patronage that emphasise the point of interaction as part of an instrumental structural system (Boissevain 1966, Sayari 1977, Scott 1977). Thus patronage wanders "between a definitional specificity, on the one hand, and a kind of poetic metaphor, on the other" (Weingrod 1977:41).

The patron-client pattern has most usually been analysed as a form of social structure. The assumption of mutual dependency on a structural relationship requires reassessment as patron-clientelism is by no means the only means for survival in contemporary Mediterranean societies (ibid.:1977:45). Whilst patronage remains *a* form of structure open to and formed by social actors it is not a process imperative for the continued functioning of a generic social system. The structural approach presumes the arrangement of actors at various points of the "overall stratification hierarchy" (ibid.). These potential relationships can be activated through informal social networks, meaning that access is gained to key "decision making points" on the hierarchy (ibid.:46, Mair 1969:122). The system is reproduced, sustaining the overall structure of

society in a form of equilibrium. Furthermore, the focus on structure in relation to patronage has led to the theorisation of the Mediterranean as a homogeneous 'culture area' (Just 2001:46-47) with patronage as the idiom for 'doing politics'. Such an approach to the analysis of patronage can result in ethnographic accounts emphasising the role of the client (Lyon 2002:9, 224).

An alternative approach to the study of patronage is through a processual or performative framework. This stance outlines patronage as a process of ceremonial performances and focuses as much on the outcomes and social implications of the relationship as the interaction itself. The processual approach aims at abstracting underlying social processes emerging from clientelist interactions (Weingrod 1977:48). The focus on process highlights culturally embedded idioms such as power, honour and sentiment that come to the fore through "highly stylised, ritualised performances" (ibid.:50). However the cultural aspects of the processes still seem to be embedded in the structure itself rather than being highly variable fluent cultural aspects in their own right.

I propose that patronage in Trikala be considered a persistent cultural pattern akin to a dynamic social structure. The actors change the form and interaction of relations depending on socio-economic context. It is a dynamic, flexible and historically contextual system. At present, in Trikala patronage represents just one way, embedded with many others, towards achieving economic ends. Often material gifts have been replaced by money which has become more of a feature which loads with ambivalence the relationship between patrons and clients. For example, in Trikalini marriages it is customary to give money in a small envelope (*fakeláki*) as a gift to the prospective couple instead of purchasing any other form of present. In these cases the small envelopes are most welcome as they are considerable economic contributions towards the new household. These *fakelákia* are not only morally acceptable but emphasise the generosity of the donor. In such cases, money is positively loaded and under no circumstances is associated with corruption and bribery. In other cases, such as the *fakeláki* (singular of *fakelákia*) that one gives to a doctor in a hospital in order to ensure the positive outcome of an operation or simply the positive treatment of one's kin, money is negatively loaded and the *fakeláki* represents all things associated

with corruption in the health system. Yet, one cannot help but notice an apparent ambivalence which is highly pertinent to my argument here. In both cases – marriage or hospital bribery – what is given in exchange is the *fakeláki*. A *fakeláki* can have both a positive and a negative meaning depending on context. Nevertheless, the same medium is used in both cases and only under specific context shifting markers does it change its 'colour'.

The significance of money as mediator within the specific cultural setting is apparent in a multitude of social situations (Taussig 1980, Bloch and Parry 1989) and has become integral to most socio-economic relationships. This is to say that patronage is very much associated with profit-making businesses (Just 2000:174) as well as individual entrepreneurship. Moss offers the example of an Italian businessman in the 1980s who found that only by changing his usual gift to the political elite could he gain a public works contract. Instead of the, until then, customary gift of bread and mushrooms he conveyed the sum of 40 million lire (Moss 1995:58). He obtained the contract. Adjacent economic systems have substantially altered the grounds of the patron-client relationship. Furthermore, other economic relations such as bank credit could be viewed as extensions of patron-client credit systems as services are provided in exchange for custom (allegiance) and eventual 'profit'. Thus the structural basis of patronage has changed along with changes in bureaucracy, administration and economy (Moss 1995:58).

Furthermore, as Campbell argues, patronage is an effective representational political system which connects wider with localised political contexts (and now also transnational). The state may be perceived as an abstract and distant entity and state officials may deliberately project a hostile and impersonal image (Campbell 1964:238). In such cases, people with political or authoritative power, within the community assume the responsibility to link their peripheral communities to the abstract and bureaucratic state. The patrons become bridges between the loci of state power and "introduce some flexibility" into otherwise "rigid and uncomprehending" aspects of social life (ibid.:259). In return the

client unquestionably supports the politics of the patron and expresses the feelings of gratitude and indebtedness[15] (1964:259, Herzfeld 1985:19-20).

This is not however merely a political process at the level of governance. As some 'votes' or opinions count more than the others on the council, so certain 'votes' or opinions count more in the community. Certain members of society have the ability to negotiate with agents of bureaucracy and authority in a more effective manner (Campbell 1964:225, Crozier 1964, Boissevain 1966, Moss 1995, Piattoni 2002). Therefore, patronage is also much concerned with forms of power and influence within the politics of the local community (Gellner 1977:1).

Patron-clientelism is approached in this thesis as a structure-type pattern with cultural and historical elements interacting with constantly changing modes of relations and shifting institutions. It is a changing product of its time that is at once a constituent of social structure and culture. Patronage brings together different forms of socio-economic relations, thus its institutional basis is often ambiguous (Pipyrou 2010a). It is not statically entrenched within 'the traditional' nor has it been fully incorporated into 'modern capitalist' economics. It is one form of 'getting things done' that transgresses otherwise bureaucratic and political (in the loosest sense of the term) boundaries that may be considered rigid in another cultural context. As such it is part of the local interpretation of global economic trends.

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[15] For Campbell debt complies with a form of dependence which is a measure of weakness (1964:226). This is especially interesting when considering the trend for taking out substantial bank loans prevalent during the period of economic prosperity in Trikala pre-crisis. The social implications for significant debt were often disregarded within specific social groups. This is related to the impersonal relationship provided by 'faceless' actors involved in the transaction (Gellner 1977:6). The impact of financial loans becoming commonplace and thus socially sanctioned, coupled with the faceless nature of the 'patron' – the bank – changed public perceptions of indebtedness. Often such debts were also incurred under the pretence of striving for social mobility, making the situation more acceptable to family and friends.

Social Change

Social change is an underlying principal for much of this thesis with the emphasis on the cultural and historical construction of crisis experience. Through the lens of crisis and prosperity, social change is examined from the annexation of Thessaly to the Greek state in 1881 to the present day. Obviously the ethnographic data over the course of 130 years has been drawn from many sources. Greek scholars who discuss the relevant issues in-situ facilitate an engagement with the social pulse of the time[16]. Additionally, foreign ambassadors, dignitaries and travellers writing throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth century further allow for the socio-historical contextualisation of key events. During the turbulent years of the 1940s – arguably the most significant period of social change in Trikala – we begin to encounter extensive first-hand ethnographic material.

The focus of this thesis is on how previous periods of social change have shaped people's experiences of the present events. This is expressed through a variety of tropes such as nationalist rhetoric relating to past events, political policy, agricultural mechanisation, shifting economic patterns, and the embodiment of significant past events – cultural proximity. Additionally, the consequences of social change on local perceptions of social status and mobility will be explored. In this case, the two aspects of change impact upon each other considerably, as periods of crisis and prosperity create spaces for mobility and alter perceptions of status. Hence 'social change' is examined as a historical topic rather than an absolute anthropological theory in its own right.

Significant periods of social change for Trikalinoi range from the agrarian reforms of the 1920s to civil war, famine, military dictatorship, European integration and the introduction of liberal markets, a stock market crash and the current economic crisis. Many of these events were products of the national or the global, yet had particular consequences for a relatively rural community in

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[16] The history discussed in this thesis is from the point of view of a social anthropologist. Therefore, as Just notes (1989b:viii), when discussing historical events the scholarship of others has been extensively utilised and must be understood as critiqued from an anthropological perspective.

central Greece. Social change is therefore not presented as a bounded process within a closed community but is related to periods of change on other social levels. Whilst it is understood as an elongated process spanning 130 years, intense periods of social change are examined independently to help piece together the significance of certain historical events.

Periods of social change have been selected from the realms of history as illustrative of the continuing process. These choices have been made on the basis of three criteria that make them relevant to the understanding of contemporary society. Firstly, despite being linked to national and global patterns, the periods considered have a direct and significant impact on the inhabitants of Trikala. Secondly, the economic consequences of the events are of primary concern when discussing social change. Finally, some events have an intense impact on the Trikalinoi despite not having a direct effect on the locale. These events signify social change on a wider scale but have come to occupy a central place in the local collective conscience (Chase-Dunn and Babones 2006).

Approaches to discussing social change are diverse as the topic itself spans all themes of social research, from holistic village studies to political processes, conflict and natural disaster. Here there are two selected approaches which assist in the understanding of periods of social change such as crisis and conflict as well as modernisation and mechanisation. Both Gluckman (1968) and Layton (2000) are relevant to this study for numerous reasons. They both deal in different ways with concepts of time – which is another central feature of this thesis. Gluckman discusses 'structural duration' and 'historical time' as two measures of social change. Layton's detailed account of historical time in Franche-Comté, France, is the culmination of research over a period of nearly thirty years. Furthermore, Layton regularly contextualises change as far back as the eighteenth century and beyond. Additionally, both pieces of work discuss a multitude of different types of social change, which the scholars base in a variety of dynamic anthropological theories. The accounts acknowledge radical and gradual change over a range of social arenas. Finally, the two studies represent how two very different epistemological approaches to social change

can be pertinent to the analysis of the same ethnographic situation – that of Trikala.

Gluckman (1968) has discussed social change in relation to the 'structural duration' of individual institutions. He begins by stating that 'all social life exists in time and all processes in time involve changes'. However, there are several types of 'time' as well as distinctive types of 'change' (1968:219). By equating 'social institution' to 'cultural pattern', Gluckman defines 'structural duration' as the time scale of an institution. For example, the time scale for analysing a family may be four or five generations and parliament has a structural duration of around fifteen years (ibid.:119, 223). He argues that often such analyses do not take into consideration the external factors effecting social change in each institution, thus eliminating external intrusions, extraordinary events and contradictions. However, such a structural analysis of a monolithic institution through 'structural duration' alone does not represent clearly what happens in "actual historical time", only in the *as if* time of structural duration. Changes may be more "radical" once the institution is analysed as part of the social whole, such is the case with changes in the patronage system in Trikala. Even in such cases, Gluckman argues, new forms of wealth can be invested into old relationships and visa-versa (ibid.:230).

The differentiation in theories of time means that there are encapsulations of past events in present cultural patterns (Gluckman 1968:220). The present condition of social institutions illustrates the effects of changes over real historical time. History is incorporated and presented in the reality of the present (in a similar fashion to the cultural proximity of individual events discussed above). These changes to institutions eventually get permanently encapsulated and produce standardised ideas about history and time (ibid.:220). The institutions accommodate social change.

Gluckman's theory of structural duration in the analysis of social change, even when considered in its own historical and disciplinary context, is open to much criticism. Gluckman states that in this abstract perception of time individual institutions always go through a cyclical process and end up where they started

(ibid.:221, Kurtz 2001:107), thus maintaining equilibrium[17]. Although he does concede that in 'real historical time' social institutions are not in a state of stasis, he maintains that the elements of an institution remain in a "state of balance" when they eventually recover from disturbance. This is despite the fact that individuals may occupy different positions within the institution after times of social upheaval. These differentiations in the social positions of individual actors are of utmost importance in much twenty-first century anthropology and are overlooked by purely structural analysis.

The analysis of social change within an abstract form of time overcomplicates the understanding of the process at grassroots level. Gluckman acknowledges that the theory of structural duration "is abstracted from reality since it may not deal with the whole complexity of reality" (ibid.). If the analysis operates within abstract time then the distance of translation into 'real' social experience detaches the anthropological theory from the ethnographic material.

The theory focuses on notions of stability and equilibrium. Social reality does not always follow such a structured path. Indeed, it has been a more recent trend to analyse social change in terms of 'chaos theory' rather than equilibrium (Bonabeau 1997, Mosko and Damon 2005). Gluckman again recognises this inadequacy:

> "Various institutions have different structural durations, and their "intermesh" has to be analyzed. Events emerging from the operation of one institution may intervene in the operation of another institution in a manner that is haphazard as far as the systematic interdependencies of the recipient institution are concerned. External events from quite different areas of the world may intrude into the field under analysis, again in what, from the point of view of an analyst of systems, is a haphazard manner" (ibid.:223).

He defends this by emphasising the resistance of institutions to social change and suggests that the analyst must overcome this hurdle by "carrying out a process of mental abstraction" (ibid.:223). The major crises are the result of

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[17] It was a feature of the processual paradigm, instigated by Gluckman, that dynamic political processes were analysed in terms of a 'social drama' (Turner 1957). In this framework an initial breach in social relations results in a crisis. Each side of the breach then mobilises 'powerful sources', leading to concerns over potential conflict. This in turn results in countervailing measures by leaders who deploy adjustive or redressive mechanisms, thus restoring peaceful relations (Kurtz 2001:107). This highlights the cyclical nature of the processual approach.

smaller accumulative crises that occur in the structural patterns. Once again this seems an unsatisfactory rebuke when considering the 'structural consequences' of crises such as civil war and even the effects of global recession on local institutions. Gluckman adequately defines many of the shortcomings of his theory before reverting to structural-type in answering the criticisms.

The abstraction of singular institutions from historical time – however we choose to theorise this – is problematic. This thesis looks at changes in social and economic patterns by exploring the experiences of the 'everyday people' and how this is linked to wider national and global bodies. Historical time plays a critical role in the analysis of contemporary experience, facilitated by institutions such as the state, European Union, stock market and the education system. However these 'institutions' are not examined separately or within a concept of time as a vacuum. They are not compared directly as primarily mutually exclusive entities. Gluckman's appreciation of the global and the national in influencing the changes in local communities is useful when discussing social change. His emphasis on structure is a distinctive idiom of the time, yet in a period of rapid radical change he concludes that it is necessary to resort almost entirely to narrative and from this to seek various types of patterns (Gluckman 1968:233). This appears to contradict his statement that social reality is something "external and constraining" rather than something internally constructed. Actors are thus "self-deceived" by their surroundings (1968:232). I agree that actor's behaviour is influenced by cultural patterns and the constant penetration of their social environment by external innovations, yet the prioritisation of theoretical model over actor narrative is a little hard to swallow in 2010 (although this prioritisation was not what Gluckman intended in the context of 1960s anthropology). To understand the social repercussions of the current economic crisis such a narrative approach is often required.

Through a structural-functionalist framework it became apparent that social change was dictated by institutions whilst individual action and history were 'neutralised'. Therefore repeatable and controllable factors dictated the stability

of society (Layton 2000:101). In his study of Franche-Comté, France[18], Layton critiques the structural-functionalist approach that assumes societies were inherently stable and their existing form was in preservation through customs and sanctions (ibid.:102). Through a wonderfully detailed ethnographic study over the course of nearly thirty years, Layton argues that there are variations in individual and collective interpretations of historical events and the application of socio-economic strategies. Through his research he found that no two villages on the Plateau of Levier were structurally identical but their development depended on the historical adoption – or not – of co-operatives, entrepreneurs, and councils varying in space and time (ibid.:103). The equilibrium model as proposed above by Gluckman was inadequate to explain variation within what should have been an area of cultural unity.

Different localised routes of social change have different impacts as cultural repertoires are diverse even within a geographically restricted area. Cultural unity lies in a number of organisational themes and the management of resources and environmental conditions (ibid.:104-105). The diverse paths of social change in the cultural area, Layton argues, were the result of different responses to changes in the local economy; "social systems are typically rather fluid; their structures change and there is a thin line between structure and process". People have choice between alternative actions (as will be demonstrated in relation to modes of social mobility in Trikala), hence cultural patterns are not merely the product of social rules and institutions (ibid.:106, Mair 1969:121). The interaction between people and social variables determines routes of social change and subsequent sustainability. Institutional arrangements remain resistant to change until change renders them "untenable" and thus they are replaced by new arrangements in a "series of steps" (Layton 2000:307).

To the extreme, social structure can be deemed the epiphenomenon of how people allocate time and resources within a given context (Barth 1967, Layton 1997). The strategic decisions of people change the system. However, the focus

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[18] For further discussion on social change in France see Mendras and Cole (1988) focusing on class, kinship and national institutions, and Vaughan, Kolinsky and Sheriff (1980) on education, industry and agriculture. Friedl (1974) and Rosenberg (1988) are also excellent resources when discussing history, society and change in France.

should not be on the individual in a social and historical vacuum – strategic decisions are 'inextricably part of the nation-state context' as 'contributors to the market-economy and answerable to its laws' (ibid.:110). People participate in social systems not just respond to them and new strategies are often derived from old ones. For example, Layton notes that the agricultural market economy is a product of rural depopulation that began in the mid-nineteenth century. In turn the majority of economic change is related to changes in state policy and the differentiation in livelihood strategies; they are mutually influential in a form of 'historical production' (Narotzky 2004:58). Therefore order in social relations is not the outcome of an underlying structure nor is it purely the product of the actor's rationale (Layton 2000:112). Instead, following Bourdieu (1977) and Giddens (1984), "agent's strategies *constitute* local society and culture"; the "situated activities of agents, taking place through time and in space". Actors' activities reproduce the social conditions (ibid.). Both the approaches of Bourdieu and Giddens allow for more agency, and strategy, than was allocated through a structural-functionalist or structuralist model. Agents draw on certain rules and resources within their social environment to make strategic decisions according to cultural and environmental context, thus interaction transforms the overall structure.

Cultural strategies are consciously pursued and result in historical as well as cultural variation (ibid.:176). They can be reactions to wider social trends such as depopulation, conflict or policy change, but social interaction is the key to understanding change through time as local culture is enacted in relation to a social and natural environment. The wider social system changes if a different strategy becomes more appropriate or widely available (ibid.:179). Social change is thus primarily the product of strategy, yet variation in the behaviour of individuals is always in relation to the cultural background (ibid.:223). A key point to Layton's argument is that social structure – or cultural environment – is as likely to transform social relations as it is to reproduce social order due to the implication of strategy by cultural actors (ibid.:360).

In the context of social change in Trikala many of Layton's points are highly relevant. The historical contextualisation of social change is of great import. The

availability of new opportunities for the employment of strategies as well as innovation is caused by periods of crisis. The diverse investment of time and capital in the context of altered forms of social environment change subsequent social relations in either a temporary or permanent fashion. Crisis provides opportunity for innovation and, as has been demonstrated throughout the recent history of Trikala, these fluctuations in the socio-economic environment form the bases for diverse shifts in social relations. In a similar respect, periods of prosperity and affluence allow for alternative strategic investments. The reinvestment of capital in times of prosperity – into the stock market for example – at once perpetuates economic affluence and eventually causes subsequent crisis. Thus the strategic decisions of the individual are reproduced as such a major pattern that the alteration of the existing socio-economic system becomes almost inevitable. The proposal that social change can fuel necessity for further social change is exemplified through examples of crisis, as social change does not necessarily imply positive connotations. The social environment is altered, thus cultural patterns interact with shifting social backgrounds.

As history informs cultural repertoire, so contemporary strategic decisions are the product of historical significance. Not only do previous decisions in times of crisis alter the trajectory of social change, but they directly inform the decisions of contemporary actors. In Trikala this is most evident in respect to perceptions of social mobility and the strategic investments based upon notions of value judgement. These judgements are imbued with a range of sentiments based on family histories and the construction of difference in cultural repertoires.

The cultural repertoire is appropriated by a variety of actors to inform decisions and hence we have regional variations in the intensity and formation of crises. Even though the roots of the formation may be ultimately beyond the control of the local community (despite the fact that they may participate in the wider systems that cause the downfall), the cultural patterns of the locale contribute to the flavour of the local experience of crisis. This extends to the adaptation of local communities to particular social circumstances (Layton 2000:355). Applying Layton's framework slightly further, the patterns of economic

behaviour embraced at any given time are the product of local cultural repertoires, but can be endorsed, even encouraged, by the state and global trends (ibid.:123).

Indeed, Layton records how economic diversification changed and destabilised the once-efficient strategies for regulating interpersonal relations on the local level. This is exacerbated in times of extreme social and/or economic crisis. New economic strategies transform local culture due to the participation of people in changing economic environments and rapidly shifting strategic investment (ibid.:255, 358). For example, economic innovation in saturated or collapsing markets can provoke diverse trajectories in future economic strategies. Strategic investment in relation to historical conditions can also result in upwards or downwards social mobility as strategic decisions are implemented. As Layton notes, "Households which have a similar composition and economic status at one moment may increasingly diverge in response to demographic variables or the accessibility of alternative employment" (2000:107). This is in response to 'economic selection' – the selection and rejection of economic routes (ibid.:304-305). Culturally and historically informed modes of dealing with crisis can seriously affect strategic investments and thus social status and mobility. This emphasises the dialogue between the individual, social life, cultural repertoire and history (bid.:365).

Individual decisions may have the ability to change the eventual trajectory of social systems in the long run. Opportunistic or 'chance' innovations by individuals illustrate how communities are not closed systems but are open to turbulences in social processes instigated in both a top-down and bottom-up manner. Yet, Layton reminds us, individuals are always involved in socially embedded relationships – their decisions take place within these relationships and wider fields of social interaction (ibid.:235, also Kirtsoglou and Theodossopoulos 2010). Individual strategy is crucial to understanding social change but the "consequences are determined by the social environment in which different strategies are enacted, copied, or discarded" (ibid.:258). The first people to participate in imported aspects to the existing cultural repertoire create social trends that others can participate in or oppose. In Trikala this was

the case with status competitions provoked by the liberalisation of the economy in the 1980s and the years of economic prosperity in the 1990s. Competition for status through consumerism, what in this thesis I term 'tournaments of consumerism', was the result of innovations in terms of alternative capital investment. They were adaptations of previous aspects of the cultural repertoire in relation to new opportunities for investment. Over time this change actually created another form of distinction between sections of Trikalini society based on patterns of consumerism where the evaluation of status is diverse (chapter eight).

Although the individual, and the dynamic relationships between individuals, is important to understanding the detail of social change, this thesis deals with change on a wide-scale that implicates institutions on a national and global level. The understandings and implications of social change on the local people are explored but the changes themselves are the outcome of often abstract processes such as global economic downturn, conflict, population movement and governmental policy. However, the strategic decisions of people in relation to these contexts of change and upheaval are central to this study.

Chapter Overview

This thesis has a distinctive format based on initially addressing historical accounts of crisis before moving on to discussing how these historical periods inform contemporary experiences of crisis. These historical events will be referred back to throughout the study and the theoretical strands outlined above are discussed as they surface throughout the document. The chronological ordering of the first chapters is imperative to secure the basis of the ensuing discussion. The thesis is primarily concerned with the experience of crisis in Trikala and thus the first part is dedicated to setting a historical background of upheaval. As alluded to above, the selection of historical eras for discussion is based on three distinct criteria pertaining to the relevance of specific crises to the Trikalinoi. Hence those crises with direct impacts on local society, crises with significant economic consequences, and events which occupy a central place in local collective conscience will be addressed. The chapter on social

status and mobility towards the end of the thesis incorporates narratives from the time of prosperity directly before the current economic crisis and assesses the consequences of the subsequent turmoil. This chapter also refers back to the history of crisis and demonstrates how drastically changing economic conditions affect such things as social status and mobility.

After an introduction to Trikala and a summary of research methods in chapter two, chapter three begins to outline a history of crisis in Thessaly since annexation from the Ottoman Empire in 1881. This entry incorporates issues such as the peasant uprisings and the redistribution of ciftliks, agrarian reforms and the Greek-Turkish population exchange of the 1920s. The chapter concludes by offering accounts of the social upheaval of the 1940s which includes Axis occupation, the Great Famine and civil war. All these events are approached primarily from a socio-economic perspective. The direct narrative material for periods before the Second World War is laced with accounts from scholars and politicians of the time. The decade of the 1940s is especially important to help understand how Trikalinoi conceptualise contemporary crises and the impact of social change. The discussion of historical material from 1881-1950 in chapter three highlights the significance of global and national processes on local experience as not merely a modern product of globalisation and international capitalist markets.

Chapter four continues the investigation into the history of crisis in Thessaly from 1950 to the present day. This period encapsulates distinct fluctuations between economic prosperity and crisis, as well as political diversification. As such, the experience of shifting social environments allows for a delicate analysis of how economic fluctuations and political decisions are perceived by Trikalinoi and what enduring impact these changes sustain. Furthermore, through European integration and the liberalisation of national markets, global economic trends begin to seriously affect local investments of both time and capital. The consequences of these investments will here be explored.

The periods of crisis outlined in chapters three and four are employed as historical and cultural reference points by the informants to understand

successive periods of social change. They highlight cultural patterns of dealing with crisis and how these entwine with global economic processes and political decision making. The scene for the historically informed cultural experience of crisis is thus set.

Chapter five is concerned with theorising crisis. The theoretical context for discussing crisis in Trikala is outlined. As such the chapter presents theories of crisis formation and economic opportunism in times of social change. The Marxist perspective on economic crisis is examined and concepts of regional crisis formation are proposed. This chapter aims to give a firm theoretical context for discussing localised experiences of crisis by bringing the relevance of history into domains of contemporary life.

In chapter six the importance of the public sphere(s) in understanding crisis in Trikala is addressed through analysing the changing appropriation of local realms of public representation. The public sphere is central to both the informants and the anthropologist in understanding shifting modes of representation. Notions such as collective suffering and escapism will be presented in relation to the changing faces of spheres of socialisation. This includes readdressing the infamous public/private dichotomy associated with Mediterranean ethnography. The public sphere as an arena for disseminating concepts of blame and accountability is also a theme of chapter six. This topic envelops publics from small group socialisation on the streets of Trikala to realms of international politics. In all cases the economic consequences of crisis on representation in public domains is the focus of theoretical and ethnographic scrutiny.

Chapter seven explores further the localised conceptualisations of the current economic crisis. By applying Michel Serres as an *as if* informant, narratives of Trikalinoi are theorised in terms of cultural proximity. This is the idea that past periods of crisis can be evoked, even embodied, in order to explain contemporary social conditions. Trikalinoi refer to the Great Famine of 1941-1943 as a period of embodied crisis that is present in contemporary time. Serres' theory of proximate time – that two historical moments can become

simultaneous – is paramount to the explanation of the ethnographic material. Furthermore, the reasons why the Great Famine should be evoked over other periods of crisis are central to this chapter, especially as the famine was not as harshly felt in Trikala as it was in other parts of Greece. Channels such as nationalism, the education system and the cultural significance of food are proposed as explanatory factors. The issues of time and social memory are explored in an attempt to understand the complex patterns of cognition associated with periods of crisis.

Chapter eight focuses on perceptions of social status and mobility in Trikala. Accounts of status and mobility pre-crisis are presented as dependent on specific value judgements. The criteria for status and mobility vary through the cross-section of society as diverse channels of capital investment allow for internal competitions. The increase in consumerism during times of prosperity is placed in its historical context as material consumption as a form of prestige is compared with generational status. This tension also encompasses notions of 'traditional' modes of economics and 'recent' passages of socio-economic investment. Although 'tournaments of consumerism' are apparent to varying extents in all sections of society, the criteria by which status and mobility is evaluated is diverse. The sustainability of social status and mobility is also interrogated in light of the onset of economic crisis and austerity. This chapter once again highlights the significance of history and social change on local and global levels in the shaping of value judgements and strategic investments. Alternative investments in material artefacts – what are termed 'positional goods' – and education accord to diverse notions of social status. Such diversity in investment implies diversity in the consequences of economic downturn.

Through exploring historical periods of crisis and their relevance to contemporary social experience the following chapters weave together many theoretical paths. The culturally informed experience of national and global crises emphasises the intricate entwining of all levels of social experience. People interact within contexts of transnational and localised socio-economic relations. Periods of social change and upheaval inform subsequent experiences of crisis as cultural patterns are attached to wider economic trends. The

consequences of culturally informed decisions in specific periods of economic prosperity and crisis continue to shape localised versions of regional, national and global developments.

Chapter Two: Introduction and Research Methods

Introduction: setting the research scene

<u>A Note on Trikala</u>

The majority of the material on which this thesis is based was collected during a period of twelve months of ethnographic fieldwork from November 2007 to November 2008 in the town of Trikala, Thessaly, in central Greece. My affiliation with the town dates back to 2004, since when I have paid approximately two visits per year in addition to my long-term field research. In 2009, and with economic crisis palpably in the air, I returned to Trikala twice for a combined duration of seven weeks. In 2010 I spent a further five weeks in the field. These return visits proved central in assisting with the contemplation of much of the material collected during the original fieldwork period.

The town of Trikala is situated in the west of the periphery of Thessaly[19] in central mainland Greece. Trikala has a population of 51,862 (2001 census) and is located on a vast agricultural plain simply known as the 'Plain of Thessaly'. The plain is hemmed in by the Chasia and Kamvonia mountains to the north, the Olympus range to the northeast, the Pindos Mountains to the west and the Ossa and Pelion mountains to the south. The people of the plain experience very hot dry summers with temperatures regularly lingering at around 45°c and cold dry winters, when temperatures have been recorded as low as -25°c (although in my year of fieldwork the coldest it got was a mere -9°c).

Thessaly was incorporated into the Greek state from the Ottoman Empire in 1881 and now borders the peripheries of West and Central Macedonia to the north, Sterea Ellada to the south and Epirus to the west, with the Aegean Sea forming the eastern frontier. Despite consisting of the largest agricultural plain

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[19] The population of Thessaly is 753,888 according to the 2001 national census. The administrative regions in Greece consist of 13 peripheries, dived into 54 prefectures (*nomes*). In Thessaly there are four prefectures – Trikala, Larisa, Magnesia and Karditsa – which are divided into 105 municipalities and communities.

in Greece, the geography of Thessaly is actually rather diverse; approximately 36 per cent of the land is flat, 17 per cent is semi-mountainous and 45 per cent is mountainous. Due to the size of the agricultural plain, the periphery of Thessaly is often referred to as 'the bread basket of Greece' due to its high production levels (Campbell and Sherrard 1968). For this reason the region has been deemed as "the major growth zone of the country" (Bennison 1977:6) due to its strategic position halfway between the political and economic powerhouse of Athens to the south and the industrial port city of Thessaloniki to the north. Due to technological advances in flood control and the enhancement of the regional transport infrastructure, this is a label that has stuck since the 1970s, although as yet without much fruition. Further recent developments, such as the construction of the new Trikala-Larisa motorway and the Ioannina-Kozani-Thessaloniki national road, promise to further link western Thessaly to the ports of Thessaloniki and Igoumenitsa and the crucial Balkan trade routes. Additionally, the planned expansion of the International Airport of Central Greece near Volos will make Trikala and western Thessaly more accessible to European investment, especially the currently low-key tourist industry.

Trikala is one of four urban centres in Thessaly – the others being Larisa (126,076), Volos (82,439) and Karditsa (37,768) (2001 census) – and is the seat of one of the four prefectures that comprise Thessaly. The town is situated on the river Litheos, a tributary of the river Pineios, and lies approximately four hours drive (327km) northwest of Athens and three hours (249km) southwest of Thessaloniki. The settlement dates back to Classical times when it was known by the name Trikki. References to ancient Trikki can be found in many Classical texts, including the work of Homer. Remnants of an ancient sanctuary dedicated to the physician-god Asklepios are located near the centre of the modern town. This was once the site of a 'healing centre' dedicated to Asklepios and is widely considered as the oldest Aesculpadium in Greece[20].

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[20] http://www.mlahanas.de/Greece/Cities/Trikala.html

Map.1. The location of Thessaly periphery (light shading) and Trikala prefecture
(dark shading) in Greece

Map.2. The four prefectures of Thessaly (Thessalia) and their principle urban centres
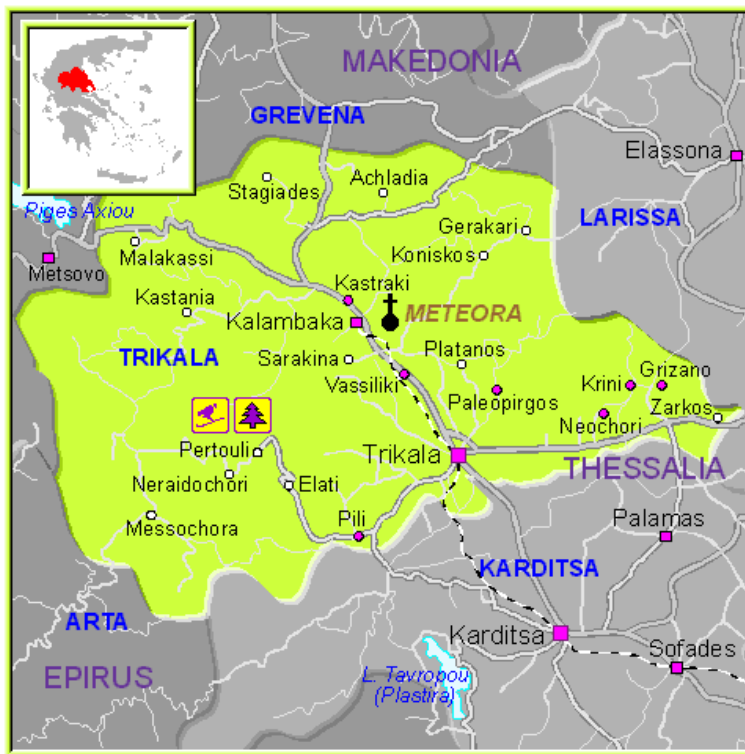
Map.3. Trikala prefecture. The research for this thesis is focused principally on the town of Trikala and the 'golden triangle' between Trikala, Kalambaka and Pili.

On a small hill overlooking the old town (known as Varousi) there is an ancient acropolis upon which stands a substantial Byzantine fortress that dominates the skyline. Other historic sites in the town include multiple Byzantine churches and the Ottoman Kursum Tzami, a sixteenth century mosque restored in the mid-1990s with European Union funding and the only work of the great Ottoman architect Mimar Sinan to be found on Greek soil (Hellander 2006)[21].

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[21] Mimar Sinan (c. 1490-1578) oversaw the construction of the famous Sultan Ahmed Mosque (also known as the Blue Mosque) in Istanbul as he was chief architect on the Suleiman Mosque (also in Istanbul) and the Selimiye Mosque in Edrine. He was chief Ottoman architect for Sultans Suleiman I, Selim II, and Murad III.

Picture.1. Greek Orthodox Church of Agios Konstantinos with the Ottoman Kursum Tzami in the background

The critical events in the history of Trikala since annexation from the Ottoman Empire are extensively covered in chapters three and four and facilitate the central arguments of this thesis. These events are discussed primarily in terms of social and economic impact on the local inhabitants, but also touch on issues of national and international importance. Therefore, for the present only a very brief outline of the history of the town will be presented.

The first signs of life in the vicinity of Trikala date back to numerous Neolithic settlements believed to be from around 6,000 BCE. The ancient city of Trikki was founded around 3,000 BCE and was purportedly named after the nymph of the same name. The city was of high importance in antiquity and became the capital of the State of Estaiotidas[22] before falling to the Persians in 480 BCE. In 352 BCE Philip of Macedon united Thessaly with the Kingdom of Macedonia. After a brief Roman occupation at the turn of the Millennium, Trikala

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[22] www.e-thessaly.gr

experienced the rule of numerous prospectors, including the Goths, Huns, Slavs, Bulgars, Normans, Catalans and Byzantines, before finally being incorporated into the Ottoman Empire in 1393 (Katsogiannos 1992:9). In 1779 the town was recorded as being home to 12,000 people consisting 'of more Turks than Greeks', although the Greeks governed the city with their own money and had the power to appoint and dismiss Turkish administrators as they pleased (Katsogiannos 1992:22).

During Ottoman rule Thessaly was divided into vast ciftliks (great estates) which were worked by *colligi* (villager tenants). Ciftliks were originally granted to Muslim settlers to Turkish lands and were to eventually become a system of great estates that enswathed the Plain of Thessaly (Mouzelis 1978, Aroni-Tsichli 2005:26). After annexation in 1881 the ciftliks were bought by new Greek investors, changing local social relations for decades, until the eventual implementation of the agrarian reforms from 1917 (Karavidas 1931, Sanders 1962, Mazower 1991). Relations with the land were further changed to accommodate the settlement of refugees from Asia Minor after the 1923 Treaty of Lausanne and the economic crisis of the late 1920s (Pentzopoulos 1962, Mazower 1991).

Western Thessaly was the scene of much fighting during the Second World War, with Greek, British and Commonwealth troops attempting to hold off German advances through the Kalampaka pass. The region was also affected by the Great Famine of 1941-1943 (Hionidou 2006) and the civil war (Close 1993, 1995) that also denotes the decade. During the civil war Trikala was the centre for the communist organisations EAM/ELAS and the surrounding area experienced considerable clashes between communist and nationalist groups. This period is also significant for the number of people that relocated from Greek Macedonia to the town, partially in order to escape the increased threats of violence from both sides, which included regular kidnappings.

Since the military junta of 1967-1974, Trikala and the surrounding plain has been the focus of much attention regarding grain production for exportation. The national government had for a long time felt that Thessaly was not efficient in

fulfilling its potential as 'the bread basket of Greece', both in terms of providing national self-sufficiency and surplus for transnational export. With the help of the European Union after accession in 1981, the regional focus has been on the increased production of cash crops and intensive farming strategies.

Trikala: getting around

In terms of urbanity Trikala is difficult to classify. Although a large town by Greek standards in terms of population (51,862), the urban area is very compact and surrounded by an array of agricultural villages. Most villages within the immediate vicinity consist of populations of between 100 and 800 residents[23]. Trikala acts as a commercial hub; as the location for weekly markets, transport links, national and multinational chain stores, banks, and other commercial amenities. However, the town cannot be classified as urban in the same way as Athens, Thessaloniki or even Larisa. The interaction between town and villages is intense and one could not prosper without the other. Trikala is detached from other urban centres – it only has two direct trains a day to Thessaloniki, over three hours away and the same number to Athens, some five hours away. Thus Trikala is a distinctly rural urban centre – or an urban centre with a distinctly rural flair[24]. As it happens, the situational context of this research was to reflect this rural-urban ambiguity as I resided in the village of Livadi, 4 kilometres from the centre of Trikala, with a family who embraced and exemplified the rural-urban relationship.

The town of Trikala consists of the central commercial street, Asklipiou, lined with cafeterias-come-bars and high-rent commercial outlets, and a series of adjacent roads and pedestrianised areas. Asklipiou is also the location for many of the most highly respected medical practices in the town, situated high up on the fourth and fifth floors of apartment blocks at the southern end of the main pedestrianised area. Asklipiou is considered as the heart of the town, although

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[23] See Bennison (1977) for an analytic break-down of village populations and services provided in Nomos Trikalon.
[24] See Just (2000:20-24) for a discussion of rural and urban contexts for anthropological research in Greece and Vermeulen (1983) for urban anthropology in Greece.

the 'central square' is located a five minute walk away past the statue of Stefanos Sarafis and over a bridge to the other side of the river.

In terms of transport amenities Trikala is home to a non-mainline train station which continues north as far as Kalampaka, and an inter-city bus station (KTEL) with multiple daily services to other urban centres across mainland Greece. The three main roads connect Trikala with Larisa to the east, Karditsa to the south and Kalampaka (and then on to Ioannina or Grevena) to the north-west. The town is home to a general hospital with what is collectively acknowledged to be the worst reputation in the Balkans (an issue confirmed by doctors employed within), a 15,000 capacity sports stadium, three major hotels and branches of all major national but no foreign banks. There are two multinational supermarket chains situated in the town, one situated in the centre and one that has two stores on the periphery. Other commercial amenities of interest include travel agents offering package deals to such exotic destinations as Java and Barbados, five internet cafes, and the store that has colonised every Greek provincial town – Marks and Spencer.

The central streets are a blend of national and local fast food outlets, national and multinational chain stores such as Zara, Alexi Andriotti, Benetton, Sephora and Hondos Center, and innumerable cafeteria-come-bars. The capillary streets, although only a few minutes walk from Asklipiou, are more a combination of small privately owned businesses such as hairdressers, travel agencies, and book shops. Above these outlets there are often approximately five stories of two or three bedroom residential accommodation with balconies overlooking the rooftops of the town centre and views away towards Kalampaka or Pyli.

Off the central square two opposing avenues are the scenes of alternative social and economic activities. To the north-west there is the old town with its assortment of intimate restaurants with typically Greek menus and small privately owned speciality shops such as a picture framers and professional photographers. To the south-east the streets widen to open onto what every Monday morning becomes the local market, catering for all needs of diet and

apparel. Many people take the early bus ride in from the surrounding villages to frequent the Monday market, both to purchase and sell goods[25].

On the outskirts of the town, but still only a ten minute walk away from the centre, are the residential neighbourhoods. The odd lonesome Ottoman relic with its distinctive rusty coloured stone walls and ramshackle tiled roof is sandwiched between concrete new builds dating from between the 1950s-1990s, painted white. The houses often have little uniformity and thus the internal dimensions vary greatly. Often the houses have been divided into apartments as parents have given them to their children as part of the dowry or in inheritance. Many were self-built by internal migrants after the civil war, whilst others are more recent, having been constructed as a result of the investment of capital gained through the economically prosperous years of the 1990s. Such an irregularity in style creates a unique atmosphere with each building bringing its own distinct character to the neighbourhood, each with a story to tell. It also means that the discovery of Ottoman buildings is all the more exciting as they appear unexpectedly from behind an array of 1960s concrete miscellanies.

Spaces of Socialisation

The main space for socialisation in Trikala is the 700 metre long central commercial street of Asklipiou (Hellander 2006). Built in the 1890s and partially pedestrianised in 1932[26], Asklipiou is nowadays lined with numerous coffeeshops-come-bars and high-end national and transnational fashion outlets. The street has been established since the beginning of the twentieth century as the *par-excellence* place of the '*volta*' (a leisurely stroll with the point being to see and to be seen). After the Second World War the *volta* on Asklipiou became a custom that exists until the present day. The gradual increase in economic prosperity, the augmentation of the population and the female emancipation turned Asklipiou into the central place for bride-picking (*nifopazero*). Up until the 1970s even the Sunday best clothes were tailored for the dual purpose of

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[25] For a discussion of the role of local markets in increasingly capitalist contexts see La Pradelle (2006).

[26] http://www.trikala-tourism.gr/portal/page/portal/etrikala/publicinfo/Asklipeiou_Street

church and the *volta* on Asklipiou, as were the female high heels and the male black suits. Asklipiou was not only the place of the *volta* for the Trikalinoi, but also for people from the surrounding villages. Therefore there co-existed multiple versions of traditional costumes on display in the street, including the *sigouna*, the costume of the local Karagounides that consisted of woven black and white wool waistcoats decorated with cord, gold thread and beads worn over a heavily embroidered wool or silk shirt and a long skirt (anagennisis 7th of September 1948 in Katsogiannos 2000:214). A lot of women had the courage to stroll continuously for two to three hours until they had blisters on their feet (ibid.:215).

Since the post-war period Asklipiou has been home to the most elegant entertainment establishments. Nowadays the street consists of many cafeterias, bars and shops catering for the top-end of the Greek high street, as well as three of Trikala's finest hotels and expensive apartment blocks housing a range of doctors, dentists and lawyers. The immediate area on and around Asklipiou continues to be the centre for *voltes* (plural of *volta*) and is the place to see and be seen. People come from both the town and the surrounding villages adorned in the latest fashions, sporting the must-have sunglasses, designer jackets and handbags. Teenage youths and middle-aged professionals alike are on display in high heels, short skirts or with leather jackets and flashy watches. It is the favourite space for people of all ages to sit back, *frappé* in hand, and look the part. Asklipiou still operates as the centre for young men and women to watch each other, meet up and socialise; and due to the dual purpose of the numerous cafeterias-come-bars, this is now a twenty-four hour a day practice. It is impossible to walk the length of the street at any hour without physically feeling the eyes peering at you across the empty beer bottles and coffee cups. There is an outwardly obvious status competition and a tournament of consumerism taking place and thus the street has become a metaphorical measure for many social and economic features, including the current state of economic crisis or prosperity. As will become apparent throughout this thesis, the public representation of crisis and prosperity is inherently linked to the observable changes on Asklipiou both in terms of general consumer and individual activity.

It is also the ideal place for people to gossip and to exchange information and narratives of the past.

Interestingly, Asklipiou has also become a metaphorical gauge for local stereotypes relating to 'types' of people. The street can be employed negatively in daily discourse to denote a person that has nothing better to do than sit around drinking coffee all day attempting to appear 'cool' by exhibiting themselves. This is especially true when applied to the villagers that visit Trikala with the sole intention of sitting at a cafeteria on Asklipiou. During my time in Trikala the occasions were numerous when a conversation would involve the derogatory phrases "*they don't want to find a job, they would rather sit on Asklipiou ...*", "*the students finish university and spend their parents' money in the cafeterias of Asklipiou. They are sat there in the morning and return during the night ...*", "t*hey are the type of people that incorporate visiting their father in hospital with a trip to Asklipiou to drink their* kafedaki *...*", "*He spent his money on designer clothes to go and chat up the girls on Asklipiou, now he is broke ...*", "*I am sure he can find the time to do some* voltes *on Asklipiou, that is where he seems to live ...*".

Picture.2. Setting up for another day's trade: early morning on Asklipiou

Picture.3. Monday market in central Trikala

Other social spaces in the town are worth noting for their diverse demographic appeal and atmospheric flavour. The central square (Kentriki Plateia) Riga Fereou situated close to the Monday open-air market and surrounded by banks and national chain stores, is the location for the early morning gathering of elderly local men. Sheltered from the sun by a canopy of dense trees, the shallow pond and two small cafeterias provide the ideal location for elderly men to gather on a daily basis from about 7.30am until just before midday. In the evening the severe lack of nightlife around the plateia means that it is little more than a taxi rank and a pass-through route to Asklipiou and Plateia OTE. Plateia OTE on the outskirts of the old town and a mere ten minute walk from Asklipiou is popular with families and young people alike. The popularity of this specific social space has increased of late as people attempt to find an alternative to the high prices of Asklipiou in a time of economic austerity. Despite the 'special offers' now found on and around Asklipiou, Plateia OTE and the narrow winding streets of the old town with their range of tavernas and intimate bars has become a favoured financial (although not exactly 'budget') alternative for those not so obsessed with the *volta*. On the outskirts of the town, the tavernas of *Lofos* (literally, hill), offer panoramic views over the otherwise extremely flat city and cater for a more refined cliental. *Lofos* is often the first port of call for people who want to dine in a smart restaurant before heading out to sample the nightlife of the town centre.

In addition to the central *plateies*, each neighbourhood has its own local square. These squares are the hub of local socialisation where men, women and children gather throughout the day to play, discuss politics, the economic situation, football, and gossip about members of the family and mutual friends. The surrounding villages, such as Livadi where I resided during my fieldwork, almost unanimously consist of a central square with adjacent children's playground and numerous cafeterias that operate as the centre of village socialisation.

A Note on Livadi

The village of Livadi was where I set up home for the twelve-month duration of my fieldwork and subsequent visits. Livadi is situated four kilometres northwest of Trikala towards Kalampaka. From the outskirts of the village and from the balconies of the houses the views stretch as far as the monasteries of Meteora and the peaks of the Pindos mountains, which are capped with snow for six months of the year. The village has a population of approximately 800 souls and has almost become a suburb of Trikala due to recent developments along the main transport routes out of the town. Livadi consists of a church, cemetery, primary school, children's playground, five coffee shops, a small 'supermarket', KAPI (literally, Open Centre for Protecting the Elderly) that doubles up as the post office and, as of 2010, a pharmacy and a fast food outlet. The village square contains a concrete fountain at its heart which is filled with water and turned on for special occasions. The square is dotted with wooden benches and is at the heart of the public sphere in Livadi.

Off the square is the small supermarket, catering for everyday dietary and household needs, including a delicatessen and butchers. Outside the store are situated two large refrigerators of chilled drinks, a freezer full of ice creams, and a selection of children's toys including footballs and small dolls. Next to the supermarket is a small cafeteria and the KAPI where the elderly men of the village congregate every morning around 8am and drink the first of many coffees as they patronise up to three of the five cafeterias each day (cf. Just 2000:174-177). They also collect the family mail from Vaso, the owner, on the days the postman comes. Just off the main square lies another slightly larger cafeteria which is home to the only giant television screen in the village. As such, as well as catering for the morning coffees, this space gets more congested on evenings when Greek Super League or international football, as well as basketball, is screened live. On these occasions – sometimes as many as five nights a week (or more during World Cup or European Championship years) – the television is audible as far away as the cemetery on the other extreme of the village periphery. This cafeteria has recently branched out as a small take-away offering *souvlakia* and *giro* and a selection of alcoholic beverages. From 2010 a

small pharmacy has opened adjacent to this cafeteria and orders prescriptions and over-the-counter medication from Trikala on a daily basis. On the road towards Trikala are situated the other two coffee shops, one next to a small murky stream and the other – the biggest of the five – located within a small wooded area. The latter is most commonly used to host local gatherings on occasions of weddings and funerals.

The primary school, usually catering for between ten and twenty children, and small Orthodox church back on to the village square and are opposite a children's playground which doubles up as a football pitch for teenage boys on summer evenings (as the village football pitch is a ten minute walk from the central square). The playground is serviced by the village fresh water spring which is next to the bus stop which the Trikala-Livadi bus frequents eight to ten times a day. Of a summer evening Livadi is buzzing with a thick balmy atmosphere. As it is on a vast, flat, treeless inland plain, hemmed in by high mountains on three sides there is rarely a breeze during the summer months when night-time temperatures regularly remain above 25-30°c. The humidity is increased by the amount of irrigation sprinklers activated in the surrounding fields. During the winter months Livadi appears barren and uninviting. The air is crisp and the village regularly remains covered in a blanket of snow for weeks at a time.

The village has been the site for much new development over the past ten years as people living in the often cramped apartments of central Trikala have bought plots of land from the local government in order to build spacious new family homes. The expansion of the village has been intensified by people relocating from the mountainous Pindos area of western Thessaly towards urban centres in search of work. Hence the population of working age in Livadi is now a mix of commuters and the more traditional agriculturalists that work the land around the village. Additionally, the recent influx of gypsies (*tsiggani*) has meant that semi-legal, semi-permanent settlements have been set up on the outskirts of the village, much to the dissatisfaction of the resident villagers. These structures are located on one side of a central road and are made of corrugated iron, crude concrete blocks and pieces of coloured material. However, opposite these

makeshift dwellings the very same people are building plush extravagant villas erected due to the pooling of collective finances. Slowly each extended family is moving across the road into the newly built houses.

The movement of people between village and town in Trikala *nomos* (prefecture) is substantial. This is exaggerated in Livadi due to its proximity to Trikala and the amount of people that are employed in the town. Each village has at least a small supermarket and a coffee shop, and most have some sort of business that doubles up as a post office. In the majority of the surrounding villages there is a proportion of daily commuters but most of the trips to Trikala are more occasional in order to take care of 'jobs' (*douleies*) such as visiting the bank, attending the weekly market, going to the doctor and dentist or purchasing domestic appliances. Visiting friends, family and going for *voltes* in the central streets are also reasons for occasional visits to the town.

Livelihoods in Trikala

Employment and livelihood strategies in *nomos* Trikalon are a combination of intensive and subsistence agriculture, employment in the public sector and small private businesses. Over the past century Trikala has been associated with agriculture and a strongly connected tertiary sector[27] (Bennison 1977:viii). Until the post-war period much of the local economy was based on subsistence agriculture[28]. From the 1960s to the 1970s this practice began to be slowly phased out as the government encouraged the cultivation of commercial crops in an attempt to make Greece self-sufficient rather than depending on excessive imports that were prone to price fluctuations (Bennison 1977). However, since the incorporation of Greece into the European Community (1981) and the liberalisation of the national markets in the 1980s, there has been a delicate

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[27] Here I define tertiary as the businesses and institutions relating to commercial activity, banking services, medical and hospital services, administration and transport (Bennison 1977:184).

[28] For a discussion on the agricultural economy of Trikala in the early nineteenth century see Leake (1835). For a more contemporary account of agricultural economy and the consequences for tertiary development in the 1970s see Bennison (1977). Concerning the agrarian reform in Greece and specifically its effects on Thessaly, see Karavidas (1931) and Sanders (1962). For an overview of Greek agriculture in relation to capitalism and modernity see Mouzelis (1978).

balance between political and economic incentives for intensive agriculture on the one hand and increased foreign competition driving down prices on the other. The viability of the agricultural livelihood is constantly fluctuating, with some people having to take second jobs to supplement their income. A solution to the problem of profitable agricultural exports and the associated issue of the organisation of labour and production costs has been sought ever since the subsistence livelihood started to give way to commercial crops in the 1960s and 1970s (Campbell and Sherrard 1968:328). This has led to a local saying that was repeated to me on many occasions; "*There is no money in the villages because the fields do not bring money*".

According to many of my informants, the preferred jobs in Trikala in terms of money, stability and desirability are in the various chain supermarkets and shops. These are a mixture of Greek and foreign companies that pay a flat rate on a monthly basis. Acquiring jobs at these supermarkets is not straightforward as people must be patronised by someone already working in the store (see chapter eight). The most distinguished and prestigious occupations are as doctors, dentists and university professors. In terms of the majority of employment in the town, many people work in smaller shops in the town centre. This includes those living in the immediate peripheral villages who commute on a daily basis, but not those residing more than ten kilometres out of the town that tend to be employed either in agriculture or in small private businesses. Another source of a good income and a respectable job is that of a teacher, for which one requires a university degree. As most teachers are employed in state schools, the wage in stable, the pension good, the medical insurance is covered and the job is secure (or so it was thought in 2007/2008). Teachers in private schools often have a higher degree or have studied abroad and hence earn a higher wage, but without the pension and medical perks. There is an abundance of private language schools in Trikala and numerous night schools that offer education to mature students. The long held idea that working for the state is the most secure form of employment has recently been challenged by the wide sweeping redundancies made as part of the economic austerity measures.

The companies OTE (telecommunications), Trikki, Tyras and Fage (all producers of dairy products) are four national companies and major employers in *nomos* Trikalon. Due to the latter three, Thessaly has become self-sufficient in milk and cheese and the companies possess a wide distribution network across Greece. However, there are no large agricultural factories apart from storage centres. This shortage of factories is something that local people blame for the perceived high unemployment and lack of "opportunities" for young people that return from university. Additionally, OTE is considered as one of the best and most prestigious employers in Trikala due to the terms offered to employees. Some companies have recently been found to be employing as many as 300 people for just 100 legitimate posts. This meant that many employees spent their time 'at work' by sitting at empty desks, 'popping out' to do the shopping, or drinking coffee and socialising. With recent economic austerity measures, many of these jobs have now been cut.

Since the late 1990s the European Union (EU) has been issuing grants for people in Greece to start their own business. The scheme proved popular in Trikala and many people set up hairdressing salons, travel agents, garages, photo shops or book stores, to name but a few. The majority of these businesses are located close to the town centre. One lady, Stella, set up a tourist office with an EU grant of 6,000 euros a year paid in two instalments per year for the course of three years (amounting to 18,000 euros in total). The funding, coupled with her father's money, just about covered the purchase and furnishing of the shop, the establishment of business contacts and the initial advertising. Two years on Stella is still feeling the strain of the initial 'setting-up' period of the business, although she has now established a regular client base. Another benefactor from the grant is Aris, who has set up a garage along one of the main roads into Trikala. He says that a lot of the money goes on advertising as establishing a regular clientele beyond family and friends is one of the most difficult tasks. He has tried some advertisements on the local radio and has created some catchy slogans. Aris says that he tries to appeal to the materialistic nature of many young Trikalini men who believe that they can modify their car in order to attract young women. However, the problem is that "*people in Trikala tend to go for the cheapest product, not the best quality*". This is a problem echoed by

many who have set up businesses with the EU grant – establishing the client base is difficult but friends always inform friends, appealing to people that do not appreciate the 'quality' of workmanship was more complicated. Maro, a hairdresser and another benefactor of the grant, gets around this problem by advertising 'English-style' haircuts: 'the fashion of London'. *"The Trikalini women cannot resist ... they have something to tell their friends, who get jealous and come to me for the same"*. This is a strategy that also works well for Stella as *"people compete for the most exotic holiday, so these are the ones I concentrate on advertising"*.

The main problem with the grant is that after three years the business has to support itself. Family members are usually required to contribute financially in order to bridge the gap. Due to the nature of the small private businesses, often employing at the most three people, income fluctuates depending on the time of year and economic conditions. Some people, such as Maro, do separate evening jobs or attend night classes in order to train as teachers or to improve their English so as to increase their employment prospective. Some times of year there is hardly any income for the hairdressers, whilst at Christmas, Easter and before the summer holidays, the diary is fully booked. Aris finds that his garage is quite the opposite; at Christmas, Easter and during the summer people are saving their money for things other than their car. Other problems for the self-employed businessman/woman include the fact that employees rarely have contracts so can quit without notice, and there is not the security of state pensions or insurance. Furthermore, many feel that 'the good life' is impeded as there are no set holiday times and stress is constant. Employees in the public sector refute this argument and state that 'at least you are your own boss. You can close when you want, do what you want and do not have the stress of a superior above you'.

Cultural Identification in Trikala

Trikala is home to numerous cultural groups that originate from central and northern Greece, as well as from further afield. All groups are subject to cultural stereotypes employed by other factions, but there is much social interaction between the groups. In the mid-twentieth century Trikala was the focus of much permanent rural to urban geographical mobility[29]. The source of much of this population movement was the villages of Greek Macedonia on the fringes of the northern border of Thessaly. For example, some villages in *nomos* Grevenon in the Pindos Mountains, experienced an almost total migration to the three closest urban centres – Thessaloniki, Kozani and Trikala. The inhabitants, many of which were employed in the prominent construction industry of the mountainous region, sought employment elsewhere after the upheaval of the Second World War and the subsequent civil war (1946-1949) that was harshly experienced in the northern regions of Greece. The factors for what could be classified as an internal migration were primarily social and economic and related to escaping persecution, finding employment opportunities, education and social mobility. In Trikala, these people were accommodated on the periphery of the town in make-shift houses and effectively found a way into the labour market. Eventually the people acquired land in other neighbourhoods by pooling their capital and built houses on adjacent plots according to the criteria of village identification (this is explored fully in the chapter three).

Nowadays, the majority of families retain at least one dwelling and often an amount of land back in the village of origin and this is transmitted to the successive generations in the form of dowry and inheritance. For the most part, extensive exogamy has resulted in the loosening of the links with the place of origin. Today the second and third generation descendants of the migrant families maintain more or less meaningful connections with their Macedonian

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[29] Rural to urban mobility (here I deliberately refrain from using the term migration) was homogeneously felt in most Mediterranean and Balkan regions after the Second World War and was influenced by many social and economic factors. Between 1956 and 1960, some 250,000 people participated in internal rural to urban migration in Greece. Additionally many temporarily emigrated abroad, most notably to West Germany (Campbell and Sherrard 1968:328, see Friedl 1976, Davis 1977, Hirschon 1989, Argyrou 1996 for discussion of migration in the context of Greece).

villages according to how often they frequent their houses during national holidays and summer vacations. It is still usual for second generation[30] residents who were born and raised in Trikala, to identify themselves as 'Macedonian' and when asked, state, "*I am from the village of Kalimera, Grevenon*" for example. The third generation descendants of the population movement now maintain various affiliations with the villages of their Grandparents, depending on ethnic/cultural identification, property ownership, how many elderly relatives continue to reside in the village and how often they themselves continue to visit the place.

Due to the aforementioned internal population movements, coupled with the compulsory exchange of populations between Greece and Turkey after the Treaty of Lausanne in 1923[31], Trikala is now home to a variety of cultural groups, all of which distinguish themselves according to cultural traits. The descendants of the civil war migrants from Greek Macedonia are mainly, although not exclusively, of Vlach or Sarakatsani background. The Vlachs, often stereotyped as the people of the highlands, have their own language and set of culture values. Many of my informants argue that Vlachs are not as 'Hellenised' as other cultural groups and therefore always patronise their own people before giving consideration to anyone else. Often the term 'Vlach' is used in discourse in order to denote the 'second class citizen', the uneducated, and the vulgar. The category 'Vlach', Cowan argues, has different valences depending on context. Hence a person living on the Greek side of the Macedonian border inhabits the category rather differently to another in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) (2000:12).

Another group, the Karagounides, evoke a stereotype of "the people of the plain". This is in direct contrast to the stereotype associated with the Vlachs. Karagounides postulate themselves as 'the real Greeks'. They consider themselves to be the true 'locals' (*dopioi*), which in this case is better translated as 'people of this place' (Agelopoulos 1997:11, Cowan 1997:153, Kirtsoglou

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[30] Here I follow Lisón-Tolosana's (1966) definition of 'generations'.
[31] This was the peace treaty drawn up concerning the partitioning of the Ottoman Empire (cf. Pentzopoulos 1962, Hirschon 1989 for how the treaty affected population exchange).

and Sistani 2003:192) that have been in the area since Classical times. Others perceive them as having 'thick heads' and being very stubborn. The Sarakatsani, most famously the subjects of Campbell's 1964 ethnography *'Honour, Family and Patronage'*, are stereotyped as a nomadic people of the Epirus region. They are associated with being Vlach due to their traditional employment as pastoralists. However, on meeting a Sarakatsan, this equation will be refuted with a phrase such as "*you found the Vlach, now make his tomb*" (traditional proverb). Other cultural groups in Trikala include Arvanites, *Tsigganoi* (gypsies), Jews, and descendants from the resettled refugees of the 1923 population exchange with Turkey – mainly of Cappadocian and Pontian backgrounds. Pontian people, for example, are the focus of stereotypes concerning stupidity. Indeed, the word 'Pontian' is used on a daily basis to describe someone who has no sense. Additionally, their folk tales and traditional dances can become the subject of exaggerated imitations by non-Pontians.

Negative stereotypes about the Other are circulated on a daily basis in Trikala. Innumerable are the times when I have heard statements of the type; "*the Vlachs are cunning and successful entrepreneurs*"; "*the Karagounides are stupid and idle*"; "*the Pontians are completely thick*". Such assertions are reinforced by proverbs and folk tales where traits such as intelligence and cunning are exaggerated. Indeed, within folk songs, in short stories and in everyday discourse, the Other is always present, stereotyped, but always within.

Often in the field I have heard it claimed that Vlachs and Pontians are not Greek. To claim that a Karagouni's ancestors had Vlach blood is met with denial and distain as they are sometimes thought of as of Slavic origins. "*For we are Karagounides. The real Greeks, of real Greece. As old as time. Greeks won't lower themselves to the level of work of an Albanian, or even a Vlach*". After the influx of the Albanian economic emigrants during the 1980s the stereotype repertoire has been widened in order to include them. This has been reflected in a shift in economic practice among my Karagounides informants who no longer go to work in the Peloponnese during the winter months, despite the fact that it is now very much easier to do so, because the work in the fields is 'below' them and only suitable for 'Albanians'. Furthermore, when looking for

work in Trikala to support their fluctuating agricultural income, many automatically dismiss certain jobs due to their stereotyped association to another 'lower' group of people. Such comparisons allow each group to classify and feel secure with their own expectations (Theodossopoulos 2003:179).

All of the above are stereotypes authored by people who reside in close proximity with each other. Yet in the face of nationalised debates such as 'the Macedonian Question'[32] these people are united, their stereotypes of each other set aside for the defence of a grander stereotyped ideology and they may easily dismiss the fact that they refer to an area inhabited by the same groups of people whom they have culturally, cognitively and economically stereotyped. This form of sub-national stereotype allows the conceptualisation of Greece as at once being a homogeneous entity whilst still being comprised of a number of meaningful parts. Hence, whilst in the field, "the boundaries of neither cultures nor traditions can be taken either analytically or methodologically for granted" (Faubion 2003:147, Hacking 1999).

Research Methods

As mentioned above, my affiliation to the field dates back to 2004 when, as a first-year undergraduate student in anthropology, I visited the family of a friend who reside in a village 4 kilometres from Trikala. I had travelled to Greece for family holidays since 1989 when a trip to Crete formed one of my earliest childhood memories; what, over time, has become a memory of a memory. Subsequent holidays to various Islands and a first venture onto the mainland in 2001 reinforced the place that Greece, and Greeks, had captured in both my heart and mind. I have so far explained the theoretical and ethnographic reasons why I decided to conduct fieldwork in Trikala, I shall now present a more personal account of why this specific site was selected.

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[32] In Greece when one refers to Macedonia (Makedonia) this is always with reference to the geographical region of Greek Macedonia and not FYROM (known as Skopia in Greece). The dispute of the name is not a particularly recent phenomenon. Similarly to myself, Sutton notes that this issue was "dominating the political scene, the Greek media and the discussions of ordinary people" during the period of his fieldwork in 1992 and 1993 (1998:175). Following Sutton, I believe that the use of the name *Skopia* in reference to FYROM is a deliberate rhetorical ploy to reduce the country to its capital city (Sutton 1998:177).

My first day at university in Lampeter in 2003 sealed what, in hindsight, was a foregone conclusion. Finding myself to be the only Englishman in a hall of forty Greeks and the simultaneous discovery that my foremost anthropology lecturer was also Greek, my future was sealed. The three years at Lampeter saw me create a circle of companions of Greek origin and this provided an invaluable primer in the Greek language – despite the fact that most things I was taught to say were completely irrelevant for what was required for an everyday conversation. These relationships, two in particular, introduced me to the region of Thessaly. The visit in 2004 was my first to Trikala and would be followed up by trips in 2005, 2006 and a preliminary fieldwork visit for four weeks in April 2007 before entering my doctoral fieldwork period in November 2007. My fieldwork started in a time of economic prosperity in Trikala. No one could have begun to predict the air of economic uncertainty that was proliferating on the global stage one year later. The full impact of the severe economic reality did not hit Greece until the following year, 2009, however in the latter months of my original fieldwork year significant doubt had started to surface in Trikala as to the effects of the global crisis on the local level. The unchecked years of prosperity were beginning to be questioned in relation to previous experiences of economic downturn, such as the stock market crash of the late 1990s when a global downturn led to full-scale crisis in Greece. With major economies going into recession, how would this affect Trikalinoi?

In the final three months of my official fieldwork year my line of questioning started to change towards peoples experiences of crisis and economic hardship. What they expected, what they had experienced in the past, their fears and assumptions relating to government handling of national budgets and the perspectives of individual investors and consumers in Trikala. What resulted was an interrogation of the sustainability of prosperity in the age of capitalism. This dove-tailed with my initial research questions and the main themes that had come from my fieldwork so far – issues concerning social status, social mobility, small and medium enterprises and the relationship between patron-clientelism and capitalist systems of social relations. I found that by adopting this stance and the rather fortunate early recognition that something big was

about to happen, helped connect the global, national and local perspectives of socio-economic experience as well as link the past – 'history', crudely put – with the present. In hindsight I feel very lucky to have conducted research that has straddled such a significant time of social change, the fissure between socio-economic prosperity and crisis closing rapidly over the past few years and culminating in a series of historical events of considerable magnitude.

With the situation in Greece developing quickly on my return to England in November 2008 I continued to follow developments closely through online newspapers and frequent telephone conversations with friends in Trikala. In 2009 I managed to return to Trikala twice, once in July for a period of four weeks and once just before Christmas for a period of three weeks. The following year I visited in April for three weeks and August for two weeks. Each visit has been with the dual purpose of seeing friends and family whilst primarily collecting information and assessing the situation on the ground. These follow-up trips have been priceless in helping make sense of much of the data gathered in the latter months of my fieldwork year. The relations and relationships that were created in the field have allowed for immediate access to pools of information during follow-up visits foregoing the usual formalities one may encounter when meeting an informant for the first time.

I believe that 'the elongated field' is a very positive aspect of conducting fieldwork generally, and particularly for the case in hand. If one were to cut-off the field after a preordained period of time, despite fascinating new developments, solely due to university, funding or personally imposed restrictions, highly significant aspects of social reality would be purposefully ignored, even deleted, in the ethnographic record. The binding of the fieldwork experience in specific spatio-temporal frames is sometimes necessary as otherwise no piece of work would ever come to a conclusion. However, in this case, a number of factors combine to justify the continuation of 'fieldwork' beyond the original spatio-temporal boundary. For one, Trikala has remained highly accessible to me. In many ways the field is physically 'in the house' on a daily basis and is further accessed through the telephone and emails. Secondary sources are also readily available. Yet the main argument concerning

accessibility is the ease at which one can return to the place itself, to slot back in to social circles, to live in the same house with the same family as if they are your own and observe first hand the shifting social dynamics.

<u>Methods of Data Collection</u>

My primary technique of data collection was through participant observation. For a period of one year and subsequent visits amounting to another four months, I lived in the village of Livadi, near Trikala, Greece. During this time I accompanied my informants as they went about their daily lives, working, shopping, socialising, preparing weddings and burying their dead. Much of the data on which this thesis is based comes from informal conversations and discussions with inhabitants of Trikala, Livadi and other villages of *nomos* Trikalon. Informal discussions took place both on the individual level and among groups of friends and relatives (Ellen 1984, Silverman 1993). Many of these people became my friends, even family, whilst others acted as gatekeepers, culture keepers and institutional contacts. These informal conversations were recorded in a field diary that consisted of narratives, stories, historical data and my own reflexive accounts of experiencing 'the field'[33]. As will become apparent below, living with a family in Livadi allowed for a unique insight into daily family life, the moments of elation, and the times of great mourning, the monetary matters, family conflicts and long winter evenings watching political satires and old Greek films on the television. The informal recording of these events in the fieldwork diary was paramount to the construction of a thesis that aims to do justice to how social relations are affected at every level by shifting socio-economic conditions.

Some 'interviews' were more structured (cf. Spradley 1980:123-125, Mishler 1986). This was especially the case with doctors, dentists and government officials as I often had to fit into their busy schedules which included working evenings. On these more formal occasions I often prepared a line of questioning in advance, although on many occasions the stimulating conversation concluded

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[33] For a discussion on the use of computers in fieldwork see Coffey and Atkinson (1996:ch.7).

that the topics under discussion were very flexible. However, the prepared questions, written in Greek, assisted in reminding me of key points that needed to be addressed throughout the course of inevitably meandering conversations. With such informants, especially those outside of my immediate circle of friends, it was more difficult to gain trust as the concept of my anthropological research – especially on economics, crisis and mobility – seemed abstract and was sometimes even viewed with suspicion (cf. Punch 1986:17-18)[34]. Therefore I aimed to form a relationship with more 'distant' informants over the course of numerous meetings until they understood exactly what my purpose was, and until I could establish the limits of my questioning. I found that in these cases the observation of body language, posture and the tone of conversation were especially illuminating as to the acceptable boundaries of questioning and the perceived validity of some responses (Ong 1967, Spradley 1980:128-129, Silverman 1993:41-43).

For reasons of practicality, trust, and based on previous experiences, a tape recorder was rarely used to document conversations. Primarily, it would have been impossible to record discussions in daily life as nearly every exchange held a degree of cultural information. It would have also implied a distance between people who readily accepted me as an equal in their conceptual worlds. From previous experience I have also found that the use of tape recorders can raise numerous methodological and ethical issues. Some people may not wish to talk – or talk openly, especially about issues of economics, income, consumption and corruption – whilst being recorded. Even if prior consent is gained I have occasionally felt that informants are uneasy with being recorded. In formal interviews I therefore preferred to take notes that were written in shorthand and typed-up when I returned home. I did, however, record some accounts of historical events, such as the accounts of the Great Famine and the relocation of people from Greek Macedonia to Trikala, as I knew these people well and the level of historical detail in their accounts required precise recording.

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[34] Punch portrays how ethnographers have been treated with contempt, suspicion and even physical violence concerning what they write about their informants (1986:17-18).

The qualitative methods of data collection were complemented with quantitative statistical collection. It could be argued that quantitative methods only produce abstract and statistical information, and that no 'physical observation' can be obtained through the use of statistics (Ellen 1984, Bernard 1994:275). Yet these data were essential due to the focus of the research on economic aspects of social life. Eventually these statistical collections formed a backdrop, a basis, for the construction of this thesis, yet their relevance as primary data sources were often negligible in relation to the final theoretical line of discussion. Hence data such as levels of income, bonuses, the percentage of income declared for taxation, loans taken out for children, bank balances and credit card limits[35], and comparative statistical analysis of people who have worked abroad and in Greece, have proved very informative but are not all directly referred to in the final thesis.

One of the first activities I conducted in order to familiarise myself with the geography of the town was to perform an informal survey of shops, businesses and land use in the centre of Trikala. This exercise proved useful in acquainting me with many of the significant social arenas and their various clienteles as well as gaining a general idea of the types of business investment present in Trikala. Therefore I acquired a map of the centre of the town and mapped on top the general business types, notes on construction and development works taking place and formed a key for the types of clientele attracted to the area. This map was later to be complemented with photographic records of the sites using a digital camera[36].

Another aspect of the quantitative data was the occasional acquisition of statistics concerning personal and family income and expenditure. These data were recorded from close informants and those that readily offered it and helped in the analysis of consumer activity, the competition for status and prestige, how certain aspects of expenditure were prioritised, family networks of money

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[35] On waiting for my flight from Athens to Thessaloniki on entering the field, I started noticing the amount of advertisements for '20,000 euro' credit card limits. Such adverts on billboards and in magazines were abundant in the urban centres in 2007/2008.

[36] For a discussion of conducting visual anthropology in the field, including methodological and ethical issues relating to photography, see Pink (2001, 2007).

distribution, the allocation of bank and credit loans and notions of social mobility. There was one key ethical issue with this form of data collection. Many people had more than one source of income, although not all sources were declared for taxation. This led to two occasions of interrogation as to who I was, who employed me and where the data were destined for. Giannis, a friend of a friend, waited for two months before letting any information concerning his employment be known. This was despite numerous assurances from our mutual friend that the information was not going to get back to government sources. It turns out, let's say, that Giannis owns a shop (his 'official' job), is a tour guide in Meteora at weekends and evenings, and drives a bus for occasional excursions organised by a local travel agent. I myself was also cautious about asking people about their income. The likelihood is that most people will significantly round up or down their actual wages, meaning that without contextualisation based on a prior relationship established over a substantial period of time, there is little way of knowing whether the information given is correct. This task is made even more difficult by the fact that over half of my informants are self-employed and their monthly income fluctuates enormously throughout the year, meaning that attempts at correlation between others similarly employed is often complicated. Here the old adage of 'lies, damn lies and statistics' holds firm on both the personal and governmental scale.

Another secondary source of information was the local archives in Trikala. Unfortunately the title 'local' is a little misleading as most of the records relate to national events and statistical polls. Perplexingly, the records for Trikala are mainly to be found in Athens. However, I did come across some interesting old maps and the occasional piece of census data that proved helpful in piecing together geographic and demographic change in the town since the Second World War. I found that most snippets of historical data were affirmed through personal accounts of past events.

An issue that was unforeseen to me before conducting fieldwork, was the fact that some questions proved difficult for some people to understand not so much in terms of content but in terms of why I wanted to know certain things (cf. Bernard 1994:269). This went beyond concepts of trust and related to why a 22

year old Englishman wanted so much information on Greek economic history. In the first two months this matter was not helped by the shock I suffered by my complete immersion into the Greek language. Sometimes a question was unintentionally constructed along the lines of direct translation, as if it was addressing a fellow English academic. This initial 'crisis in communication' actually led to many highly informative conversations with my informants. As the reasoning behind the questions was explained they often enthusiastically responded with impulsive stories of their experiences of economic hardship and crisis or accounts of social mobility in their family. Some of these narratives would later come to constitute key 'case studies' for this thesis. What I was trying to do was certainly comprehensible but the abstract concept often needed explaining during more formal interviews with new informants. When this situation occurred within the first week of my fieldwork I opened a file I had saved from a previous research methods course. The opening quote read:

> "… research involves an inexhaustible variety of settings and an endless range of situational exigencies for which ready made recipes do not exist. The conduct of the researcher, and the outcomes of research are vulnerable to unique developments in the field and to dramatic predicaments that can often be solved only *situationally*. Paradoxically, we must try to learn from our mistakes, but that can not prevent us repeating them" (Punch 1986:26, original emphasis).

When conducting fieldwork the researcher is entwined in a series of 'moral obligations' both towards their informants and the discipline (Punch 1986:25, Pels 2000, Caplan 2003:1-2). Ethnographers have to consider the 'rights and interests' of "informants and other research participants (citizens); gatekeepers; sponsors and funders; themselves; colleagues; their own and host governments; their universities or employers and the public(s)" (Ellen 1984:133, 137). Ethical issues can transcend the 'academic pale' and the researcher may, at times, use his/her own judgement to avoid controversial situations[37] (Punch 1986:31).

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[37] Yet Punch points out that such selective research tends to only 'give voice' to certain sections of society and hinder any attempts of anthropological representation of other social groups (1986:20). Often the reluctance to investigate certain social groups and institutions is related to the 'power' of the subjects embodied within such groups. This is especially prominent in the context of research in government organisations. The threat of libel action deters the perspective researcher and allows "repressive state apparatus" to remain in the ethnographic 'dark' (ibid.).

The ethics of fieldwork can be divided into many sub-fields. All considerations are concerned with the responsibility of the researchers to understand their 'moral and ethical' duties towards a variety of bodies and many of these points have been addressed above. There are the epistemological considerations, such as informant representation and reflexivity in the final text (cf. Clifford and Marcus 1986, Geertz 1988, Atkinson 1992, Okely 1992), practical considerations concerned with conduct and practice in the field and the issue of respecting the demands of funding bodies and the host institution (Ellen 1984).

In this thesis pseudonyms for personal, family and place names are used extensively. It has already been noted how some informants viewed with suspicion and apprehension my role in collecting economic data and narratives of crisis, such as the man with three jobs that could have been exposed for tax evasion. In another case I was approached by the younger brother of one of my key informants who had told me details of his consumer habits – namely cigarettes – that he was afraid would get back to his parents. In this delicate situation I assured him of the confidentiality of the information we exchanged during our meetings; a point I always made explicit. Further details of his nocturnal activities have remained undisclosed in this thesis.

Pseudonyms must be used carefully so as not to distort the ethnographic record in terms of spatio-temporal situation and social context. However, it is the anthropologist's professional responsibility to protect the physical, social and psychological rights of their informants (Bowman 1998, ASA 1999). Pseudonyms thus help maintain the informant's privacy without compromising the ethnographic record. In this thesis pseudonyms are used for most personal names apart from when discussing public figures in a third person or referential context. Village names are changed in order to maintain the confidentiality of the actors discussed in each social milieu. In some delicate cases occupations and travelling distances/directions have also been altered. The names of major urban centres such as Trikala, Kalampaka and Thessaloniki remain the same. Nonetheless, I have been careful not to "tamper with the social connotations" of what is being discussed (Kirtsoglou 2004:15).

Ethical considerations also include epistemological issues relating to the writing up process and the production of the final text for, "the field is not merely reported in the texts of fieldwork: it is constituted by our reading and writing" (Atkinson 1992:9). Adopting a post-modern perspective for a moment, the ethnographer creates and recreates the field within his/her text and must be aware that the field has no boundaries per-se, apart from those externally applied for the process of creating a coherent document (ibid.). The selective representation of the field can therefore be expressed as a 'triple constitution'. The first influence is the ethnographer's gaze, which can be affected by preconceptions of the field prior to commencing research. Additionally, the gaze is continuously constructed and manipulated throughout the fieldwork period in relation to social situations, theoretical trends and personal aspirations and oversights (ibid.). Secondly the production of the field is affected by the ethnographer's ability to construct a 'text-of-the-field', and thirdly the field is reconstructed through the reader's interpretation and contextualisation of the textual representation (Geertz 1973, Leach 1984:22 in Rapport and Overing 2000:26, Gudeman and Rivera 1990:3, Atkinson 1992:9). The text can therefore be said to be a representation of both the author and the field combined, what Atkinson calls a 'semiotic triangle' (1992:10). In the production of ethnographic texts the author and their field are forever locked in a 'perpetual embrace' (Atkinson 1992:10), with the author striving to convince the reader that they have "truly been there" and have thus been "penetrated by another form of life" (Geertz 1988:4, Gudeman and Rivera 1990:3)[38].

On the topic of ethnographic representation, Clifford argues that since the writing of ethnographic texts is central to anthropology 'both in the field and thereafter', cultural accounts tend to have a 'constructed, artificial nature'. This

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[38] According to Schneider, the ethnographer draws on his/her own experience to construct a narrative to fulfil the intentions of a specific theoretical framework (Schneider 1984:1-5). Geertz argues that this information and 'knowledge' goes through many processes of representation and interpretation. For example, the final outcome behind any ethnographic text is directly related to the original situation (not only the reporting of it) and is therefore captured in four changes: Firstly what actually happened at the time. Secondly, what the ethnographer understood and how the ethnographer has interpreted the situation. Thirdly, what the ethnographer wrote about the situation – since 'anthropological writings themselves are interpretations'. Finally, what the reader understood and interpreted from the ethnographic text (Geertz 1973:14-15, Clifford 1986:25). Such interpretations inherently result in selective inclusion, exclusion and transformation of fieldwork material by the researcher (Okely 1992).

means that ethnography is 'caught up in the invention, not the representation of cultures' (1986:2) in order to feed the 'theory-fieldwork-ethnography' triangle central to the discipline (Moore 1999). Accordingly, 'ethnography decodes and recodes, tilling the grounds of collective order and diversity, inclusion and exclusion' (Clifford 1986:2). Clifford famously – or infamously – goes on to argue that ethnographies hold 'partial truths', 'committed and incomplete' and thus ethnography is only ever partial, despite the continued desire of the ethnographer to write a complete account (ibid.:7). In order to portray cultures through a 'Self-Other' relationship, simplifications and exclusions cannot be avoided and are always negotiated by the claims of rhetoric and power. Thus, according to Clifford, ethnographic writings are determined in 'at least six ways': contextually, rhetorically, institutionally, generically, politically and historically. These determinations 'govern the inscription of coherent ethnographic fictions' (Clifford 1986:6).

This self-reflexive approach to the fieldwork and writing-up process advocated by scholars such as Atkinson and Clifford is valuable if the key points are taken into consideration without over saturating texts with obsessive self-analysis leading to doubts concerning what is actually the object of the study (Geertz 1973, 1988:20). It is easy for the ethnographer to become a self-doubting hypochondriac if s/he loses sight of the actual point of the study. The goal is still to display the ethnographic data in a coherent way that facilitates the best possible understanding of the social reality, whilst acknowledging that many underlying points inherently affect the final representation (Okely 1992:1, Macdonald 1993:18).

During my fieldwork I found myself making reflexive notes alongside ethnographic accounts on a frequent basis. I also questioned a lot of what I was being told, what I recorded in my field diary and what I was theorising. This came as a natural step in assisting the understanding of the field, the informants and my own place within a highly complex socio-cultural context. My activities that many would classify well within the often stigmatised category 'post-modernism' came as a surprise as I had always promised myself not to get caught up in the practice of 'running around in circles' involved in a pastime

that has no end. Instead, I had always told myself, 'one must focus on the ethnographic data, this is the point of fieldwork, everything else is a given'. However, I later concluded that these self-reflections, and at times self-doubts, were a natural part of the process of comprehension, both of the Self and the Other. The way that the researcher makes sense of the field does inevitably affect the final ethnographic product, yet this need not be a hindrance or in opposition to a confident analysis and coherent presentation of the ethnographic data.

Living with a Family in the Field

One of the principal advantages of my fieldwork experience was also one of the greatest challenges. I first met and resided with the family of my close friend (also at university in Britain) on my first visit to Trikala in 2004. Their home has been my home for all subsequent visits. The family consists of Eugenia a 60 year old retired teacher, Giorgos, 74, a retied government employee, Eugenia's son Angelos, 36, a self-employed mechanic, and his wife and secretary Dimitra, 33, and their newborn (in 2007) daughter. Eugenia and Giorgos own a three-bedroom, one-story house in Livadi which they shared with Eugenia's parents until 2006 when the latter sadly both passed away. After their marriage (the second marriage for both), Eugenia and Giorgos decided they wanted to leave the centre of Trikala without being too far away from close family members who still resided there. Eugenia especially wanted a large garden in which to enjoy her retirement. The first floor of the house is currently only partially built and is intended for Eugenia's daughter, Antonia, 38, who is currently at university in Britain.

Angelos and Dimitra live in Trikala in a house built by Eugenia's parents for her; where she raised Angelos and Antonia before moving to Livadi in 2001. The house in Trikala is above another that was also built by Eugenia's father and was inherited by her brother, Andreas. Andreas sold this house in 2002. Angelos and Dimitra's child, who was only a few months old when I commenced my fieldwork, spent six days a week with Eugenia and Giorgos whilst her parents are at work at their garage (between 9am and 7pm). On

Sundays Angelos and Dimitra spend the day with Dimitra's parents in the nearby village of Mikrochori before calling in to Eugenia's house in the evening. Giorgos has two children in their fifties, one who resides in a village eight kilometres from Trikala and one who lives in Athens. Both sons visit their father periodically but the time spent inside the house is negligible.

I had therefore known my host family for three years before commencing my fieldwork. The immediate advantage was an intricate network of gatekeepers and 'key contacts' that were to prove priceless (Pardo 1996:190 n.12). Eugenia and Giorgos also provided everything and more that one would desire from one's own family, as well as some welcome familiarity in what still seemed an alien world. I was also granted unprecedented access not only to the elaborate workings of the Greek family, but also to the female domain. Although this is by no means as difficult for a male researcher in the Mediterranean to access as it once was (cf. Peristiany 1966, Dubisch 1986, 1995), I still believe I was privileged to spend much intimate time with Eugenia, Dimitra and her baby in the house and this granted a fascinating insight into raising a child in Greece.

This experience was also much needed on my part. Despite taking six months of private Greek lessons on top of the informal pieces I had picked up over the years, I still felt that language was perhaps the greatest barrier between me and my field. My understanding was good, my spoken word less so, especially as the dialect was completely different to both the ear and the tongue than what I had learnt with my teacher, another Giorgos, from Patras. This was especially frustrating as there was so much I wanted to ask, wanted to respond to and there was, thank goodness, no question of reverting to English as this was only spoken by a handful of informants (and spoken to me by only two people over the year who wanted to practice their language skills). I took to recording conversations in my fieldwork diary and writing down the questions in English underneath in order to refer back to when I had formulated the correct phrases in Greek. With this issue Eugenia and Dimitra were especially helpful. They allowed me to practice my language without embarrassment or judgement and participated in many 'diagram-and-dictionary' sessions. They also proved exceptional informants for all things social, cultural and especially economic. Eugenia had

held down many jobs both in the public and private domain as a single mother of two. She was educated at the University of Athens, had a measured opinion and was always willing to listen as well as speak. Dimitra was informed on all of the current political and economic issues (her mother was referred to as the 'Minister of Culture' due to her knowledge in all matters 'cultural') due to her first-hand involvement with the general public as secretary and assistant in their mechanics business.

As I arrived in November when the surrounding mountains were already covered in a thick blanket of snow, I found myself spending more time than I had expected in the house, in what had classically been termed 'the female domain'. Coincidently, my two best friends in the field would also be women. The fieldwork experience was however very balanced – with Angelos and his motor sport friends at the racetrack, shopping for baptism dresses with Dimitra, sitting chatting in the hairdressers with Maro, discussing the female body with boy-racers on Asklipiou, going on family outings to ancestral villages in Greek Macedonia or mixed group trips to the seaside at Volos.

With the substantial privilege of living with a family came much responsibility and difficulty. Living in a close-knit family was at times very challenging as personal space was not only very limited, but also only sanctioned by other members of the family. By this I mean that as all the rooms were on one level and very close together it was not always my choice as to when I could write, rest or attend to crying babies. On my arrival I was installed in the bedroom of Eugenia's recently departed parents as opposed to the guest room which had now been appropriated by the baby. Over the year this room became known as Daniel's room rather than 'the Grandparent's' but the personal and family possessions therein, ranging from walking sticks to dresses and the trousseau, the family computer, sewing machine and tableware, were in demand at unpredictable times. These issues were, however, more than offset against the unbelievable hospitality of my host family and the great ethnographic value of gaining direct entry to a family in the field (Just 2000:3).

Other challenges were of a more personal nature. During my time in Livadi Eugenia had various visits to hospitals in Trikala, Thessaloniki and Kozani in order to monitor and treat a long-term health condition. I took it upon myself to accompany her to the hospital appointments rather than let her attend alone. Some of these trips lasted for up to one week whilst doctors conducted the relevant tests and meant staying in hotels and hospital rooms for significant periods of time. Other trips were simply to take blood samples and undergo scans. Whilst in the field two other friends were admitted to hospital in Trikala. This was a personal challenge to me due to my long-term (and deep rooted) phobia of all things medical that I have had since seven years old. The issue consists of more than simply feeling 'queasy' and has, in the past, resulted in my becoming more of a hindrance than a help. Yet the determination to accompany Eugenia to her hospital appointments was two-fold. Firstly I felt it my responsibility as part of the family, partially based on my own fears, I could not stand the thought of her going on her own. Secondly, I realised that these trips were a fantastic opportunity to see how the health system operated in Greece. The results were among the most rewarding of the whole fieldwork period. As well as forming contacts with doctors, nurses and chemists, my eyes were opened to the extent of the patron-client networks required to gain adequate medical care and the sums of money involved in paying the *fakelákia* (envelopes of money). I also witnessed what happened if such money was not paid, including a person being unceremoniously trafficked around in an ambulance between multiple hospitals (130 kilometres apart) before being treated for her stroke, and critically ill patients being forced to walk down corridors to wait in a queue to see the doctor who was sat drinking coffee and making diagnoses in his office (both in Trikala). Trikala, I am constantly told, "*has the worst hospital in the Balkans ... not Greece, the Balkans ... we have a reputation*". This is also the opinion from the inside. I hasten to add that many objectively good points of the health service were also apparent, especially in Thessaloniki, such as the availability of specialist consultants to see patients within days, and the benefits of social networks in obtaining excellent surgeons for crucial operations. Yet all treatment rested in fact on money and connections.

Less pressing responsibilities lay in caring for family members when they became ill in the winter months – Eugenia was bedridden for eight days with the flu – and becoming the inevitable (and very willing) babysitter. The latter usually consisted of a nice long walk with the pram around the village in the warmer summer months and numerous lengths of the internal corridor in the colder winter months. On more than one occasion it crossed my mind as to what an early Greek ethnographer would have made of a man pushing a baby around the village on his own on a daily basis. The truth is that in Livadi the act seemed acceptable, and at worst was passed off as 'the eccentric Englishman'[39].

My movement between village and town, all four kilometres of it, was facilitated by a regular local bus and the availability of Giorgos' bicycles. Early mornings were the best time to catch some people as they had gaps in their appointment books or had sent the children off to school. The late night outings to Asklipiou were highly informative and captured the experiences of another section of Trikalini society. Often villagers offered to take me with them as they went about their daily activities or visited relatives in the town or other villages. In this way I was able to frequent many places in the prefecture and attend

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[39] Bennison recalls that whilst conducting research in western Thessaly during the military dictatorship his 'strange, foreign behaviour' of cycling around recording retail outlets and enterprise types got him questioned and subsequently arrested on more than one occasion. However, after one particular run-in with police when his lack of official papers was called into question, Bennison visited the Minister for Thessaly based in Athens. The Minister told him that the local police were talking nonsense as no papers were required and gave him the private phone number of the Ministry in Athens to give to any policeman that gave him problems. Following an Easter Day arrest and subsequent release near Karditsa, word got around as far away as Kalampaka that he was 'the harmless eccentric Englishman' that had contacts with the Ministry in Athens. He was never bothered again. (Bennison, 2010, personal communication).

In a similar vain, Just describes how encounters with the local police hindered his search for a fieldwork site in 1976 (two years after the end of the military junta). When Just thought he had found the perfect village on the island of Mitilini in which to conduct his research he was "hauled in by the local police and interrogated". They examined his notes and confiscated his passport based on the perception that Just (an Australian) may have been a Turkish spy masquerading as an American. The embarrassment caused to the villagers by this episode led Just to move on to a new location (2000:3). Just also refers to the concept of 'the eccentric Englishman', or in his case, Scotsman. A wandering latter-day hippy known as 'Alekos' was one of the favourite characters to frequent his research village. On arrival, the villagers assumed that Just was one of the same (2000:4).

In the 1950s Campbell also recalls the close surveillance of his "suspect work" by Greek authorities. Only with the support of the Deputy Prime Minister was Campbell allowed to stay in Epirus. As Bennison found (personal communication, 2010), his access to quantitative and statistical data, especially maps, was greatly obstructed (Campbell 1964:vii).

events that would have otherwise been impossible to observe by solely focusing my attentions on the town.

<u>Informant Base: butcher, baker, candlestick maker</u>

Many of my initial informants were connected to members of the extended family with which I stayed. From Eugenia, Giorgos, Angelos, Dimitra and Antonia I formed multiple friendships, found plenty of gatekeepers and fascinating informants. From these initial contacts, many of which remained very close throughout and since the fieldwork period, came another set of informants – friends of friends, relatives of relatives or professional contacts with people in a range of businesses and institutions. Some informants I would see three times a day, whilst others I saw once or twice during the year. Yet the range was as all-encompassing as one may endeavour. In terms of age and gender, the youngest informant (apart from the baby) was thirteen and the oldest was one-hundred-and-six. Many initial and close informants were female, yet I quickly became acquainted with males of all ages. I played tennis regularly with a university-bound eighteen-year-old and sat reminiscing about the pre-war years with men in their eighties and nineties. The village coach trips organised for the elderly people were some of the most ethnographically fruitful occasions; despite, on one trip to Arachova, getting stuck in the snow and having to listen to piped *klarino* music over a poor quality radio for eighteen hours while some senior ladies refused to leave the bus for fear of bears. The people whose accounts form the basis of this thesis hail from diverse socio-economic backgrounds. Doctors, dentists and university professors shared their time and opinions as much as farm-hands, housewives and mechanics. University graduates and unemployed economic immigrants were members of my company at given times, as was a local priest, a military communications expert and a taxi driver or two. The geographical range was also surprisingly diverse. Among my informants can be cited Greek Macedonians that relocated to Trikala during the civil war, descendants of Pontian refugee communities that settled in Trikala after the 1923 exchange of populations, second-generation migrants that have returned from Germany, Sweden and Australia, British educated graduates, Vlachs that hail from the mountains of Epirus, a Sarakatsani dentist,

Karagounides that claim to be 'the true locals of Trikala', Albanian immigrant labourers, and people originating from Trikala and now living permanently in Athens. All now live, work, or have family in the town of Trikala or the surrounding villages between the 'golden triangle' of Kalampaka, Trikala and Pyli. As is the dynamics of population movement within this area, all informants had strong and regular links to the town of Trikala. This combination of diverse age, profession, and cultural and geographic background provided an excellent insight into the lives of a cross-section of the community.

Chapter Three: A Brief History of Crisis in Thessaly since 1881, Part One: 1881-1950

The prefecture of Thessaly was no stranger to times of crisis long before the effects of the current financial circumstances began to take hold towards the end of my fieldwork in 2008 and the following deficit troubles of 2009. Since Thessaly was incorporated into the Greek state in 1881 there have been many periods, fluctuating in nature, between social and economic crises and intermittent times of prosperity. In order to facilitate the theorisation and subsequent discussion of crisis and its public representations it is necessary here to outline some key moments in the history of social and economic crisis in Thessaly and subsequently Trikala. The historical contexts presented in this chapter form the bases for extensive critical theoretical and ethnographic discussion throughout this thesis.

There are many important interrelated events that define numerous periods of crisis in Greece. These events may appear distant and perhaps separate if one accepts a linear notion of time, yet in actual fact they are closer in cultural proximity than they might at first seem (Serres 1995a:57-59). Cultural proximity in this sense refers to events that hold a significant place in the social memory of Trikalinoi that are recalled at specific socio-historic moments as representations of the past within the context of the present. Furthermore, these events can become embodied by the actors within the context of the present. I argue that it is the concept of crisis that triggers moments of cultural proximity, thus making 'two distant points in time suddenly become close, even superimposed' in social memory (Serres 1995a:57-59).

As such historical moments of crisis and social change, events including the agrarian reforms, the redistribution of land and compulsory population exchange with Turkey, the Great Famine during the Axis occupation of Greece, the civil war and the military junta of 1967-1974 and European Community integration will be outlined in this and the subsequent chapter. Many of these events are

intertwined in a dense network of history, political decision making and socio-economic strategy.

Since the term 'crisis' can be employed to describe many diverse events, the periods of crisis explored here are selective. The choice has been based on three main criteria. Primarily, the events focused on have had a direct and significant impact on the inhabitants of Trikala; thus episodes such as the civil war, the agrarian reforms and the military junta are included but the Cyprus crisis of 1974-1975 has been omitted (cf. Argyrou 1996, Sant Cassia 2005, Bryant 2010). Secondly, the crises that are of most interest for this study are those which have had a considerable economic impact. Thus when discussing the Great Famine and military junta, the economic aspects are the focus of the analysis. This is not to dispute the import of such events in other political or social arenas. Thirdly, some events may have not had an intense direct impact on the people of Trikala but however occupy a significant place in the local imagery. For reasons that will become apparent, the Great Famine of 1941-1943, the compulsory population exchange of 1923 and, elsewhere in this thesis, the Macedonian Question have been taken as such occasions. It is especially important to justify such selections as it will be later discussed how the people themselves select certain narratives of crisis as culturally important, whilst others are more commonly dismissed in collective recollection.

The date 1881 has been chosen as the lower boundary for the historical discussion of crisis. As the date that signifies the annexation of Thessaly from the Ottoman Empire to Greece, 1881 marks the point of highly significant social change and socio-economic unrest, especially in terms of land tenure. At the other end of the scale the historical account is bounded by the decade of the 1990s when Greece experienced a stock market boom which was informed by a collective attitude of free-spending liberalism. The period of 2001 onwards, introduced in chapter one, will be analysed in further detail throughout the study in relation to the causes and consequences of the current economic crisis.

<u>Great Estates and a Change in Social Relations</u>

Since the end of the sixteenth century the ciftlik system had operated in Thessaly as well as in other parts of the Balkans (Karavidas 1931[40]). The discussion of ciftliks (also tsiftliks (du Boulay 1974) or chiftliks (Campbell 1964, Campbell and Sherrard 1968, Kontogiorgi 2003:68) or chifliks (Sant Cassia and Bada 1992:12))[41] in Thessaly can be divided into two distinct phases; Ottoman administration pre-annexation and Greek administration post-annexation.

Ciftliks were originally land grants made by the Ottoman sultans to Muslim settlers in Turkish-occupied lands[42]. The ciftliks varied in size between six to fifteen hectares and were deemed sufficient to support one family. At the end of the seventeenth century, ciftliks became much larger private properties where the landlord held rights over whole villages whose villagers became his tenants. During this period the peasant workers were contracted under Ottoman laws which gave them rights to a certain amount of their produce – usually either two-thirds or one-half. For one, the product of their labour was considered inalienable. After the annexation of Thessaly to Greece the Ciftliks were purchased by entrepreneurs of the diaspora, the majority of whom originated

[40] Kostas Karavidas (1890-1973) is an interesting figure in the history of land reform in Greece. As a specially hired agrotologist for the Greek Agricultural Bank he published widely on the importance of land reform in the Balkans. He was a follower of the political theorist Dragoumis and believed that the grandiose hopes for economic reform through state planning based on West European models were unsuitable for Greek conditions. He favoured a "vision of Greece" based around local communities rather than a centralised state (cf. Karavidas 1931, 1935, Mazower 1991:280-281). He recognised there to be 'a crisis in agriculture' beginning in 1930 due to the redistribution of ciftlik lands.

[41] Prior to the Ciftliks, the land in the Ottoman Empire was granted on non-hereditary fiefs to Ottoman soldiers and officials in exchange for certain military commitments. This was known as the *timar* system. The fiefs were governed by laws that were supervised by Ottoman officials. Villages were often allowed to be semi-autonomous as long as taxes were paid regularly. The *timar* system was eventually phased out at the beginning of the sixteenth century due to the break down of the centralised system of government (Sanders 1962:64, Campbell 1964:11, Campbell and Sherrard 1968:55, Bennison 1977:97, Kordatou 1980:39, Inalcik 1985:106-107).

At the same time, in other parts of what is now Greece, such as Zakynthos, under Venetian rule from 1485-1797, similar landlord-tenant systems were in place. In Zakynthos these estates were termed 'serfs'. The large underclass of peasant labourers, known as *semproi*, were often recruited as soldiers to accompany their masters on military campaigns (Theodossopoulos 2003:18).

[42] This led to some people changing their religion from Orthodox Christian to Islam. However, this would have severe consequences when in the 1920s all Muslim populations of Greece were forcibly 'exchanged' with the Christian populations of Turkey (Karavidas 1931).

from the Ionian Islands and northern Epirus (Mouzelis 1978:77). The Greek government supported this move as they hoped that the entrepreneurs would bring capital into the region and improve the productivity of the land, thus edging Greece towards self-sufficiency in grain. This, however, would not prove to be the case. The disillusionment was double sided. The peasant farmers had been promised their own pieces of land after annexation despite the rights of the *Ciftlikades* (ciftlik owners) being transferred intact and enhanced through the handover deal confirmed in July 1881[43] (Aroni-Tsichli 2005:26).

In 'Old Greece' (Attica and the Peloponnese), during the period after independence and before the annexation of Thessaly (1833-1881), the Byzantine-Roman legal system in place gave the *Ciftlikades* extensive rights as the absolute owners of their lands. However, in this case the *Ciftlikades* rarely exercised these absolute rights and therefore the peasant workers did not pursue their ultimate desire of devolution of all land ownership. This was partially because on the issue of the 'common lands' – land that was deemed 'civic' and fell outside the domain of the ciftliks – the landlords and the peasants were united in seeking unconditional devolution of ownership and thus the opposition between the two interest parties was somewhat nullified (ibid.:27).

At the time of annexation 460 of the 658 villages in Thessaly were ciftliks and only 198 *kefalochoria* (village-led) where usually one village comprised a single ciftlik before being divided in two if it expanded beyond its means[44] (Bennison

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[43] The annexation of Thessaly and Arta was the result of long-term diplomatic negotiations that commenced at a conference in Berlin in June and July 1878. The handover was finalised between 20th June and 2nd July 1881 (Aroni-Tsichli 2005:26). When 'Old Greece' was granted independence in 1821, the ciftliks were annexed in a special law agreed in London in 1930. The agreement stated that the owners of the ciftliks could either keep or sell them, yet according to this law, the British government were allowed to intervene in order to safeguard the rights of Ottoman citizens inhabiting the lands at the time of the handover (Aroni-Tsichli 2005:26).

[44] It is interesting that in Northern Greece under the governance of the (in)famous Ali Pasha (?1750-1822), many Turkish landlords were pressured to sell their holdings to the governor and flee to Larisa – the only place that remained beyond his reach. Ali also appropriated the land that was left without any inheritors. Within a decade Ali Pasha owned nearly all the land in his domain (Fleming 1999:55); eventually he commanded 263 ciftliks in Thessaly (66 per cent of the total), 411 in Epirus, 100 in Macedonia and 172 in Sterea Ellada (Aroni-Tsichli 2005:47-48). He is now a notorious Ottoman figure that has preoccupied the Greek nationalist imagination through education textbooks, films and popular songs for both his atrocities and his political astuteness.

1977:97). Due to the nature of Ottoman law[45], the socio-economic situation was not homogeneous across Thessaly as the land tenure contracts were varied. In central Thessaly the landlord-worker contracts were mainly based on the premise of *misakarika*. Under this agreement, the peasant workers gave one-half of their produce to the landlord. In western Thessaly, notably the areas around Trikala and Karditsa, the contracts were based on a *tritarika* system whereby only one-third of the produce was handed over to the landlord. The dual-layered arrangements had numerous consequences. Under the *misakarika* the *colligi* (peasant workers) were more submissive due to the stronger relation of domination on the part of the landlord. It was noticeable that in the *tritarika* ciftliks the *colligi* developed closer ties with their land and were more progressive in their demands for devolution of ownership. In the *tritarika* ciftliks the living conditions were substantially better and supported a higher population. Such notions were driven by the fact that in the *tritarika* ciftliks around Trikala and Karditsa, the *Ciftlikades* only provided the land and the peasants funded the seed and the cultivation costs (Aroni-Tsichli 2005:37).

The *colligi* benefited from Ottoman law in numerous other ways. The ownership of the ciftlik land was ultimately with the Ottoman government who subsequently let it to the *Ciftlikades* under an agreement of perpetual company. Hence certain laws were implemented in order to protect the *colligi*. Each peasant worker was connected with his land and house throughout life, the right of which was inherited, features that enhanced the inalienable aspect of their tenancy. Furthermore, the peasant worker was granted unquestioned access to forests, grazing lands, orchards, vineyards and water sources as well as other public and civic areas of the ciftliks (ibid.:32-33).

The Greek capitalists were enticed into investing in the old Ottoman ciftliks as a means to recuperate losses made during the fluctuating economic crises of the late 1800s, cumulating in the bankruptcy of the Ottoman government in 1875-1876. On the part of the previous Ottoman *Ciftlikades*, the fear of nationalisation

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[45] It was not until 1860 that a legal framework was officially put in place to legislate the owner-tenant relationships (Bennison 1977:98). For an extensive account of the differentiations between ciftlik operation and structure over the centuries of Ottoman rule, see Inalcik (1985).

of their lands after the handover outweighed the low prices offered by the incoming entrepreneurs, many of which were involved in the banking profession and originated from outside of mainland Greece. This 'absentee' status meant that the new owners employed stewards to manage the ciftliks whilst they were away but were still supported by the Greek state due to the general opinion that the investors would improve production levels that would be beneficial for all Greek citizens (ibid.:41).

Yet both the productivity of the ciftliks and the working conditions of the *colligi* deteriorated under Greek ownership. The landlords did not invest in new technologies or fertilisers in order to improve productivity and neither did they invest in land reclamation projects as anticipated. This was partially due to the economic circumstance of the late 1800s when the price of grain plummeted on the European markets due to systematic swamping by Indian and American exporters. Hence, Greece had to increase its own imports and increase financial loans to landowners who could not find a market for their produce. Any profit that was made by the *Ciftlikades* was invested abroad due to their absentee status, thus the wider Greek economy was by no means benefiting directly from 'foreign' ownership (ibid.:42-43).

From the perspective of the *colligi*, under the administration of the Greek *Ciftlikades* they had no legal protection against their landlord who was capable of exercising the newly founded right of evicting his tenants whenever he pleased (du Boulay 1974:8, Mouzelis 1978:77, Inalcik 1985:106, Sant Cassia and Bada 1992:24). This was because the land was no longer ultimately the property of the state, as the *Ciftlikades* had transformed it into private property. The *colligi* were reduced to the role of share-croppers of which the landlord would still demand a rent of either one-half or one-third of the gross product of the land despite the fact that a contract of perpetual company was no longer present (Campbell 1964:11, Campbell and Sherrard 1968:55, du Boulay 1974:8)[46]. du Boulay notes that in the village of Ambéli, Euboea, the villagers

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[46] In the context of agrarian reform in Spain, Lisón-Tolosana notes that "between master and labourer there is no relationship apart from the economic one" (1966:26).

had to "beg their bread" and thus took to harvesting and threshing the grain in secrecy[47].

Although the peasant workers suffered immensely under the post-Ottoman ciftlik system, not least due to their ambiguous legal rights, the landowners enjoyed great economic prosperity (see also Theodossopoulos 2003:18). The *Ciftlikades* capitalised on the intense industrialisation occurring in Western Europe and the subsequent increase in demand for Balkan agricultural products, especially cotton, maize and tobacco (Bennison 1977:99). Due to their entrepreneurial background, the *Ciftlikades* also benefited from the simultaneous demand for handicraft products in which they invested. This meant that in terms of exportation, for a short period Thessaly became the most industrialised area of Greece. This was however short lived as cheaper products from Britain became more widely available, thus intensifying international competition (ibid.:99).

As previously mentioned, the disillusionment with land reform following the annexation of 1881 was two-fold. Another aspect that contributed to the lack of increase in productivity of the land was the continuation of seasonal renting to nomadic shepherd populations. This practice was widespread during the Ottoman era and would have had to be curtailed if maximum productivity was to be realised. The post-Ottoman government of Charilaos Trikoupis (who served as Prime Minister in Greece seven times between 1875 and 1895) strongly believed that the plains of Thessaly would promote the Greek economy to a level of self-sufficiency as well as provide a surplus to trade on international markets. The seasonal renting of grasslands to Sarakatsani and Vlach shepherds was thus to become a problem for the broader Greek economy as the land was not being cultivated to its optimum level. Indeed, in the second edition of the Baedeker guide to Greece of 1894 it is noted that the population of Trikala rises from 14,800 in summer to 18,000 in winter due to the seasonal relocation of local shepherds (Baedeker 1894).

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[47] If the head of the household in possession of a ciftlik died leaving several sons, they were to possess the land collectively (Inalcik 1985:106). In the case of Ambéli, the ciftlik was eventually bought by the villagers in 1853 and shared equally among the inhabitants (du Boulay 1974:8).

Greece relied heavily on the importation of grain paid for with income generated by exported currants. Trikoupis acknowledged that this reliance on one predominant export was dangerous and thus grain and cereal production should be increased in Thessaly. His fears were confirmed in 1892 when France introduced a high tariff on Greek currants, meaning that the price fell by 70 per cent overnight on London markets[48]. At this point the annexation of Thessaly became a problem rather than a benefit for the Greek government as the enlargement of the state meant an increase in population; an economic crisis was afoot (Campbell and Sherrard 1968:97, Campbell 1968). Thessaly held the key to self-sufficiency in grain during this period of food shortage. Pentzopoulos notes, "until the annexation of Thessaly they (the Greeks) never had anything approaching good farmland" (1962:151, see also Kontogiorgi 2003:73, 2006), this would have to be cultivated more efficiently. However, we know that between 1896 and 1911 the area devoted to cereal production in Thessaly shrunk by 17 per cent (Dakin 1972:251, Mazower 1991:51). The absentee landlords cared little for the aspirations of the Greek government and refused to reform their land use, continuing to leave one-third of arable land fallow every year. Mouzelis argues that this was an inevitable consequence of large land ownership in the newly founded Greek state; "big landed property, because it takes advantage of the rigidity of land supply, whether in capitalist of feudal form, constitutes an obstacle to the growth of industrial capitalism" (1978:76, 1980).

A foreseeable consequence of the changing status in ciftlik ownership and cultivation methods was the peasant uprisings that occurred in Thessaly and other parts of Greece at the beginning of the twentieth century. The uprisings were in protest at decreasing standards of living, the ambivalent legal rights of the *colligi* and the broken promises of the Greek state. The most notorious uprising took place in the village of Kileler near Larisa, Thessaly, in 1909/1910

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[48] The 'currant disaster' had significant economic repercussions which were compounded when Greece went to war with Turkey in 1897 (Campbell and Sherrard 1968:97). For further discussion see Andreades (1906).

following the torture of numerous *colligi*[49]. Based on contemporary narrative accounts and local newspaper reports, Karanikolas presents the collective feeling among Greeks that they were residing in "the state of the *Ciftlikades*; they were neither human, nor Greeks, nor Christian" (1980:149).

The primary cause of the peasant uprisings was the rapidly deteriorating living conditions of the *colligi*[50]. The power to change social relations through the political system was also curtailed due to the voting persuasions of the workers being determined by the political loyalty of their ciftlik masters (Karanikolas 1980:153). Hence organised revolt was the only path for the *colligi* to publicly challenge the social status quo.

On the 12th February 1883 a Member of Parliament for Attica named Zigomalas was once again defending the *colligi* of Thessaly for their constant uprisings against the new Greek *Ciftlikades*. His argument is of particular interest for he, in a nut shell, exposes the social and political problem of Thessaly after the annexation:

> "how do you expect the people of Thessaly to feel knowing that they now have a free country when they are not entitled to their own land?" (Karanikolas 1980:153-154).

Indeed, it has been noted that under the sporadic Trikoupis government of the late nineteenth century, many of the peasant workers were lamenting the deterioration of living conditions under Greek rule:

> "where are you poor Tourkiko! (The Turk) How better we were before … we (now) experience policemen and mayors far worse than the worst Turks" (ibid.:156).

Nikolaos Tarbazis, a Member of Parliament from the village of Zarko, Trikala, was one of many instrumental figures in the organisation of *colligi* uprisings. Armed groups of *colligi* refused to hand over the agreed amount of grain to the

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[49] The film *To Choma Vaftike Kokkino* (*Blood on the Land* [1965]) charts the violent peasant uprisings of early twentieth century Thessaly.

[50] This is illustrated by some refinements in the official relationship between landlord and peasant worker. Now the *colligi* were obliged to obtain written permission every time they wanted to go outside the limits of the ciftlik (Karanikolas 1980:150-152, '*Aneksartisia tis Larisas*' 8/8/1982). Furthermore, the *Ciftlikades* retained power over the 'bodies of the wives and daughters of the *colligi*'.

Ciftlikades. The landlords responded in type by forming a paid armed force of approximately 150 Turk-Albanians. The running battles between the paid army and the *colligi* plagued Thessaly for many years, during which Tarbazis was jailed three times for instigating popular uprisings (Karanikolas 1980:159).

In Thessaly, Christakis Zografos, a Greek banker, was considered one of the harshest of the *Ciftlikades*. He became infamous for the amount of beatings, killings and multiple evictions of his tenants. On 5th March 1883 Tarbazis revealed in parliament some of the torturous persecutions inflicted by Zografos and his administrators; his argument echoes other pro-worker politicians of the time and highlights once again the disillusionment with idea of 'the Independence' at the grassroots level:

> "how do you expect the *colligi* of Thessaly and Epirus to fight for their country when they know that their families are without protection, a roof, a handful of land for burial of their parents whose lawful rights have been stolen, who are tortured in a million ways, and in the end they are expelled as slaves" (Karanikolas 1980:161).

This announcement was one among many that referred to the multiple alterations of living conditions post-annexation. Not only were the *colligi* subjected to physical abuse, but their land was no longer inalienable and the inheritance rights that their ancestors had enjoyed had been revoked. In response, Zografos, through the mediation of Prime Minister Trikoupis, attempted to bribe Tarbazis with the offer of the position of vice-director of the National Bank of Greece. This position would be a trade-off for the cessation of Tarbazis' involvement with the peasant uprisings in Thessaly. Tarbazis' response was steadfast:

> "Mr Prime Minister, thank you but I refuse. I do not fight for personal interests but for the collectivities of Thessaly who were suffering under the Turkish *Ciftlikades* and now under Zografos. I fight for my people – this is what my father taught me to do. I have sworn to fight for the freedom of my compatriots because my compatriots are slaves in a free country" (Karanikolas 1980:163-164)[51].

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[51] The same feelings were observed among the people of Thessaly in 1913 after the Bulgarian war, Sarafis notes; 'I remember a soldier telling me "for which country should I fight for when my family is poor and the owner evicts me from the land that my forefathers were living on for hundreds of years, because I did not cultivate the fields because I was fighting for the nation? What kind of state is this? Where are the preachings and the promises?" (Karanikolas 1980:174).

It is widely acknowledged that despite a 'progressive administration' Trikoupis failed to provide a substantial agrarian policy, preferring instead to focus on rebuilding the nation's fragile communications infrastructure. The pressure mounting on the government to address the agrarian issue and bring to a close their ever increasing economic dependence on the *Ciftlikades* was escalating. The process was brought to the fore after the *coup d'état* of 1909 which was a result of growing discontent with both internal and external issues (Doukas 1945:83, 85). The installation of Eleutherios Venizelos as Prime Minister in October 1910 came with a promise of sweeping economic reforms that would benefit Greece in its entirety. In 1910 a separate Ministry of Agriculture, Commerce and Industry was formed on the bases of the 1901 Greek Agricultural Society (later to become the Ministry of Agriculture in 1917). The aims of the newly established Ministry were to 'develop national resources, organise and channel productive resources and ultimately further raise the standard of living through an increase in national income'. To public acclaim the agricultural economy of Greece began to encounter progressive change (ibid.:86).

Agrarian Reforms: 1917 onwards

The importance of the ciftlik system to present socio-economic conditions in Trikala becomes apparent when we consider the land reforms that began in 1917. Karavidas, a prominent agronomist (*agrotologos*) hired by the Greek Agricultural Bank at the time, officially labelled this process 'a crisis' in 1930 (Karavidas 1931:173, Mazower 1991:75-79)[52]. For one, the redistribution of the ciftliks allowed a new route for social mobility as people could sell their smallholdings and reinvest the capital elsewhere, often in educating their children. Concepts of social status thus began to be detached from purely land ownership, a central theme when considering notions of prestige in twenty-first century Trikala.

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[52] For an interesting comparison on the agrarian reform and the break up of the great estates (*latifundi*) in Southern Italy see Vanzetti and Meissner (1953), Rossi-Doria (1958), Ginsborg (1984), Pipyrou (2010b).

The land reform legislation was first implemented in 1917 by the Ministry of Agriculture, although it did not become fully operational until after 1922. The heart of the reform legislation was the redistribution of the ciftlik lands to peasant workers in the form of individual smallholdings for private cultivation (Sanders 1962:65, Mouzelis 1978:78, Sant Cassia and Bada 1992:10). Yet the effects of the reform took a long time to filter down from governmental level before the centuries-old system of great estates and peasant workers could be altered.

The original law, No. 1072 of November 18th, 1917, provided the basis for partial expropriation and sequestration of lands. This was followed by a decree on 14th February 1923, after the Asia Minor disaster and the influx of refugees to Greece, that allowed for wide scale expropriation without compensation to the proprietors of medium-size as well as large estates (Pentzopoulos 1962:152). Campbell notes that in Epirus it was not until 1927 that the division of ciftlik land was substantially implemented (Campbell 1964:15). Sanders also states that in 1953, some thirty-six years after the initial reform plans, many people around Larisa, Thessaly, were still awaiting their promised allocation of land (1962:67). In the context of Zakynthos which operated under a similar system to the ciftliks of central Greece, Theodossopoulos notes that it was not until the 1960s that land began to be redistributed from the large old-established estates of the island owned by two brothers, descendents of an old noble Zakynthian family. It was only when the nephew, who disapproved of the remnants of feudalism, inherited the estate that plots of land were sold off to local farmers (2003:31-32).

Despite this apparent lack of reform in many areas of Greece, pressure was rapidly mounting on the landlords holding big estates to sell or distribute plots to the landless farmers (ibid.:34). In Attica, the prefecture to the south-west of Thessaly, Iliopoulos notes:

> "This audacious agrarian policy of expropriation, which allowed in general each proprietor to keep only 30 hectares of cultivatable land, has permitted landless inhabitants of Attica to become owners. This right was acquired on condition of complete payment of the value of the plots acquired and with the obligation of cultivation under penalty of forfeiture" (Iliopoulos 1951 in Sanders 1962:65).

Nevertheless, Thessaly is the *par-excellence* example of agrarian reform in Greece due to its unprecedented rich fertile land, complex history of land ownership, and the sheer size of the farm holdings (an average of over eleven acres per household compared to less than ten throughout most of mainland Greece and five acres in Epirus and the Peloponnese) (Sanders 1962:66, also Sivignon 1976, Mazower 1991:75, Sant Cassia and Bada 1992:10). By 1930 most of the great estates of Thessaly had been converted to land for private cultivation. The *Ciftlikades* were allowed to keep an area up to 500 acres but no more. This meant that 1.5 million acres of land was to be redistributed nationwide. Until the reforms, half of the Thessaly plain had been owned by a single landlord from Larisa who would retain his maximum 500 acres after the redistribution. It was the desire of the government that the remainder of the land was to be destined for the peasant farmers (Sanders 1962:67). However even this was begrudged by the *Ciftlikades* and some sought to privately sell off as much land as possible before the government expropriated it. To facilitate this they exploited obscure legal loopholes, adding additional bureaucratic difficulties to the redistribution process[53].

There were many practical problems with the redistribution of the ciftlik lands. As well as the bureaucratic and political troubles of expropriation and redistribution, the land given to the peasant farmers was often scattered and thus complicated to manage. Another issue was that the former *domka* system of leaving one-third of the collective village land fallow every year was disrupted by the new individual landholdings and the pressures to commence growing commercial crops to increase the financial productivity of the land (Sanders 1962:68, Kontogiorgi 2003:76). More practical problems also arose. Karavidas notes for example that under the *Ciftlikades*, peasant workers were required to keep irrigation ditches clear. However, after the redistribution the farmers no longer seemed concerned with the maintenance of such ditches (Karavidas 1931 in Sanders 1962:341). This, Karavidas argues, is due to the fact that "the traditional aspirations of our rural population do not lie in farming … When the

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[53] Such opportunist entrepreneurship can lead to historic alterations of the socio-economic structure, the 'influence of which is still sometimes found today' (Lisón-Tolosana 1966:5).

harvest is a success, the surplus is used to open a shop or to send the son to Athens to study law!" (1931:496, see also Friedl 1962, Mazower 1991, Argyrou 1996). This seems to be supported by other ethnographic accounts such as that of Sant Cassia and Bada that presents how when ciftliks were sold off to peasant workers, instead of continuing to work the land many new landowners actually uprooted and moved to Athens, using the financial capital gained to educate their children and "enter into lucrative state employment or politics" (1992:10). Hence a preference for other modes of economic livelihood was being displayed on the part of the peasant workers, which in turn inevitably alters concepts of social status and mobility.

Additionally, Campbell notes, there was a substantial increase in disputes over escaped animals trespassing on the land of other farmers. The competition between families was not so apparent under the ciftlik system as families often came together in collective opposition to their (Greek) landlord. After redistribution some people resented the land given to others in the village and this heightened the level of distrust within the community (1976:21).

The government reasoning for redistributing land in separated strips was indeed logical. The idea was that by employing this system every new land owner would be allocated land of differing quality and specialisation (Karavidas 1931:159). However, the farmers often found this system inconvenient and many did not want or need certain pieces of land that they were allocated. In order to combat the problem of small separated strips of land some smallholders decided to pool their resources together and combine their land. In Nees Karyes, south of Larisa, Thessaly, twenty-three men with the smallest and most detached pieces of land pooled their farms and agricultural resources in 1952. The total area of this collaboration came to 575 acres for one extended farm. In order to cultivate the mass of land to its full potential, the men sought the advice of an agricultural specialist and bought a tractor and other machinery on his recommendation (Sanders 1962:69). A cooperative initiative thus came into existence as an indirect consequence of the original land reform. This method of pooling agricultural resources is still very common in much of Thessaly today but in 1952 the residents of Nees Karyes deemed this alternative economic path

an absolute "necessity" (ibid., cf. Lisón-Tolosana 1966 in context of Spain and Layton 2000 in the context of France)[54].

Echoing many narratives of hardship that I have come across in contemporary Trikala, one Greek official in the 1950s told Sanders:

> "today there is less income per family, less food, and the land values go up. Those that have more land become better off, leading to totally new economic and social distinctions in the villages. Many of our farmers are trying to make a living on such small farms that all they produce is hate … That is why you see here in Athens many strong, healthy men selling matches. They have no work to do either in their villages or here in the city" (1962:70).

The consequences of the 1917-1930s agrarian reforms were still being felt long into the 1960s. The redistribution of land meant that the peasants could now choose what crop to cultivate, where to sell their surplus produce and how to reinvest the profit (if any). They also had greater freedom to diversify or indeed sell-up and re-invest the financial capital in another enterprise. One of the long-term consequences of the reforms was the mechanisation of land cultivation. Pre-reform, the majority of the *Ciftlikades* had refused to invest in new machinery to improve production on their lands. Yet by 1962 Thessaly had become the most mechanised region of Greece (Sanders 1962)[55]. This was partially due to the advent of the cooperatives which allowed for the pooling of financial capital in order to purchase such expensive items as tractors and mechanical ploughs (cf. Layton 2000 in context of rural France). The mechanisation was accelerated by the fact that many farmers lost a lot of livestock and beasts of burden during the German occupation and civil war. Therefore after the wars they chose to re-invest in technology rather than replacing the resources they had lost. People who had animals before the upheavals were able to gain an economic advantage in terms of technological advancement by investing in tractors. Consequentially, with an increased yield and small surplus farmers re-invested in the land and the machinery and by the 1960s began to dispel the nonchalant disinterest previously shown by many

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[54] Indeed, Lisón-Tolosana argues that in Spain agrarian reforms have brought about a high number of "economically discontented people" with laws that are favourable towards those who were 'better off' and can dictate what they paid labourers (1966:42).

[55] For a comparative example of the effects of mechanisation on a rural community see Layton (2000).

Thessaloi towards their newly acquired land. Yet another form of disillusionment had been overcome and peasant farmers recovered a sense of inalienability with their mode of livelihood (Sanders 1962:84).

The Impact of the Refugees on Land Reform

The acceleration of expropriations in the 1920s was made absolutely necessary due to the influx of refugees to Greece following the compulsory exchange of populations with Turkey after the Asia Minor disaster[56] (Mouzelis 1978:78). The Treaty of Lausanne was finalised in July 1923. In accordance with the treaty, "all Turkish nationals of the Greek Orthodox religion established on Turkish territory (except for Greek inhabitants of Constantinople) and all the Greek nationals of Moslem religion established on Greek territory (except the Moslem inhabitants of Western Thrace) are forcibly exchanged" (Pentzopoulos 1962:52).

According to the Educational Institute of Greece, 1.2 million refugees resettled in Greece after the exchange of populations and an additional 750,000 individuals had already fled to Greece prior to the treaty due to the dense air of uncertainty concerning Greece's position in Asia Minor (Pentzopoulos 1962:48, see also Hirschon 1989). Between 34,659 and 35,288 refugees were relocated to Thessaly, 2.8 per cent to 3.1 per cent of the total (depending on the statistical source). According to the 1928 census, of that number in Thessaly, 740 took up residence in Trikala *nomos* (N.S.S.G. 1933 in Bennison 1977:238). At first glance this number may appear insignificant, yet the resulting acceleration in land reforms relating to the assimilation of these people into the Greek economy had significant implications for the people of Thessaly (cf. Karavidas 1931, Pentzopoulos 1962, Bennison 1977:104, Mouzelis 1978:19). For one, the influx of refugees to central Greece meant that the area of grassland available for farming on the plains significantly reduced (Campbell 1964:8). Reflecting the trend on a national level, the majority of the remaining ciftliks, such as the

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[56] For a discussion of the war with Turkey, 1919-1922, see Pentzopoulos (1962), Clogg (1992), Hirschon (1989).

estates of Mount Athos in the north of the country, were quickly expropriated to provide smallholdings for the resettled populations (Clogg 1992:103).

Despite attempts by the government to integrate the refugees into the Greek economy, many struggled to compete in the existing agricultural markets and lived in 'refugee quarters' on the edge of towns (Sanders 1962:67-68, Hirschon 1989, Clogg 1992:103)[57]. Indeed, it was the policy of the government to prioritise rural settlements of refugees rather than people who were relocated to urban areas. Hence many villages were re-established in rural Greece as entire entities, carbon copies of their previous forms (Hirschon 1989:257).

Pentzopoulos argues that "any sudden and anomalous increase in the population of a country has obviously far-reaching economic repercussions" (1962:143). This is because the newcomers are as much producers and consumers as the host population. In the case of the population exchange, the economic repercussions were exaggerated due to the state of the recovering Greek economy after a decade of war. Initially, a 20 per cent population increase crippled the already strained resources. The problem was exacerbated further by the completely destitute nature of the new arrivals, many of whom had no means to support themselves, and often no clothes or covers. Hence rapid agricultural and urban reforms were absolutely necessary to accommodate the new arrivals and minimise the extensive financial liability they posed to the state and consolidate a recovering economy.

During the years following the Asia Minor catastrophe, Greece experienced a period of prosperity and progress. Despite the fact that over half of the annual budget was spent on accommodating the refugees, they themselves eventually played a central role in this inter-war economic recovery[58]. Pentzopoulos argues

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[57] According to Sanders, the 'land hunger' exhibited by the Asia Minor refugees arriving in Greece was partially due to the extensive lands available to them in the relatively sparsely populated lands of the Turkish interior (1962:67). On the political level the refugees thus became 'interest groups' in their own right (Karakasidou 1997:149, Hirschon 2000:164, Kirtsoglou and Theodossopoulos 2001:398).
[58] It has been suggested that the immense financial burdens incurred by the Greek state after the exchange of populations may have contributed to the Greek financial bankruptcy in 1932 (Pentzopoulos 1962:145, Svoronos 1981:4, Mazower 1991).

that it was due to the competitive conditions into which they were resettled that the refugees were aggressive and established successful enterprises. Their modes of livelihood were often based on strategies adapted from their previous lives in Asia Minor and thus were innovative in the context of Greece (ibid.:144-145, 150, 160). He suggests that the unconstitutional way in which after the February 14th decree of 1923, land was reclaimed by the state without compensation demonstrates the rapid response of the government to provide refugees with smallholdings (ibid.:152). Indeed, Greece was widely acknowledged as possessing the most revolutionary agricultural policy in Eastern Europe, with over 50 per cent of land within her borders affected by the reforms. As Pentzopoulos puts it:

> "The influx of the refugees constituted the *coup de grâce* on the big estates, even the monastic ones, which were literally swept away. By 1925, 1,496 land properties were expropriated and after 1930 "it [was] difficult to find, throughout the length and breadth of Greece, an estate exceeding 1,200 acres" (1962:152-153 original emphasis).

The primary aim of such an extensive land reform package was to encourage independent peasant-proprietors to take an active interest in increasing production levels. This aspiration was still linked to the long-term aim of making Greece self-sufficient in grain production – a goal that had first been set after the 1892 currant crisis. The relatively unstable financial climate of the 1920s, when crisis and prosperity were perpetually exchanging places, meant that the government was met with little resistance from the landholders as long as appropriate compensation was eventually received (Pentzopoulos 1962:155, Kontogiorgi 2003:74).

<u>The Economic Crisis of 1929-1932</u>

Following the exchange of populations Greece experienced a period of enhanced economic growth. The newfound prosperity was facilitated by the diversification in the national labour market established by the new arrivals, such as the early 1920s tobacco boom, and the upward trend in global market investment. However, as the decade drew to a close economic change was imminent. The events of the 1929-1932 crisis were not solely a Greek problem. One of the most infamous chapters in world economic history was the 1929 collapse of the Wall Street stock markets and the economic depression of the 1930s (Mishara 2008). The crash of the overseas markets which ensued led to an atmosphere of uncertainty and instability in more peripheral economic regions such as Greece.

The first blow, an obstruction of Greek wine exports to France, was to hit at both the macro level of the national economy and the level of the small-scale producers; state, growers, merchants and workers were all implicated (Mazower 1991:116). This impediment was in violation to a recent trade agreement and meant that attempts to diversify Greek exports actually led to a formation of a Greek wine cartel that had the homogenising effect of discouraging competition between exporters to the remaining markets in Germany and Britain (ibid.:115). The wine embargo was just the beginning of many more serious things to come.

The negative effects of the wine trade violation were aggravated further as Greece continued to rely on the exports of tobacco and currants, an issue that had not been addressed since the currant crisis of 1892. The parallel crisis in the tobacco markets was at the centre of the 1929-1932 slump. Augmented because of American reluctance to purchase prime oriental tobacco due to the economic situation in the United States, Greek producers had to compete with those in Bulgaria and Turkey in providing alternative cheap tobacco to the United States of America. Thus large-scale companies were preferred to provide cheaper tobacco, meaning that the small-scale producers were left in a poor bargaining position. Some peasant farmers were unable to diversify and the falling tobacco

prices left several areas of Greece in a state of famine, necessitating tax exemptions in 1930 (ibid.:117, Svoronos 1981).

Far from the export complications impacting only major corporates or capitalist structures, Karavidas locates the foremost force of the export crisis in small-scale farming businesses in northern and central Greece. He writes that the unit for analysing the crisis is more appropriately,

> "The personal, classical, provincial Greek community which … permits the local Greek peasants to exploit their produce, their personal capital and their own surplus labour, on the spot and indeed not only as producers, but also as traders and manufacturers" (1981:13 in Mazower 1991:118).

During the boom years of the 1920s many agriculturalists secured loans either from money-lenders or the National Bank, leading to what came to be termed 'the capitalisation of the countryside'. Accusations circulated that the farmers had spent their loans on petty consumer goods, although some capital was also invested in hiring extra workers to harvest the increasing amounts of crop. Hence, in Thessaly, there was a seasonal trend for agricultural labourers to migrate northwards to assist the collection of the tobacco harvest due to the promise of a secure wage. The downturn in agricultural markets and the inability to diversify meant that many of the loans could not be repaid during the early 1930s. The only way to avert immediate financial catastrophe was to borrow more money from the newly established Agricultural Bank to meet repayments demanded by existing creditors[59] (Mazower 1991:119-120).

In Thessaly the average income of a farming family fell from 19,200 drachmas to 12,330 drachmas in only one year partially due to the decreasing opportunities for seasonal migrant labour and partially because of local issues concerning the declining market for commercial crops. The circumstances severely jeopardised the recently implicated land reform programme as newly formed smallholders were beginning to declare themselves bankrupt (Mazower 1991:130). Giorgos, 90 years old, remembers the effects of the 1929-1932 crisis

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[59] The refugee populations were the first to suffer the full affects of the credit crisis when their debts had to be defaulted. The money had originally been loaned in order for the refugees to construct a new livelihood and become brokers (Mazower 1991:122).

on his village, 10 kilometres south of Trikala. Giorgos' father was a small-hold farmer who obtained his land from an expropriated ciftlik in 1925. Giorgos' two older brothers regularly assisted with both the olive harvest in the Peloponnese and the tobacco harvest near Kavala. As subsistence farmers his family did not suffer directly from the market crash, but he recalled the difficult situation at the time:

> "There was no work for my brothers those years. Neither in the north nor in the south. They stayed at home. The money coming into our family was maybe half of the previous five years. Of course nobody thinks of this now, the younger people, that we had to migrate to supplement our income. No one does this nowadays … My brothers being at home not only meant we had less money those years, but they were eating at home as well. I was helping my father and the other villagers collect the crop, as much as a young boy could. We had a lot that year, perhaps more than usual so we were okay, we had none to sell at the market, but then we never really did. I heard stories of poor people up there (he gestures towards the northern mountains, implying north) that lost everything. Many had very little to lose but the government did not help them".

I ask him how the farmers on the plain of Thessaly experienced the crisis,

> "Like I say, we were not as bad as elsewhere but we suffered with the income. The crops were good … other people who were bigger farmers than us could not sell their goods so they often stored it or shared it with other people".

The agriculturalists around Trikala felt very distant from what was happening on 'the markets' in the global sense, but the local consequences were mainly focused on falling prices for surplus grain, seasonal unemployment and eventual hoarding of foodstuffs. Accounts such as Giorgos' can be understood as furnished with a degree of national consciousness. Although the generation of informants born before the Axis occupation and subsequent civil war in the

1940s generally demonstrate less of a tendency to relate to 'national' historical events as if they had severe 'local' impacts (as we shall see in the case of the 1941-1943 Great Famine), events such as the 1929-1932 economic crisis occupy a significant place in the collective consciousness. In Trikala, the '*intelligentsia*' are more likely to relate to the national consequences of the 1929-1932 crisis and its global impact, whereas the Great Famine is recalled more frequently by the whole cross-section of society. This could be attributed to a number of factors, including the fact that the Great Famine superseded the 1929-1932 crisis chronologically, the effects were more homogeneously felt across the nation and the ideological causes of the Great Famine were more relatable and pliable. Additionally, blame for the Great Famine was much easier to locate within the conceptual reality of most Trikalinoi.

The economic and environmental conditions of other parts of Greece have always had an impact on the economic circumstances of Trikalinoi agriculturalists. Climatic extremes in another part of the country, declining local markets or even crop disease could have subsidiary effects on people in other regions. Dimitris, 68, comes from a family who have worked the land around his village Mikrochori, near Kalampaka, for generations. He describes how until the late 1980s many young men of his village went to work harvesting the olive groves in the Peloponnese, stating that this was to supplement the family income at a time when the women could be left to tend the land around Mikrochori. Even in 2007 Dimitris had to do 'odd jobs' in the village in order to enhance his 700 euro per month income from the state pension. He declares that;

> "People do not do those jobs anymore. They are considered as below
> the standard of a Greek. Until recently we all used to go to the
> Peloponnese every year to help with the olive harvest. We would get a
> small wage, a place to sleep and our food (although some people did
> sleep outside). It was a good time to be together as well as earning
> money to bring back to our families. It made our livelihood a little
> more comfortable; we even relied on this work when our own crop was
> not good. Now it is considered the work of the Albanians (implying all
> immigrants) to go to the Peloponnese and the Greeks won't go down

and work there anymore. They don't want to work next to an Albanian they would rather sit on Asklipiou drinking their *frappé* and watching the girls, even though unemployment is high … Some years we couldn't go, or we would get there and there was no work for us. Sometimes it was because the harvest was poor, maybe the winter was dry or there was a severe heat wave. Other times it was because they could not pay us. May be they had a bad harvest the year before or perhaps they were not selling enough at the market in town, I don't know, but sometimes we would have to come straight back home again. And it was a tough journey, no proper roads when we were young … We got to know the people down there and they knew us, they would get us work if they could".

This account from Dimitris helps highlight the integrated nature of local economies within the national context. Hence the implications of the 1929-1932 economic crisis in the tobacco and currant production locales can begin to be contemplated within a broader context, emphasising the point that the state, growers, merchants, and workers were all affected by the crisis (Mazower 1991:116). The dual facets of the declining opportunities for seasonal migrant labour and the ancillary effects of falling market prices meant that agriculturalists on the plain of Thessaly resorted to hoarding grain as both a matter of necessity and an insurance policy. Interestingly, the hoarding of olive oil during the current economic crisis has also been considered an insurance policy against austerity measures and an unstable currency, a practice mirrored for similar reasons during the Second World War.

The Turmoil of the 1940s Part One: occupation and famine

Two significant crises impacted on Greece during the 1940s, both of which had emphatic social, political and economic consequences. Firstly, the Great Famine of 1941-1943 during the German occupation and secondly the civil war of 1946-1949. The two events are by no means mutually exclusive and are intertwined within social and historical narratives. It is the former of these crises that will first be considered.

An estimated 300,000 people died in Athens alone during the Great Famine of 1941-1943 and to this day this crisis in particular remains at the forefront of narratives of crisis in Greece (Hart 1996:29). Many of the problems with the food shortage were caused by the expropriation of food stuffs and resources as German troops advanced through Greece (Mazower 1993:23-26). The troops resided in private houses in order to avoid bombing, many of which were severely looted. Everything that could be used was stolen and then the timber was used as firewood. The situation got so horrific that even the German hierarchy were lamenting the 'catastrophic supply situation' and advised that the army should be bringing supplies into the country rather than taking them out (ibid.:24). However, Greece was near the bottom of the list when it came to providing substantial food supplies, with the Reich preferring to concentrate on the situation in Belgium, Holland and Norway (ibid.:31). Even if the Axis powers had been determined to maintain an acceptable level of nutrition in Greece they would have had a nigh-impossible task as most of Greece's supplies were imported by sea (including 600,000 tons of grain a year) and rail. As soon as Greece was occupied the sea routes became systematically blocked and the people running the railways from Belgrade and Sofia were preoccupied with supplying the Axis troops in the Balkans (Sweet-Escott 1954:93).

As the Foreign Director of the Near East Foundation in Athens, Laird Archer,[60] recalls from first-hand observations, how the Nazis confiscated hospital food

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[60] Laird Archer (1892-1981) was born in Argonia, Kansas. He worked for Henry J. Allen Publications prior to becoming Governor Allen's secretary in 1920. Between 1922 and 1923, Archer worked for Near East Relief, where he analysed refugee problems in Russia, Turkey, and

supplies and sealed off entire markets, annexing the supplies for their own troops and machine-gunning down any live poultry before repossessing the farmland (Archer 1944:196-197). Indeed, Archer's observations in the vicinity of Athens, recorded in his diary and published in 1944, are both extremely fascinating and an important source of first hand information concerning the consequences of the first stage of the Axis occupation. He recounts how dairy herds were 'reserved' for German soldiers who slaughtered many cattle herds for meat. The ministry of agriculture estimated that the domestic supply of milk was cut by one-third due to the slaughtering (ibid.:197, Mazower 1993:30).

Archer provides a detailed account of how retail outlets were systematically looted by German soldiers. By using a currency known as 'Occupation Marks' – a currency with no value outside of Greece – German soldiers were ordered to purchase anything and everything from retail outlets and ship the goods home to the Reich, thus devastating the commercial centre of Athens (Archer 1944:198). The purpose of the practice was threefold; "it will please the Nazi troops, it will make their people at home feel they're getting something out of the endless fighting, and it will help to enfeeble Greece" (ibid.). Obviously the economic consequences of this strategy were immense. Firstly, there was a currency that had little or no value, especially outside of Athens. Secondly, shopkeepers began to hide many products from the soldiers, thus facing closure if they were discovered. Additionally, by taking the products off the shelves, they were also taken out of the reach of the everyday customers. Thirdly, prices went up excessively over a short period of time as shopkeepers attempted to discourage such loot-buying – yet the effects of this actually hampered the local people and not the soldiers as the price of all available food at the time was far beyond the reach of the indigent (Hionidou 2006:44, 48).

Iraq. In 1930, Archer became Foreign Director of the Near East Foundation and remained at that post until 1952, when he retired. Archer also chaired the American Reparation Committee in 1941 and the Coordinating Committee of American Agencies for Reconstruction Planning in 1942 and 1943. Archer publications include *The Balkan Journal* (1944). Composed of excerpts from his diary, *The Balkan Journal* deals chiefly with international affairs between June 1934 and August 1941 (http://libinfo.uark.edu/specialcollections/findingaids/archer.asp).

From his apartment window in the centre of the city, Archer recalls observing a squad of soldiers buying-up a leathergoods shop. They carried their newly acquired suitcases to the clothes shop next door and filled the suitcases, thus buying-out this store as well. They then entered the neighbouring camera store and emptied that as well. In the space of thirty minutes three families were put out of business with little chance of re-stocking and virtually no value to the money that was exchanged (1944:198). The next stage in the process, Archer testifies, was usually the "purchase" of the business itself and the installation of a German director. If sale of stock was refused, the owner was arrested and taken into internment. During the first few months of the 1941 occupation an estimated 2,000 factories of all sizes had been repossessed in Athens by the German authorities (ibid.).

To make the shortage of food supplies worse, the exceptionally dry spring of 1941 decreased the grain harvest by approximately 50 per cent over much of the mainland, when a full crop would have still been one third short of the necessary annual supply. The people to be most greatly affected by this were initially the unemployed, refugees and the families of mobilised men due to the sudden cessation of government food subsidies (ibid.:189, Hionidou 2006:33). Although this is the general rhetoric of the situation in 1941, Hionidou, a dedicated social scholar of the Great Famine, disputes the claim that agricultural production dropped so significantly during the Axis occupation. She claims that such statistics refer to the amount of production the Greek authorities actually managed to tax at the time (2006:68). The main difference in production and consumption, Hionidou argues, is that prior to the war the selling of grain and cereal to the government was optional but often obtained a good price. During the occupation this became compulsory in order to secure foodstuffs for rationing. Especially the residents of the Islands often refused to hand over the foodstuffs and pay the 10 per cent tax required due to the continuous miscalculation of output by the Greek authorities. Only with the impending

threat of German military intervention did these incidents of resistance come to an end (ibid.:73-75, Thomadakis 1981)[61].

Obviously, the famine was much more than merely a statistical problem. The psychological dimensions are at least as important. The people that lived through the famine were changed mentally, morally and politically (Mazower 1993:41). Hence narratives of the Great Famine intertwine with other periods of economic pessimism, such as the financial crisis of 2008-onwards, creating a narrative 'history of traumatic past' (Winichakul 2002:245). For one, attitudes to death were altered beyond comparison. Many Greek Orthodox practices could not be followed upon the death of a relative. Sometimes the bodies had to be abandoned, or at best were buried in a haphazard manner wherever people could dig through the frozen earth. The costs involved with a 'proper' burial were just too high, in terms of petrol, transportation and Church permissions (Mazower 1993:41). The narratives of the famine in Greece span many levels. They are embedded in the educational curricula, popular poetry, autobiography, collective history, politics, and both public and domestic discourse.

One male informant, Stergios, 76 years old, who lived in Trikala during the occupation, narrates:

> "When I was a child during the war I used to play on the streets with the children of the neighbourhood. Sometimes the women would give us small pieces of stale bread to eat whilst we played. I remember that on more than one occasion I would eat a small piece of the bread and save the rest to take home to my mother. She would always accept the bread, poor woman, which by that time was dirty and covered in nasal excrement … We (the children) also made a habit of picking up any small crumbs that we could find on the streets of our neighbourhood".

In this case the informant actually recounted this story whilst being directly questioned about the twenty-first century economic crisis. The point of the

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[61] For a detailed account of the black markets, inflation and economy of occupied Greece see Thomadakis (1981).

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cultural proximity between two seemingly distant events becomes apparent, a proximity facilitated by a shared notion of crisis.

Almost all the families of my informants had members who directly experienced the famine of 1941-1943, the consequences of which have been passed down through the generations, thus informing the current actions of many people. Narratives of the Great Famine have become embodied not only through narrative and discourse, but also through patterns of consumption. One such example is of how Trikalinoi nowadays insist on maintaining a very well stocked larder, in keeping with the hoarding practices during the famine and in fear of what consequences a new crisis might bring (Mazower 1993:32). The large freezers remain stocked with frozen fruit and vegetables which are bought in abundance on a regular basis. Indeed, the famine itself added an extra element to the importance of food in the Greek imagery (cf. Sutton 2001).

The question "*why do you not eat?*" and the imperative statements "*take some food*" and "*do not throw away the food*" are commonplace in everyday life. One female informant, 65, explains:

> "We have experienced times when we had no food, especially our parents. We do not forget these times, we are told of how hard it was then ... We, who did not even have a piece of bread to eat. Food cannot be wasted, and it must be appreciated, for even today not all of us have it".

I have experienced on many occasions bringing home food from 'outside' after a day in the town or preparing to go out to a *panagiri* (celebration) where food would be plentiful. The reaction on both occasions is to crowd around the food and to make sure everybody in the immediate *parea* (company) is fed 'before it runs out' (even though this is logically highly improbable).

This fascination with food both on the level of narrative and consumption must be contextualised within a wider framework. The effects of the Great Famine ignited by the Axis occupation were not as severely felt in Trikala as in other

urban centres such as Athens (Bennison 1977:106, Hionidou 2006:34)[62]. This was due in part to the relative failure of the Germans to occupy mountainous regions of Thessaly; hence the plains also escaped the severity. Indeed, Trikala was one of the major centres of resistance to German forces during World War Two. The resistance forces were under the control of the Greek resistance organisation, EAM (*Ethniko Apeleftherotiko Metopo*), and its military wing, ELAS (*Ellinikós Laïkós Apeleftherotikós Stratós*), based in Trikala[63]. Another reason for the dilution of the crisis in Thessaly was the fact that many people still retained access to a small amount of basic produce due to their smallholdings and self-sufficient production techniques, something that was impossible in the major cities. However, due to the nature of Greek nationalism the plight of one part of the nation during the devastating famine, such as Athens, is recalled as if the narrative were a first-hand personal experience in Trikala. The crisis thus takes on a national importance even in the areas that were not so overwhelmingly affected. The accounts of the hardship in Athens during the Great Famine are well documented in educational history books and popular novels. For example, the majority of people can recite the fact that during the famine people were resorting to eating cats that they found on the streets of Athens (Psathas 1944). Thus the importance of the Great Famine in the social imagery of today should not be underestimated and will form the focus for chapter seven entitled "Time, Crisis and Social Memory".

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[62] Although the area was to feel the affects of the resistance movements such as EAM/ELAS and EDES, see Hondros (1981), Hart (1996).

[63] The Kalampaka pass, 20km north Trikala, was where the Greek and British Imperial forces joined to fend off the German progression through mainland Greece (Archer 1944:177). Important battles took place on the 12th of February 1943 at Oxyneia (Meritsa), on the 23rd of April 1943 at Kalampaka, and on the 8th of September 1943 at Pyli. (http://www.ethessaly.gr/cultureportalweb/index.php?page=particle&article_id=14&topic_id=33 &level=1&belongs=10&area_id=2&lang=en).

The Turmoil of the 1940s Part Two: Civil War

The second major crisis in Greece during the 1940s was the civil war that devastated the country from 1946 to 1949. The conflict developed in multiple stages and thus the official dates vary, from 1941 to 1950. The roots of the crisis are indeed inextricably linked to the Axis occupation of Greece during the Second World War as the Axis powers employed methods of coercion and seduction to gain collaborators from the local populations. With the diverse economic, ethnic and cultural backgrounds of the occupied populations, fissures in the social composition were relatively easy to find. Previously sutured divisions were reopened and hostility was provoked between those who benefited and those that suffered from such collaborations (Iatrides 1981, Close 1993:1, Fleisher 1995:48-49). Politically led by the KKE (Communist Party of Greece), many leftists, along with a large section of society that had suffered under the Axis occupation, vowed to avenge those who had benefited economically and socially. The withdrawal of the Axis forces only fuelled the underlying hostilities as power vacuums were left behind (Hart 1996:29).

On 27th September 1941 EAM (the National Liberation Front) was founded as an organisation under the instruction of the KKE. EAM initially enjoyed immense popularity in Thessaly due to the KKE's "mastery of propaganda" that pitched 'the people' against 'the government' who were portrayed as benefiting from the consequences of war"[64] (Woodhouse 1976:136, Hondros 1981, Grigoriadis 2010). EAM was soon to enjoy the political, humanitarian and military support of Albania, Yugoslavia and Bulgaria, as well as the ideological support of Stalinist Russia.

EAM was originally comprised of staunch communists as a resistance to the occupying German and Italian forces; however the organisation gradually incorporated more liberal and middle class support in the early years of its existence. The military arm of EAM was ELAS (National Popular Liberation

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[64] Both Iatrides (1972:149-150) and Hondros (1981:45) draw our attention to secret KKE orders to EAM/ELAS to cooperate with Allied forces during the occupation in order to 'win over the middle classes' by the time of liberation.

Army) whose general headquarters were located in Trikala. EAM/ELAS intended to at least prevent the restoration of the monarchy and avoid a return to the pre-war persecution of the socialists; at best they planned to seize power in government in Athens (Campbell and Sherrard 1968:180, Close 1993:3, Fleischer 1995)[65]. As early as September 1943 the EAM/ELAS resistance forces were under attack from specially organised Security Battalions under German direction (Close 1993:4, Hart 1996). It is difficult to estimate the amount of support for EAM/ELAS in their resistance operations as the statistical records of the time are notoriously inaccurate; the range has been said to be between 200,000 and 2,000,000 members (Hondros 1981:41-42).

Until 1942 EAM/ELAS collaborated with EDES (*Ellínikos Dímokratikos Ethnikós Strátos*, Greek Democratic National Army) within the Thessaly region in waging guerrilla warfare against the Axis forces and opposing the government collaborators. However this uneasy coalition of ideologies – the communist EAM/ELAS and the increasingly rightist EDES – would soon turn into a bloody territorial war between the two organisations. In 1943 the skirmishes between the two organisations drastically increased. EDES enjoyed significant support from the British government as the British saw EAM as a threat to their traditional influence over Greece. Gradually EDES attracted members from a variety of ideological backgrounds and became simply known as the 'anti-communist' organisation[66]. This label was also given to other non-communist resistance groups in Greece that participated in localised editions of the national ideological conflict (Smith 1993:64). The northern regions of Thessaly bordering Greek Macedonia and the Pindos Mountains were especially affected during this stage of the civil war. The conflict was complicated further by the agreement of EAM to collaborate in a British patronised government at the same time that they were fearsomely fighting British-backed government forces. In 1944 approximately 22,000 EAM/ELAS fighters took on over twice the number of government forces, British Commonwealth troops, police, Security Battalions and Greek anti-communists, in Athens-Piraeus. ELAS

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[65] The exiled Greek government was substantially patronised by Britain (Close 1993:3-4).
[66] EKKA (National and Social Liberation, *Ethniki kai Koinoniki Apeleftherosis*) was an equivalent anti-communist party that fought running battles with EAM/ELAS but operated mainly in Sterea Ellada and disbanded in 1944 (cf. Close 1995:xii-xiv).

sources stated that over 1,000 rightist prisoners were captured and held near their base in Trikala (Close 1995:140)[67].

The 1943-1944 stage of the civil war was especially poignant in Trikala and "made a special impact on the public because the military leaders of these organizations were well known in the cities and allied with politicians" (Close 1995:102). One such figure was Aris Velouchiotis who has been described as 'an outstanding personality' and was famous for his charismatic speeches. Some of my informants claim personal connections with this figure, often saying that their fathers or grandfathers were his friends or acquaintances. One informant recalls the account of her late uncle:

> "Uncle Christos knew Aris. He was a familiar face around our villages. I remember him telling me that Aris was a pretty normal guy, but when he spoke people listened, he was convincing and people believed in him and the cause he was promoting … he knew how to work the audience … but he was a normal man really. I remember he said that Aris was not born in Thessaly but was adopted as one of our own …"

Velouchiotis organised many of the guerrilla bands in central Greece and was one time leader of the ELAS army as well as simultaneously serving on the Central Committee of the KKE. When translated his name literally means 'the god of war from Veloukhi' – the highest peak in the central Pindos range. His real name was Athanasios Klaras and although he was born in Lamia he spent most of his life in the mountains of Thessaly. He signed a declaration denouncing communism in 1939 when advised to do so by the KKE, however this was purely a political ploy. Interestingly, he often employed the notion of Greece as the 'ciftlik of others', a situation that he vowed should never happen again (Woodhouse 1976:3-5). Velouchiotis was known for his brutal manner of warfare and tried to organise another phase of violence after EAM/ELAS had agreed to disarm and sign a truce with the British and Greek nationalist forces in early 1945. At this stage he denounced the KKE, left Trikala and set out once

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[67] At the same time another 60,000 EAM/ELAS members were involved in fighting anti-communist resistance bands in northern and western Greece (Close 1993:66, cf. Hondros 1981).

more into the Pindos range with a small band of devoted guerrillas. Whilst in the mountains he learnt through the Trikala-published *Rizospastis* journal that the ceasefire was still being upheld by the communist hierarchy. In the article Velouchiotis' name was especially mentioned as one who would 'face punishment' if he continued to resist. He finally took his own life in June 1945 whilst being pursued by communist bands in the Pindos Mountains. His severed head was hung from a lamppost in Trikala (Woodhouse 1976:140-141).

Another such figure with personal connections to Trikala was Stefanos Sarafis, relative of the historian Lee Sarafis who provides a commentary on the civil war in central Greece (cf. Sarafis 2000). Stefanos Sarafis was an army colonel, and commander-in-chief, of ELAS from Trikala who died in an 'accident' − he was hit by a car driven by an American Air Force lieutenant in Athens in 1957. There are narratives of his funeral in Trikala when the secret police were walking up and down Asklipiou to observe who was in attendance (Ioannou 1981:63, Fleischer 1995). Stefanos Sarafis refused to declare allegiance to the king during the civil war. On 5 July 1943 he signed the 'project of military cooperation' according to which all the guerrilla troops would collaborate against the Axis occupation under the direction of a collective general. He was elected as the representative for EDA for Larisa and Magnesia in 1956[68]. His statue now stands near the main square in the centre of Trikala.

The violence of the civil war escalated in 1946 after both EAM/ELAS and the British failed to implement their promises of disarmament and political cooperation, known as the Varkiza Agreement. During the cessation in hostilities and the dissolution of the ELAS military wing a series of rightist attacks on communist outposts became notoriously known as the White Terror. Leftist retaliation was at first supposed to be a warning to the right not to continue with their 'campaign or terror', yet the action actually had an opposite effect and the fighting intensified. The White Terror is typified in the historical record as a series of brutal killings by rightists against the left, who did not initially retaliate in order to honour their ceasefire agreement with the British.

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[68] For accounts of Stefanos Sarafis during the civil war see Sweet-Escott (1954:23), Woodhouse (1976).

The White Terror is considered to be what instigated the renewed hostilities as the KKE led the communist forces into military conflict once again in order to "protect itself against its ideological enemies" (Iatrides 1981:152, Smith 1993, Close 1995). According to the official KKE publications, at the time of the White Terror 1,289 resistance fighters were murdered, 6,671 wounded, 31,632 tortured, 84,931 arrested, 8,624 imprisoned, 677 offices of resistance organisations were attacked and 165 women members of EAM were raped without communist retaliation[69]. However, some scholars, such as Kalyvas, take a different stance when considering the White Terror. Kalyvas suggests that the leftist violence against the rightists, what he terms the Red Terror, is understated in the historical record. Kalyvas believes that this distortion is a consequence of the eventual 'absolute defeat' of the communists, thus persecutions of the defeated side will inherently be emphasised in public discourse (2000:142). He concludes that the so-called Red Terror was a centrally planned process that was key to EAM's and the KKE's strategic goals (ibid.:143).

Since ELAS had been disbanded under the Varkiza Agreement, EAM formed a new military wing; DSE (*Dimokratikos Stratos Elladas*, Democratic Army of Greece). DSE fought a bitter war against the Greek National Army (which was supported by the British and Americans) from 1946 to 1949 (Campbell and Sherrard 1968, Hart 1996:32). Throughout this period, Thessaly, Epirus and Greek Macedonia were the main focus of the fighting (Close 1993:7, 1995:193). In Thessaly participation in the hostilities rose by over 50 per cent between 1946 and 1949 due to the successful recruitment drive of Vasiles Bartziotas. Left-wing attacks on gendarmerie posts and patrols significantly increased to secure extra supplies, a feat that was pre-eminently demonstrated by the capture of the heavily fortified village of Deskati in northern Thessaly[70] (Campbell and Sherrard 1968:182, Close 1995:193-195, Sarafis 2000:219). In 1946 Yugoslavia and Albania also increased their supply of weapons, food and medicines to the communist campaign. Close notes that in Thessaly the sympathy towards EAM was based in the resistance campaign of the organisation during the Axis

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[69] http://inter.kke.gr/News/2006new/2006-09-civil1/
[70] For a detailed account of the policing of Deskati during the Axis occupation and subsequent civil war, including an intriguing account of British-Indian Imperial troops stationed in the remote village, see Sarafis (2000).

occupation when the local people benefited from the line of supplies coming from the north (1995:194, Sweet-Escott 1954:60, Campbell and Sherrard 1968:182). In December 1949 EAM/ELAS claimed one final sizeable victory in Thessaly by securing an urban centre when they captured the town of Karditsa, 28 kilometres to the south of Trikala (Close 1995:112-113).

EAM/ELAS enjoyed strong local support in Thessaly throughout the civil war, especially as their general headquarters were in Trikala (Woodhouse 1976: 134, Close 1995:134, 136, Clogg 2002:137). The mountainous regions that hemmed in the vast agricultural plain were strongholds of the communist resistance. Thus Thessaly and the neighbouring prefecture of Western Macedonia formed "a continuous area of left-wing strength, communicating with the hospitable territory of Yugoslavia" (Close and Veremis 1993:98-99). The main communist journal, *Rizospastis* was also published in Trikala during the civil war. This perception of the area as a communist stronghold would come to have an effect on the local populations during the military junta of 1967-1974 as many people were restricted in their movement, employment or even relocated. Indeed, Herzfeld notes that after the civil war, a vindictively victorious right-wing hounded all suspected communists and barred their children from good jobs and interfered with their access to social services (1991:38). The war was also fought on an economic level. The communist guerrillas in western Thessaly and the Pindos systematically destroyed electricity generators and water supplies, leaving much infrastructure damaged beyond repair. Therefore, economic stabilisation after the war would be tedious as the government had to deal with an immeasurable reconstruction programme (Herzfeld 1991:41).

For the Trikalinoi, as in the majority of rural Greece, people attempted to continue with their everyday lives during the civil war (cf. Sarafis 2000:217). As previously mentioned, in Trikala I have come across numerous narratives of people directly affected by the civil war. Depending on political allegiance, left-wing and right-wing narratives place the blame initially towards the external other – the interference of Britain and the US or Russia and Yugoslavia – but somewhat more tentatively inwards towards each other.

Patterns in the dissemination of blame can be linked to the political environment of the time (cf. Winichakul 2002). In Greece, the communist defeat created an intensely anti-communist government until 1974. It was only after the legalisation of the Greek Communist Party and the socialist government of 1981-1989 that interest in the civil war as a topic of literary debate was substantially revived (Marantzidis and Antoniou 2004:223)[71]. Scholarly articles are often products of concurrent political rhetoric. For example, during the intensely anti-communist governments of 1945-1974, two out of three books on the civil war were anti-left but between 1974 and 2003 four out of five books were pro-left. Marantzidis and Antoniou argue that people brought up after 1974 have been inducted to a 'dominant left-wing model of the civil war'. These discrepancies led to two main narratives of blame; the right wing calls this the national-minded (*Ethnikofrones*) versus traitors of the nation, the left wing divides civil war society into patriots versus collaborators-reactionaries (Marantzidis and Antoniou 2004:224).

According to leftist accounts of blame abundant after the 1974 fall of the military junta, the civil war only began in 1946 and the conflict raging in Greece from 1941 was primarily a resistance war against the Axis occupation and their internal collaborators. In their discourse the Greek Axis collaborators are deprived of their national identity, thus actions against them are not considered part of the civil conflict. Thus fratricide was not part of the civil conflict hostilities as the opposition was not considered Greek. On the other hand, the right-wing rhetoric insists that the civil war began during the Axis occupation when various resistance groups began fighting each other. They evoke the infamous 'three rounds' theory which attempts to prove that the Communist Party wanted to seize power in post-war Greece at all costs (ibid.).

The right-wing rhetoric post-civil war was set against a backdrop of the Cold War and the reworked perspectives of the Second World War. The blame was

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[71] According to Hart (1992:78) the civil war is often still a delicate issue to address in the public domain whilst the Second World War and the German occupation are less sensitive matters. This is due to the "opposing sympathies" of people within the same village. She notes that it was actually those with rightist sympathies which were most reluctant to raise the issue and those who did speak warned against repeating their comments so as not to "stir up bad feeling" with their version of history (1992:79).

directed outwards towards the interfering influences of the Soviet Union and communist Yugoslavia. The left-wing propaganda reversed these accusations towards the meddling British and American imperialism. Either way, from the mid 1970s the external Other was held responsible for the civil violence and, Marantzidis and Antoniou argue, this remains the accepted mainstream approach to this day (ibid.).

Dionisis, 60, tells me of how,

> "the others wanted Greece for themselves after the German occupation … she was like a prize, like a cup won at the football … the Americans wanted it, the Russians wanted it, and they were all aggravating the situation".

From 1974 onwards any remnants of internal blame for the civil war, brothers against brothers, was assigned to the pages of history and a collective rhetoric against the external Other was wholly adopted, thus denying any 'internal divisions and ambiguities in Greek society' (ibid.:225). Furthermore, the resistance against the occupying Other, the Axis forces, is presented as united, ignoring the internal civil conflict between factions such as ELAS and EDES. This presentation of collective unity was necessary in the 1980s and 1990s when the socialist PASOK, the central-right Nea Dimokratia and the Greek Communist Party all found themselves in the national government.

At the grassroots level, narratives of blame are informed by personal experience as well as official and scholarly rhetoric. Most families in Trikala have relatives who have poignant narratives of the civil war. For example, there are many stories of kidnappings by communist guerrillas in the Pindos Mountains which obviously inform personal and collective opinions on the conflict. These narratives are abundant in Trikala partially due to the considerable geographical rural to urban movement of people to Trikala from the mountainous regions of Greek Macedonia during the civil war. Kidnappings and banditry were widespread in the mountainous northern regions at this time and some families

currently residing in Trikala have personal accounts of family members being kidnapped and executed by leftist or rightist guerrillas[72].

In the 1940s the Greek government had policies that encouraged people to relocate away from communist troubled mountainous areas to urban centres. These policies were aimed at controlling the influence of communist guerrillas and were a strategic scheme to discourage people from collaborating with the communist side. The relocation policies were aimed at two main categories of people, namely those who were anti-communist and those who were suspected of collaborating with the communist DSE. Either way, the national government sought to create 'dead zones' in order to break up communist lines of influence, a notion particularly prominent in the Pindos mountains that acted as a supply chain for communist resources from Yugoslavia and Albania. Therefore, during 1946 and 1947 many people from the peripheral areas of northern and central Greece relocated to urban centres such as Trikala, Kozani and Thessaloniki. Yet this migration towards urban centres, when combined with an era of exceptionally high inflation (Sweet-Escott 1954, Thomadakis 1981, Palairet 2000), meant that people faced problems of inadequate education, welfare and health provisions due to the limited capacity of public services (Clogg 1992:182).

One such person who relocated to Trikala during the civil war was Thomas. I first met Thomas in 2004 when he was aged 93 and I enjoyed many visits over successive years. He recited his story of why he came to Trikala in 1947.

Thomas relocated to Trikala from Kalimera, Grevenon, in Greek Macedonia in 1947. During the same year he managed to relocate his whole family from the village to Trikala, 115 kilometres away by road. Thomas had suffered great loss in Kalimera during the civil war as one of his brothers voluntarily joined the communist guerrilla forces and was never seen again and the other went missing, presumed kidnapped. At the time it was being made widely known that the national government would impose harsh punishments on people they

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[72] For a discussion of banditry in the Mediterranean see Sant Cassia (1993) and Jenkins (1998).

suspected of being, or collaborating, with the communists. Thomas himself did not care for politics but given his family's ambivalent past record with the communists, and constant threats towards raiding his village, he decided to remove himself from the situation and move to Trikala, where nobody would know him or his family.

On arrival in Trikala Thomas was allocated a place of residence in a neighbourhood of '*parapigmata*' (*parapigma* – put to the side), opposite the central sports stadium on the eastern suburbs of the town. Here the *katathiokomenoi* (pursued people), or *andartopliktoi* (stricken by the communist guerrillas) were accommodated. The accommodation comprised of a wooded shed-like structure with a corrugated iron roof where whole families were obliged to share one room. This residence was provided by the national government for all those people who wanted to relocate to urban areas. It was further part of the government plan to depopulate the rural areas to create 'dead zones' during the civil war. Thomas was a builder and together with other builders who came together from Kalimera, they worked on various public and private jobs in the town. Nevertheless, the living conditions for Thomas and his wife were extremely difficult and thus together with another co-villager from Kalimera they bought some land near the railway lines in the neighbourhood of Pyrgos. The two men divided the land into two parts and build houses for their families. Thomas would later repeat this exercise in the 1960s when he built houses for his children in another district of Trikala. Thomas' daughter Eugenia remembers that whilst she was growing up in Pyrgos people were referring to her as 'the *katathikomeno*', thus omitting the 'o' which creates the word properly. "*People did not know the word or how to say it properly*" she recalls.

Thomas' relocation was mainly driven by a conscious decision to avoid implication in the politics of the civil war, but also has an economic undertone. The civil war had crippled the economy of the villages of Greek Macedonia where prior to the 1940s the construction industry was thriving. Builders like Thomas would travel around northern Greece in 'teams' (*omades*) from Epirus to Kavala to gain building contracts. The village of Kalimera, Grevenon, enjoyed a reputation for excellent masonry and was relatively wealthy with a

high level of prestige. The German occupation and the civil war disrupted the movement of the builders who could no longer find enough work locally. The dangers of travelling in the mountains due to both leftist and rightist banditry meant that those without political or economic interests in the conflicts were faced with a dead-end situation. Hence Thomas and others like him decided to relocate to the towns where the opportunities for work were greater and their families safer. Consequentially, the relocation process during the civil war can also be linked to notions of employment, education, and social mobility (cf. Moustaka 1968).

Economic Ruins of the 1940s

In statistical terms the events of the 1940s were enormous. It was estimated in 1946 that the physical damage caused by the Axis occupation alone was $8.5 million. Over 2,000 villages were burnt or raised to the ground and one-quarter of all buildings in Greece were damaged or destroyed (Sweet-Escott 1954:94). The production of many crops was non-existent and industry was at a standstill. Much of the nation's infrastructure was also severely damaged during either the German retreat or the subsequent civil war, including most bridges and ports. The currency was also in crisis. The amount of gold sovereigns sent to sustain the resistance and the common practice of literally 'printing money' meant that inflation seemed impossible to control (ibid.:96, Thomadakis 1981, Palairet 2000). Stories concerning hoards of gold in western Thessaly are abundant in the folklore of the region and are circulated among my informants.

One of my informants in Trikala has recently bought a metal detector in an attempt to discover gold sovereigns dropped by Allied forces during the Axis occupation. The money was supposed to aid the resistance movement but more often or not it was taken by local people and hoarded underground or in houses in the villages of northern and central Greece. A house in Trikala was recently renovated and a 'treasure chest' of gold sovereigns was discovered and duly looted. The folklore concerning the dropping of British '*lires*' (pounds) into Greece is ubiquitous in northern Thessaly and Western Macedonia. Occasionally, small groups equipped with metal detectors and all the related

paraphernalia, organise 'treasure hunting' excursions. These stories are adorned with myths about snakes and monsters that guard the British treasures.

The folklore concerning the value of gold sovereigns is based firmly within the economic reality of civil war Greece. Greece experienced four stages of hyperinflation between 1941 and 1946. The rocketing prices peaked in October 1944 when, after liberation, prices rose by 7,459 per cent in one month (Delivanis and Cleveland 1949, Makinen 1986, Palairet 2000:9). By 1944 the amount of currency in circulation had increased by 36,100 per cent from 1939 levels and in 1944 one gold sovereign was equivalent to 170,000,000,000,000 drachma. On 10th November 1944 the government withdrew the existing currency and replaced it with the new drachma. One new drachma was equal to 600 pounds and 50,000,000,000 old drachma (Palairet 2000:9). As civil war intensified from 1945 onwards, it was commonplace to put savings into material artefacts or gold sovereigns[73]. This drove the price of gold far above the world market price. Thus the national economy again began to slip. In an attempt to stabilise the drachma the British government lent Greece £25 million as part of the Anglo-Greek financial agreement of 24th January 1946. This was in addition to the £46 million lent to Greece by Britain in 1940-1941, the repayment of which Britain had already agreed to waive. In return the Greek government agreed to stabilise wages, to control the price of certain rationed goods, increase taxation and eventually eliminate the budget deficit. In 1946 the United States of America added an additional $80 million to the substantial British loans (Sweet-Escott 1954:101-102).

More financial aid was to come the way of Greece in the form of the Truman Doctrine[74] of 1947 (also a key aspect of the communist defeat during the civil war [Campbell and Sherrard 1968:183]) and the Marshall Aid programme or European Recovery Program (ERP), also formulated in 1947. Under the Truman

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[73] Under Nazi occupation, economic administrator Hermann Neubacher tried, ultimately unsuccessfully, to implement a 'free market' plan in the place of rationing in order to encourage Greek citizens away from hoarding and towards free spending. Due to unforeseen trajectories in the war in Europe, the policy was never implemented. Neubacher noted that besides foodstuffs, the demand for gold sovereigns exhibited by the Greek people was unsustainable and confidence in their national currency needed to be restored (Palairet 2000:34).
[74] For a discussion of the Truman Doctrine see Fatouros (1981).

agreement the United States would give Greece an initial $300 million, of which $149 million was allocated to military aid, $146.5 million was to be put towards economic assistance, with the balance being spent on administration. The total of the Truman Doctrine was to be revised to $648 million by the middle of 1949 (Sweet-Escott 1954:105). The Americans had by this time decided that merely restoring the Greek economy to its pre-war status would be inadequate. Instead they believed in targeting a new industrial development programme that was collectively drawn up (Sweet-Escott 1954:107, Fatouros 1981:244)[75]. The cost of living had also skyrocketed during the 1940s as everyday particulars became rare. In 1947 certain items were 300 times more expensive in terms of real wages than in 1939. Some wages increased by up to 250 times as part of the collective wage and salary agreements of 1947 (Sweet-Escott 1954.:103).

According to Ginsborg, the American decision to pump aid into Europe was purely based on economic and political ideology (1990:78). By the end of the Second World War, three-quarters of the world's invested capital and two-thirds of its industrial capital were concentrated in the United States. Thus the Americans desperately required trading partners but Europe's economy, and thus buying ability, would take many years to recover from the pummelling effects of war. Thus the Marshall Plan (or ERP) was set up in 1947, whereby the United States would give $29 billion in assistance to Europe over a period of four years[76]. Interestingly, due to the impending civil war in Greece, George Marshall warned the European beneficiaries that all aid would cease in the event of communist victories (Ginsborg 1990:115). Thus the situation for Marshall Aid was different in Greece than other European countries, for example Italy, where communist opposition did not escalate into full-blown civil war. The objective of the programme was to make the recipient nations independent of dollar aid by 1952, but from this Greece was exempt due to the ongoing civil war. In the first year (1948-1949) Greece received a total of $273.2 million from this programme; the figure for the second year was almost identical. However, of the total $550 million received in two years of Marshall Aid, only $150 was

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[75] Early in 1949 it was suggested that Greece should operate with a minimum deficit of $150 million.

[76] For an account of the impact of American aid in post-war Italy see Ginsborg (1990).

directly spent on the reconstruction and development of the economy, the majority literally went on maintaining standards of living to the minimum level (Sweet-Escott 1954:107-108). In fact, the majority of the estimated $2,500 million Greece received after liberation was spent on the civil war, as it was in the interest of the foreign donors and the Greek government to win against the communist opposition (ibid.:161). Indeed, Campbell and Sherrard argue that it was only due to the extensive material, financial and military support provided by Britain and America that Greece was not enveloped into the 'communist world' between 1947 and 1949 (1968:185). They state that the repercussions of such a deep social divide between communist and anti-communist sympathisers included a weakened central government that compromised the "practical solutions of Greece's moral and economic dilemmas" (ibid.:185, Svoronos 1981).

In Thessaly the American and British aid had visible effects 'on the ground'[77]. A significant part of the foreign aid was put towards agricultural development. Large quantities of machinery, especially tractors, were imported to north and central Greece. Storage and processing facilities were also improved in order to increase productivity. Additionally, money was invested in the instruction of the peasant farmers on issues such as effective crop rotation and the best uses of feed, fertilisers and equipment (Sweet-Escott 1954:108-109). One must bear in mind the observation of Karavidas (1931:496) from the Agricultural Bank of Greece that "the traditional aspirations of our rural population do not lie in farming …" and the considerable problems caused in productivity when the land from the ciftliks were redistributed in the 1920s and 1930s. Once again the prospect of Greece becoming self-sufficient in grain production was foremost in the minds of the investors.

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[77] Campbell (1968b) mentions the affects of the civil war on the Sarakatsani herders of Epirus. He says that the currency inflation and the communist insurrection "ruined many of these men" (1968b:146). Only the stronger and more able merchants survived by stealing the custom of the weaker competitors and offering substantial credit at a time when the shepherds needed a larger cash income and thus a larger debt (ibid.). This may be considered as a form of economic opportunism at a time of crisis.

Chapter Four: A Brief History of Crisis in Thessaly since 1881
Part Two: Post Civil War until the Present Day

This chapter continues the investigation into the history of critical events in Thessaly according to the same criteria as used in the previous chapter. Post-civil war periods of social upheaval will be presented to be later analysed in relation to the current economic crisis. As one might expect, the first-hand narrative detail of the post-civil war period is more comprehensive than the pre-war years.

The Military Junta 1967-1974

Sweet-Escott notes that in 1954 there were only a few areas that relied solely upon agriculture as the basis on the economy; one such area, he states, is Thessaly (1954:119). The early 1970s saw a shift from wide scale subsistence agriculture on the plain of Thessaly, towards small scale cash crops (Campbell and Sherrard 1968:328, Campbell 1968, Sivignon 1976, Bennison 1977). This was primarily due to the policy of the military junta that aimed to allow "the forces of the free market" to operate more effectively and implement a new economic development plan (Ministry of Coordination 1968:preface 5, 7-8). According to the Ministry of Coordination, the new economic plan implemented on 1st January 1968 would transfer Greece "from the category of underdeveloped to the category of developed economies" through the "active support of the business community, the trade unions and all Greek citizens" (1968:preface 5-6). The assurance given by the government of active support for private free market initiatives created a problem of how to produce profitable agricultural exports whilst managing associated issues of labour organisation and production costs (Campbell and Sherrard 1968:328). It is often said by Trikalinoi that the economic policies of the dictatorship years[78] stabilised the

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[78] See Ministry of Coordination Central Committee for the Elaboration of the Economic Development Plan. 1968. *Economic Development Plan for Greece 1968-1972*. Athens. This is a detailed official document written primarily by Makarezos, often referred to as the 'the right hand of Papadopoulos' during the military dictatorship of 1967-1974. It is interesting to note that the majority of the members of the various committees involved in the publication of the

economy and brought much economic gratification to the majority of people. This was due to the decision of the government to halt the "the strict and detailed planning of the activities of the public and private economic agencies" as this was seen as contrary to "the best interests of the country" (1968:preface 8). Since the early 1970s Trikala has had a growing tertiary sector strongly connected to small scale commercial agriculture (Sanders 1962:31, Bennison 1977:viii) and Thessaly has been deemed "the major growth zone of the country" (Bennison 1977:6) due to its strategic position halfway between Athens and Thessaloniki.

Although Trikalinoi are quick to denounce the military junta on many political and ideological grounds, the views of my informants – even the most staunchly socialist – concerning the economic conditions at the time generally concur with the official government line that aimed to "secure … a high standard of living for the whole population and favourable conditions for sustained cultural and social progress" (Ministry of Coordination 1968:2). Maria, who worked as a teacher during the junta, represents the general consensus that "*one good thing about the junta was that we knew we were secure (economically) ... the employment was good and the wages stable*". As Bennison (1977) has argued, it is difficult to analyse the economic statistics provided by the military dictatorship of 1967-1974 with confidence, as their validity and accuracy is questionable due to the paramount ideological agenda of their authors. Whilst this is a legitimate observation, one needs to remember that even under liberal democratic rule statistics can be blatantly falsified to meet political agendas, as was the case with the deficit statistics throughout the early twenty-first century. It is therefore of significant interest to hear people discuss the stable economic conditions provided by the dictatorship, both in the public and private sectors[79].

Once investors were satisfied that the government had secured a degree of stability and communism was no longer a plausible threat, the economy grew

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1968 economic plan were educated in British and U.S. universities (including many from Manchester University and the London School of Economics and Political Science).

[79] One of the greatest economic successes of the military junta was the investment in and expansion of the tourist industry. However, this narrative is not as prevalent in Trikala as much of the development took place on the Islands and the coastal areas of the mainland.

rapidly under the military junta. By eliminating the parliament and much of the cumbersome bureaucratic institutions the dictators made economic decisions quickly and without diplomatic debate. This streamlined the decision making process, kept inflation low and further encouraged international investment, such as the entrance of Coca-Cola into the Greek market. Some politically astute informants, usually of a nationalist persuasion, have argued that the period of economic growth and prosperity under the dictatorship has never since been surpassed.

One reason for this desire for a stable free market economy is explicitly laid out in the 1968 economic development plan for Greece; "full adaptation to economic conditions in (line with) the member countries of the European Economic Community" (1968:2, see also EU Regional Policy 1999:98). The success of this adaptation seems to be confirmed by the 1981 accession of Greece to the European Community, only seven years after the fall of the dictatorship in 1974 (Clogg 1992:243, Georgakopoulos 1994:98, Kapteyn 1996:63)[80]. The incorporation of Greece into the European Community signalled a further shift towards neo-liberal modes of economics.

European Community Integration

The accession of Greece into the European Community (EC) in 1981 was permitted on many political bases and had multiple economic consequences at both the national and local level. After the dismemberment of the dictatorship and return to democratic government in 1974[81], the EC were keen to embrace the new democratic republic of Greece (Holman 1996:4-6). This was despite preconceived opinions that Greece was neither economically or politically ready for the integration into 'Europe' so soon after the military junta. Although

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[80] European Union enlargement brings objective problems. Each member state has extreme cultural, economic and political diversity and new interests to be accommodated. For example, some countries, like the United Kingdom, had objections to relinquishing national sovereignty. Additionally there has become a separation between 'dependent' states such as the former Soviet nations, and the 'powerful' states, such as France, Germany, and the United Kingdom (MacDonald 1993:3, Pinder 1998:17).
[81] Conservative New Democracy (Nea Dimokratia) candidate Konstantinos Karamanlis was sworn in as Prime Minister on 24th July 1974 (Clogg 1992:168).

reformed and open to free market trade, there was the general feeling that the Greek economy was still unready for the open competition of the common market (cf. Kapteyn 1996:118, Holman 1996, Pinder 1998, Ioakimidis 2001, Pagoulatos 2001). Yet any such reservations were counter-balanced by a distinct feeling of historical obligation towards Greece as the cradle of European civilisation. During discussions proceeding admission into the EC, a British foreign office minister stated that Greece's entry would be "a fitting repayment by the Europe of today of the cultural and political debt that we all owe to Greek heritage almost three thousand years old" (Clogg 1992:2, also Herzfeld 1986:4, Faubion 1993:245). This sentiment was echoed throughout the existing members of the European Community (Holman 1996, Pinder 1998), and was reinforced by the way in which Greek Prime Minister Konstantinos Karamanlis "exploited feelings of guilt at Europe's inertia during the dictatorship", which led to an easier path for "the country they (Europe) liked to hail as the fount of European Civilisation" (Clogg 1992:177)[82].

The entry of Greece into the EC was negotiated by the conservative 'Nea Dimokratia' (New Democracy) party, led by Konstantinos Karamanlis. However, in 1981 the socialist PASOK party, led by Andreas Papandreou, came to government. The new socialist government had different ideas about the role of 'Europe' in Greek political and economic affairs (Clogg 1992:235, 243, Pinder 1998:67). The negotiation of Greek accession into the EC came at a time when nationalism in Greece was at its pinnacle (Yalouri 2001). The motto of the pro-EC party Nea Dimokratia read, "Greece belongs to the West", whilst their main political opposition, PASOK, replied with "Greece belongs to the Greeks" (Clogg 1992:179). The PASOK line was more appealing to the Greek general public in the ongoing debate of whether Greece belongs to the East or the West – what Herzfeld analyses in terms of 'disemia' (Herzfeld 1987:95-122). Indeed, due to the incumbent socialist government following over thirty years of rightist rule, a sense of collective political unity was being formulated on the national scale among Greek historical and political scholars. As noted in relation to

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[82] For Herzfeld, Ancient Greece is considered "the idealised spiritual and intellectual ancestor of Europe" (1987:1). He argues that the initial 'nationalist' identity – the Greek – is said to have originated from the very idea of a 'Europe' (1987:6).

rhetorics of the civil war, during the 1980s, the external other was being put in opposition to the collective Greek unity. The socialist propaganda from PASOK was that the EC would exclusively benefit the economically powerful minority, the large-scale entrepreneurs. The accession to the EC was therefore portrayed as a selling-out of Greek heritage to the powers of the West for the benefit of the minority; what Yalouri terms 'a betrayal of Hellenism' (2001:46)[83]. The previous conservative government that negotiated the accession believed that the EC represented "a stronghold of democracy that could help consolidate their own recently established democratic systems"[84] (Holman 1996:4, Pinder 1998:65).

Through the early years of membership Greece gained a reputation for tending to obstruct 'Community business' whenever a problem arose (Pinder 1998:67). This was especially the case when economic policies were debated. For example, the negotiations concerning the accession of Portugal and Spain into the EC were made more difficult on economic bases, as the Greek government emphasised the increased competition over agricultural supplies to Northern Europe[85]. In hindsight this objection was exceedingly valid and, one may argue, based on previous experiences of the monopolisation of tobacco exports during the 1920s. Many farmers in the villages around Trikala complain of the increased international competition and the rapidly falling prices of their produce over the past twenty years (cf. Monastiriotis and Tsamis 2007), something which is commonly equated to 'theft' (Just 2000:164).

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[83] In the context of Malta, a nation that during the 1990's was dominated by the discussion concerning 'joining Europe', Mitchell argues that there are two main approaches to the argument. On the one hand, Europe is seen "as a source of potential economic stability" and inherently offers "strategic protection for a country that has historically been threatened" (Mitchell 2002:12). On the other hand, "Europe itself (is) a threat to national sovereignty and national identity" that systematically 'erodes tradition' (ibid., Boissevain 1994:41).

[84] This is an example of how national agendas of a particular state government can compromise – or strengthen – the position of a nation within the wider European political context. Therefore, it could be argued, the basic position of power and influence is still held by the individual state governments (cf. MacDonald 1993).

[85] Other examples of unconformity early on in the EC membership includes the fact that the Greek foreign minister Yannis Haralambopoulos failed to criticise the Soviet Union for shooting down a Korean airliner in 1983, Papandreou's support for Yasser Arafat and the Palestinian Liberation Organisation, and the presence of many controversial political leaders at the 1984 PASOK party congress. Additionally, Clogg notes how Greece "spectacularly broke ranks" with the EC when Papandreou refused to join sanctions against the military regime in Poland (Clogg 1992:189-190).

Yannis, 35, a local mini-market owner recited the hardship of his neighbours in a village 5 kilometres from Trikala. Confirming the numerous daily accounts circulated among the villagers, he states that,

> "They (the farmers) have nowhere to sell their produce now … the fruit and vegetables they harvest cannot all be sold in the market in Trikala. Usually the fruit is sold to people in Trikala that then they sell it on the distributors (wholesalers) in Athens for a small profit, who, in turn sell it on to the supermarkets or may be export it. But the money offered to the farmers for their fruit and vegetables is now so low. Why to offer a lot of money when the same thing can be imported from Spain or Africa for less money, I don't know, half the price? Look at the prices in Athens that it is selling for and how much the farmers get; it is nothing, nothing I tell you. The bureaucracy has meant that it takes so many men to sell one piece of fruit and they all want to make their own money from it.
>
> I buy some directly from them to help them out, but look at the size of my store, I buy only a tiny amount compared to what they have … lets face it, it tastes better, its so fresh, the imported stuff might come from Spain or Africa, I don't know, but it travels for days before it gets sold in Athens. Of course they (in Athens) don't care, they don't know the difference, as long as it is cheap. People here now have to take other jobs to support their families, but what do they (the companies) care, they make money out of it."

Another informant, Charis, an agriculturalist who cultivates grain to sell to wholesalers, insists that the markets for grain have become equally swamped, echoing back to the economic crisis of the late 1800s when the European markets were systematically flooded to drive down grain prices. Indeed, as recently as June 2010 reports in local newspapers were lamenting the falling prices of wheat exported from western Thessaly for use in the production of

Italian pasta[86]. Charis also believes that the lack of investment in Trikala by the Greek government is to blame for the lack of infrastructure surrounding the largest agricultural region of Greece. There are numerous agricultural cooperatives of distribution, such as Agroviz, and storage facilities in the vicinity of the town, many of which belong to AGRI, the Union of Agricultural Cooperatives of Trikala. However there are no large scale processing facilities or factories. The grain must be transported to larger cities for processing and distribution. He explains that agricultural industries are leaving Greece for the cheap labour and low taxes of the Balkans, especially Romania and Bulgaria. Charis states that:

> "they do not invest money in factories here in Trikala, we don't even have one big agricultural factory, at least in Larisa they have (he pauses) may be three or four. They bring employment to the area, they create jobs. We have no employment in these agricultural factories"

It is interesting that once again the circulation of blame is both internal and external. The government and the Greek companies are held accountable for not investing in the area, but ultimately it is the competition from the external Other that is the source of falling prices and unemployment. It is the general consensus that the amount of bureaucracy throughout the production and wholesale process is obstructing the traditional livelihoods of the farming communities. For this the European Union is blamed for trying to make everyone in Europe go through the same processes, against their will. Peraklis, from an agricultural background in Trikala but now residing in Athens, tells me:

> "Daniel, something else, I will tell you the biggest problem, THE biggest problem, not only in Trikala, although it affects Trikala, but in the whole world now, the whole planet, and that is globalisation. Globalisation is THE biggest problem Daniel … (he goes on to say the same thing multiple times) … they are trying to make us all the same and we don't realise it, the truth I say. Power is becoming more

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[86] *I Erevna*, 26th June 2010.

centralised – with America and the EU. Soon all our lives will be run, determined, by America and Brussels. For example … my colour as a Greek is blue. When I dance I am blue, when I work I am blue, when I eat I am blue. You in England, you are a different colour, let's say red. When you dance you are red, when you work you are red, when you eat you are red, and in Germany they have another colour. We are all different. But soon we will all have the same colour. They will force it upon us, from the centralised power, centralised government, not our choice. We are becoming the same."

However, this is only one side of a multifaceted story of agricultural production and consumption. In recent years Trikala has benefited from the free market economy especially in relation to the production of dairy products. The town is home to three major manufacturers of dairy products; Trikki, Tyras and Fage AE. Thessaly has become self-sufficient in milk and cheese and these three companies possess a wide distribution network across Greece[87]. The narratives of economic hardship and prosperity due to neo-liberal markets are very selective on a daily basis. One can comfortably overhear multiple discussions concerning low agricultural prices and the lack of processing facilities, yet the success of the dairy industry is glossed over without remark. The three dairy factories provide extensive local employment and an extent of business prestige.

Despite increasing apprehension concerning how the open market would be received, in 1984 Andreas Papandreou explicitly declared that withdrawal from the EC would have disastrous economic consequences for Greece. Above all he emphasised the importance of the substantial agricultural subsidies for Greek farmers and the reduction of tariffs and customs duties[88] (Clogg 1992:189, European Union 28G 1999:37, Georgakopoulos 1994:102, Kapteyn 1996:118). The influence of Greece in the EC was to have a profound effect on many policies concerning developing economies in the Balkans and Mediterranean Europe. This led to 'Integrated Mediterranean Programmes', which distributed

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[87] www.3kala.gr/nomos_trikalon
[88] According to Clogg, the political and economic legitimisation provided by the European Community helped 'anchor Greece' firmly within the 'western alliance' and "legitimising her (Greece's) still somewhat uncertain European identity" (Clogg 1992:154).

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funds for regional development in a co-ordinated way (Pinder 1998:67). Nowadays, the official political stance from the Greek government is essentially one of full support for European Union policy, despite ongoing public debate concerning the economic and political efficiency of the membership.

The Liberal Spending of the 1990s: rise and fall of the Greek stock markets – Trikala, Greece, the World

The economy of Trikala in the 1990s was defined by extensive free spending, encouraged by a stock market boom and the almost indiscriminate availability of bank loans[89]. The carefree attitude towards lending and investment was apparent on both the state and the individual level (cf. Kapopoulos and Siokis 2005, Jermann and Quadrini 2007).

The feeling of economic invincibility that was evident in Trikala was facilitated at state level by the lifting in 1991/1992 of strict legislation that controlled prices, limited business opening hours and made it virtually impossible to employ people on a part-time basis (Boutsouki and Bennison 1999:97). The lifting of these restrictions was part of the governmental effort to liberalise the wider Greek economy in preparation for the Single European Market and to encourage investment by foreign retailers (ibid.).

Since accession into the European Community in 1981, Greece's financial markets have undergone a process of rapid liberalisation and expansion. Remarkable rates of growth were attained during the 1990s which persuaded more reluctant eurozone members to allow Greece to join the eurozone in 2001 (cf. Pagoulatos 2001). It has been suggested that stock markets help support

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[89] The 1990s is also characterised by an increasing number of Greek businesses relocating to other Balkan nations. With the continued expansion of the European Union and the return to peace in the Balkans, Greek investors, both corporate and individual, relocated their business interests northwards into other Balkan states. Enticed by the promise of inexpensive labour and low taxes the operational centres of many Greek businesses have been relocated, creating a 'Greek capitalist diaspora' in the Balkans (Kamaras 2001). This movement obviously had a substantial impact on the local economy of many regions of Greece. Times of economic crisis exacerbate the consequences of repositioning transnational investment. The increasing numbers of small-scale entrepreneurs and highly qualified corporate executives conducting business north of the border has both contributed to the current national crisis on the macro level and intensified the perception of victimisation caused by the economic austerity measures on the local level.

long term economic growth due to their high liquidity, making investments less risky, yet a state of market stability must first be attained (Levine 1997).

Until the early 1980s the financial system in Greece was characterised by institutional specialisation being required under governmental law rather than informed by market performance. The regulation of the financial system was conducted through a complex system of credit rules in a fixed administrative environment. The first stage of liberalisation came under the PASOK government of 1982 when the role of the Bank of Greece in controlling monetary policy was enhanced and a limit was set to government funding obtained from the national bank (Hondroyiannis, Lolos and Papapetrou 2004).

In 1990 the newly elected Nea Dimokratia government started to follow a liberal Thatcher-Reagan style of economic policy, dismantling the remaining state control of the market. One part of this reform was the removal of a local monopoly on auditing accounts of the Greek Professional Body (SOL) which was opened up to competition from the so-called 'Big 8' international accountancy firms. The aggressive accounting strategies by those supervising and reporting on the efficiency of the stock market were partially responsible for the beginning of the stock market boom (Forbes, Skerratt and Yiannopoulos 2006). The new government also privatised many state owned companies and built upon the existing 1985-1987 stabilisation programme introduced by the PASOK administration. Both the PASOK and the Nea Dimokratia governments were committed to 'modernising and liberalising' the Athens Stock Exchange in order to 'increase efficiency and make it more accessible to international investors' (Barkoulas, Baum and Travlos 2000:4). The reforms that were introduced by the new stock exchange law (L. 1806/88) and the Basic Banking Law of 1992 were expected to positively affect the market and lead to the expansion of its activities. An additional incentive for all potential investors is the absence of capital gains tax in Greece. It was the international investment, especially from within the European Economic Community (EEC), which stimulated the economic boom.

The fact that both centre-left and centre-right governments sought to expand the open markets encouraged public investment as it became apparent that the policies were not just a passing political whim. Tsakalotas (2008) attributes the downfall of the centre left (PASOK) during the early 1990s and early 2000s to their misunderstanding of neo-liberalism. Whilst in opposition, far from elaborating on the policies of their predecessors, the centre-left opposition reverted to the propaganda of the early 1980s focusing on the war between 'old' and 'new' and 'Greece' and 'the Other', whilst maintaining the basic 'package of neo-liberal reforms' (Tsakalotas 2008:4). This tactic was not popular with the electorate during times of economic prosperity and the party suffered at the polls. Such a marginal stance was deemed necessary to serve all bases of PASOK supporters, from working class agriculturalists to the intellectual elite. Despite the heavy losses at the polls and voter dissatisfaction, the party were stubborn in maintaining a mixed stance on the issue of the free market. The tentative relationship between PASOK and neo-liberal market economics compared to rightist liberalism was eventually to prove beneficial during the global economic crisis from 2008 onwards when the Greek population became disillusioned with global market systems. The fact that PASOK blamed the unregulated nature of the market and government collusion with the American capitalists for the economic downturn offered an ideological, if not practical, alternative and allowed PASOK to claim the political moral high ground through playing the political 'blame game'.

Reflecting the international trends of the mid and late 1990s, Greece experienced a stock market boom from 1992-1999 (Jermann and Quadrini 2006, Barkoulas, Baum and Travlos 2000). Between January 1998 and September 1999 stock prices increased by an average 332.69 per cent (Caporale, Economou and Philippas 2008:2). The boom was attributed to a combination of the newly liberal and deregulated economic environment and falling inflation and interest rates (Kyriazis and Diacogiannis 2008:163). Greece was deemed to be an emerging market where a vast range of enterprises offering a variety of services were rapidly going public. Such booms are characterised by the investor's capital gains accumulation becoming the reference point for evaluating future trades. Thus the investor has little interest in following international market

trends or prospecting for the future, but solely bases his/her investments on the amount of return received under present conditions. The reference point is the accumulation of money and not a close following of market conditions. This is why a sudden market crash is usually unanticipated by the investor and subsequent reactions to a downturn in the market are ineffective. Indeed, the ability and efficiency to react to new information is a characteristic of emerging markets (Barkoulas, Baum and Travlos 2000:2, Laopodis 2003). In this case the public frenzy surrounding investment in the stock market is a trend or fashion in itself.

In Greece investor protection is weak. According to Forbes, Skerratt and Yiannopoulos (2006), minority shareholder rights are weak due to the conspiratorial culture of the trading on the national market based in Athens. The companies look after each other's vested interests before the interests of their own shareholders. After the introduction of the electronic trading system to the Athens Exchange in 1992, trading became so frenzied that an 8 per cent price limit for movements in the Exchange index was introduced. If prices on the Exchange moved by more than this amount in one day then trading was suspended. As the public craze for stock investment increased further, the limit for overall daily movement on illiquid stock was decreased to 4 per cent in order to stabilise the market. As these limits became more frequently violated, the overall movement limit was increased to 12 per cent in 2000 (ibid.). As well as encouraging large-scale international investment, 'playing the stock markets' became a national phenomenon.

In mid-nineties Trikala almost everyone of legal age was playing the stock markets. There was no need for the 'investors' to be keen economists or follow the market trends, the only thing that mattered was the public appetite to create money for nothing. The 'speculative bubble' meant that interpretation of market tends was not the investor's priority (Forbes, Skerratt and Yiannopoulos 2006:2). I had heard many years before my fieldwork that there was a public frenzy in Greece for playing the stock markets in the mid and late 1990s. Throughout my fieldwork the extent of the fixation and the consequences of the impending crash were revealed.

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Antonia, 23 years old at the time of the stock market boom in 1997, had just finished her degree from the philology department of the University of Athens when she returned to Trikala to find a job. She and her friends started playing the stock market. She recalls that people of every profession and age were trading on the market and they were not concerned "which shares they picked" because they were guaranteed at least an 8 per cent return within a day, what has been termed 'the higher abnormal returns of the Greek stock market' (Kyriazis and Diacogiannis 2008:162). She recalls,

> "The people didn't know what they were getting involved in. A lot of companies floated on the stock market because they were guaranteed by the climate to sell off their shares very quickly … I was buying shares like crazy. At the time I didn't care about the credibility of the company, its size and its economic capacity. Amongst others, I possessed shares from a fish farm; the price was rising like crazy. I found out after the crash that the fish farm was really just a pond with a couple of sheds. It was sad really because we were greedy and we were so taken by the fervour of the stock market that we thought we could be fixed for life. We thought that we would make money for a few years and then never work again … There were no interest in the trends of the market because we saw it as guaranteed easy money … People like me, with no knowledge of markets, economy or anything, were investing everything."

Antonia's account reminds me of a game I used to play with my friends over the internet. The metaphorical resemblances are poignant. As we were not old enough to purchase shares in the mid-nineties, we found an online trading company who allowed us to 'purchase' shares at real-time 'prices' and trade as if we were 'in the City'. No money changed hands however, the target here was to become 'top of the weekly league' in terms of percentage profits. However, we all attempted to find trends in the market and buy and sell at the appropriate times, although basically, like Antonia and her friends, we knew nothing about the stock markets. The statistics of the site were directly linked to the

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international markets and the game play was very realistic. Simultaneously in Trikala, the game was being played with real money and investment capital, with the difference being that the lack of knowledge concerning the dynamics underpinning the markets would have severe consequences at the time of the crash.

During this period of prosperity, a lot of stock trading companies (ELDEs, [*eteria lipsis kai diavivasis endolon* or *xrimatistriakes eteries*] companies for receiving and transmitting shares) opened in Trikala, only to close down again straight after the crash. ELDEs also opened in small towns and villages across Greece; a total of 1065 offices nationwide in 2000 (Korfiatis, *To Vima, 28/01/2001*). In Trikala *nomos* (population 137,723) fifty ELDE offices opened with seventeen in Karditsa *nomos* population 130,213). The new law 2396/1996, passed in 1996 that permitted businesses to set up offices transmitting and receiving shares on behalf of their customers, was destined to bring Greece in line with European Union open market regulations. After the introduction of the new law, 1.3 million Greek citizens registered to trade on the Athens Exchange through the ELDE offices. The law allowed anyone to enter the market by obtaining personal trading codes from the ELDEs No formal training was required for people to open and operate in ELDE offices. As a result many people left their jobs as teachers, physicians or retailers in order to set up offices that not only offered a route into the Exchange, but also offered advice on investment. The misguided advice offered through the untrained and unregulated ELDEs is considered to have contributed greatly to the ultimate financial ruin of many Greek citizens, and many Trikalinoi.

Due to the unregulated nature of the Athens Stock Exchange, many national and international organisations floated their 'companies' – many of which were 'rogue' – without internal controls on investor security and auditing. This resulted after the crash in countless 'bouncing cheques' being issued to customers (Korfiatis, *To Vima, 28/01/2001*). Additionally, the ELDE offices had to be furnished with the latest software systems in order to process transactions efficiently, thus opening up a new market for selective computer software

companies to supply their systems nationwide[90]. Katerina, a teacher, was 25 years old when she worked in an ELDE office in 1998.

> "The stock market shops all opened together, at the same time, and very suddenly. They were places of socialisation, you know, like the cafeterias on Asklipiou. I worked there for a year, serving coffee and beers to the customers as well as executing the deals. People would come in during their break from work in the middle of the day and sit watching their shares rise in price. Some would stay until the Athens market closed in the evening … It was like they were treasure hunting. Some times they would ask me for advice. After working there a while I got more confident in what I was doing and tried to help out the best I could."

For most of 1999 the Greek stock market continued to increase in prosperity and the ELDEs were flourishing. 'Worthless' shares rose from $0.10 per share in January to as much as $100.00 per share later in the year. The government continued to praise the stock market and refused to interfere to protect the small scale investors. From September 1999 until early 2000 the Athens Stock Exchange suddenly went into free-fall (Caporale, Economou and Philippas 2008, Dimitropoulos and Asteriou 2009).

The 1999-2000 crash was more prominent than that of the 1987 slump and the 1997 mini-downturn due to the vast numbers of the general public embroiled in the turmoil. Hence, this particular crisis holds a prominent place in public imagery. On 14th March 2000 the Athens Exchange plummeted by 6.60 per cent leading to violent protests in the city. The index continued to fall sharply in April, with further daily drops peaking at 9.17 per cent on 17th April (United Press, 14th April 2000, Stergiou 2008[91]). From December 1999 to March 2003 the Athens Exchange had lost 77.88 per cent of its value (Caporale, Economou and Philippas 2008:3). Foreign investors were selling their portfolios in an attempt to escape the rapidly deteriorating situation. The small investors were

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[90] Once such example is the company 'Broker Systems S.A.'
[91] Kathimerini, 21/01/2008

worst affected. The majority of the general public held on to their shares in anticipation of the market picking-up so as they could repay their loans taken to finance the original investment. Nikos is just one example of the many people who lost their life savings, their homes and businesses and went into overwhelming debt due to the crisis.

Nikos, a major land owner, was in his late forties during the late 1990s. His capital invested in numerous shares had risen to 870,000,000 drachmas (2,553,192 euros at the 2001 pre-single currency exchange rate). Nikos was waiting for his investments to reach the 1 billion drachma mark before cashing in his shares. The crash hit Greece before he realised his objective.

> "We were very greedy. We thought that we would never work again. We said that once we reached *X* million drachma we would stop. Obviously we just kept setting the goal higher. People did not believe that this would ever end, it was free money, we did not care. Once the markets started to drop we still paid little attention as we thought that this was just a phase. We did not take the money out, cash it in I mean, because we felt that we were losing money despite the fact that we were still well in profit compared to the initial investment. We didn't liquidise our assets and the crash was so vertical, as vertical as the boom. People like me lost whole fortunes, land, houses, because they had sold property in order to invest in the market. I know some people who became suicidal after the crash[92]".

Nikos eventually lost two-thirds of his real estate in Trikala, which was comprised of shops on the central commercial streets and neo-classical estates. He went bankrupt and had to turn to family and friends in order to rebuild his livelihood. Nikos was fortunate that he had money to invest in the first place as well as a family network to support him after the crash. Other people sold nearly all of their assets – cars, houses and land – in order to invest. Some also took extortionate bank loans in order to invest in the markets; these very often could

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[92] This parallels the reported suicides of Wall Street bankers during the 1929 stock market crash (cf. Mishara 2008).

not be repaid. Antonia remembers that some of her friends did this just before the crash; "*they were left with literally nothing. One of my friends lost all the money that he had earned as an economic migrant in Germany. He eventually had to move back with his parents in Duisburg.*" The stock markets were perceived as a quick and reliable way to become socially mobile in financial terms. Many Trikalinoi ended up in a worse position than from where they started.

It is estimated that during the 1999-2000 crisis over 100 billion euro were lost by small-scale investors[93]. Yet it was not only individual investors that were severely affected. The Union of Agricultural cooperatives in Trikala purchased 800 million drachmas of bank bonds by collecting money from cotton sales. Of these bonds, 500 million were purchased from the Agricultural Bank, 200 million from Alfa Pisteos and 100 million from Alfa Trust. An additional 100 million drachmas were invested in 'agro-bonds'. It is speculated that the intention of the Union was to repay a previous 1.550 billion drachma loan taken in 1998 to cover their operating needs. As of 30 August 2000 the 900 million drachma bonds were collectively worth 250 million drachmas. The Union rejected accusations of economic difficulties but could not account for how they would repay the original 1.550 billion drachma loan (*Rizospastis, 30th August 2000*).

The Greek government, on the other hand, profited greatly from the Athens Stock Exchange by cashing in large amounts of shares just months before the crash. According to the official Athens Stock Exchange brochure, the Greek government sold off 1,983,270 shares in the Athens Stock Exchange (39.67 per cent of the share capital) in December 1997 and a further 600,000 shares (12 per cent of the share capital) in December 1998. The 1999-2000 crash was to lead to substantial regulatory and institutional reforms mainly focusing on investor security (Caporale, Economou and Philippas 2008:1).

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[93] www.phorum.gr

Conclusions: History of Crisis 1881-2000

These two chapters intended to outline the history of social and economic crisis affecting the people of Trikala since 1881. The events discussed were strategically selected on criteria of local economic impact and cultural proximity and will form the bases for further explorations of crisis in relation to social mobility and status, social memory, and public representation in the proceeding chapters. From the ciftliks to the stock market crash, social upheaval and crisis have affected society and economy on both macro and micro levels. Some themes recur throughout the history of crisis. At this stage I wish to simply highlight some of these lines that weave together accounts of crisis in Trikala.

One such recurring theme is the intertwining of economic policy with political agenda. The conflicting political ideologies of the left and the right over the last century have meant that blame for crisis has been circulated internally. An external outlet for blame has also been found, first in the form of the United States and Britain for 'meddling' in internal matters, and then in the form of the European Union for strict policy control. The civil war and the consequential economic difficulties, the Axis occupation, the dictatorship and the stock market crisis are understood as the product of a combination of internal collaboration and corruption and external interference; both stances are approached with much scepticism by Trikalinoi. Internal political ideologies and external pressures led to the military junta in 1967 and the liberalisation of the market economy in the 1980s and 1990s. However, in the case of the markets, liberalisation was not regulated closely enough and international trends were dismissed as not applying to the Greek economy. Entrance into the European Community and the subsequent liberalisation of economic markets, ideological projects infused with political ambition and external pressures, transformed the lives of Trikalinoi.

Paths for social mobility is another recurring theme in the history of crisis that will be explored further later in this thesis. At times of crisis there are always those who can profit from the social circumstances, and not always in a clandestine manner. Indeed, one could argue that this strategic opportunism is the pinnacle of entrepreneurship. The redistribution of the ciftliks allowed for

smallholders to sell their land and move to urban centres to educate their children, thus changing forever the notion of social status in Trikala. A selective minority even found modes of social mobility through political collaborations during the Axis occupation and subsequent civil war through shifting notions concerning the local power hierarchies. Even the influx of Asia Minor refugees during the 1920s facilitated unexpected paths of social mobility, as did other geographic movements such as the relocation of anti-communists during the civil war, supported by an ideological government policy. The liberalisation of the market economy in the 1980s and 1990s facilitated another path for social mobility in financial terms, thus changing the perceptions of social status along alternative material lines. Social mobility and, furthermore, social capital is available for a mass market audience.

In terms of land and livelihood, alienation, entrepreneurship and self-sufficiency are recurring themes. The *colligi* uprisings of 1909-1910 were linked to concepts of alienation from land and the withdrawal of inheritance rights. The agrarian reforms that played a central role in returning the land to the people were accelerated by the population exchanges of the 1920s; people who had been significantly alienated from their homelands. Alienability also surfaces in terms of blame. The alienability of responsibility and blame for crisis is a key aspect of political success. Self-sufficiency, on the other hand, has been the goal of both the state and the individual since before the annexation of Thessaly. Whether on a national or local scale, the aim of integrating the local economy with international markets, household subsistence with national supply and balancing agricultural production with investment surplus has been a challenge for the peasant farmer, the petit-capitalist and the national government alike.

Finally, the collective imagery of crisis is a central theme to the socio-historical account. As we shall come to understand, some crises occupy a prominent position in Trikalinoi social memory. Each crisis is remembered in a different idiom and in relation to specific details. Some crises are perceived as 'closer', more 'relevant' to contemporary life, than others. The collective imagery of crisis is facilitated through family narratives and nationalist rhetoric.

Hence economic crisis cannot be defined merely in monetary terms but along the lines of a multiplicity of social conditions, political and ideological as well as practical. Crisis can be expressed through a number of dichotomies in an attempt to understand the reasoning behind the events, old systems:new systems, external:internal, exploitation:domination, nationalist:socialist, greed:altruism; the phenomena and the epiphenomena of crisis can be eternally argued. Yet, as Mandel (1962:342) reminds us, it is the crisis that causes the narratives and not visa-versa.

Chapter Five: Theorising Crisis

Having outlined the historical contexts of crisis in Greece and their impacts on the Trikalinoi, this chapter takes further the concept of crisis as events with multiple eventualities. As has become apparent, the term crisis can relate to periods of conflict, mass-migration, natural and environmental disasters, or phases of economic hardship. Focusing on economic crises, the concern of this chapter is to place crisis within a theoretical framework in order to explore how crisis is ultimately represented and evoked in the public domain in Trikala. The aim is to deconstruct the notion of crisis as an abstract term by placing it within numerous theoretical and ethnographic contexts. Some theories of crisis will be explored in relation to classic Marxist conceptualisations based on the functioning of the capitalist systems. The discussion will then move towards an understanding of regionalised crisis and the roots of the current economic situation in Greece.

Throughout this chapter various alternative ethnographic contexts will be considered in order to assess 'the multiple eventualities/possibilities' of the rather abstract and often ambiguous term 'crisis' (cf. Goddard 2010). Additionally, reoccurring themes such as notions of blame and accountability, social mobility and competing political ideologies will be present as a theoretical and ethnographic undertone throughout. This is intended to complement not only the complexities of the historical events that form 'the genealogy of crisis' in Trikala, but also to facilitate discussions of cultural proximity, social mobility and perceptions of social status in other parts of this thesis.

Placing Economic Crisis in a Theoretical Context

'Crisis' can be understood as something signifying a period of social change or instability that evokes feelings of fear, panic and danger. It is a critical point where the social norm is perforated in a significant and often unexpected way, what may be referred to as "a decisive change in direction" from the course of

everyday life (Meltzer 1981:37). In a wider context, crisis may refer to natural disasters such as earthquakes and landslides (Yong 1988, Rozario 2007), medical traumas, health scares and epidemics such as the 2009 swine flu pandemic (Curson 1985, Janes, Stall and Gifford 1986, Saliou 1994, Kolata 1999), or times of war and conflict (Stoler 1985, Schmidt and Schröder 2001, Stewart and Strathern 2002).

So far in the academic literature there has been a general homogenisation of economics as either the cause of crisis or economics as the effects of crisis[94]. This somewhat ambiguous approach has led to conflicting arguments concerning the nature and definition of economic crisis. On the one hand scholars such as Damette and Poncet advocate the inevitability of economic crisis in capitalist societies. They state that economic crises are 'deep, lasting and structural' as well as 'unavoidable' (1980:93). Nevertheless, Meltzer has argued that 'new meticulous forms of economic analysis will make grand-scale economic crises a thing consigned to the pages of capitalist history' (1981:38). There is an obvious disparity between the two claims that requires further explanation. A substantial element of this discrepancy can be located in the insufficient definition of what constitutes an economic crisis. Economic crisis is often approached as a homogeneous entity in itself, a single moment or event which is analysed regardless of the political and social mesh into which it is entangled. The intertwining of political, social and economic aspects is all too often taken for granted and not further explained, meaning that a lack of communication results from ambiguous definitions of crisis and a homogenisation of political, social and economic aspects. In order to begin to understand the inevitability and tangibility of economic crises we must attempt to deconstruct the *process* of crisis by detailing the primary contributing factors and the epiphenomenal effects. This goes against the overwhelming tendency to label crises as solely 'political', 'economic', 'humanitarian' or simply conflating everything together as 'crisis'. The complex mesh can begin to be untangled by attempting to locate the principal economic aspect in the process of crisis

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[94] In this instance the term 'economic' could be replaced with 'social mobility', as often crisis provides spaces for social mobility that were once not available. Similarly, a wide-scale collective striving for social mobility can be the cause of crisis by depriving society of the adequate infrastructure required to sustain prosperity.

formation. By doing so it will become clearer what constitutes the economic aspect of crisis and how causes can be distinguished from effects. However, in every case the 'economic' is duly enmeshed with other cultural, institutional and political movements. Thus when employing the term 'economic' this does not imply a separate bounded institution.

It is therefore proposed that there should be a distinction made between the economic aspect of crisis in terms of economics as the cause of crisis and economics as the effect of crisis. As has been illustrated in the previous chapters, the economic aspect of periods of crisis cannot simply be glossed over with an all-encompassing definition. Although the cause and effect of each crisis is often complex, it would appear that there are occasions when economics are the 'primary cause' (Piattoni 2002) of further political and social discourses and occasions when economic upheaval is the epiphenomenon of wider political and social discourses. To go one step further I would also like to suggest that economic issues can act as mediators between the cause of crisis and the effects. Each variable affects the other in a circular interrelationship (Piattoni 2002:2). Thus a causal chain is set in motion which reverberates with other phenomena such as governance, cultural change and economic entrepreneurship (ibid)[95]. This is in opposition to a fixed model, advocated by scholars such as Putnam (1993) that states that change can only occur within the cultural realm, which in turn alters institutional performance and consequentially economic performance. Although I agree that localised economic activity is strongly linked to culture, the view of Putnam is very deterministic. Let us consider some illustrative examples.

An example of economics being the primary cause of crisis would be the events of the 1999-2000 Greek stock market crash. In this case a crisis caused by poor

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[95] Piattoni suggests an alternative model to the common trend of presenting economic performance (economy) as the epiphenomenon of government capacities (institutions) in turn determined by the cultural setting (identity) in which government institutions operate. She argues that these variables are not sequential from culture to institutions to economy but are interrelated in a circular fashion whereby a change in one of these premises reverberates among the others. Piattoni believes that this notion gives agency to all aspects of the process (2002:2). She further argues that this flexibility allows for concepts of alternative economic activity such as clientelism.

economic management had many secondary social and political effects (Carney, Hudson and Lewis 1980). Another example is the current crisis engulfing Greece. This crisis is also of primary economic form. Although one may argue that political mismanagement is the cause of the current crisis, one should look beyond the immediate national context in search of the primary cause. The current crisis was caused by global economic circumstances. The recessions experienced in Britain, the United States of America and Japan had severe impacts on global markets and affected the ability for peripheral economies such as Greece to compete on the world stage. The Greek economy followed suit by falling rapidly into recession. Only then were the political mismanagements of economic issues, such as the incorporation into the eurozone, revealed. If it were not for the initial economic downturn these political decisions would have remained unnoticed for much longer. It is true that political mismanagement and underlying structural flaws now make the social conditions worse in Greece than in other nations that were simultaneously affected by the economic downturn; but in essence the initial source of the crisis is of an economic nature.

On the other hand, let us consider the case of the break-up of the ciftliks during the agrarian reforms of the 1920s. This crisis had economic consequences but as an epiphenomenon of a primarily social crisis. The sense of urgency surrounding the redistribution of land caused by the purchase of the ciftliks by Greek landlords was the primary cause of the crisis. This was coupled with disillusionment relating to the broken socio-political promises of empowerment through land possession pledged by the government pre-annexation. The interplay between both state and peasant ideology also played a central role in the immense social change during the land reforms. However, the consequences of this crisis were principally economical. The dramatic events of the peasant uprisings in Kileler (1909/1910) would have dramatic long-term economic consequences throughout a succession of subsequent crises. For instance, during the 1929-1932 economic crisis, newly 'liberated' smallholders were going bankrupt due to the abolition of sharecropping and the falling market prices. In Greek Macedonia the newly resettled refugees that once benefited from the break-up of the ciftliks now found themselves in excessive debt. Even during the Axis occupation individual smallholdings were selectively repossessed by the

invading forces. In this case the economic impact was the epiphenomenon of '*a crisis*', or 'a crisis with (secondary) economic consequences'.

The third variable in the trilogy concerns the economic aspect of crisis acting as a mediator between the primary cause of crisis and the epiphenomenal effects of crisis. This can be illustrated through the example of the Axis occupation and the subsequent Great Famine[96] during the 1940s. The initial crisis was formed on the grounds of political ideology and warfare[97]. The epiphenomenal effects included food shortage, economic hardship and civil conflict. However the mediating factor that connects the primary causes with the secondary effects is the economic embargos employed by the Axis occupation. Based on political policy the occupying forces directed financial aid to other nations such as the Netherlands and Belgium, systematically destroyed the national markets and deliberately reserved the financial capital of the Greek banks for the Reich. Additionally, the German soldiers were ordered to buy-up many Greek businesses in a form of systemised looting. Even the Allied forces employed economic tactics that contributed to the effects of the crisis by blockading all trade in the eastern Mediterranean Sea. These multiple economic policies bridged the gap between the primary cause of crisis and the secondary effects. Furthermore, in this case the economic aspect of crisis is an ever-present as it is located within the German war strategy (the cause of crisis), the economic embargos (the mediating policies) and the destruction of livelihoods (the effects).

However, the consequences of crisis are not homogeneously experienced in a more or less severe manner depending on whether the principal economic aspect is located in the cause, mediator or effect. In all of the above examples the Trikalinoi have experienced significant economic impacts that have changed their lives either temporarily or permanently. Therefore, throughout this thesis I refer to economic crises when considering both the economic causes and effects

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[96] See also MacGaffey (1998) for consequences of food shortages during political and economic crisis in Zaire (Democratic Republic of Congo).
[97] For comparative cases of conflict at times of crisis see Stoler (1985) in Sumatra and the edited volume of Schmidt and Schröder (2001). For an account of violence at times of capitalist economic change see Macfarlane (1987).

of the events. This is not to say that any given 'economic crisis' is devoid of the intertwined political and social paraphernalia. In order to facilitate these important aspects, I attempt to locate the principle economic implications for each crisis within the wider context of crisis formation.

Opportunism at Times of Economic Crisis

There are certain variables in crises that alter their impact; one such factor is longevity. For example, a sharp fall in the stock markets creates an unwanted interruption in economic prosperity for millions of people, but usually this intermission is temporary. If the markets do not rise immediately then a new level of stability is formed at an alternative rate. From this new level subsequent times of crisis and prosperity will be calculated. On the other hand, some economic crises are prolonged and last for decades, such as in the case of civil wars (cf. MacGaffey 1987, 1998, 2000). In the context of Zaire (Democratic Republic of Congo), MacGaffey argues that there is an ongoing 'humanitarian crisis' which in turn has created a severe economic crisis, including a flourishing secondary economy (black market) and an increase in drug trafficking and 'blood diamond' trade. Even if the civil war were to abruptly end tomorrow, the social and economic crisis would continue for a sustained period of time.

Longevity further influences the diverse strategies people devise in order to deal with, and even capitalise on, economic crises. Opportunism is always an aspect of the economic exploitation of crisis situations. There are often opportunities for actors to locate diverse ways to advance their own socio-economic position or business prospects based upon their responses to changing social circumstances (Theodoridis and Bennison 2009). Usually these economic aspects of crisis can be categorised as part of the epiphenomenal effects of the original crisis rather than the primary causes. Here some examples will be offered in order to illustrate diverse forms of economic opportunism in times of both short-term and long-term crises.

Concerning the short term crisis of the 1999-2000 Greek stock market crash, a popular conspiracy theory circulates locally stating that the government had

inside information concerning an imminent stock market crash. Therefore bodies acting on behalf of the government sold over 2 million shares in the year before the crash, without informing the general public of the imminent market instability. This questionable action was inflated by the fact that many small-scale investors had little concept of market trends as 'playing the stock markets' was a temporary cultural 'fashion' and because there was no official security mechanism provided for investors. Thus the government was deemed morally corrupt in withholding valuable economic information in order to advance its own interests. The sense of urgency demonstrated by the government in offloading their shares was a strategic action not shared by many small-scale investors. The sudden crash in September 1999 left the small-scale investors in a state of panic and pandemonium. There was a sense of urgency to make the correct economic decision; to sell as prices fell or to hold on the shares in the hope of a speedy recovery. Too many investors chose the latter option[98].

There are numerous examples of economic opportunism during long term crises. This is often coupled with changing perceptions of social mobility and the elevation of social status. The Greek novelist Dimitris Psathas offers plenty of insights in his book '*Cheimonas tou 41*' ('*Winter of 41*'), a collection of mini comic-tragedy stories written during the Axis occupation in Athens and based on true stories of his experiences during the War years. In the story of the grocer Psathas illustrates how some actors acquired new social prominence during the crisis. As a person with direct access to vital rationed resources the grocer is rapidly climbing the socio-economic ladder.

> 'Before the war he was "just Thanasis", but suddenly the war grabbed him and made him "honourable mister Thanasis". The situations raise some people whilst other people are doomed. The situations are favourable to *some* people' (Psathas 1944:15-18, emphasis added).

Thanasis used his position as grocer to manipulate the crisis situation for his personal social and economic gain. This included promising to locate and

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[98] An interesting comparison of economic opportunism in times of crisis comes from Italy. After natural disasters such as landslides and earthquakes the contracts for rebuilding devastated communities are often appropriated by Mafia organisations. This has reportedly been the case after the 2009 L'Aquilla earthquake and constituted the norm for Southern and Central Italy (for example see Paoli 2003).

'reserve' specific items of food, such as butter and beans, for 'friends' before actually selling them on to other customers for a higher price. His exploitation of the illicit economy by selling resources to the highest bidder is a common practice during times of crisis[99] (cf. Campbell and Sherrard 1968, Hart 1973, 1992, 2005, 2007, Thomadakis 1981, MacGaffey 1987, 1998, 2000, Narotzky and Moreno 2002, Önis and Rubin 2003, Parvizi and Houweling 2005:3, Gregory 2009:152).

In another ethnographic context, that of Zaire, MacGaffey offers a similar account of economic opportunism in times of crisis. MacGaffey explores how people find social and economic opportunities amidst the chronic state of political and economic crisis (1998:37). Once again the illicit (or secondary/black) economy, defined as the 'unrecorded activities that evade the regulations of the 'normal' official economy, allowing for entrepreneurial innovation', plays a pivotal role in economic opportunism (ibid.). Due to the chronic long-term condition of crisis in Zaire, MacGaffey argues that the official and second economies are not distinct sectors, but intermingle in complex ways[100] (ibid.:38, Hart 1973, 2005, Thomadakis 1981).

The political circumstances in Zaire since the 1970s have meant that a potentially prosperous nation-state has become a breeding ground for corruption and violence, leaving the nation devoid of multinational investment (MacGaffey 1998:39-40). These voids in the national market mean that there are multiple demands for resources that can be met by opportunistic entrepreneurs, thus some people can strategically prosper from the crisis.

MacGaffey continues; 'from such turmoil people were finding creative and ingenuitive ways to deal with the situation and small initiatives were flourishing as people learnt to fend for themselves' (ibid.), what has been termed "the art of

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[99]Currently, black market cigarettes and fuel are in high demand in Greece (*The Economist, vol. 396, issue 8689, 3rd July 2010*).
[100] This is an important aspect in the discussion of 'corruption as a cultural phenomenon' (including notions of 'moral economies' in Bosnia, Bulgaria and Greece).

managing, of making do" (Goddard 1996:50)[101]. Especially resourceful were the small enterprises; workshops and garages that had diversified and even started to compete with the remaining multinationals[102], businesses that were operating 'within the cracks' (Pardo 1996:19) of the crisis stricken society (Ciervide 1992:224, MacGaffey 1998:40). Such was the success of these opportunistic small-scale enterprises that imported (by any means possible) the materials needed to produce consumer goods during the crisis that a permanent basis was formed for large-scale capital accumulation. This eventually led to small-scale enterprises expanding into large-scale businesses (MacGaffey 1998:40). The tradesmen opportunistically visited other countries in order to supply particular demands that were prevalent in Zaire. One such enterprising strategy was to purchase food in neighbouring Angola, which had experienced a price slump due to a civil war, and sell it in Zaire (ibid.:41-43). However, as the national currency was so devalued, the currency of choice for international trade was often gold, diamonds, coffee, ivory or drugs, thus forming a multiplicity of illicit exchanges. With these resources locals could also barter with workers from multinational oil companies in the region that acted as intermediaries to provide goods from European countries[103].

The above accounts of satisfying consumer needs through entrepreneurial networks remind me of the case of Spyros, the mini-supermarket owner in Livadi. During my stay in the village Spyros was the man to ask for all your consumer needs. His shop, which he owned with his brother-in-law Yannis, consisted of just three small aisles selling basic household products and

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[101] In the context of Naples, Italy, Goddard explores the notion of '*l'arte dell,arrangiarsi*', the art of managing and making do. She states that the long-term problems of poverty and deprivation are reflected in the diverse ways that Neapolitans strive for social and economic adequacy. Some activities include the production and distribution of contraband and drugs, improvising small shops from downstairs house windows, unofficial car park attendants or more mainstream jobs such as working in 'sweatshops'. These activities can help "keep individuals and households alive" (1996:50).

[102] Many Trikalinoi have taken to business diversification in order to compete in over saturated local markets. Maro, a hairdresser, offers 'exclusive London-style cuts' which she advertises through cut-outs from British magazines. Stella, a travel agent, has diversified by offering 'adventure tourism' packages. Clients can participate in guided hiking tours, take part in scuba diving, or mountaineering. She hopes to extend this to skydiving in the near future. She says that this diversification is required due to the intense competition between travel agencies in Trikala.

[103] The process of money changing also crossed the boundary between Zaire's political elite and the everyday people as the 'middle men' in this process were those with access to the 'currencies'; often people high in the political hierarchy (MacGaffey 1998:41-43).

foodstuffs and a small delicatessen. However, whatever product you wanted, whatever manufacturer you preferred, Spyros was highly successful in acquiring the exact product within days. His brother and sister both owned similar style shops in two other local villages and he also had friends who owned supermarkets in Trikala. Usually these networks were enough to satisfy the demands of the villagers. That was until the English anthropologist entered the village. First it was phone cards. I was informed by a Greek friend prior to my stay that a certain make of phone card allowed for exceptionally cheap telephone calls to Britain but I was not confident of finding them in the village. On my arrival I was informed that Spyros was the man to ask if you wanted anything unusual imported into the village, so after a coffee one morning I went to place my first request. "*No problem*" I was informed, "*I know these cards, my friend Nikos has them in Trikala, I will send my assistant to get some for you, come back this afternoon*". That afternoon I had my phone cards. "*Okay*", I thought, "*at least I know they have them in Trikala for next time*". However, from that moment forth Spyros kept a packet of phone cards under the counter for whenever I requested them, regularly sending someone to collect new packets from Trikala.

That Spyros' ability for filling in the gaps in the market stretched to Trikala may not be of much surprise, but his entrepreneurial talents went further. On the imminent arrival of a friend to Trikala I was asked to locate a specific make of French hair care product. I decided to begin my search with Spyros. After many telephone calls Spyros was unsuccessful in his initial search … he told me to "come back tomorrow". The next day I called in the mini-supermarket and he greeted me with a beaming smile, he had located the product in Larisa, over 60 kilometres and a one hour drive away. He said that he would personally see to it that his son drove down to the city to collect the product. The next day I had my French hair care product, without an inflation of its market price. He said that he would make sure he kept it in stock for the duration of my stay. I did not have the heart to explain that it was not for me so I duly accepted his offer whilst explaining that I may not need another bottle for the next six months.

Every time I requested an item I could not find myself in Trikala Spyros would either locate it and pick it up himself, send someone else to collect it, or get it delivered to the shop. By doing so, his customers stayed loyal and his reputation for tending to the villagers' needs was enhanced by filling in the gaps in the local markets. Spyros did profit economically of sorts from the activity as well as gain a place of social prominence and reputation in the village for being the man to consult for all consumer needs. He achieved this prominence by utilising his network of social and economic relations (Hobsbawm 1968:35, 51). During my year living in the village I encountered numerous stories of other obscure requests that Spyros had obtained for his customers ranging from specific types of cheese to washing machine detergents and exotic tea bags, all obtained within a few days at most. Unlike the grocer described by Psathas, Spyros kept his promises and to my knowledge did not auction reserved items to the highest bidders[104]. Like MacGaffey's informants, Spyros was tending to the voids in the local market.

Networks of economic relations and the politics 'of making do' are particularly pertinent during times of crisis. Alternative modes of access to and accumulation of products is imperative in crisis contexts such as famine and civil war. Entrepreneurial opportunism benefits both the consumer who obtains their required goods and the businessman who accumulates economic and social capital. There may be noticeable exploitation of mediators and inflated commodity prices due to opportunism and illicit trade but often there is little room for morals in times of crisis. Indeed, in the event that there is no change or adaptation to the circumstances of crisis, people, as well as businesses, will inevitably flounder (Theodoridis and Bennison 2009:390)[105].

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[104] As many products could be easily found in nearby Trikala there were not many cases when Spyros had to permanently stock a requested item and the more unusual requests were generally one-off purchases.

[105] For a discussion of how Greek companies employ a variety of business strategies to anticipate and accommodate economic crises see Theodoridis and Bennison (2009:399, 401).

Marxist Understandings of Crisis

One of the most widely known concepts of crisis relates to the theories of Karl Marx – also strongly informed by the essays of Frederick Engels (Arthur 1970:15). Theorised in direct relation to capitalist and pre-capitalist economic production, Marx's ideas relate to numerous social processes since social and cultural phenomena are constitutive of 'the economic' (Thompson 1965:84, Sayer 1991:2). Put simply, for Marx a crisis was "an interruption in the normal reproduction process" and was strongly related to the 'material destruction of the elements of production' and a naturalised trade cycle (Engels 1959, Mandel 1962:342, Marx and Engels 1970). In Marxist theory the cycle is defined in terms of four specific phases of change: economic recovery, boom and prosperity, overproduction and slump, crisis and depression (Mandel 1962:347-349). Poignantly when one considers the current economic circumstances of much of the Western world, in the times of crisis and depression the human and material basis of reproduction, including the labour power and the instruments of production are significantly reduced: inevitably leading to decline in human and productive consumption and high unemployment.

In his essay *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific*, Engels describes the inevitable collision between the extension of the markets and the extension of production and the consequential resistance of consumption: part and parcel of the "vicious circle" of the capitalist system (1968:425, cf. Carney 1980).

> "As a matter of fact, since 1825, when the first general crisis broke out, the whole industrial and commercial world, production and exchange among all civilised peoples and their more or less barbaric hangers-on, are thrown out of joint about once every ten years. Commerce is at a standstill, the markets are glutted, products accumulate, as multitudinous as they are unsaleable, hard cash disappears, credit vanishes, factories are closed, the mass of the workers are in want of the means of subsistence, because they have produced too much of the means of subsistence; bankruptcy follows upon bankruptcy, execution upon execution. The stagnation lasts for years … Little by little the pace quickens. It becomes a trot. The industrial trot breaks into a canter, the canter in turn grows into the head-long gallop of a perfect steeplechase of industry, commercial credit, and speculation which finally, after breakneck leaps, ends where it began – in the ditch of a crisis. And so over and over again" (Engels 1968:425).

Marx and Engels acknowledged that crisis can take many forms and have a plethora of consequences. Natural or social catastrophes, such as crop destruction, disease, wars and earthquakes, have devastating social and economic effects: a category of crisis that is termed 'non-economic', at least in original primary formation (Mandel 1962:342). Marx argued that these crises were equivalent to business fluctuations in the purely capitalist context[106]. Economic hardship may follow a natural disaster[107] due to a shortage of labour or infrastructure damage or the effects of the event on natural resources since, as Engels has stated, 'nature is the material that labour converts to wealth' (1972:251). Hence economic wealth is based on the original premises of nature and labour. This is most evident in relation to the value of land: a notion which crosses the non-capitalist/capitalist transition. In *The German Ideology* Marx argues that for a landlord the significance of the land is not profit but the leasing of the plots for rent. The land has to be in demand in the first place and can lose its 'feature' of value without losing a single physical characteristic, such as fertility (as it may do as the result of a volcanic eruption for example). The landlord:tenant economic relationship, and hence the value of the land and the livelihood of the individual, relies upon other social circumstances and wider economic contexts that condition the demand for tenanted land (1970:102). We can therefore determine that Marx believed capitalist crisis to affect both the workers and the capitalist class, pre-capitalist and capitalist societies (Elster 1986:74, Marx 1867).

In the distinctly capitalist context, 'material destruction of the elements of production' pertains to the result of a crisis rather than the cause. An example of this would be the reduction in number of people involved in the production process. A natural disaster or war would inherently have this effect; as would a decline in demand for a commercial product. Mandel illustrates this point by

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[106] In an interesting chain of events, in 2010 President Obama equated the crisis of the British Petroleum oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico, a natural disaster, with the September 11th terrorist attacks on the World Trade Centre. The oil spill, although 'natural' was the cause of capitalist production techniques and the terrorist attacks are commonly deemed a consequence of socio-political policy. Both crises are very different in cause and effect with diverse human consequences, yet they were deemed comparable without a problematisation of the paradox.

[107] Of course, one must keep in mind that natural disasters do not discriminate between capitalist and pre-capitalist societies, yet the social and economic consequences are quite diverse.

suggesting; "it is not because hunger reigns in people's homes that the output of labour declines and crisis breaks out, but the other way round" (Mandel 1962:342).

However apocalyptic it may seem, Marx and Engels argue that the epidemic of overproduction that is synonymous with economic crises leads to the destruction of industry and commerce which appears equivalent to famine, universal war and natural devastation experienced in pre-capitalist societies. At such a time society seems to return to barbarism (1968:40). This is because "there is too much civilisation, too much means of subsistence, too much industry, too much commerce" and the people have become too powerful for the system (ibid.). One may not wholly agree that economic crisis, such as is currently being experienced internationally, is directly comparable to famine in sub-Saharan Africa, and the terms 'civilisation' and 'barbarism' do not sit so comfortably nowadays, but as an analogy of social change and when one considers a relativisation of normative circumstance, the concept becomes slightly less melodramatic.

Capitalist crises with primary economic causes can relate to the concept of 'monetarily effective demand' on the national and international scale. This is to say that an abundance of commodities cannot realise their exchange value on the market and remain unsaleable, dragging businesses into financial destitution (Mandel 1962:343, Elster 1986:75). As multiple businesses are engaged in the same capitalist market system, they in turn are likely to feel the effects of a depreciation in exchange value[108]. It is interesting to note that it was the differentiation between use-value and exchange value, intrinsic in the nature of a commodity, which Marx understood as constituting the possibility for crisis in the first instance. Again it is a paradox that in order to appropriate the use-value of a commodity one must first possess the equivalent in exchange value (Mandel 1962:343). Of course the exchange value of a commodity is not static. One of

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[108] Hobsbawm argues that industrial revolutions and depressions work along similar lines. Thus the industrial revolution in Britain cannot be discussed without considering the wider European and World economies due to the "larger network of economic relations" (1968:35, 51).

the major causes of economic crisis is the inability to repay debts due to a change in the commodity/money exchange rate (ibid.:344-345).

One might say that nowadays the strategic investment of money in the balance between use and exchange value is the key to avoiding crisis. Yet "the love of money" is a vice of every individual thus presupposing periodic crisis as inevitable (Marx 1858:155). Due to this 'love of money' businesses overstretch their economic means and are forced into administration and small-investors suffer the devastating consequences of stock market crashes. Individual responsibility, I would argue, is disseminated through levels of bureaucracy and hierarchical power existing at all levels of capitalist business which allows for self-denial and moral ineptitude. Due to the nature of the bureaucratic system the individual feels little sense of moral obligation to the client, as well as hesitant towards trespassing on the territory of someone else's power. Thus the hierarchical mechanism of capitalist power is often inefficient and, furthermore, almost entirely faceless; another aspect that supports the sense of diminished responsibility. Weber alludes to such dissemination as essential to the functioning of the amoral machine that is capitalist business (Weber 1970:95, Sayer 1991:137) and Engels attributes the continuation of periodic crises to the "unconscious thoughtless manner" of production inherent in such a process (1959:196). Thus the reproduction of the economy, the cycle of trade and the fluctuation between times of 'poverty and plenty', perpetuate with periodic interruptions of the socio-economic norm.

Finally, it is interesting to note what Marx and Engels believed to be the way the capitalist class got over these crises. We have already alluded to the destruction of commodities and the machinery for production as well as job losses in order to save money. According to Marx, during economic crises the level of the playing field is reset. Thus big businesses that were accustomed to big profits are satisfied with average profits and the small businesses may go bankrupt. By destroying productive sources – especially the forced redundancy of workers

(Marx 1973)[109] – capital can be freed up for the attempted conquest of new markets and the more thorough exploitation of the current ones (Marx and Engels 1968:41). Cynically, Marx and Engels summarise these solutions as 'paving the way for more extensive and more destructive crises' in the future and 'diminishing the means whereby crises are prevented' (ibid.), all as the result of power being within "the hands of the few" (ibid.:55).

Regional Crisis and Social Change

As has been alluded to elsewhere in this thesis, at specific times during their formation and resolution economic crises can become a regionalised problem (Mandel 1962, Hobsbawm 1968, Carney, Hudson and Lewis 1980, Bowles 2002). How economic crisis is managed on a regional basis in relation to international markets alters their longevity and severity at the regional level. Although regional crises usually tend to reflect general crisis tendencies, there is often a distinct regional aspect to crisis formation (Carney, Hudson and Lewis 1980:20). Narotzky's definition of 'regional' is followed; "the place-boundedness" of economic activities that incorporate specific local understandings of "social capital" and the wider economy (2006b:339). Social capital is the ability to turn particular non-market relations into "capital" by accessing social, political and economic resources through personal networks. Relations of production and consumption can at least partially be based on other morally and socially predicated forms of responsibility and exchange in a form of "capital" not regulated by the state, legal forms or contracts (ibid.:347, 349, Bourdieu 1977, Narotzky 2004, Narotzky and Smith 2006). Thus the cultural distinction observable in regional varieties of *capitalisms* can be grounded in particular localised social and economic conditions (Bourdieu 1990, Narotzky 1997:111). These notions can be further located in localised relationships between industrialisation, modernisation and political change (Yanagisako 2002, Ballinger 2007:59), what Narotzky terms regionalised "dynamic and flexible economic structure(s)" (2006b:337). Economic activities are embedded within pre-existing social fabrics to create a successful model based on localised social

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[109] The reduction in employment numbers can also be the result in new technical innovations and the use of machinery (Marx 1973:125).

and cultural notions of relations. Structuring socio-economic relations that may not be based on official 'Market laws' (Narotzky 2006b:338, La Pradelle 2006) mean that the effects of crisis will be regionally specific.

These variables mean that in some cases regional crises can continue to exist even when the wider trend in economic markets is positive (such as in Argentina between 1998 and 2002). Some may even be contained if dealt with efficiently. According to Damette and Poncet (1980), when there is a global economic crisis, state monopoly capitalism begins to lose control at a regional level; thus a pre-existing regional crisis can become 'standardised' by global trends. Furthermore, new regional problems are created in order to deal with or exploit market conditions. Thus a significant debt may be formed in times of prosperity so as to provide capital for accelerated accumulation. In times of recession, further problems are created in order to devalorise the capital required to re-establish conditions for renewed accumulation (Carney 1980:40). Damette and Poncet offer the following hypothesis for regional economic crises:

> "Regional crises ultimately reflect the general crisis of the system. The initial force is provided by the general crisis. Regional crises are not the result of simple disaggregation of the overall crisis. There is a specifically regional diminution to the problem" (Damette and Poncet 1980:93).

The present economic crisis in Greece is one such illustrative example of a crisis with a quintessentially regional flavour. The financial problems that the state faces are not new. As early as the 1960s scholars have highlighted the extreme problems caused by high government deficits (Campbell and Sherrard 1968:ch. 9). However, the handling of the national economy during the years of prosperity, coupled with slow reactions to the international economic downturn, means that the Greek economy has suffered greatly. The management of credit was mis-handled on a state level, reflecting the international "serious and apparently structural" tendency to turn a blind eye to budget deficits and falsified figures (Campbell and Sherrard 1968:299, Piga 2001). The accession of Greece to the European Community in 1981 and their membership of the European single currency in 2001 were events processed amid a great deal of international scepticism as to the readiness of the regional economic arena for

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new liberalised markets. A 'blind eye', we are informed, was turned by the international community towards certain economic conditions necessary for membership of these institutions. Issues such as inflation rates and public spending remained unresolved, an attitude that was more recently reflected in relation to trade deficits and semi-legal banking agreements that contributed to the current crisis (Piga 2001, Balzli 2010).

These inconsistencies are what are discussed above in terms of the dissemination of responsibility through bureaucracy and hierarchical power relations, resulting in moral ineptitude. Governments base policy within the bounds of short-term economic climates due to high levels of public expectation and internal governmental statistical targets. The practice of turning 'a blind eye' to economic problems and especially rapidly escalating financial loans is not purely an issue at the state level. In Trikala the air of invincibility that could be felt during the mid to late 1990s resulted in many people 'throwing caution to the wind' in terms of consumerism and personal debt. As with the case of Nikos, the stock market investor in the previous chapter, complete livelihoods were devoted to a medium of investment that few people truly understood, in this case the stock market. The same issue frequently arose in the context of indiscriminate bank loans. One informant stated that;

> "If I wanted a new car, perhaps a car better than the BMW Stavros had just bought, I would go to the bank in town and ask for the money … then a few month later I might fancy a holiday, so off to the bank I went".

The consequences of failing to repay loans were played down by my informants, "*What is the worst that they can do, repossess my car?*" was the most common response. By demonstrating such passive attitudes towards the consequences of their actions, both the government and the individual investor suffered extremely when the international economic crisis struck[110]. In this sense the

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[110] Weber has argued that such action, or perhaps inaction, is essential to the functioning of the amoral machine that is capitalist business (Weber 1970:95).

'global economic crisis' took on a localised form due to the economic circumstances of the population.

Greece is a good example of the relationship between regional and international economic crises as the nation has recently been fashioned as distinctly Western with a strong regional yet still highly dependent economy. The mixture of capitalist and entrepreneurial mentalities and pre-existing hierarchical systems such as patron-clientelism, contribute to the rich economic flavour (cf. Campbell 1964, 1968, Yanagisako 2002, Bennison and Theodoridis 2009). This is one of the reasons why the Marxist 'evolutionary' concept of economic stages – pre-capitalist economies being succeeded by intermittent times of capitalist prosperity and crisis which in turn is succeeded by another economic condition, that of socialism – cannot be uncritically applied to the Greek context. Within Greece there are numerous embodiments of economic practice, a miscellany of capitalist and pre-capitalist relationships in the conditions of production and consumption. The supposedly separate stages are amalgamated into various tropes of 'doing business'. This can be connected to what Campbell and Sherrard term the 'isolation' of many Greek people from the philosophy of the capitalist system despite being almost obligatorily involved in it by want of association (1968:349). This is not to say that people in rural Greece do not operate within the realms of global capitalism and to an extent prosper from it. In an area relatively detached from mass tourism, transnational investment, industrialisation and urbanisation, 'the global capitalist experience' often appears as an epiphenomenon of decisions taken in a distant place by people driven by a specific agenda and a powerful ideology[111] (cf. Chomsky 1996). Thus the inhabitants of Trikala and the surrounding villages live their daily lives within the realms of both global capitalism and other socio-economic 'philosophies'.

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[111] It is interesting to note that despite the number of 'supermarkets' in Trikala, the term 'supermarket' is in fact used for all small self-service outlets in peripheral regions and stems from the introduction of large 'European style' supermarkets in Thessaloniki and Athens in the 1970s. In Trikala and most of the outlying villages, 'supermarkets' are usually like British 'corner shops' and are still owned by individuals rather than incorporated firms (Bennison 1977:82).

One example of the "network of shifting but necessary alliances" between numerous forms of socio-economic activity (Narotzky 2006b:339) can be taken from two transnational supermarkets in the town, both belonging to the same chain. The German owned supermarkets are managed by local Trikalinoi, who in turn are under the management of regional executives in Athens. The supermarket chains are transnational capitalist enterprises where Trikalinoi can purchase all their weekly consumer goods. Yet despite official company policy the supermarket employees obtain their jobs on the basis of patron-client relationships. If a person does not have a network of contacts that relate him/her with the local branch manager then there is little hope of obtaining a job, regardless of curriculum vitae. This multi-faceted process highlights the complex relationship between state policy, unions, employers and employees in Greece (Featherstone 2008:7). Additionally, Trikalinoi often frequent these large chain stores only 'as a last resort' as they are considered to lie at the social boundaries of their conceptual worlds (Marx 1990). They would rather patronise smaller shops belonging to friends and family (Just 2000:174-177). The visits to the multinational supermarkets are perceived as faceless market relations between two separate 'isolated' partners not intimately united (ibid.:182). The majority of my informants preferred to patronise local businesses owned by relatives or friends of friends, demonstrating the instrumental weight of personal and affective relations (cf. Bennison 1977, 2010 (personal communication), Narotzky 2006b:340, Narotzky and Smith 2006). Fruit and vegetables are shared between villagers on the basis of supply and demand and money rarely changes hands during these exchanges[112]. This is a point the Just highlights in the context of Spartokhori, Meganisi. Here, the villagers were producers of olive oil and thus nobody ever *purchased* oil from the local shop, despite the relatively low price. On the occasion that the innocent anthropologist, Just, purchased his first bottle of oil he was reprimanded by numerous villagers who competed for his 'custom', as paying for oil was considered little more than 'theft' (Just 2000:164).

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[112] Other luxury consumer goods such as expensive cars and desirable clothes are indicators of socio-economic status (discussed in chapter eight), but are understood as indulgences into a world of the Other rather than consumer necessities.

Another instance of overcoming aspects considered synonymous with capitalist systems relates to the transgression of government imposed economic bureaucracy (Crozier 1964, Weber 1970). When problems do arise with official state or EU bureaucracy, these issues can be circumnavigated in ways inconceivable in other capitalist societies. Perhaps this is what Campbell and Sherrard meant by the 'isolation' of the rural Greek populations from the philosophy of the capitalist system; an isolation which to an extent is still evident today. What is more, the other economic 'philosophies' proliferating in Trikala have dense cultural and historical roots that operate within the complex and multi-faceted local/regional economic environment (cf. Featherstone 2008).

It is therefore worth considering an alternative model of socio-economic development that does not demonise capitalism from the outset as a stepping stone to something beyond – an alternative to the Marxist paradigm. Such an approach is offered by Rostow (1960). Intended to be a "Non-Communist Manifesto", Rostow's proposition is that all countries are located within a hierarchy of economic development. He identified the stages as: (a) the traditional society, (b) the transitional stage that preconditions for take-off, (c) the take-off, (d) the drive to maturity, and (e) the stage of high mass consumption (Rostow 1960, Colman and Nixson 1986:39). Rostow states that a nation must pass through one stage to get to the next, with stages (d) and (e) being the stages of self-sustaining capitalist growth. The main differences with Marxist concepts of development are that there is perceived to be no end to the capitalist cycle of the final stage and each stage is statistically measurable. During stages (a) and (b) radical changes are required in agriculture and transport and an "entrepreneurial spirit" has to emerge towards market-orientated economic activities in order for a society to advance further up the hierarchy. To progress from each stage economic investment should also grow from 5 per cent to 10 per cent of GNP within approximately a decade (ibid.).

The problems with this theory of economic development are manifold. Let us begin by keeping in mind Greece as a representative of any number of peripheral capitalist economies. For an economy to pass from one stage to the next on the hierarchy it must undergo numerous social transformations. Only

after these issues have been 'resolved' may the subsequent stage be obtained. This initially poses a problem for any theory of cultural continuity in socio-economic terms or indeed for multi-faceted capitalism (McNall 1976, Mouzelis 1978, La Pradelle 2006). It is right to query how a society can completely detach itself from the socio-economic remnants of the recent past. What is more, can it truly be stated that any nation in the contemporary world is completely 'traditional' and absolutely untouched by at least one of the numerous processes of globalisation and capitalism? Additionally, Rostow's theory presupposes that one stage is qualitatively better than the previous as a stand-alone set of conditions. This specific concept of a closed society with homogeneous measurable social and economic conditions seems quite farcical; especially the suggestion that during the early stages the national economy is completely self-sufficient. As we have seen in the case of Greece, from the 1800s until the 1970s Greece relied heavily on imports to support the national economy and the inability to reach levels of self-sufficiency has been a recurring theme for over a century (Kuznets 1963:41). During this time Greece was certainly not a 'modern capitalist nation' and thus does not fit in to any of Rostow's categories of development. Although it is common knowledge that economic crises can be regional (for example Argentina 1998-2002, Turkey 2000-2001, South-East Asia 1997), as can prosperity (such as the relatively unscathed nature of the economy in China, Turkey and Australia in recent times), it has become indisputable that current globalised market systems make each and every nation susceptible to transnational fluctuations. This notion of periodical transnational crisis is not factored into the developmental equation.

Finally, Rostow supposes that there is nothing beyond the condition with which many nations now find themselves; his theory is certainly bounded by time and experience. If such specific statistics as percentages of GNP investment are the means by which a national economy progresses, one must pose the question of regression. If this is the case then do the social changes that come with advancement up the hierarchy become deformed with economic regression? Along these statistical lines of thought Argentina may be deemed to have recently regressed as the nation's GDP dropped by 20 per cent between 1998 and 2002 (Page 2009:1).

In the same way that economic progression did not happen overnight, neither did the current economic crisis in Greece. Neither did it coincide with the advent of a new government when PASOK came to power in October 2009. The substantial regional flavour that made the crisis so extreme had been an underlying inevitability for many years. Indeed, the events contributing to the excessive nature of the current crisis – such as fabricated statistics, fraud and tax evasion – are not new or unusual in the Greek context (cf. Campbell and Sherrard 1968, Mouzelis 1978). One can argue that this is the result of interplay between multiple economic philosophies – capitalism, opportunistic entrepreneurism, patron-clientelism, social networks, and altruistic exchange – all strongly present in everyday life, overlapping to the extent that one becomes part of the other, coexisting in simultaneous moments (Narotzky 2006a, 2006b). Above all, as none have mutually exclusive rights to the economic sphere, they cooperate and facilitate on one level and erode and destroy each other on another level.

Culturally embedded phenomena such as bribery and favour exchange that may be deemed wholly corrupt within many Western capitalist societies (categorised as Rostow advocates above) are part and parcel of the 'Greek way' of doing capitalism (Seremetakis 1994:39, Bratsis 2003, Featherstone 2008)[113]. As there are regional forms and variations of 'doing economics' there are regional forms and variations of economic crisis. As La Pradelle explains;

> "Societies do not wake up one fine day and discover the market economy as if it were Euclidean geometry of thermodynamics. They are either endowed or not with the institutional and historical conditions that allow for the instating of a particular mode of social relations: market exchange" (2006:6, also Müller 2004, 2007).

The pre-existent socio-economic conditions are not easily neutralised in the way that Rostow suggests. The 'rules of the modern capitalist game' are governed by 'higher powers' and thus people in Trikala are often detached from the ideology invested in the liberal market system. Therefore local people drift in and out of

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[113] For a discussion of the varieties of capitalism and the liberal economic reforms requested under the European Union's Lisbon Programme see Featherstone (2008). For a comparative account of French varieties of capitalism in relation to town marketplaces see La Pradelle (2006).

contextual relationships as they carve their own niche into the workings of the combined economy (La Pradelle 2006:5-7); or as Narotzky aptly puts its, 'people make their way toward some kind of livelihood while the currents they float on hurl them here and there' (Narotzky and Smith 2006:122). The circulation of goods and services between kin, neighbours and friends is simultaneous with market exchange that deliberately ignores individual identities (Sahlins 1972, Marx 1990, Narotzky 1997, 2006b). Specific spatial and social contexts engender different economic relationships. There are spatial and temporal limits to these transactions that are strategically selected through deep cultural understandings of social and economic relations and social capital (La Pradelle 2006:7, Sahlins 1972). Hence often more than one sovereign system overlaps, creating a culturally unique reading of the social situation, as is the case when local managers hire friends and family to work for a transnational company or when villagers would rather patronise local shops and pay more money for their goods than visit a transnational chain store. These specific regionalised culturally informed processes shape how crisis is experienced in Trikala and other parts of Greece: the severity, the longevity, the causes, the consequences and the resolutions. A global economic crisis formed on international markets generates regional effects due to the structural intertwining of formal and informal aspects of the economy (Narotzky 2006b:351).

Thus, as most of Europe comes out of a recession, Greece is left behind with International Monetary Fund (IMF) and eurozone bailout loans and a stringent package of austerity measures in place. The style of Greek capitalism from the governmental to the individual level has generally contributed to this regional crisis. Yet the effects of the Greek crisis are not only restricted to within the borders of Greece, such is the nature of international markets. Greek bonds and credit ratings have been reduced to the status of 'junk'[114] and other nations look

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[114] "Junk" status reflects "considerable uncertainty surrounding the timing and impact" of fiscal austerity and reform measures on the country's economic growth, "particularly in a less supportive global economic environment", thus discouraging provisional investors from trading with Greece on international markets as it is deemed "a severe credit risk" (*International Business Times*, June 14th 2010). Greece's was reduced by four slots to Ba1 – the highest junk-level rating – from A3, also as a result of the "balance of the strengths and risks associated with the Eurozone/IMF support package" (ibid., *The Economist vol. 395, issue 8682, 15th May 2010, and vol. 395, issue 8683, 22nd May 2010*). Indeed, even before this downgrade, Greece was often

set to follow suit, the Euro faces a potential decrease in value and the eurozone prepares to be dragged back into economic turmoil. It is interesting to note that in Britain, not a constituent member of the European single currency, the public is informed through the European Central Bank of 'how this will affect us all' whilst British politicians state that 'this is Greece's problem and a problem for the eurozone' (*The Economist, 29th April 2010, 6th May 2010, 13th May 2010*).

Local Reactions to the Regional Crisis of 2008-present

The reaction to this news in Trikala ranged from disbelief to outrage to fatalistic resignation. However nobody was particularly surprised by what they heard. The lack of surprise was firstly attributed to the public perception that corrupt behaviour, portrayed as causing the situation, is habitual and endemic at the state level. Secondly, extensive media speculation had surrounded the integrity of economic figures for some months. It is commonly acknowledged that the government is corrupt and 'eats money' on a daily basis. It is also widely accepted that politicians regularly resort to grand-scale bribery to avoid prosecution[115]. However, as the severity of this 'discovery' by the newly elected PASOK government began to be revealed, the public rhetoric, fuelled by media reports, started to change. Ilias, 44, explains;

> "I can't say that I was shocked at what our politicians had done and the position they had put us in. My first reaction was 'ack, look at what these arseholes have done again … *again*'. I thought that it might blow-over in a few weeks like all the other 'thrillers' they give us through the television. Yet this one did not go away and the accusations got worse, more statistics were discovered to be false. And it wasn't just the reporters that were telling us of these problems, the Prime Minister was appearing on the television regularly. He was serious, very precise and obviously implied that this was a collective

dismissed by investors as a country of high inflation and repeated devaluations (*The Economist, vol. 395, issue 8688, 26th June 2010*).

[115] The "invisible receipts" have for a long time meant that the prosperity of the Greek economy has been falsified and remain a central feature of any analysis of Greece's commercial policy (Campbell and Sherrard 1968:301).

problem that had been caused by the previous (Nea Dimokratia) government. As you walked down the street you could hear televisions turned up to full volume and the Prime Minister's voice booming through the open windows. As the consequences of these problems became apparent we all started listening more intently, it was all that anyone was talking about. People became economic experts over night – we now all talk about 'spreads' and 'bonds', words that we never used before. We thought that we were returning to the bad times of the past."

The fact that people have become 'economic experts' highlights the intensity of the situation. The usual media scaremongering was in this case fully justified. The topical satire shows, such as the hugely popular *Al-Tsadiri News* and *Radio Arvila*, reflect on the consequences of the austerity measures and the inconceivable level of governmental corruption. The critique of the current crisis is mediated between the public and private domains through television that brings public concerns and common discourses into the private realm and thus creates new public dialogues. One such provocation provided through the medium of television relates to discourses of previous times of crisis. Narratives of past crises, especially the Great Famine and to an extent the 1929-1932 economic crisis, are given impetus in both a top-down (through the mass media) and bottom-up (through personal accounts and experiences) manner. Trikalinoi are beginning to embody the crisis just as their parents and grandparents have embodied previous crises such as the Great Famine and the civil war. Trikalinoi are enacting familiar practices such as hoarding food and using bicycles rather than cars when possible. These practices are related to the pressures induced by the financial bailout packages approved by the IMF and the eurozone.

In 1968 Preston noted that; 'it is important that the structure of economic trade in Greece should not remain unaltered in the midst of the changing economic environments; consumption opportunities and buying habits need to be addressed' (1968:214). This is an unequivocal necessity if Greece is going to recover quickly from the current crisis. Yet even amidst the apparently ingrained nature of poor economic policy and institutional corruption in Greece, some

scholars strongly believe that post-crisis state policy can be greatly transformed (cf. Bowles 2002, Goddard 2010). Bowles suggests that there can be alterations in unrestricted free market policy that focuses inwards towards a regional state-central model that provides localised security in case of economic recession (Bowles 2002:237-238). However, for this programme to work a region needs to have a powerful and respected leader. In the pre-crisis Balkan context this figurehead would have indisputably been Greece; the leading investor in the region as well as political and economic powerhouse (Georgakopoulos 1994, Kamaras 2001, Bratsis 2003)[116]. Unless Greece can recover entirely and effectively from its current conditions it may lead to a crisis in confidence from investors within its own region. The initial changes may not initially be on a large scale. For example, analysts have also suggested sweeping constitutional reform is coupled with departmental reorganisation, ranging from simply letting international cruise ships take on new passengers at Greek ports and increasing the number of lorry licences (it is cheaper to transport goods from Italy to Athens than it is from Thebes, just 32 kilometres away) to reforming the welfare state and tackling the 'jobs for votes' culture. Widespread tax evasion is also an issue that needs to be addressed; a study by the London School of Economics and Political Science estimated that Greece's potential tax yield is reduced by 26 per cent due to tax evasion (*The Economist, vol. 395, issue 8688, 26th June 2010*).

Eleni, 51, a primary school teacher who resides in a relatively wealthy suburb of Trikala, rather holistically captures the public fears embedded in the current crisis and austerity measures;

> "We are scared. We feel so insecure. The austerity measures will affect only the normal people, the politicians and those with contacts will continue to 'eat the money'. They are the cause of the crisis and they will not be punished, but we will. Therefore there can be no end to the crisis because the problem (the corrupt politicians) is not being

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[116] On a wider regional basis the eurozone would seem to have been an association of like-minded states with France and Germany as political and economic figureheads. This was made apparent by Germany's central role in securing, negotiating and providing bail-out loans to Greece in 2010.

targeted. If they get taken to court they pay-off the judges. We are paying for their behaviour, their money-eating, there is scandal after scandal … The pensions have been cut and now we will have to work longer and harder just to survive. I heard a woman call into the morning chat show *O Ormofos Kosmos to Proi* (Beautiful World in the Morning). She was over 80 years old and said that she had no money due to her small pension. Her husband was dead and she couldn't claim his pension, she did not even have money to buy her tablets and medicines that the doctor prescribed. She asked the doctor what she should do, he told her it was her problem not his. She didn't have enough money to give him a *fakeláki* (bribe). Eventually the television presenter promised to help her raise the money by sending it himself. We cannot see the light, there seems no end to the devastation they are telling us. The politicians played with our money and lost it all, now they are taking more money from us to try and stop their problems, more tax, cutting our bonuses … (In another story) I went to fill the car with petrol two days ago, the prices have risen so much that I could not afford to fill it up. I will use my bicycle to get to work in the next village from now on. I cannot afford to run the car, and I work nearly full-time … I suppose that I am happy to have a job; so many people will lose theirs. Young people have no prospect of getting work[117], the students are better off staying in England, not returning to Greece … Here, even those with work are not earning money. The private sector (implying self-employed) workers have no customers as people hold on to their money and the public sector workers face huge pay cuts and redundancies … We are thinking that we will return to the bleak days of the war like our parents experienced. We have to prepare ourselves for that."

The austerity measures implemented by the Greek government amplified the sense of injustice. Many Trikalinoi feel unlawfully persecuted whilst the real perpetrators get away with their crimes. Sometimes, far from creating the liberal

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[117] For the effects of the Argentine economic crisis and the impact on young professionals see Goddard (2010).

ideal of "world peace through world trade" (Polanyi 1957:11, Griffin 1994, Lee 2003, Hart and Hann 2009:72), dramatic social and economic change can be the cause of much violent reprisal. This was demonstrated in Greece in May 2010 when national strikes were called and thousands of people took to the streets to protest. Their anger was generally directed at the police, then government buildings, banks, national media outlets and multinational business chains, eventually resulting in the deaths of three people (known as the Marfin deaths [*Reuters, 5th May 2010, The Times, 6th May 2010, Kathimerini, 6th May 2010, The Economist 6th May 2010*])[118]. This was seen by many Trikalinoi as a new and unacceptable escalation in protesting.

At this point I refrain from drawing conclusions to this chapter on theorising crisis until after the discussion of how these theoretical ponderings are represented on the ground in Trikala. It is important to contemplate how often abstract concepts of global and local economic systems impact on local populations. To do this it is imperative to consider depictions and understandings of crisis in the public domains of Trikala.

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[118] See also Stoler (1985) for discussion of social change initiating violent uprisings in the context of Sumatra and Page (2009) for the protests concerning the recent economic crisis in Argentina.

Chapter Six: Depictions of Crisis in the Public Sphere: Observable Phenomena

In this chapter 'the public sphere' will be critically analysed so as to interrogate how notions of crisis are represented in Trikala. The public sphere(s) is the *par-excellence* arena of socialisation in Trikala and provides highly visible as well as metaphorical modes of understanding contemporary socio-economic conditions. A re-assessment of the public/private dichotomy as provided by previous scholars of Greece is taken as the starting point for this discussion, before moving on to an analysis of how the social impacts of crisis are played-out in the public arena in Trikala.

<u>The Public Sphere</u>

The public sphere in Trikala is the *par-excellence* arena of socialisation where the effects of crisis are played out on multiple levels. Additionally, the public sphere is an important site for intense status competition as well as an arena for the exchange and analysis of past crises. The public sphere can be explored in relation to a number of things; politics, gender, space, visibility, sociality, commensality, accountability, mass media, narrative and discourse and bureaucracy to name but a few. I would like to take a moment to explore the interaction between some of these aspects in relation to the analysis of the current economic crisis.

In Trikala the public sphere has become especially crucial as an arena of social interaction during the current economic crisis. The whole 'event' of the economic crisis is played out in the public domain, both on the level of government information exchange and personal experience. An analysis of the understanding of crisis in the public sphere is therefore imperative to comprehend how crisis is understood in the context of Trikala. To facilitate this aim two ethnographic examples have been chosen – one from Mexico and one from Argentina – to illustrate the import of the public domain at times of crisis. Both of these examples refer to periods of economic hardship and address how

crisis is portrayed and understood in the public domain as an arena for the comprehension of and reflection on social circumstances. Initially however it is necessary to briefly highlight the place of the public domain in Greek ethnography and situate the current discussion of the public depiction of economic crisis within a theoretical framework.

The public/private dichotomy has been central to the analysis of Mediterranean societies since the 1960s (cf. Friedl 1962, Campbell 1964, du Boulay 1974) and has been portrayed as adhering to rigid stereotypes of socialisation, political subjectivity and gender[119]. Unlike other parts of the Mediterranean, especially Italy (cf. Ginsborg 1990, Goddard 1996), the public and private domains have remained remarkably separated in terms of space, what Just calls "a series of open forums and tightly closed doors" (2000:157). Initially this demarcation was almost exclusively explored in terms of gender and the honour and shame model (cf. Pitt-Rivers 1954, 1966, Campbell 1964, Peristiany 1965, 1966, Lisón-Tolosana 1966, Friedl 1962, 1986, du Boulay 1974, Davis 1977, Herzfeld 1980, 1985, Dubisch 1986, Gilmore 1987, Cowan 1990, Faubion 1993, Sciama 1993, Dubisch 1995, Goddard 1996, Booth 1999, James and Kalisperis 1999, Just 2001, Kirtsoglou 2004). The code of honour and shame "unites ideas about power, sexuality, and gender relationships with a rigid spatial and behavioural division between women and men" (Dubisch 1995:196). The reputation of men is defended primarily in the public domain through the "energetic protection of the families' interests, as well as of the chastity of their wives, sisters mothers and daughters" (Kirtsoglou 2004:20, Campbell 1966:146, Davis 1977:179, Dubisch 1995:196). The reputation of women is believed to be related to the cultivation of shame or their reputation for being virtuous. This reputation is less threatened if the woman stays in the private domain, literally 'at home' (Dubisch 1995). The woman's reputation depends not only on her sense of shame but also on the communal knowledge that the men in her family are willing and able to defend her. The representation of an analytic dichotomy, public/private, was for decades fairly unflappable.

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[119] Just notes that it is a paradox of the rural Greek village that "people so committed to the privacy of domestic life nevertheless choose to live in a form of settlement so compact that one house is literally on top of another" (2000:157).

In her study of pilgrimage to a Greek Island shrine, Dubisch (1995) questioned the ethnographic authority of the public/private dichotomy based on the concept of honour and shame. Whilst in the field she, as I, found herself experiencing a "dissonance" between models they were taught pre-fieldwork and the ethnographic reality. Put simply, she found the model inadequate and too outdated to fully capture the social dynamics of her field. The female subject in Greece is today by no means a 'suppressed, downtrodden and reclusive creature' as portrayed in earlier accounts, and the strict separation of the public/private spheres along the lines of gender are not so strictly defined (ibid.:199). This has become a central criticism of the honour and shame literature (Cowan 1990:11, Goddard 1996:15, Kirtsoglou 2004:20).

For Dubisch the key moment came when observing the public performance of women "ascending to the church on their knees", which contradicted the public/private dichotomy that she was taught that she *should* find before entering the field. The reason that Dubisch found such performances 'anomalous' was due to the 'ethnographical and theoretical literature that shaped and constrained work on gender (and social cohesion) in this particular cultural region' (1995:195). In relation to contemporary male roles, Faubion argues that in modern-day Greece women are actually more 'liberated' from the social restrictions of gender roles than men. He argues that men are still expected to act like "real men", where as recently women have had more license to "be themselves" (1993:218). Being a 'real man' is inseparable from the notion of providing for the family, and whilst in modern day Greece a woman may or may not manage the home, the man still has to provide for it (ibid.:219). Faubion suggests an asymmetry in gender bias in modern Greek reform, opposite to the asymmetry of gender roles argued by Cowan (1990). According to Faubion, "women are now more free to indulge in traditionally masculine pursuits; but men still run a considerable risk of censure for indulging in traditionally feminine ones" (Faubion 1993:219, also Herzfeld 1985:124). A man who is 'shamed' for his action – thus bringing his family's reputation and honour into doubt – is said to have 'become like a woman' (Dubisch 1995:197).

Unavoidably, ethnographies of Greece share multiple aspects of theory and representation, and keystone theories have directly influenced later work. It could be argued that the focus on the public/private dichotomy in Greece in terms of gender (and in terms of honour and shame [Just 2001:39]) is almost a natural succession. The next generation of researchers after the Mediterraneanist scholars of the 1960s, grasped the dominant theoretical trend associated to the region and sought to juxtapose or justify its basis in Greek social life. Therefore gender roles are portrayed as being the central ideologies from which to analyse the social organisation of Greek culture, even if such roles do not conform to the structural models of the 1960s; what du Boulay terms "essential classification" (1974:105). This is not to say that the analytical models of the 1960s were without merit. Social reality has not remained unchanged and untouched over the past fifty years. "Cultural stuff" (Barth 1969:15) transgresses the shifts in disciplinary focus and theoretical frameworks, and is continuously changing (cf. Kearney 1995:547, Amselle 2002:220-227, Moore 2004:71). This is especially evident in today's world of globalisation, popular culture and tourism, mass media and the rapid spread of economic, political and cultural ideas (Amselle 2002:229). Especially pertinent to the discussion of Greece is the influence of mass tourism that became apparent in the 1980s, bringing with it diverse cultural ideas and considerable information exchange (cf. MacCannell 1989, Goddard, Llobera and Shore 1994:24, Mansperger 1995, Boissevain 1996:13, MacLeod 1999, Kirtsoglou and Theodossopoulos 2004:136, 147, Theodossopoulos 2005). According to Rapport and Overing, these processes of globalisation mean that there are now local, national and transnational codes that 'overlap and intermix' (2000:169, Clifford 1997). With this in mind, we cannot argue that the 'honour and shame' code was not an integral part of social reality in 1960s Greece. Even today, parts of the ideology hold resonance with certain social phenomena. Yet the social reality of Greece is ever changing, and – coupled with new methodological and theoretical paradigms – contemporary ethnography aids in the production of new anthropological knowledge (Moore 1999). However, the theoretical concepts developed during the 1960s have unmistakably formed the basis for subsequent fieldwork interests in the region, hence the proliferation of the public/private dichotomy being explored in terms of gender. Indeed, Sant Cassia and Bada ask the question of how one can address Mediterranean

societies without reverting to the old schemata of cultural unity such as honour and shame and the public and private domains, initially explored by the first generation of Mediterranean scholars and with which "there is now uncomfortable dissatisfaction" (1992:3).

Along these lines, I would argue that the public sphere is still the *par-excellence* arena of socialisation and political subjectivity whilst the private domain has retained an intimate family-orientated composition; as Hirschon puts it, the private domain is "an exclusive precinct, that of the family, closed to outsiders" (Hirschon 1993:84). In contemporary Trikala Hirschon's distinction of space remains largely intact, although it is based on different terms of engagement; notably not on gender. Public and private spaces can now be understood as semi-permeable in specific contexts, such as when considering the influence of the mass-media which cross the public/private divide. Family narratives of crisis formed in a private context are also expressed by both men and women in the public domain. These 'intrusions' (Just 2000:167) are governed by notions of limited access.

The public/private dichotomy is not devoid of value as an analytical tool for understanding social phenomena, as long as one is conscious of both the restrictions of such a division and its historical roots. Goddard argues that the concepts of public and private are better understood "as ideological constructs that define spaces, activities and persons in differing ways. The meaning and significance of actions and spaces need to be contextualised and we should not underestimate the capacity of *agents* to redefine and/or undermine such boundaries and distinctions" (2000:17). Hence, as the dichotomy is primarily a "feature of anthropological discourse" (Collier and Yanagisako 1987:18-20, Moore 1993:193) the boundaries are by no means rigid. I again refer to Dubisch's account of female pilgrims in Tinos to illustrate the 'pushing and blurring of boundaries':

> "One of the sights that constantly attracted my attention at the Church of the Annunciation … was the many women who chose to ascend to the church on their knees. This was especially common at the busiest times of year … the dramatic nature of their vows made them highly visible … Certainly for me the fascination

was due in part to the "exoticism" and dramatic nature of the act. But there was another reason for my own interest, and this was the challenge these pilgrims presented to certain anthropological representations of Mediterranean women, representations that had played a significant role in my own anthropological biography … During their devotions at the Church of the Annunciation, large numbers of women in effect make public spectacles of themselves in front of strangers, as well as family and friends" (Dubisch 1995:194-195).

Based on the fieldwork in Trikala, the appreciation of the public/private dichotomy should be as a highly flawed analytical construct which can today be summarised along two main lines. Firstly, there remains a definite division between types of socialisation in the public and private domains. This is perhaps similar to what Weber (1970) might have termed the 'attitude-set' of the domain[120]. Unlike in Italy where scholars have noted that house doors are left open for people to come and go as they pass the house from the road (Goddard 1996) thus meaning that 'the home' transcends any notion of physical space, in Trikala there are clear distinctions in social spaces themselves, even if the appropriation of space is sometimes blurry. This is despite the fact that in Just's words 'ideally the division between public and private ought not to exist, they ought to blend harmoniously' (2000:167). In the Italian context, Pitkin has also noted that the kitchen transcends the public and private realms (1999:289, also Hirschon 1993:77). In this case, "boundaries can be moved, institutions overlap the private and public, and there are a variety of factors which define a situation as either public or private. These factors can be social, spatial or metaphysical" (York 1997:215). As Hirschon notes, in Greece gatherings in public spaces are quite different to those in the home. She notes that public areas become 'open-air theatres' with broad conversation topics (1993:83). The public sphere is constituted by the aggregate of conversations treating matters of collective concern (Campbell 2003:19). In Trikala, Asklipiou is the *par-excellence* space for public socialisation where topical discussion abounds on all matters ranging from politics and economics to fashion and 'petty' gossip.

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[120] Indeed, both Marx and Weber argued for the separation of the public and private spheres; "The executive office must be separated from the household, business from private correspondence, and business assets from private fortunes" (Weber 1970:197, Sayer 1991:138). Weber states that without this distinction 'modern capitalistic enterprise' is deemed impossible (1974:21-22, see also Macfarlane 1986, 1987).

Secondly, in contemporary Trikala the correlation between public/private and male/female is open to much critique beyond the bounds of this chapter. Suffice is to say that the public and private spheres have been almost completely transcended by both men and women for many years prior to my fieldwork in relation to allocating the work load (Theodossopoulos 1999, 2003). Many female informants have provided detailed accounts of their employment in the public domain from the 1970s onwards, whilst men are no strangers to domestic chores. Far from being periodical punctuations of the opposite sphere during celebrations or pilgrimage (cf. Friedl 1986, Dubisch 1995); the crossing of people between domains is a daily occurrence abided little pre-consideration. In line with Theodossopoulos (2003:81), the female role in public economic affairs has been underestimated. Many men now assist with public chores and even food preparation duties, whilst women sit drinking ouzo in the bars in the town centre. Many women are also public figures in their community and much of the strength of the ideological public/private divide as a theoretical construct based on gender no longer holds truth.

Therefore we need to consider other possibilities of how the public sphere is constituted. In some instances the public and private spheres are spatially still very rigid, whilst on other occasions they become semi-permeable, such as private conversations and small-group socialisation taking place in very public places (Just 2000:167-168) in a form of domestication of the public arena. In order to build on the concept of a contextual permeation, even 'domestication', of the public sphere some key theories of public/private formation will first be introduced, starting with that of Habermas. This will also assist further the exploration of how crisis is depicted in the public arena in relation to blame, narratives of crisis and how the external effects of crisis are portrayed through popular culture.

Habermas classifies events, places or gatherings that are open to a large number of people as public, in contrast to closed or exclusive affairs. However, just because something is 'public' does not necessarily imply unlimited accessibility (Habermas 1989:1-2). The public sphere arose historically in juxtaposition with a society separated from the state. From the perspective of Habermas, the

"social" could be ascribed its own sphere to the extent that the reproduction of life took on private forms on the one hand, whilst the private domain assumed a public relevance on the other. Therefore the interaction of private people became of public concern (1989:127). This is to say that the public sphere was a space of human interaction/action with limited accessibility. For Habermas the public sphere assumed a primarily political function whereby human communication ceased to merely concern subjectivity and increased to issues of political and economic influence over persons of power to further common interests. This, of course, coincided with the increase in private property ownership (1989:56). The public sphere was thus deemed to be the realm where property owners could assert their influence on figures of political authority and others with whom they were in competition, it became a realm of 'possessions' (ibid.).

By the mid-nineteenth century in Western Europe, the public domain inevitably came to be under the control of those groups who had no interest in maintaining society as a private sphere[121]. The sphere was thus expanded from being exclusively bourgeois to an arena for critical debate from the ground up. It allowed the critical evaluation of human beings by human beings (Habermas 1989:127-128). By these parameters people can acquire 'public recognition' or 'public reputation' (ibid.:2), as in the case of competitive status exhibitions and public tournaments of consumerism, what can be termed the "politics of public credibility" (Ku 1999:7). The public sphere is an arena of visibility where each individual does his/her best to excel, thus making the invisible visible (Habermas 1989:7).

The public sphere is one of the largest possible communicative spaces within a community – with other forms of 'publics', such as the internet, encroaching on physical domains to broaden realms of influence still further. As a narrative space, the public domain helps to map out the moral underpinnings of political authority, status, and relationships within a society (Ku 1999:49). The space allows for both reflection on past events and postulations concerning the future.

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[121] Status in the *polis* was therefore based upon status as the unlimited master of an *oikos*, or household (Habermas 1989:3).

The discourses are based on shared and communicated experience over a span of time. Thus cultural and political processes intersect the public discourses and changing public imagery, represented through narrative and discussion, and exercises power over the same political and cultural processes that feed it. Narrative discourse in the public domain can lead to collective mobilisation (Hart 1992, 1996), collective identity construction (Alexander and Smith 1993), crisis resolution (Jacobs 1996) and a feeling of social solidarity (Jacobs and Smith 1997).

In the public sphere, a discourse is usually on a cultural theme, social issue or political event (Ku 1999:53). The relevance of the events to the particular narrator's own experiences is paramount. The plot, Ku argues, is a "temporal projection" and can lead to the symbolic embodiment of the theme by the narrator (ibid.). Thus, when a certain event is discussed in the public domain, the relevance to the individual's own experience leads to recollections of past experiences expressed in narrative form. Hence narratives of the Great Famine can intertwine with current economic pessimism in a 'history of traumatic past' (Winichakul 2002:245). Narratives therefore incorporate cognitive, affective and evaluative dimensions into our experience of time and collectivity (Ku 1999:57). Of course one must also consider the eligibility of the audience to the relevance of public discourse. In many cases the repercussions of public discourse can be instigated by one audience – the general public – and directed overwhelmingly against another – for example the national government. Especially prominent in this process is the inchoate application of the collective "we" (Ku 1999:58, Carrithers 2008), employed to demonstrate solidarity to the cause and disseminate responsibility and blame across specific levels of the social strata.

As mentioned above, in Trikala the public sphere has become even more crucial during the current economic crisis. Intertwined depictions and representations of crisis criss-cross the public domain in various forms such as media reports, personal narratives and visual representations, as will become apparent through the presentation of two ethnographic examples of crisis depiction in the public domain, within the contexts of Mexico and Argentina further below. In contemporary Trikala, people who until recently would gather in each others

houses in the evening for dinner parties now predominantly socialise outside of the house, usually in bars around the central commercial streets. They go out numerous times throughout the week, not necessarily spending much money, and sit at a table around the area of Asklipiou or connecting streets and converse, joke and gossip. "*Mazevomaste ekso*" (we gather outside), it is said. This is 'in order to escape the house'. During working hours the shop owners also congregate in the street rather than in each others stores; the topic of discussion is usually the economic situation. As one female informant, Anita, 38, explains:

> "We are discussing the crisis with the rest of the owners of the shops in the neighbourhood, the photographers, the driving instructors, the pizza place. We congregate outside of our stores and discuss the situation of the economic crisis and the fact that we do not have work. What is going to happen? We were discussing and they were telling me that we are going to have to close the shops. I do not watch television because I am so stressed, I have constant headaches. We gather outside. Nobody is invited inside anymore. We are going crazy in there, everybody is afraid … I tell you that every Saturday I am going out because I would go crazy if I stayed in. I only have one or two drinks. We cannot stay at home any more. We gather outside. Nobody is invited to the houses any more. We say that we are going out. This is our space for gathering".

Gatherings that would usually have taken place in the private domain now take place in numerous small 'private' groups in distinctly public places such as Asklipiou. Small private stages of mixed-sex collectivities are evident throughout the day and night. During one return visit to Trikala I was invited to meet my female friend, Agapi, a private shop owner, at her house at 8pm. During my fieldwork in Trikala I would often attend social gatherings with Agapi and her *parea* (company) which usually consisted of approximately eight people, both male and female, who were employed in jobs ranging from an army trainer to an accountant, a lawyer and a shop assistant, and even on occasion the local priest. The host for the evening would also cook the meal and provide

entertainment, music and drinks. The conversation was always very diverse due to the range of characters present, often politics and economics would merge with personal gossip and stories of friends, relatives and jobs and discussions about the latest television phenomenon. The gatherings would take place in the dining room or back yard and everyone would try to contribute something to help the host in his/her preparations. Hence, my 8pm summons to Agapi's house did not raise any suspicions in my mind as to a different turn of events.

On my arrival I was invited to wait in the living room whilst my friend finished getting ready. I noticed that the table was not set and there was a distinct absence of aroma coming from the kitchen. I automatically assumed that we were going to someone else's house to eat. I called out "*so where are we going tonight?*" The reply was sharp; "*out*".

The gathering that night consisted of the usual protagonists; the lawyer, the accountant, the army man, the hairdresser, the video store owner and the shop assistant. The topics under discussion were similar; jobs, friends and the economic crisis were on the agenda. The location was a small unassuming side-street taverna in the old town. On enquiring as to why we had this time decided to gather outside I was told;

> "We haven't done that for about six months now. None of us have the energy to do that now. We don't want to stay at home. We might as well come out; we can still talk and see each other. It is just like having our own table outside. It is nice to see other people doing the same thing. This is what most people do now, but we don't go to expensive places, not necessarily on Asklipiou. We like to discuss openly, we can't do that in the house, and we want to get out whenever we have the chance … In Trikala we have to escape our houses at every opportunity so everybody would rather sit out and talk."

The reasoning behind the increased significance of the public domain in terms of sociality is twofold. Firstly, by congregating outside of the house Trikalinoi have expressed a feeling of being away from the constant stress of the economic

situation. As Anita notes, in the house "*there is pressure ... people sit around dwelling on how bad the situation is*". By being away from the monotonous depression exuded by the television broadcasts and the household accounts there is a perceptive release of stress. In the context of the 2001 economic crisis in Argentina, Goddard notes how excessive stress was one of the central recurring narrative themes among her informants. This was related to the prospect of job losses and the anger vented towards people employed in dealing with the public face-to-face (Goddard 2010:135)[122]. Yet, this is not to say that people congregate outside more often in order to forget the situation. Seemingly paradoxically the second reason to identify is the need to share narratives of economic hardship. Whilst gathering outside the main topic of conversation, illustrated through Agapi's narrative above, is the current economic crisis. The concept of collective victimisation is more easily realised in the public domain.

Spaces within the public arena are thus transformed and gatherings that once took place within the privacy of homes are now conducted within a compartment of the public domain, what one may be drawn into terming small 'domestics'. This resonates with Habermas' idea that 'circles of people' can make up different forms of publics upon the same spatial stage (1989:55-56). He supported the concept that the public sphere is at times a private affair and visa-versa with rules of inclusion and exclusion. From a Marxist perspective this could be understood as the realisation of the public domain as an arena of equal access for political debate, albeit within numerous selective private groups. The public space can be appropriated by social groups for political debate, although the dialogue between the selective groups is still far from the socialist ideal, hence the private nature of the sections of the enlarged public sphere of deliberation (ibid.:127). This is due to the multi-strata character of the public domain. Within these strata certain social groupings can find their niche. Yet it is the same strata that allow representation and inclusion with the sphere of the public that maintain it as a hierarchical and exclusivist composition. Hence

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[122] Furthermore, due to employment and custom operating on a patron-client basis, many bank owners were mortified that they had given the wrong advice to their customers, many of whom were very good friends. Due to the Argentine system, even bank managers at branch-level were considered liable and prosecuted despite their very limited power and authority in the broader context (Goddard 2010:135).

Habermas' 'free individuals' are regulated by rules of equality only applicable to those of the specific bounded social group in the first place. Thus criticism and debate can be understood as taking place within numerous 'private' (in the loosest sense of the term) spaces within the strata of public space between those who fit the criteria. As a whole, public arenas lose social exclusiveness but inherit numerous exclusive spaces of regulated debate which would have once been the concern of 'the private' (cf. Habermas 1989:131-132). Habermas argues that this means that the public domain is comprised of "competing private interests" as a consequence of the transformation of the public domain from a sphere of socialisation for exclusive private factions to an open and accessible arena for political debate within countless collectivities (ibid.).

To an extent the zoning of public spaces such as Asklipiou has always been based on criteria of inclusion and exclusion. The bars that run the length of the main commercial street attract very different clientele. 'Circles of people' do find their niche within other customers of similar socio-economic persuasion. For example, there are the bars/cafeterias that are fashionable with the youth, those frequented by the Nouveau-riche, and more traditional cafes with a more distinctly mature clientele[123]. This leads to more or less homogeneous groupings based on certain social dynamics. Yet during my fieldwork and subsequent visits the zoning has become more strictly based on small mixed social groups with limited public access that constitute small privates within the wider public arena. In this sense various 'publics' form small domesticated areas.

Kirtsoglou in her ethnography of same-sex relationships in Greece refers to the domestication of public space within the context of a town bar (2004:11). She suggests that there is a spatial distinction within the tavern between the bar area, frequented by regular groups of friends, and the other tables, frequented by other customers. Thus the bar area acts as a domestic space within the wider public arena. The significance of this distinction, Kirtsoglou suggests, concerns the bar area being closer to the 'backstage' of the tavern – the people who work in the kitchen and the singers' resting area for example – rather than the tables of the

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[123] According to Just, the coffee-shops and drinking places in Spartokhori, Meganisi, constituted "a public world where conspicuous attendance was obligatory" (2000:159).

'clients' (ibid.). The tavern becomes the group's stage where they can manipulate the clients with their 'backstage knowledge'.

It is true that spaces within the public domain can be appropriated and transformed within specific contexts, although in the case of my informants the physical aspect of 'space' as we might envisage it becomes less clear. Kirtsoglou talks of the bar and the tables and Hirschon (1993) discusses the moveable chair as mediums to transform the somewhat rigid public/private dichotomy. In the case of 'gathering outside' in Trikala, one might imagine a conceptual 'stage' that is transported from within the home to the streets around Asklipiou and the town centre. The actors are the same and the conversation very similar, but instead of a private dinner party it is now a 'private' within a different spatial context. As will become clear from the case of Lakis below, members of these groups become aggravated when 'outsides' intrude on their gathering. These small gatherings constituted the re-creation of intimate space along the lines of 'limited accessibility' (Habermas 1989:1-2)[124]. This is not a matter of front-stage/back-stage but an issue concerning where the 'stage' or platform for these gatherings is located in the first place, how the domains are permeated or re-located. As in Kirtsoglou's case of the tavern, a small section of public space is annexed for a previously private-domain orientated activity. Thus the platform for socialisation is folded up, put under the arm and pitched in the middle of the public social arena. One may equate this with a traditional English Sunday dinner being relocated from the kitchen table to the carvery restaurant with the difference being that this is not special celebratory occasion and none of the obligatory relatives are invited.

Yet this is not a 'stage' in the sense of display or performance – either of knowledge or of material wealth. For example, I refute the theory that the preference of gathering outside of the house is related in this specific case to demonstrating the individual ability to spend and remain unaffected by the

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[124] Hirschon, amongst others, discusses the re-creation of Asia Minor villages in Greece after the compulsory exchange of populations with Turkey in the 1920s. 'Refugee quarters' are visible in many of the major Greek towns and are often characterised by the attempts of the inhabitants to re-create life in their villages of origin (Pentzopoulos 1962, Hirschon 1989). In this case the public and private spaces – ranging from churches to living quarters – have been re-located and 'unpacked' in a new location.

economic crisis. Argyrou discusses the *fouartas* (a big spender) who wants to show that he has no respect for money despite economic situation (1996:21). This disposition, he argues, is at the very core of male personhood. Men usually frequent restaurants and bars and display their money by buying the whole company (*parea*) food and drink. The slightest allusion, particularly in public, that one may be stingy (*spangorammeni*) is a cause of great embarrassment (ibid.:74-75). Furthermore, Argyrou suggests that rising costs and economic hardship are seen as a challenge to a *fouartas* due to the greater recognition he will receive (ibid.:97). In Trikala this idea does exist in some sectors of society. However, the congregation of people in public spaces during the economic crisis is not directly related to an attitude similar to the *fouartas*; the public demonstration that economic hardship has no effect on them. On the contrary, the harsh effects of the current circumstances are precisely the topic of conversation and discussions on how one can save money are prevalent. Instead the dual premises of escapism and collective victimisation are the core reasons for the shift in social activity.

Such an example of not conforming to the persona of *fouartas* is offered by my friend Ioanna about a mutual acquaintance, Lakis, 32, a very status-conscious person who regularly occupies a table on Asklipiou with his group of friends:

> "Lakis went out with his group of five friends in order to relax and drink some beers in Trikala. He often does this in order to get away from work and all that stress. The empty beer bottles were stacked up on the table, you know, as they do, and, as it later transpired, they had just finished discussing their economic problems and decided to change the subject when a black man came around selling watches. This upset the groups of friends more than merely a simple annoyance. Usually Lakis would ignore the man but this time he just snapped and tore into the poor guy by exclaiming 'what do you think that you are doing? We have an economic crisis and you expect us to buy your watches. Where do you think we get the money? Ah, get away from here.' This broke the mood of the whole company."

This account is quite different to what one would usually expect from Lakis, for usually he would take great pleasure in strolling around Asklipiou showing off his friends to people he met on the street. He was always concerned with his social profile and relied on his 'cool' persona of never getting flustered whatever the impending social trauma. Indeed, he was generally renowned for his relaxed attitude to life and to people.

Through this narrative, once again the idea of escaping from the constant stresses of the economic crisis by going out with friends is overtly apparent. Although the beer bottles have been allowed to accumulate – an activity practiced by many groups of men in order to show that they are both purchasing and drinking heavily – this time the motivation for the conduct was not related to status perception. Instead the activity was related to 'drowning one's sorrows'. The request from the street seller to purchase watches was taken as a personal insult, enough to make a grown man snap into an uncharacteristic barrage of verbal abuse and for the neighbouring tables to overhear that Lakis had no money to spend on luxuries.

Escapism, Collective Suffering and Victimisation in the Public Sphere

The concepts of escapism and collective victimisation are closely linked and public social spaces, especially Asklipiou, are the loci for such sentiments. However, 'escapism' should be understand to mean two things; firstly the ability for the individual to physically remove themselves from a situation of high stress, literally to 'escape' their worries of work or the house; secondly, 'escapism' in the sense that one can escape through the medium of collective victimisation. This is to say that through indulging in the sharing of narratives and stories, as well as bemoaning the current circumstances, people can metaphorically escape from the clutches of reality, or at the very least they can relieve the stress of feeling personally persecuted by the economic circumstances. Specific social spaces are reserved for individuals to make public their personal aspirations of escapism (Trias i Valls 2001:254, 2010:104). Furthermore, the actions are semantically loaded with increased sentiment due to the nature of their public expression (Trias i Valls 2001:224).

In Trikala this release is realised by immersing oneself in discourses of collective victimisation and collective suffering. Such narratives help "construct a collective individual … (that) emphasize heroism and triumph along with victimization … (and) explicitly work on sentiment" whilst placing the blame on the Other (Verdery 1996:77, Ballinger 2003:12). Hence people can "represonalize the economy" from being something of abstract control to being something of shared experience. The expression of public unity during key events generates a spirit of solidarity through communal participation (Hirschon 1989:236).

As Kirtsoglou argues, collective suffering provides people with a collective narrative of pain and endurance, what Dubisch terms "a community of pain … to protest against injustice" (Dubisch 1995:214, Kirtsoglou 2004:155, also Hirschon 1989). The actors are able to find a 'common thread' – in this case economic hardship – through which they can provide mutual support and advice. Furthermore, the support system is also good for venting pent up frustrations. According to Kirtsoglou an audience, in her case the *parea*, the all female 'company', legitimise narratives of pain and suffering and help each individual in the transition from the realm of pain back to everyday reality (2004:96). By congregating in social groups and discussing the personal effects of the economic crisis, my informants are legitimising, perhaps justifying, each other's experiences of suffering. The stress of the situation is partially relieved through a collective realisation that 'I am not the only one' and 'it is not my fault'; the common experience of isolation that one may feel under such conditions are being re-routed within the reality of the situation. In this sense the public domain acts as an arena akin to a political forum for the narrative 'validation' of circumstance (cf. Nichanian 1999:255).

In Greek ethnography the concept of collective suffering has also been employed when discussing the refugee populations involved in the obligatory population exchange with Turkey in the 1920s (Hirschon 1989, 2003, Kirtsoglou and Theodossopoulos 2001). This is related to the idea of a "paradise lost" and the sentimental reaction to the "predicament of being a refugee"

(Kirtsoglou and Theodossopoulos 2001:397). Due to the implication of the state in the forced relocation, the image of the paradise lost 'can be used as a strategic resource to simultaneously emphasise the state's culpability and its responsibility to make amends in the present' (Mitchell 1998:93, Kirtsoglou and Theodossopoulos 2001:398). The collective victimisation felt by the refugees at their enforced resettlement, leaving behind their land, homes and churches, is placed adjacent to the culpability of the state. In the case of the refugees, collective suffering was therefore always portrayed in relation to another, the Other (Kirtsoglou and Theodossopoulos 2001:405-406). In a similar vein, during the current economic crisis the role of the state is interrogated in terms of accountability, discussed below.

Dubisch (1995) has explored the notion of competitive suffering, in many ways similar to the concept of collective suffering. Competitive suffering is defined by Dubisch as "constant complaints about the difficulty of daily life and problems at work, illness, or (particularly for women) personal relationships" (ibid.:214). She argues that public performances that communicate the difficulties of life 'resonate with narratives greater than the actor him/herself'. The individual identifies with the narratives of others in his/her company and shares in the experience of pain. Suffering is a performative act that is about more than simply the narrative of the individual, but a publicly enacted idiom that seeks to express culturally specific experiences (Dubisch 1995: 213-215, Kirtsoglou 2004:106-107). Both Dubisch and Friedl note that on being asked "How are you?" a Greek villager, as is the case around Trikala, usually answers "We are struggling" or "We are fighting", such complaints, they note, very often relate to economic difficulties (Friedl 1962, Dubisch 1995:215). But in any case, an audience is imperative to the process of competitive, and indeed collective, suffering as a 'connection' is necessary to facilitate the process of dissemination of experience. This connection is sought in the public sphere.

The mutual audience and sense of togetherness relating to the group gatherings on Asklipiou could be deemed similar to Victor Turner's notion of communitas (1969, 1974) in the way that a spontaneous community is formed that share a sense of collective experience during liminal times. As Edith Turner explains:

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"Turner uses "communitas" extensively in anthropology to mean a relational quality of full, unmediated communication, even communion, between people of definite and determinate identity, which arises spontaneously in all kinds of groups, situations, and circumstances … The sense of sharing and intimacy that develops among persons who experience liminality as a group" (Turner unknown[125]:97, Stinmetz 1998).

Turner's work on communitas is extensive and has been extensively critiqued, especially in relation to his concept of anti-structure (cf. Eade and Sallnow 1991). Here the positive aspects of Turners concept of communitas will be outlined in relation to the ethnographic case at hand.

Turner notes that communitas is important for the collective well-being of a community as an inherent social critique is created (Dubisch 1995:42). For the current ethnographic study, it is also interesting to note that Turner understood communitas as able to "liberate individuals from the conformity to general norms … (and) warms everyone to each other" in a sense of 'comradeship' (Turner 2008:96). This is evident when a group of people take to the public sphere in order to liberate themselves from the stresses of the economic crisis. The groups of people gathering in the public domain, although participating in 'private' forums, are in direct visual communication with each other. There is expressed a sense of solidarity of "we are not the only ones" and a shared common knowledge of the current socio-economic circumstances. Communitas, Turner argues, emerges from the spaces of freedom often found in betwixt-and-between situations. Thus communitas is evident in society through the interstices of structure in liminality; times of change, at the edges of structure, in marginality; or from beneath structure, in inferiority (ibid., Turner 1974, 1982:47-50). At first human interrelatedness can 'play across structural systems', but inevitably communitas soon develops a certain social structure where free relationships between individuals start to become norm-governed (1982:45-47).

In the case of the social gatherings in the public domain in Trikala, we can observe that a new space has been created for a very specific purpose. People

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[125] Article from Routledge, cw.routledge.com/ref/religionandsociety/rites/communitas.pdf

that were once socialising in each others homes at dinner parties are now gathering outside of the home with the specific intention to discuss each other's socio-economic circumstances and partake in a form of collective suffering. Hence the public domain has enveloped a new forum for social debate that has emerged in reaction to a period of social change. The practice has unspoken rules of behaviour, as was apparent in Lakis's narrative; one must not allude to excess expenditure, but listen to the torment of others and participate in mutual consolation. In Turner's terms a communitas has been formed at a time of social uncertainty. Additionally, such an activity in the public domain could be seen as a 'crisis ritual' that has surfaced along the semi-permeable borders of the public/private divide. Crisis rituals are employed when an unfavourable change has affected a collectivity, or the group faces a danger or calamity of some kind. Such situations spread anxiety, uncertainty, and fear that can be alleviated through the performance of mass rituals that provide security and hope by reinforcing social ties and pointing to the transcendent dimension beyond everyday experience. In the theory of crisis ritual, the individual or family becomes a community problem; hence the public/private dichotomy is again permeated. I believe that 'ritual' may be the wrong word to employ here as it is semantically loaded and evokes powerful notions of rites of passage, initiation and religion. However, the concept that Trikalinoi have adopted activities and routines that help them collectively deal with the impositions of crisis by reinforcing solidarity through relocating 'private' gatherings into public spaces is fascinating.

Discussing Accountability and Blame in the Public Sphere

The appropriation of the public sphere in order to escape the stresses of the workplace and the home, coupled with the concepts of collective and competitive suffering, result in "local expressions of disconformity" with national and global economic systems (Gledhill 2010:150). Social gatherings can be seen as a form of 'collective mobilisation' employed by Trikalinoi in order to deal with the difficult situation at hand. Disconformity is evident elsewhere in these congregations, as people also bring up the question of accountability; who is to blame? The Trikalinoi assure themselves that it is not

them, or indeed their fellow Greek 'commoners', however much petty corruption or tax evasion they may themselves be involved in. Accountability and blame for the crisis is located within the bipodial schemata of 'accountability to the public' and 'public accountability'. According to Werbner (1995:99), debates concerning accountability stretch from the most personal to the "most inclusive public sphere". Over time arguments concerning accountability separate the local and the global and also fuse them in historical narrative, as in the case of cultural proximity.

As the austerity measures grasp the nation, the government is publicly seeking to hold the external Other accountable for the current turmoil; primarily Germany for stealing Greek gold during the Second World War and the United States of America for the banking crisis, as well as the European Union for poor financial management. Trikalinoi acknowledge this rhetoric but principally hold the Greek government responsible for the crisis and thus it is they that must deal with the situation. Due to this stance, many Trikalinoi are consistently calling for "*O allos*" (the Other) to be installed in power, a movement that has been promoted through the mass media. By "*O allos*" they mean someone other than PASOK and Nea Dimokratia, the two main parties that have dominated Greek politics since the downfall of the military junta in 1974 (additionally these two main parties have been led by two main families – Papandreou and Karamanlis and their sons respectively) (Clogg 1992).

These debates take place primarily in the public domain, both 'on the streets' and through media discussions and debates. The government also officially transfers blame through television appearances and press releases, primarily towards the external Other as well as the previous Nea Dimokratia party. Individual and collective responsibility is disseminated through levels of bureaucracy and hierarchical power existing at all levels of capitalist business and government which allow for self-denial and moral ineptitude. The process of blame-shifting is exacerbated by the implication of globalised economic markets and regional integration programmes such as the European Union. Such institutions are seen as 'absent' and 'devoid of political accountability', or, as I was constantly reminded, "not interested in Greece, but focused upon

themselves and their own priorities" (cf. Shore 2000). Blame is thus alienable and transferable between people, national government and other states and international institutions, with the public sphere as the vessel for such strategic relocations.

Some examples of the recent blame-shifting will be offered here, set in the context of the anger and frustration surrounding current economic conditions. A more general analysis of how Trikalinoi understand blame to be circulated and transferred will then be presented.

In February 2010 PASOK's Deputy Prime Minister Theodoros Pangalos[126] publicly placed the blame for the current financial crisis on the Germans:

> "They [the Nazis] took away the Greek gold that was in the Bank of Greece, they took away the Greek money and they never gave it back … I don't say they have to give back the money necessarily but they have at least to say "thanks"".

The Mayor of Athens, Nikitas Kaklamanis, also waded into the dispute:

> "You [Germany] owe us 70 billion euros for the ruins you left behind [in the war]."

Pangalos continued to say that Italy had done more than Greece to mask the debt and deficit troubles in order to join the European single currency. He also claimed that the current economic crisis in Greece would not have been as bad if the European Union leadership was stronger:

> "The quality of leadership today in the Union is very, very poor indeed."

Furthermore, the Greek Consumers' Federation called on shoppers to boycott German goods[127]. There were simultaneous murmurings heard on the streets of Trikala concerning Bulgarian boycotts on Greek holiday resorts and anti-Greek

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[126] During the 1996 Imia/Kardak crisis Pangalos, then Greek foreign minister, stated "We have nothing to do with Turkey … A man can't discuss things with murderers, rapists and thieves". Turkey responded by calling Pangalos a 'psychopath' and "insults began to fly faster than the state-of-the-art aircraft which the two countries were using to engage in dangerous mock-combat over the Aegean". Pangalos was eventually forced out of government due to the incident, only to return years later (Morris 2005:118).

[127] news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/8536862.stm, www.dailymail.co.uk

rhetoric circulated by other Balkan states. The source of this largely exaggerated rhetoric is obviously nearly impossible to trace but is became highly popular among Trikalinoi, in a similar line to the conspiracy theories concerning the renaming of FYROM circulating in Trikala in 2008.

Dealing with crises is often portrayed by political bodies as a 'common and collective responsibility' that cannot be traced to a single state or political body alone but can be transferred to numerous politically ambiguous sources. Sometimes governments shift the blame towards external bodies, as illustrated above. On other occasions blame is presented as a shared responsibility and both the general public and other national and transnational bodies are held accountable. In March 2009 the slump in the Italian economy led to Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi asking the cash strapped Italian people to "go out and spend" to raise their nation out of economic squalor (di Leo 2009). This statement holds a logical truth: as the recession got worse, so the public experienced restrictions on their expenditure and duly spent less, only to further harm the economy, yet it was not a good exercise in public relations. Campbell reports how in the American context the U.S. President stood up in front of the World Jobs Summit in Detroit in 1994 and announced "how they must cooperate in facing their common problem – unemployment – in much the way they have cooperated for fifty years to defeat Communism, to stand up against Iraqi aggression, and to expand the global trading system" (2003:3), thus disseminating the blame for increasing unemployment away from the target of the White House. In this case, other political and economic bodies were given praise and reminded, rightly so or not, of their role in previous successes such as 'defeating Communism' (always a clutch word in U.S. politics) and 'standing up to Iraq'. In another case, Campbell quotes the Mexican President as placing the "responsibility to reform" on the participation "of all political parties and of all society" (ibid.:4). This case shows a shift of responsibility from the figures of the leadership to the people, and a pre-emptive warning that if the reform legislation fails then it is not the sole responsibility of the President. Hence a feeling of self-responsibility was imposed upon the everyday people, in a parallel to the 'politics of *arrangiarsi*'; being responsible for yourselves (Goddard 1996:50).

On the other hand, the general public tends to place the responsibility of crisis firmly on the governing bodies. For example, the 2009 swine flu pandemic was portrayed in Trikala as a crisis purely of the Greek state's making. Media reports fed public opinion that the inadequacy of medical treatment, the lack of funding for antiviral medication and political corruption were behind the pandemic effecting Greece: the issue was also presented as a solely Greek problem and blown completely out of proportion by both media and state. However, in Trikala in July 2009, many people in the town aired their reluctance to meet 'a foreigner' just in case they were infected. This rhetoric was spread by state television channels and nationalist politicians. By playing on notions of national sentiment, this was intended to direct the blame away from the national government and towards an external Other. Depending on political allegiance, much of the mass media portrayed 'the foreigners' as being infected and 'the Greeks', even those involved in frequent international travel, as being pure. Yet, at the same time the situation regarding the virus and its effects in other countries were not reported and it was insinuated that if the Greek government was not so corrupt then the whole problem would go away. Hysteria and pandemonium were paramount but blame was again disputed; was it the foreigners fault as the government portrayed, or the Greek politicians fault due to wide scale corruption and incompetence? There were even suggestions among some sections of Trikalinoi that all people that came into contact with foreigners should go and have a blood test to see if they have swine flu. Even leaving the village was seen as precarious and anyone moving any great amount of distance should be quarantined for at least a week. Hence visiting some informants became difficult and sometimes uneasy interrogation as to one's recent movements became commonplace. Both versions of blame were greatly fuelled by media coverage and political allegiance and lend strength to the argument that the mass media takes on the institutional role of the public sphere, albeit with nationally-specific degrees of state control (Ku 1999:7). Indeed, the Greek newspaper *Kathimerini* has begun to term this obsession with media exaggeration and the resulting actions of the people "the media democracy" (Lygeros in *Kathimerini, 7th May 2010*).

According to Kirtsoglou and Theodossopoulos (2010), Greek discontent towards external others is bound up in notions of anti-globalisation and cosmopolitanism. I would also add that it is intertwined with a discontent towards their own politicians. Both anti-government and anti-globalisation rhetoric is part of everyday life and is tied up with broader international pressures on Greece to conform to external political agendas (cf. Werbner 1995). The official level rhetoric is disseminated in a top-down manner associated with strong nationalist and nationalised institutions (in this sense they play with the strong notion of '*ethnos*' prevalent in Greece [cf. Just 1989a]). The external Other is sought as the object of accountability for wrong-doings towards a group of like-minded 'disenfranchised people' (Werbner 1995:83-84). 'Western imports' are held responsible for the corrupting authoritarian organisations forced upon the Greek people by the European Union and the United States of America. Foreign meddling in regional affairs is noticeable on an everyday basis when issues such as the renaming of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and the independence of Kosovo are discussed. Indeed, the declining economic conditions in Greece and the waning political influence of Greece on the European stage is generally considered as a consequence of the government being a 'puppet of the US' who "*systematically want to break up the Balkans into smaller nations in order to create more markets to sell their coca-cola*". Greece's obedience to US command is also publicly considered to be connected to military contracts. Blame is therefore lain at the door of those perceived to be making "decisions of global consequence (that) shape the face of the world" (ibid.:84, Stavridis 2007)[128].

However, this is the point where everyday people in Trikala begin to be critical of 'the Other within'; those that sell-out the 'Greek people'. Greek nationalism is deep-set. The roots have for a long time been bedded down and as a consequence 'the people' are confident in their sense of collectivity. The critique often begins along the lines of 'why are we subordinate to the external Other when we are the *Greeks*'. The government, especially that of Kostas Karamanlis after his 2007 re-election, is thenceforth held accountable for

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[128] For an account of public opinion in Greece regarding America in light of the Afghanistan and Iraq wars see Stavridis (2007).

'selling-out' Greece to the highest bidder – usually deemed to be the US or the EU[129]. Political and economic blame gets turned towards the national government who are deemed corrupt and only interested in themselves and their military contracts. The fact that politicians even have to transfer blame to external powers illustrates their own subordination ineffectiveness. They fail to protect the interests of their citizens from the influences of the external Other, echoing back to the socialist slogan of the 1980s, "Greece belongs to the Greeks" (Clogg 1992:179).

Twice a week I would take a morning walk to the village KAPI[130] (Open Centre for Protecting the Elderly) in order to purchase tickets for the local bus. As in many small Greek villages, KAPI acted as a cafeteria, post office and ticket office for local transport as well as a body that organised day trips and excursions for locals. In the store there was always a small television playing up high in the corner of the room. Sometimes it was on mute and on other occasions it was turned up to a booming full volume which elderly men gathered around to watch sport, news or political speeches. On one occasion the then Prime Minister Kostandinos Karamanlis was giving a recorded speech in parliament addressing the problem of the independence of Kosovo and Greek influence on political questions in the Balkans (including 'the Macedonian Question'). As I waited for Vaso, the owner, to bring a new batch of bus tickets down from the upstairs store room, I had a conversation with an elderly man, an agriculturalist, who I had met a few days earlier whilst out cycling around the vast agricultural plains towards Kalampaka. Flippantly pointing towards the television he gestured;

> "Bah, what does he care about us, the men in Germany (meaning
> Brussels), wherever they are, even our own Prime Minister doesn't
> care about us. He does what the Americans say … they can afford new
> American aircraft, even those Eurofighters (Greece was at the time

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[129] As a study of political responsibility in decision making, Shore tells us, the European Union is intriguing as there is a severe absence of accountability to each other, national governments or 'the public'; there is certainly little democratic accountability (2000:213-215). This can quickly lead to acts of corruption or deliberate paths to 'bypass the system' (Shore 2000).

[130] KAPI (*Kentra anoichtis prostasias ilikiomenon*) was institutionalised in 1979 and in 1982 it became a public corporation.

reportedly 'trialling' the multi-billion pound military aircraft), but the old women cannot be treated by the doctors because they can't pay the bribes. You know how many old women still live alone up in the mountain villages, they have no central heating and no running water, but he (Karamanlis) does not care as long as he gets money from the Americans and the EU. And just look at the condition of the roads around here. They were supposed to have been fixed ten years ago but they started – with money from Europe – and then mysteriously stopped again, half finished. Ah, now and then you may see a man making some concrete but only for a week and then, nothing. He is the bad guy in the story, you cannot blame the Americans, they know that they can get money out of him so they take advantage; he is the problem, the 'fall guy' … He has no power in Skopje, the Americans want to call it Macedonia they will call it Macedonia and what is more our Prime Minister will slap him on the back and blow him a kiss … But any of them (Greek politicians) would be the same, as long as they fill their own pockets with money … First of all they took away our livelihood, the agriculturalists here have no money now … now they are dividing up the land to the Americans, and we let them do it".

The negative sentiments expressed towards Karamanlis are generally directed at any Prime Minister or prominent politician once in government. This was not so much a personal attack, more of a generalisation of a 'type', perhaps even stereotype (Kirtsoglou and Sistani 2003, Theodossopoulos 2003) as the actions of political figures are always assessed with greater suspicion than those of any other individual (Piattoni 2002:5, Banfield 1958).

Kirtsoglou and Theodossopoulos outline how western interference breeds attitudes of anti-globalisation creating "indigenous reaction to centres of power" (2010:85). I would add that this same opposition to centres of power could be applied to Trikalinoi views of the politicians in Athens who sanction the western interference and benefit from their decision making; they are the 'hands that

lead' or 'defy' the Other (ibid.:88, 93)[131]. Global phenomena such as cosmopolitanism and globalisation are locally understood to be the product of a foreign agent; however the ultimate accountability for accepting or denying these forces lies with the actions of the Greek government. The reply of the government to such accusations is a rather Malkovich-esque phrase; "It is beyond my control"[132] (Lewin 2007:1). This has indeed been the case during the current economic crisis where sweeping government rhetoric and conspiracy theories concerning German gold and American meddling have been taken on board at a superficial level by the Trikalinoi before they unequivocally return to narratives of Greek political corruption and calls for those individuals in Athens responsible to face trial. In this case the grand narratives distributed by the politicians have failed to focus the blame away from themselves as perpetrators in the eyes of the public, indeed these claims merely heightened civic debate (Werbner 1995:100). Conspiracy theories concerning global power are merely one aspect of a much deeper understanding of political accountability.

The circulation of blame advocated among significant portions of Trikalinoi can be understood in analogous terms with the circulation of valuables in the Kula ring, as first discussed by Malinowski (1922). As Appadurai notes, Malinowski's original publication can provoke much thoughtful and fruitful analysis in terms of circulation and exchange (1986:18).

Like the armshells and necklets of the Kula ring, blame goes "round and round". It is circulated in both a top-down and bottom-up direction but always the 'men of substance' – the politicians and people in positions of power – play a central role (ibid.:103). Malinowski tells us that there are two spatially distinctive types of exchange and circulation within the Kula ring; internal and external. The internal, he states, is within the Kula district and the external is with 'overseas' partners (Uberoi 1971:11). Put explicitly, in the Greek context the external circulation is advocated by state rhetorics and exchanges between international

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[131] Post Greek civil-war literature attempted to place blame on the differences within. When they found that there was no end to accusation and counter-accusation they focused their attentions on blaming the external other (see Maranzidis and Antoniou 2004).
[132] In the 1988 film *Dangerous Liaisons* John Malkovich's character, Vicomte de Valmont, seals himself against all moral accountability by repeating this phrase whilst seducing and destroying his eventual love interest, Michelle Pfeiffer's Madame de Tourvel (Lewin 2007:1).

bodies and the internal, which represents "a chronic permanent trickling", (Malinowski 1922:103, Uberoi 1971:11), is circulated through the public domain in Trikala. This highlights the two-way dynamic of responsibility as discussed by Campbell above.

A "chronic permanent trickling" of blame and accusations of accountability are commonplace in most democratic states (cf. Lewin 2007), the level to which it is circulating at any given time increases or decreases depending on specific social circumstances. The 'big overseas expeditions' whereby blame is circulated on the international level relate to international visits and European Union summits where everyone attempts to agree to given strategies but readily cite the 'differences' between members for the lack of responsibility in responding to crisis. On this transnational level there is "one enormous transaction, or more correctly … ever so many transactions taking place simultaneously" due to the sporadic nature of these events (Malinowski 1922:103).

Taking the Trobriand analogy further, in line with the general opinion among my Trikalinoi informants, each man of substance (politician) "hopes to secure himself supremacy and pride of place" and does this by means of "influencing" their counterparts in a calculated manner (Fortune 1963:209-210).

There is this man of local renown called Gravalos. He is a member of parliament for the PASOK party. He promised to promote the interests of his constituency, to the south of Trikala, including new investment and the building of new commercial premises. This, he reassured his voters, would bring jobs to the town. Although there was initial scepticism due to the non-local roots of Gravalos' family, he was elected to parliament on a wave of local vigour and optimism. However, "*He forgot to tell us who these jobs were for*". Gravalos needed the patronage of a senior party member in order to get his desired job in the new government in Athens. The influence of the senior politician was great. Gravalos kept his word and began to build a new shopping complex on the edge of town. Although completed two years after the original deadline, the first shop opened among a muted fanfare. "*That was the last time anyone saw him here … and that was five years ago. He dare not show his face around here after we*

found out what had happened". Evidently, Gravalos had 'influenced' the management of the new shop in order to employ people from another village where the senior party politician had contacts. Two other people from the other village were also "*systemised into Athens universities*", in which Gravalos had influence as a former lecturer. Gravalos was duly promoted in the party hierarchy six months later. Furthermore, the remainder of the project, amounting to an additional five retail outlets, remained unfinished. "*They ran out of money. Who knows where the money went*" (ironically said). "*He neglected his constituency; it was all a show to get the votes. He is doing well now, flying high in Athens, lots of money in his pocket. We never see him here now, the arsehole*".

Gravalos has so far escaped accountability, even when his party was voted out of parliament. His internal contacts with senior politicians in the party hierarchy have meant that he has maintained a high status and high paid job. He has employed his position of influence to further his own social and economic position but has escaped official accountability, whilst being blamed locally of wide-scale corruption.

> "Everyone knows that these things go on, money-eating here, bribery there, but they never suffer the consequences. Even the Prime Minister is getting the money from the Americans so there is no need for him to care about what his people think … There have been cases when people like Gravalos have been taken to court after secret television cameras have filmed them making illegal deals; many, many times okay. May be they get as far as an Athens court, if that, and then you hear nothing more about it. The case is dropped, or may be the video goes missing. Obviously they use the same tactics there, either the judge has friends that influence him or he gets paid the bribe, anyway, the man is never sent to prison, he is let free … You saw the houses they have built in Arachova (here begins another narrative concerning 'second homes' in prestigious Greek holiday resorts)".

In Trikala, this type of illegal activity is blamed for the majority of the current economic crisis. However, when a person cannot successfully pass on responsibility in times of crisis, after a period of time he/she starts to get a bad reputation and, in the case of a politician, is often forced to resign, the equivalent of a *keda* collapse; a system of successful circulation breaks down (Campbell 1983:218-219). In the Kula case the inability to continuously pass on artefacts results in a bad reputation and a decline in trading partners and eventual collapse of the *keda* (road, route, path, track) (Fortune 1963:209-210). Reputation is based on acquiring, holding and parting with possessions at strategic moments as the artefacts journey around the islands. Thus the manipulative skills of the actors are paramount to a successful career in Kula trading and the maintenance of reputation; the individual has to make judgements of personal estimation and calculation. If this is not the case then the *keda* will collapse. On the occasion of such a collapse, another *keda*, or in our case government/politician/scapegoat, must be formed, one without the tainted reputation; a period of realignment takes place. Sometimes a man may never be able to form another *keda* due to their reputation for "bad" Kula activity (Campbell 1983:218-219, Munn 1986). By constantly changing *keda* in the Kula ring, the history of artefacts is affected and associations between actors and artefacts are lost. Hence, if we continue with the analogy of crisis and blame, the changing of governments/politicians/scapegoats, disassociates the blame from the new protagonists. An example of this was apparent in Britain during and after the 2010 elections when the austerity measures announced in an emergency budget by the new Chancellor of the Exchequer, George Osborne, were accepted almost without protest by the general public due to the association of blame, promoted by Mr Osborne's own Conservative Party, with the previous Labour government. In the Kula context, Campbell argues that the alteration in *keda* means that the previous 'Big Man' loses his claim to immortality as others take on the responsibility from a position of 'a clean slate' (1983:218-219). In this respect the correct calculation of when and to whom to pass on the artefact (blame) in order to maintain reputation is a "suffocating" responsibility in itself (Weiner 1983:164-165, 1988, Appadurai 1986:20).

Furthermore, like blame, the artefacts themselves gain in significance and 'wealth' the more they are circulated. The artefacts acquire a history that endows them with special meaning and importance (also in terms of gift exchange see Mauss 1954). The further the blame travels, the more 'wealth' it accumulates; the heavier it becomes. The "circularity" nature of the system means that the significance of the object is not static or part of a binary whole. This "endless unidirectional circulation" means that the things being passed around develop a "circulatory life of their own" (Malinowski 1922, Munn 1986:44, 58). Blame, like gossip (du Boulay 1974, Zinovieff 1991), is manipulated, exaggerated and deliberately circulated between strategic actors, thus accumulating a multidimensional life of its own whereby one point of accusation leads to numerous other sources of the same network of blame. This is exaggerated by the primarily faceless nature of international relations and the intertwined global market system which incorporates multiple referential points of accountability concerning any one transaction. Hence we can invert the concept in the Kula of the traceable history lending desirable properties of wealth to the artefacts so as to invite competitive desire, arouse envy and confer social distinction and renown: as blame circulates it acquires a poisonous wealth through a network of ambivalent connections, resulting in a form of alienability (Malinowski 1922:511). The idea of a poisonous wealth being circulated can obviously be linked to theories of inauspicious and polluted gifts (Douglas 1966, Bailey 1971, Parry 1986, Raheja 1988, 1994, Hendry 1990, Trias i Valls 2001). Douglas argues that either the transgressor is held to be the victim of his own pollution and therefore suffers the consequences of his actions, or some other victim takes the brunt of the danger (1966:133). Pollution, or indeed accountability, can therefore be a deterrent to a would-be wrong-doer if s/he cannot pass-on the blame successfully as it inspires fear, terror or dread (ibid.:1). According to Douglas,

> "when action that is held to be morally wrong does not provoke moral indignation, belief in the harmful consequences of a pollution can have the effect of aggravating the seriousness of the offence, and so of marshalling public opinion on the side of the right" (1966:133).

Thus the circulation, in Malinowski's words, 'surpasses size and complexity' by referring the object, heavy in 'mythology and magical ritual' (1922:510) and poisonous in presence, onto another. The actors "know their own motives, know the purpose of individual actions and the rules that apply to them" and like Malinowski's account of the Kula, some evade responsibility and manipulate the circulation process (ibid.:83).

It is also possible to 'stall' the responsibility of repayment through smaller offerings. These offerings are subordinate but stall the repayment of the original transaction. Hence, the closing of accounts is dependent on the "complex interplay of the incommensurable spacetimes" created by minor as well as major circulations (Munn 1986:58). As with any good politician wanting to avoid a scandal and shift blame onto another constituent party, the Gawans, Munn argues, must watch the activities of their neighbours closely in order to know when and where to make their strategic move (ibid.:59). Furthermore, the durability of the items that are passed-on commensurate with their power of circulation, "it never finishes, it goes around again and again", in this sense, Munn argues, the system creates its own regulatory dynamic (ibid.:60) that is intertwined with memory and embroidered with oral history. If opportunities for prestigious exchange are missed, or a *keda* brakes down, the individuals involved are held not only personally accountable, but also accountable for the prestige of the community (Malinowski 1922, Munn 1983).

We must acknowledge that this is by no means a perfect analogy. To start with, in the Kula ring people desire gifts to be passed on, admire them and 'bid' in order to gain possession of especially desirable artefacts (Malinowski 1922:98-99). Indeed, Malinowski argues that it is mainly due to the "deep desire to possess" that the Kula ring exists at all (1922:510). Obviously blame and responsibility is not here desirable. This is unless the actor feels that s/he can gain more prestige and reputation by resolving the problem, as Gordon Brown attempted to do during the British recession in 2008/2009 where he gained international recognition, IMF plaudits, public support and opinion poll points due to his perceived economic prowess in a crisis partially created by his own

government[133]. In this case it could be deemed to be part of the public display of the results of successful economic activity outweighing previous notions of political inadequacy (ibid.:146). Additionally, a man in the Kula ring actually is made richer by "the continuous possession and exchange" (Malinowski 1922:81, Fortune 1963:214-215) of artefacts, whilst in terms of blame it is usually the success of the 'passing-on' that determines the reputation of the actor, although how one deals with the 'possession' aspect is also important, as demonstrated by Gordon Brown. If for any reason the transfer is unsuccessful the 'partnership breaks up' due to the failing to oblige the expectations of another partner, perhaps in this case 'the public'. The Kula exchange partnerships are also necessarily based on the transfer of objects with similar or the same value in a unilateral manner. In terms of accountability it has difficult to measure like-for-like exchanges and the reciprocal nature is not obligatory and often not an integral part of the circulation process.

It has also been mentioned that the objects in the Kula ring are endowed with history and take on aspects of identity from their possessors; "each one of the first-class armshells and necklaces has a personal name and a history of its own" (ibid.). This 'wealth' then builds up as the object circulates, as in the case of blame. However, a paradox in the analogy is that here blame is deemed alienable. Although it could be argued that each crisis has a history – it does not just appear void of socio-historical circumstance and political agency – the accountability for the history has usually become alienable or at least indistinguishable (cf. Lewin 2007).

What follows is a consideration of different forms of discourse of crisis and accountability in the public sphere. In each case the narrators and the audience must be considered within the contexts of crisis in which they are presented. The circulation of responsibly can be represented, indeed evoked, through many mediums. The public sphere is usually the arena *par excellence* for display and portrayal of social unrest and representations of accountability where social

groups share and come to terms with crisis along the lines of collective suffering (Campbell 2003, Page 2009).

Representing and Evoking Crisis in the Public Sphere: how is it portrayed?

Wherever the blame may be deemed to lie, crisis is represented and evoked both within the patterns of production and consumption. As mentioned above, I have chosen in this chapter to focus on depictions within the public sphere as this is central to Trikalinoi understandings of crisis. Outlined here are two cases of representation of crisis which portray socio-economic circumstances through the processes of production and consumption. How similar processes are at work in Trikala is also highlighted. The significance of these mediums is enhanced if one considers them within the framework of evocation, not merely representation. In this instance the depictions of crisis do not lack a certain agency; they promote activism and evoke emotion as well as mobilising a sense of collective suffering (Strathern 1995:6).

The two examples of crisis evocation selected here relate to economic crises in Mexico and Argentina. These cases were chosen not on the basis of geographical proximity but on the criteria of circumstantial similarity, both in relation to the causes of crisis and the mediums of public representation. Hence the presentation of Mexican mural art aims to highlight how depictions of crisis in the public domain shift accountability towards political actors and appropriate significant figures in the portrayal of collective victimisation. The Argentine case represents a situation with similar temporal and consequential proximity. Yet, the example of Argentine film production during an economic crisis also illustrates how methods of production and public consumption are affected by economic crises. Additionally, the portrayal of crisis in the public arena (and especially the mass media) is here multi-faceted; the methods of production are seriously constrained due to funding difficulties, the theme of the plot is influenced by contemporary socio-economic conditions and the audiences relate directly, and indeed are directly proportional in their attendance, to the situation of economic crisis.

In his ethnography of mural painting in Mexico, Campbell discusses depictions of political accountability and public victimisation after the 1985 Mexico City earthquake. In this instance the economic aspect of crisis was the epiphenomenon of the original event. People were left to rebuild their communities amid concurrent economic difficulties and murals of social solidarity and reconstruction appeared on working-class apartment buildings. These were coupled with depictions of political corruption and revolutionary figures from the past (2003:6-7). The government's efforts to address the crisis were deemed, at best, inadequate, with little support for the working-class reconstruction efforts. The murals thus describe "relations of institutional power – running hierarchically from global to local mechanisms of authority, administration and control" (ibid.:8).

The development of mural art in Mexico is part of a wider aesthetico-political modality of public discourse; a composition of public discourse positioned within the official public sphere and often in direct opposition to official rhetoric (ibid.:70). The 'exclusionary machinery of official management of the public image' means that people seek spaces for self-depiction of "image" (Campbell 2003:11). Public spaces allow for a place for public discourse and represent economic and social situations on the ground through the painting of murals. The murals are spaces for public discourse and represent economic and social situations on the ground. This is similar to the transformation of the public sphere in Trikala during times of crisis and can be related to both the alternative use of space, such as the small private gatherings in the public arena, and to the change in patterns of competitive consumerism, what is termed in this thesis as 'tournaments of consumerism'. In both cases individual and collective commentaries on socio-economic circumstances load the public sphere with local, nation-wide and international references to crisis.

The prolific Mexican mural movements have their roots in the fallout of recent economic as well as natural crises. According to Campbell, the accelerated capitalist process, rapid globalisation and the lack of investment in local production has led to a dismantling of the state-owned economic sector and a flow of capital investment away from the Mexican people (ibid.:16). This has

resulted in a decline in wages and quality of life for many citizens. He argues that the Mexican state has lost much power in controlling its own social problems, such as unemployment, balancing production for export:production for internal consumption and monitoring rural to urban migration. Overall, the informal economic sector has expanded rapidly as a result of official economic policy meaning that the Mexican state can no longer legitimise itself unopposed through public rhetoric, leading to a rise in new socio-political discourses (ibid.). These opposing socio-political ideals are expressed within a tightly controlled public domain through murals.

The mural depictions often have layers of discursive content and incorporate many levels of localised representations of cultural images and collective experiences (ibid.:11-12). The city has become the stage, as well as the protagonist, for exhibiting the national condition and the political agency of "emergent publics". Concepts of collective victimisation and collective suffering are portrayed through the medium of paint. The many layers of discourse, beit repression, natural disaster, blame, famine or economic crises, are mediated by a number of culturally significant actors. For example, one mural depicts the Virgin of Guadeloupe with roses – a sacred national symbol relating to a miracle in 1531 and once a symbol of state legitimacy and justice on behalf of the subaltern[134] –, painted at the request of a neighbour in order to discourage littering outside of her home. The local gang, "Los Caracoles", were determined to have their collective emblem painted next to the virgin, thus appropriating the sacred national image. The artist accepted the demands of the gang and obliged. A rival gang noticed the new addition to the wall. They spray-painted their acronym between the two paintings and appropriated the virgin for themselves. Additionally, this act was perceived as a critical comment on the association of "Los Caracoles" with the state government and thus their unjust association with a sacred image (ibid.:130-131). Campbell notes the polyglossia of such a mural.

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[134] Campbell notes that the icon of the Virgin of Guadalupe has become most popular among the lowest strata of the social order. In a sense she has become the patron saint of the street (2003:130).

The original meaning for depicting the Virgin has been over-determined by the local gangs and thus her meaning has been changed[135].

Thus Campbell's research focuses on three main themes; the appropriation of space in relation to official/public buildings, the rhetoric and discourse of crisis including collective suffering and victimisation – from official and 'street' perspectives – and depictions to illustrate solidarity or contestation with certain groups that hold the government accountable for their socio-economic conditions. The space chosen to present political differences is the on the street. Kertzer suggests that such a public arena allows for conflict and crisis to be played out ritualistically (1988:ch.7). It is through ritualisation, he argues, that the human species control intraspecies conflict (ibid.:128). Here 'ritualisation' refers to standardised, repetitive symbolic action; in Campbell's case, mural painting. The meaning of symbols such as the Virgin mentioned above varies for different people and the public appropriation of meaningful symbols through processes of political ritualisation allow for open contestation between multiple parties. Conflict and crisis can be both limited and provoked by ritualisation; here Kertzer provides the example of the West Indies international cricket team[136] using the sporting arena to symbolically crush the former oppressors, whilst the emotions of the otherwise controlled British rise to boiling point (ibid.:129).

In the case of the Mexican murals, unlike in Northern Ireland (Buckland 1981, Nordstrom and Martin 1992, Rolston 1992), it would appear that only the one side involved in the political struggle are appropriating the street walls as a ritual space of political contestation. According to Kertzer, this is not unusual; a single group can identify the enemy, in this case the state, recount the moral inferiority of the Other and glorify and celebrate their own group (ibid.:130). In this way people are provided with a means to express antagonisms through a specific controllable frame.

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[135] Another highly poignant mural depicts the *chupacabras* or "goatsucker", a supernatural entity believed to prey on animals. Sightings began at the time of the 1995 Mexican economic crisis. The artist had been fired upon by federal police whilst attempting works in the past but was provided with an armed guard by the "Los Británicos" gang, as well as with paints "decommissioned" from a local paint warehouse (Campbell 2003:128-129).

[136] Kertzer notes that Cricket is itself a symbol of upper-class British colonial rule (1988:129).

The second example of depicting crisis in the public sphere concerns Argentine cinema during the economic crisis that engulfed the country at the turn of the millennium. The peak of the crisis was in December 2001 (Goddard 2010:131). Between 1998 and 2002 Argentina's GDP dropped by 20 per cent, banks stopped savers from accessing their accounts, protestors rioted as the country experienced food shortages, unemployment rose to 20 per cent in 2000, and the currency underwent 'pesification'. Within two weeks Argentina had five presidents (Page 2009:1, Goddard 2010:131-132). In this case the economic aspect of the crisis was primary and the range of 'verbal and visual imagery' during this period has become 'iconic' (Goddard 2010:131).

The situation evokes many parallels with the current Greek crisis. The 2001 economic crisis came as a surprise to the people of Argentina. For many years previous the nation was deemed to be a "star pupil" of the IMF and World Bank (ibid.:132). However, the signs were there for the people who wished to read them; the high inflation rates, increasing debts, government interference in currency exchange rates, and a general sense of anxiety and terror in both public and private sectors. Interestingly in relation to the Mexican example above, Goddard notes that many public areas were locations for graffiti concerning the crisis. The graffiti was usually in English and in highly visible places, thus indicating that the protest was directed at getting a message out to the wider world through the mass media (2010:134).

Page examines the films produced during the economic crisis as both depicting and being products of the social circumstances (this has also been the case in Greece, especially during the 1960s 'golden era' of Greek cinema). She argues that during the crisis directors were forced to make "aesthetic virtue out of economic necessity" (ibid.:2). Little money was available for film production and they were therefore often made 'on the hoof' (ibid.). The films depict growing unemployment, rising crime and informal economy, poverty and debt. Page's argument is based on the concept that films portray these social phenomena and help in the construction of modes of subjectivity with regards to capitalism, neo-liberalism and economic crisis (ibid.:3).

When considering the effects of media representations of economic crisis, Page's observation that crisis spawns nationalist discourses is poignant when one thinks about Greece (ibid.:6). Mass media and film can be an important way to cross the public/private political divide. In the same way that one may encounter partisan news broadcasts concerning crisis, corrupt politicians and budget deficits being beamed into a living room in Athens or Trikala, in what many have started to term "the media democracy" (Lygeros 2010), so the film industry can bridge the public/private domains in the form of videos and DVD's. Whereas, Page notes, cinemas in Argentina themselves mark a boundary between middle-class prosperity and urban decay (Page 2009:11), the product itself has wide spheres of influence in multiple social arenas.

In a similar way to Greece, Page notes that in the Argentine context, in times of crisis the nation and the state are symbolically separated in the minds of the public (see Just 1989a:72 for case of nation/state distinction in Greece). The nation is therefore called upon to invoke criticism of the state by accusing the latter of selling off the country's assets, leaving the nation with uncontrollable levels of debt. Thus the nation is rearticulated within the public sphere as a collective victim, with the aid of the mass media and film, so as to oppose the traitors of the state and to resist the opportunistic poaching of neo-liberal global capitalism (cf. Page 2009:6).

On the other hand, mediums of the mass media may represent beacons of hope in times of crisis. One example of this comes from the time of the Nazi occupation of Greece, 1941-1944. At this time the only channel of information to which many people had access was BBC radio. Hionidou notes that the BBC Home service augmented rumours of harvest seizures by the Axis authorities, leading to revolts in many parts of Greece (2006:76). Archer records in his journal that on April 24th 1941 that a "small comfort" is found in Athens from a BBC report that one thousand aircraft had gone to England from America (1944:189). Again, on April 30th 1941 he says how a BBC radio broadcast informs the Greek people of the safe arrival of British troops in Crete and the death of 75,000 German soldiers (ibid.:206). The broadcasts also told of other

successes in the Balkans, such as the Russian counterattacks on German forces and British RAF bombing raids (ibid.:235). Indeed, many informants, especially those around the urban centres during the Second World War, describe how BBC radio broadcasts were often the only sources of communication with the outside world and led to many people learning English through this medium. This was openly acknowledged by the Greek authorities when in 1944 the Greek government requested that the British Foreign Office asked the BBC to cease direct condemnation of the Greek Security Battalions that were sponsored by Germans due to the fact that up to 70 per cent of Battalion members were Allied well-wishers that listened to the radio. Thus some radio broadcasts were censored (Mazower 1993:330-331). The mass-media continues to play a significant role in the communication of crisis, especially in the form of satirical entertainment shows and programmes focusing on topical political debate.

When societies are in times of crisis public portrayals of the upheaval can provide means for understanding and coping with the threat to social order. The world is not predictable and a discursive outlet for the social tensions is required; hope, anger or jubilation. The governing bodies can be held to account through collective public displays; locked in a war of perceptions and a war of emotions (Kertzer 1988:135).

Conclusions

This and the previous chapter were concerned with placing economic crisis within a theoretical framework to facilitate further understandings of crisis among the Trikalinoi. The localised understandings of crisis are inherently based on localised perceptions of economic relations as well as specific notions of blame and accountability. Through these discourses Trikalinoi bring together global and local systems that involve personal and impersonal relationships.

The emphasis on the public domain as an actual and metaphorical gauge of the present crisis was illustrated through ethnographic contexts such as the semi-permeable nature of the public/private divide. This dichotomy has been central to the analysis of Greek society for decades and holds a significant position in

the anthropology of the Mediterranean. However, I suggest that the contemporary value of this analytic tool lies away from the gender divisions and the honour and shame model. Instead of problematising the public/private dichotomy in terms of economics of the house/economics of the public, which would have indeed proven insightful, the divide was explored in terms of appropriation of space and semi-permeable contexts of representation. Due to notions of escapism and collective suffering, the public domain takes on an increased significance in Trikala during times of crisis.

Public visibility is an excellent indicator of economic decline or crisis. Public spaces of socialisation such as the main commercial streets, neighbourhood squares and cinemas are indicators of the level of economic crisis in both a literal and metaphorical sense. In Mexico, as in many Greek provincial towns, commercial streets are loci for the display of social and material status. Campbell decides to focus on the mural depictions of crisis, Page on the visual portrayal through film and the media. Images of the public sphere can be important tools for assessing and analysing crisis. In Trikala, the specific social arena of Asklipiou is usually the space for people to excel, display their possessions and critically evaluate one another, especially in times of economic prosperity. The visibility of an altered condition of a public space provokes memories of a previous time when these spaces were previously transformed. Thus the invisibility of a bygone era is rendered evident through the combination of memoirs and a visual representation of similar conditions is recounted in relation to the contemporary crisis. As public space in the centre of Trikala is usually occupied by those with a desire to display their relative symbols of status in an acutely visible manner, a change in this normative appropriation of space triggers the activation of previously dormant narratives as well as an adjustment in behaviour patterns. Hence, the physical spaces themselves are transformed and the narratives exchanged within their domain are poignant.

Pictures. 4 and 5. Examples of mid-summer sales on Asklipiou. The banner on the shop reads "For two more weeks even lower prices". The sign on the bottom

basket reads "Everything 5 euros". These were symptomatic of the sales in all establishments in central Trikala during summer 2010.

Despite the fact that crises such as the Great Famine and the present economic decline may not seem directly comparable images, narratives of various crises criss-cross public spaces that act as visual aids in the calculation of crisis. This takes one back to Mandel's argument that crisis causes the narrative of famine and not visa-versa (1962:342). In current conditions the coffee shops of Asklipiou – the last place that would expect to feel the effects of financial strain – has visibly changed as Trikalinoi can no longer afford the excess expenditure. People look for alternatives; a backstreet cafeteria, or one with 'special offers'. Consequentially, the cafeterias are promoting special offers, the likes of which are highly unusual in this part of town. One informant, Popi, 40, tells me:

> "One cafeteria on Asklipiou is called "*Pour Vous*". They have lost a lot of custom to other places. They (*Pour Vous*) have announced that between 2pm and 5pm the coffee will cost 1,50 euros. This is a dead hour and the owner came up with this idea in order to take advantage of the inactivity. Some friends of mine, a mother and daughter who also have a cafeteria, during the same time, 2pm until 5pm, they offer buy-one-get-one-free on beers"

The effects of the financial strains are also being felt by the notoriously complacent younger generations that usually appropriate the cafeterias of Asklipiou, purchasing their coffees with the money of their parents and grandparents. Nikos, 16, the son of Maro, explains:

> "Before the crisis we as a group (*parea*) did not consider the economic situation of our parents. For example my mother is a hairdresser and the parents of one of my friends own a sweet shop. They say that one day they have work and another day they do not work. So we need to come up with some plans so as to manage our pocket money in order not to ask for a raise. For example in Asklipiou from "*Eclipse*" the coffee costs 3,50 euros. So we buy the coffee from Manavika (the old

town district of Trikala) from "*Hara*" where it costs 1,50 euros 'to go'
and we go to Frurio (another part of the old town) and we drink our
coffee alone, away from the people. So we keep the 2 euros difference.
We have an understanding with each other. Some days I have more
money than the others. Some days they have more than me. But we do
the same things because we understand that our parents are very
stressed because of the crisis. Before we did not think of the money.
But now we are very aware that our parents are in a difficult situation.
And we discuss it. We say for example that today my mother did not
have work. Another day the others say that their parents did not have
work. We have a friend in the company that is sort of upper class. His
parents are civil servants with a second house and two cars. He is
attending the private school in Trikala. But he is ok in the sense that he
does not try to distinguish himself from the rest of us. Despite him
having a bigger amount of pocket money he never demands to go for
coffee in Asklipiou instead of Frurio."

Hence the public sphere is once again the loci for which to understand the
effects of the current economic crisis. Yet, as will be presented in the next
chapter, as the Greek media elaborates and embellishes the current financial
problems, narratives of other periods of crisis, such as the 1940s famine, are
brought to the fore by the local people in relation to both social memory and
contemporary visual references (cf. Halbwachs 1992, Tanabe and Keyes 2002).
Thus public spaces such as Asklipiou are spaces that reflect local understandings
of socio-economic situation, strongly informed today by wider perceptions of
national and international climates.

Chapter Seven: Time, Crisis and Social Memory (Cultural Proximity)

The current economic crisis in Trikala has provoked poignant narratives of identification with previous periods of crisis. Accounts of times of social and economic hardship remain just below the surface of daily life even during times of prosperity as the turbulent recent past lives on in personal experience, family narratives and nationalist rhetoric. Indeed, even before the effects of the economic crisis began to take hold, stories of certain crises occasionally punctuated daily discourse. Hence during times of crisis recollection of past critical events surface in a much more regular and formalised manner (Das 1995). People are likely to recall how their relatives fared during certain times of social upheaval such as the civil war or the military dictatorship, thus meaning that past critical events become general reference points for individual and collective history and are given a new form of life (ibid.:1).

In culture there exist things which we think of as detached, as distant, but which are actually very close. With the resurgence of crisis these past times resurface as culturally proximate; through memory, objects and artefacts such as food, nationalist rhetoric and the education system. It is more than simply cultural memory (although this plays a part), it is an embodiment of times past, an embodiment of personal and non-personal memory, embodiment of both past and present nationalisms and a condensing of time to a singular moment of contemporary socio-cultural experience. Furthermore, as will be highlighted in this chapter, the memory of past crises may be transmitted non-linguistically (cf. Bloch 1998). 'Distant' events can be embodied as though they were part of the contemporary life of the actors (ibid.:114).

Some past events appear as culturally 'close' despite being separated by significant periods of time, and sometimes by many generations. These accounts are apparent both within the public and private arenas, yet it is the public sphere which provides a multi-layered canvas for narratives and meta-narratives of past events. However, not all past crises are recalled with equal prevalence. Some

events appear 'closer' in the collective social imagery, what I term 'cultural proximity'. The purpose of this chapter is to unravel the concept of cultural proximity by analysing ethnographic accounts of previous crises within the context of the current economic crisis. It is the further aim of this chapter to explore the reasons behind why some events are recounted as culturally 'close', with special reference to the Great Famine of 1941-1943.

Cultural proximity is the ability for the individual or collectivity to recognise and embody representations of the past within the context of the present, "whether the past be 20, 200 or 2,000 years ago" (Sutton 1998:ix). Furthermore, people can understand current events based on accounts of the past, whether experienced first-hand or not. It is something that is close to the culture and everyday life of the person/people. In journalism and media studies, the term "cultural proximity" is used to describe a topic that the audience can relate to and identify with (cf. Straubhaar 1991, Keinonen 2009). In contemporary Trikala people feel that at the present time of economic crisis they can identify with previous critical events such as the Great Famine, a crisis that now feels culturally and historically very close (cf. Serres 1987). Taking this concept further, cultural proximity depends on one or more defined historical moments where people can recognise past traits in their contemporary life and they feel as if they are in a context where the terms past and present collapse into a simultaneously meaningful moment; as Serres argued when stating that 'two distant points can suddenly become close, even superimposed' (1995a:57-59). Comparative and genealogical analysis does not necessarily depend on perceptions of proximity in lineal time. The communication between two distant events can be played out through symbolic systems, cognitive categories and local/national vocabularies (Seremetakis 1991:11-12). Understanding the significance of past events within the context of the present can be facilitated by the analysis of particular aspects of past experience; hunger, violence and discrimination to name but a few. In this sense temporal closeness/distance is just another restricting dichotomy.

In order to explain this concept further some theories of time will be discussed in relation to ethnographic accounts. Hence the beginning of this chapter will

focus on the work of French philosopher Michel Serres in order to determine how two significantly distant events can be culturally proximate. The focus will then shift towards why some crises, such as the Great Famine, are prevalent in the collective social memory and are culturally very close. Finally an ethnographic analysis of the role of food in the social memory of Trikalinoi will be discussed and how notions of hunger and famine assist the process of understanding contemporary crises.

Crisis and Collective Memory

Crisis is embedded and embodied throughout generations in the form of collective memory, personal narratives, and state-endorsed historical rhetoric[137]. Recollections of former crises are brought to the fore in later times of social upheaval as if they have been directly experienced and have suddenly become both socially and historically very close. Memory is thus 'sedimented in the body' through various channels (Connerton 1989:34-35, Seremetakis 1994, Bloch 1998, Sutton 2001:12). The example *par excellence* of cultural proximity during the present economic crisis has been the wide scale references to the 1941-1943 Great Famine. For reasons that will become clear, the Great Famine occupies a significant place in Trikalinoi social memory, recited mainly in the form of collective suffering and crisis management. These recollections form part of the conceptual framework which is drawn upon to explain people's possible fate this time around. The events are appropriated in order to explain fears and anxieties in contemporary times; the two events seem extraordinarily close (Serres 1987, 1995a:205). On collective memory Halbwachs argues that:

> "We preserve memories of each epoch in our lives, and these are continually reproduced; through them, as by a continual relationship, a sense of our identity is perpetuated" (Halbwachs 1992:47).

There are still people residing in Trikala who experienced the Great Famine first hand, yet most of the accounts are passed down through the generations in a form of embodied social memory (Seremetakis 1994, Sutton 1998, 2001, Bloch 1998). The 'preserved memories' in Halbwach's terms are reproduced both

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[137] For a selection of papers on embodiment and experience see Csordas (1994).

privately and publicly, facilitating a sense of collective identification with past events[138]. The crises of bygone eras are relocated to the present context. It must be considered as to why there is a special collective identification with certain events, such as the Great Famine. This is a particularly paradoxical situation as it is generally acknowledged by historians and social scholars alike that the Great Famine did not have such a significant direct impact on Trikala as did other events, such as the civil war. As two events that occurred during the same decade, the 1940s, their impact cannot simply be assessed in statistical terms (number of deaths, economic impacts) but also in terms of social consequences, including the construction of memory on both the local and national scale. In this way social memory can be understood to 'both separate the local and the global and also fuse them in historical narrative' (Werbner 1995:99). People's orientation to local and national accounts of the past glorifies (in national myths), laments a loss (as in nostalgia), legitimises (as in social charters), or recovers a silenced history (as in the ethnic 'search for roots') (ibid.).

There is a complex interplay between personal experience that has been transmitted inter-vivos through kinship relations and the deliberate construction of nationalised narratives communicated through government policy and the education system (cf. Anderson 1983:41-43, 45, Gilroy 1987:154, Danforth 1995:xiii, Karakasidou 1997, Sutton 1998, Winichakul 2002)[139]. This is not to say that processes of nationalism necessarily 'collapse the personal experiences and memories of individuals with those of the new national group' (Karakasidou 1997:25). For the Trikalinoi, personal accounts and experiences continue to reside alongside the nationalist rhetoric as partially intertwined cultural 'histories' (cf. Sutton 1998, Vereni 2000:50, Brown 2003:129, Millas 2007, Theodossopoulos 2007:16). This is particularly significant as in real terms the

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[138] According to Bloch the reverse is also possible; people can remember past events at which they were present and recount them as if they themselves were external, as if the events happened to other people (1998:124).

[139] Both historical and religious beliefs often provoke strong individual and collective emotional responses. In the context of Micronesia, Lutz argues that cultural forms of emotional meaning are linked to broader political structures and issues of power relations (Lutz 1988:9, 54, Bourdieu 1991:1, 37, 41-42, Foucault 1976). The feelings produced through emotions relate to culturally-specific ideas of morality, domination and ideology (Lutz 1988). If people and organisations with political power to influence 'the masses' manipulate sensitive feelings of identity and belonging, they can provoke emotional and 'meaningful' responses.

Great Famine did not directly impact Trikala to the extent that was felt in other parts of Greece, especially Athens, yet accounts are recalled and fears expressed as if the inhabitants underwent the same ordeal as those in the worst affected areas. As will be unfolded further, rather than being a localised critique of nationalism, the rhetoric of nationalism is itself critiquing local experience.

Narratives of the epoch do, however, live on in many households through elderly relatives – they are 'in the house' –, thus creating a genealogy[140] of crisis connected directly to 'the moment' and to relatives that may not have experienced the events first hand. Recollections of specific past experiences are stimulated partially by a fear of returning to the 'time of crisis' (and a fear of the same results) and people 'reaching their limits'. It is interesting to note that apart from fearing a return to an era of hardship, many elderly informants exhibit a degree of pride for having passed through times of crisis and tend to portray a measure of superior knowledge of how to deal with unprecedented circumstances. In both cases the fear and the pride is not simply recalled in discussion with narratives of the present crisis, they are instead embodied, experienced and re-lived as if the past events are the present, not merely a critique of the present.

Due to the selective nature of nationalism, collective memory informed by first-hand accounts has been punctuated deliberately with certain events by means of the national educational system and media channels emphasising certain aspects of history whilst downplaying others (cf. Das 1995, Karakasidou 1997). This plays a significant role alongside the intergenerational transmission of autobiographical memories. Nationalism is key to the dissemination of localised events to the national conscience (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983, Sutton 1998, Brown 2003). Due to the nature of Greek nationalism the plight of one part of the nation, such as Athens during the Great Famine where 300,000 people died, is recalled as if the account were a first-hand personal experience in Trikala. Here there is a question of scale. From the localised level of interpretation and

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[140] Goddard notes that kinship genealogies anchor history to 'family time'. They form a sense of unity on the family and village scale by recreating events of the past. Genealogies provide "the means of representing social continuity" (1996:217).

experience, some events like the Great Famine have relevance on another level. The same concerns now dominate throughout the different scales (Werbner 1995:112). The shift in scale is produced by a combination of the impact of crisis and nationalised conscience. The crisis thus takes on a national importance even in the areas that were not so overwhelmingly affected. Maurice Bloch (1998, 2004) suggests that autobiographical memories are intertwined with semantic memory which thus facilitates the transmission of cultural representations. From this we can understand the impact of narratives of the Great Famine on people who did not witness it first-hand (Laidlaw 2004:3) (either because the region was not so badly affected or because they are from a successive generation). Thus collective memory is internalised by processes of both autobiographical and semantic memories "burned in the mind, so to speak, by the traumatic and emotional nature of the experience" (Bloch 2004:65). The process of nationalism is one of the manners that such memories can be 'burned in the collective mind', as master narratives bring certain events into a 'schema' of cultural proximity (cf. Serres 1995, Bloch 1998, Vereni 2000).

Significant individual or collective actions and events are attributed to the whole as 'meaning structures' (Ku 1999:51). People understand their life within both individual and collective time frames, relating the present to the past and to the future (ibid.:58, Sutton 1998). Individual historical accounts, or 'histories', are often constructed based on the collective experience of multiple groups within a society, and done so for many social, political and ideological reasons. Such 'histories' (in opposition to official accounts of 'history') can be based on memory and experience of the past, thus allowing people to reproduce a 'first-hand' historical account incorporating various degrees of nationalised rhetoric through public discourse.

It has long been argued that memory plays a significant role in the construction of collective cultural and historical identity (Anderson 1983, Halbwachs 1992, Vereni 2000). Due to the distinctively recent nature of intense conflict in the Balkan Peninsula, Vereni argues that collective memory ensures a 'coherence of existence and unity' when faced with challenging and perhaps conflicting accounts of experience (2000:47-48, Brown 2003). The 'bond between memory

and identity is inescapable in its public dimension and in its personal one' (ibid., Halbwachs 1992:47). In Trikala, the reworking of embodied memory in order to understand current socio-economic conditions is based on past experience of conflict and crisis as well as nationalised historical accounts that penetrate the private domain through public channels. This process assists in capturing symbolic meaning (Cohen 1985:21, Sutton 1998:66, Herzfeld 2001:55). It is this reworking of accounts of crisis, and their comparative nature, that allow for their discussion in relation to contemporary symbolic representations of crisis. Memory can therefore be reconfigured according to ideological and symbolic parameters as well as personal and collective experience (Ballinger 2003:1)[141]. Narratives of crisis that propose historical accounts based on experience and memory can incorporate and reinforce significant cultural meaning across substantial periods of time. Memory is employed as a "historic resource" (Light and Prentice 1994:90, Ballinger 2003) that lends meaning to unusual and sometime inexplicable contemporary events[142].

Hence the current economic crisis and its socio-cultural fallout is analysed by the Trikalinoi in terms of the Great Famine in order to confront the extraordinary. The iconic symbol of hunger as a tool to communicate and justify concepts of deprivation constantly recurs throughout Greek ethnography. Herzfeld explains how Cretan shepherds employ the notion of hunger in order to

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[141] In the same line of thought, within a Macedonian context Brown argues that refugees and survivors of conflict or crisis are "connected" by their constructions of memory. He believes that different communities within the same locality interpret events distinctively. The constitution and maintenance of these communities are based on the multiple "styles of imagining" (Anderson 1983:6, Brown 2003:21, 51). For example, people in the mountain town of Krusevo in Macedonia omit 'international' revolutions in neighbouring provinces from their oral accounts of history, choosing to highlight their own – officially undocumented – experiences of *international* conflict (Brown 2003:129). The "emphasis and omissions of local recall" that Brown discusses explains in this context how at times certain memories are emphasised and at other times they are omitted. A sense of 'experiential meaning' is therefore created whereby locality, history and experience of circumstance form the basis of socio-historical reality.

[142] Sutton (1998) illustrates how local perceptions of past events address more than merely local histories. He explores how the Balkan war of the 1990s was understood on the Greek island of Kalymnos. The U.S. depiction of Serbian "concentration camps" in Bosnia was rejected by the locals as being "the Western Great Powers at play" (Sutton 1998:149-150). For Sutton, this was partially due to the 'peripheral' position of Greece in relation to the "centres of power and information" – what Sutton terms 'global positioning' – (1998:150, 154) and in part because of Kalymnians' own experience of being occupied by "The Great Powers", from the Ottoman Empire to the Germans and the British in World War Two (ibid.). Hence, Sutton encourages us to consider how meanings and structures interrelate between 'the Global' and 'the Local' (1998:150-153, Moore 2004:80-84).

justify stealing livestock. His informants insist that they were hungry under Turkish rule so they had to steal, then again under the German occupation to fend off starvation (even though they stole flocks from other Cretans and not the enemy), and still today a young Cretan "may still plausibly cite hunger as his motive for stealing several sheep in a night's work" (Herzfeld 1985:21). Herzfeld insists that this 'hunger' must be analysed ideologically and not literally. Indeed, as the Trikalinoi, the Glendiots have rarely experienced truly devastating famine, "if at all". Hunger is an integral idiom through which to express ideological notions of oppression and deprivation (ibid.:22). In this sense hunger is an inherited ideological disposition that is entwined with numerous narratives of hardship and oppression; it is truly 'burned in the mind'. It is an idiom that has been nationalised and is now collectively felt, feared and narrated.

Therefore, despite the fact that crises such as the Great Famine and the present economic decline may not seem like directly comparable images, the collective fear of returning to times of deprivation and oppression encourage narratives of hunger and famine to criss-cross the public domain. This takes one back to Mandel's argument that crisis causes the narrative of famine and not visa-versa (1962:342). In current conditions interaction in the public sphere has visibly changed, hence public spaces act as visual and metaphorical aids in the calculation of crisis. People gather in intimate groups on Asklipiou to discuss their collective destiny whilst the back streets are notably crowded with customers taking advantage of the cheaper prices and the special offers. As the mass media elaborates and embellishes the financial problems of both individuals and the state, narratives of the Great Famine are brought to the fore. This is the special significance of the public sphere in Trikala – people can compare narratives as they compare their consumer goods, they can partake in collective suffering, victimisation and escapism. They recount the past and the fate of their parents and grandparents, informed by both first-hand narratives and nationalist prose. The ideology of hunger is here employed to account for both fear and expectation. The public sphere simultaneously acts as a visual reference point onto which the narratives can be attached. The changing behaviour of everyday people supports the local understandings of the socio-

economic situation, strongly informed today by perceptions of history and collective memory.

Michel Serres, Time and Cultural Proximity

In arguing that two distant historical moments are brought together in a simultaneous moment of cultural proximity, facilitated by specific social and economic circumstances, innovative concepts of time must be addressed. The provocative work of Michel Serres suggests alternative understandings of time that help dispel preconceptions of time as a sequence of lineal events.

According to Serres (1995a:57), it is our perception of time as linear which distorts our perception of apparently distant events. He argues that things that are very culturally close do exist, but the perception of lineal time makes these events appear very distant from one another. On the other hand, events that can be temporally very close are in fact culturally very distant from one another. The question here is of course what triggers this peculiar functioning of cultural proximity. A possible answer would be the reoccurrence of crisis. Crisis produces this visibility, this intimacy between historical moments in the swirling of time that provokes cultural proximity.

To explain this concept of time Serres uses the example of the handkerchief. He states that if you take a handkerchief and spread it out in order to iron it, you can observe certain fixed distances and proximities. If you sketch a circle in one area, you can mark out nearby points and measure far-off distances. Then take the same handkerchief and crumple it, by putting it in your pocket. Two distant points suddenly are close, even superimposed. If, further, you tear it in certain places, two points that were close can become very distant. This science of nearness and rifts is known as topology, while the science of stable and well-defined distances is called metrical geometry (1995a:60)[143].

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[143] This would appear to contradict the central line of theories of time by such scholars as Ricoeur who argue that: "Time becomes human time to the extent that it is organised after the manner of a narrative; narrative, in turn, is meaningful to the extent that it portrays the features of temporal experience" (Ricoeur 1985:3).

When an informant, Stergios, 76, describes how, when as a child walking the streets of his local neighbourhood in Trikala, he was given small pieces of stale bread to eat by some local women (see chapter three); that bread he would save even smaller pieces from for his mother, who would accept them despite being dirty and often covered in various forms of nasal excrement; and recounts this when asked directly about the current economic situation, Serres' theory of time that I suggest explicates cultural proximity appears facilitated by the notion of crisis.

In another account of the famine an informant stated how he fears that the shops will again be empty and people ought to begin stockpiling their own produce rather than selling it on the market "*like we did in 1941*":

> "The feelings of people on the street is of fear that we will experience the same … we know what it was like then, we have been brought up on the stories of the war (Second World War) and the famine … I never imagined we would be preparing for the same … My wife and I know that things could get very hard so we are taking precautions: keeping the freezer full and planting more of our own vegetables. We can make our own bread and we are on good terms with the people in the village, we will help each other … I think anyway. This is what my father did, and he survived the crisis … People have started to store their olive oil in case the currency drops. They can then trade with their oil. I heard that this is what has happened before. I cannot see a way out, away from the crisis, to a return to the same situation."

Social memory is thus pivoted to historically important moments of crisis that are the focus of cultural proximity. Thus things in culture that may be considered 'distant' due to the passage of time or changing socio-political circumstances resurface in the light of new developments. The multiple distant moments are made culturally close through the medium of crisis, recalled in relation to contemporary social circumstances. The moments are culturally simultaneous.

In Serres' terms the embodiment of historical moments of crisis by my informants is more than simply a recollection of past events. Memories relate to all daily activities, yet not all memories evoke the same sentiments; what you ate for breakfast this morning, your first day at school, the warmth of the summer sun on a Greek Island, starvation and violence. Some memories, texts and pictures have a physical quality with history seeping from them. As witnesses to terrible events – either first hand or through relatives – many of my informants embody the events of the Great Famine through social memory. This is to say that memories of crises are embodied and experienced to the core; they are not merely a reaction to or an analysis of a contemporary critical event (1995a:3).

Serres himself was brought up in a time of "hunger and rationing, death and bombings" and his accounts of cultural proximity relate closely to those of Trikalinoi. His experience, although not always first-hand, was shaped by major events such as the war in Spain in 1936 and the blitzkrieg of 1939, the concentration camps of the Second World War, reprisal attacks after the liberation of France and, at the age of fifteen, the bombing of Hiroshima (1995a:2). These experiences are termed "the vital environment" that shape individual and collective perceptions of life thereafter. They are indelible moments that form social memory and inform experiences of future critical events. Serres' generation were passive to the events due to their young age, the generation before were actively engaged with the destruction and desolation of human life. Both generations were severely traumatised by the events and Serres now recounts how he cannot look at Picasso's *Guernica* due to its association with the France-Spain war of 1936 (ibid.:2-3). When he looks at such pictures he physically feels history seeping from them, as witnesses to terrible events. Such things are 'symptoms of evil', not merely reactions or analysis. The events he has experienced have been embodied and inherently influence his work today and his interpretation of current events. Therefore cultural proximity must be understood not merely as a memory or a recollection but as a physicality, a feeling, an embodiment. He says:

> "I have never recovered – I don't believe I'll ever recover … Now that I am older, I am still hungry with the same famine, I still hear the same sirens; I would feel sick at the same violence, to my dying day. Near the midpoint of this century (1900s) my generation was born into the worst tragedies of history, without being able to act … Even my own childhood photographs, happily scarce, are things I can't bear to look at. They are lucky, those who are nostalgic about their youth … We suffocated in an unbreathable air heavy with misfortune, violence and crime, defeat and humiliation, guilt … (such events as) the death camps were echoed by Nagasaki and Hiroshima, which were just as destructive of history and conscience – in both cases in a radical way, by attacking the very roots of what makes us human – tearing apart not just historic time but the time frame of human evolution" (Serres 1995a:4).

The fact that later generations of Trikalinoi recite the narrations and physicalities of the famine is "just as a river, at its mouth, leaps into wider expanses" (Serres 1995a:6). Things get re-formed at moments of crisis; history gets re-formed based on past cultural experiences, people still 'feel hungry with the same famine' that their parents experienced. At times of social change actors draw on culturally proximate memories, such as the Great Famine, in order to decipher present-day events. The fear of returning to the circumstances of a past time is socially embedded; it is like hearing the dogs bark once again as a warning to take another path to avoid the barks and bites when facing potential 'rebirths of past situations' (ibid.:21, 42).

Therefore we have to pose the question of what constitutes the contemporary. The experience of current events is not devoid of historical context either within the framework of the individual or the wider society. Something contemporary could be, at a singular moment, the whole of a set of component parts, concepts formed throughout stages of history. Serres gives us the example of the late-model car that forms the

> "disparate aggregate of scientific and technical solutions dating from different periods. One can date it component by component: this part was invented at the turn of the century, another, ten years ago, and Carnot's cycle is almost two hundred years old. Not to mention that the wheel dates back to Neolithic times. The ensemble is only contemporary by assemblage, by its design, its finish, sometimes only by the slickness of the advertising surrounding it" (1995a:45).

The 'assemblage' of a present-day crisis finds its component parts rooted in past events in order to form the contemporary unity (Serres 1995b:2). For example, the current economic crisis in Greece is not a situation devoid of history; it is rooted in social and cultural practice, global networks and political activities.

Similarly, people's understandings of critical events are not devoid of component parts – experience and cultural proximity with past events contribute to contemporary formations of crisis management. Social memory is the assemblage of different periods of crisis, multiple cultural and familial narratives of socio-historic experience and nationalised rhetorics of times past. The 'advertising' of the new event, the crisis, is embellished through the mass media and is packaged with notions of blame, nationalist rhetoric, and political propaganda (Chomsky 1996, Sutton 1998:175-178).

Such an understanding of contemporary events within the wider context of historical time leads to a double understanding of contemporaneity: the event in its own time as part of *our* era, and the event as an assemblage of re-constituted historical parts (Serres 1995a:47)[144]. This is in contrast to common perceptions of events being sealed off in their own time, their own period, unable to communicate beyond their own boundaries, imprisoning history and critical events, suffocating the remarkable connections between seemingly distant events. Such perceptions of events as singular unities are the ploy of human beings in order to articulate their experience of a contemporary moment. A singular totality is easier to conceptualise, as was the case of linear time, and therefore it is the common assumption, for, as Serres states, "a cartload of bricks isn't a house", thus only the unity seems rational (1995b:2).

Therefore, it is only the human rationale that implies that the past is by-gone and 'out of date' whilst the present remains as the authentic reality. The idea of time as an irreversible line of progress and unity as a singular contemporary entity must be challenged if we are to understand how two diverse distant events such as the present economic crisis in Greece and the Great Famine can be so culturally proximate, a concept of time which is inherently distorted due to our irrefutable inhabitance in the present. The common perception of time is as a simple line, like a race to the present. Yet history is constantly reinvented, the destruction of war, violence or famine repeats itself in the present. Historical

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[144] In the context of Sikh militant identity, Das notes the importance of symbolic language and an 'identity of events' in bringing contemporaneity to non-contemporaneous events. In this case language functions to *produce* a past reality rather than *represent* it (1995:121).

experience lends a sense of reality to the contemporary (Serres 1995a:49-51, 1987).

The concept of cultural proximity depends on a reassessment of time not as a mere 'passing', but as an extraordinarily complex mixture of stopping points, ruptures, gaps in a visible disorder (Serres 1995a:57) much like Serres' description of the handkerchief. When we can eventually conceive of two points in time being culturally and meaningfully simultaneous then the fact that the Great Famine can be collectively embodied by the Trikalinoi during the present economic circumstances can be comprehensively addressed.

Serres offers a theory of percolating and fluctuating time, 'dancing like flames' that allows for such a perception of culturally simultaneous temporal points. He argues that "time doesn't pass, it percolates. This means that it passes and it doesn't pass." It filters, "one flux passes through, while another does not" (in this case the events of the civil war flow through the percolator whilst the Great Famine does not) (1995a:58). Some segments of time get caught in the filtration process, they remain contemporary. 'It is like the fluctuations in the weather' he argues, – *le temps* in French, a word that means both the time and the weather (ibid.). Time may at first appear as though flowing like a river passing beneath a bridge, however one fails to consider the invisible counter-currents running beneath the surface in the opposite direction or the hidden turbulences that remain out of sight to the casual observer. The distances between points in time are not all equally measurable and fixed, yet there is no evidence for assumptions that counter a theory of percolating time (ibid.:58-59).

People simultaneously draw on parts of the obsolete, the contemporary, and the futuristic to assemble their experience of a critical event. An object or circumstance is thus polychromic, multitemporal, and reveals a time that is gathered together, with multiple pleats (Serres 1995a:60, 1987, also Gudeman and Rivera 1990, Bloch 1998:120). Here people usually confuse time with the reading of time, which is a metrical reading on a straight line rather than a topographical concept with folds and shifting proximities between apparently 'distant' moments. We can have a situation where time is curiously folded,

everything is tied together in one particular spot, at one simultaneous contemporary moment (ibid.:87). This closeness is exacerbated by the way people spontaneously employ notions of time through recollections of past experience. For Serres, the concept of preserving memories of past events in order to elucidate later circumstances is akin to a glacier that preserves a body frozen for 50 years and deposits it looking as young as when the man had first died, whilst his children (other memories) have grown old (ibid.:61).

Serres uses the figure of Hermes and notion of Angels to illustrate his theories of time. In his work Hermes and, later, angels act as messengers that pass through folded time making connections between relatively distant events (1977, 1980, 1982, 1995a, 1995b, 1995c). This facilitates the import and export of memories of the past into the assemblage of the contemporary. By doing this the messenger transports memories, these can be invented and mistaken, but there is no other route to understanding the experiences of the contemporary. Past events bring plausibility to present situations regardless of the perceived lapse in linear time, the inexplicable becomes illuminated (1995a:79). The metaphorical Hermes traces networks of related events and objects across space and time and creates a mobile globality expressed in narrative form, beyond the localised, rigorous and regulated explications of human rationale (ibid.:109, 115), the ignorance to the 'background noise' that is ever-present is our contemplation and understanding of the present (1995b:13, Serres and Schehr 1983). This background noise, beit in the form of memories, embedded nationalist rhetoric or generational narrative, never ceases to influence interpretations of the contemporary, "it is limitless, continuous, unending, unchanging" (1995b:13). The background noise influences the observers and the observed, passes through constructed channels of information such as the mass media and political figures and is apparent in the language of everyday society, it informs "the backdrop of the universe, the background of being" (1995a.:62).

The continuous flow of knowledge from different historical periods in the form of background systems of information, across time and space, illustrates how cultural proximity is not merely concerned with social memories of the past as mere commentaries on the present, but also as formulations in anticipation of the

future (ibid.:86). In this way social memory guides and directs behaviour deemed appropriate for the moment of contemporary crisis and the impending events.

Through cultural proximity bringing together many histories into a simultaneous moment of experience, there is a collective feeling of pulling an object or a burden from the depths of the past (ibid.:88). There are phrases – or variations of – which are repeated regularly by Trikalinoi, such as "*We don't want to return to those bleak times*", "*We thought that we would never have to go through that again*", "*They were the worst times that scarred Greece and all the people that lived through them, how can we forget*", "*Those people were different, they carried with them the pain of the Famine*", "*Only now can I appreciate what my parents and ancestors went through*" (cf. Sutton 1998:142-143). Such reiterations highlight the cultural weight of the Great Famine in the minds of the actors. The historical events tie together the collectivity and the burden being pulled. A cluster of highly different accounts, narratives and experiences come together as one body through the processes of nationalism and collective memory. Hence the recurring comments regarding the burden being pulled relate not only to the individual but also to the nation and the collective pain experienced. The sense of collective burden is enhanced by the perception that Greece and Greeks are part of an uninterrupted cultural-historical line that links the present citizens with those of the past, as preached through Greek nationalism.

Pulling such burdens brings with it the fears and anxieties entailed with the experience or collective rhetoric of experience. This inevitably effects how people react to current crises as they begin to identify 'easily recognisable pictures and patterns'. In this case sections of social memory can fluctuate, disappear, illuminate and die out according to contemporary triggers and socio-political circumstances (Serres 1995a:105, 111, Winichakul 2002). Social memory is turbulent, continuously fluctuating, fluid and mobile;

> "it is a sort of confluence, a form in which fluxes and fluctuation enter, dance, crisscross, making together the sum and the difference, the product and the bifurcation, traversing scales of dimension … (it is) ceaselessly inventing different

relations … A viscosity takes over. It comprehends. It creates comprehension. It teaches … Relations spawn objects, beings and acts, not vice versa … the mind needs movement, especially subtle and complex movement" (Serres 1995a:107).

The patterns that are formed through the recognition of culturally proximate events are visible on the ground in Trikala. The methods of comprehension of the contemporary event – the economic crisis – result in actions and reactions which are equally culturally informed. People are conscious of what has gone before; furthermore they embody the past events even when not present. Seremetakis illustrates this point with her story of cutting wild greens to eat, an activity she had never done before, but had heard her mother talk of;

> "When I went out to collect them, the sensory memory … was transferred to vision and tactility. My body involuntarily knew what I consciously did not … What was an outward act of cutting was in fact an inward act of diving into the self, of space-time sensory compression … a moment of stillness, where an entire past sensory landscape was translated into a present act … For these moments release hidden substances of the past" (1994:16-17).

Like the Trikalinoi understanding of the Great Famine, despite a restricted amount of first-hand experience, Seremetakis describes how some activities are present in social memory and result in culturally-informed actions. Let us now consider the similarities and patterns in the social experience of crisis as informed through cultural proximity before moving on to explore why the Great Famine has come to the fore as the key event that has surfaced as culturally proximate in contemporary Trikala.

Dimitris Psathas and Dimitra Papafotis

The reoccurrence of crisis has brought the Great Famine and the current economic circumstances into cultural proximity, internalised and expressed in narrative form. I here wish to offer an example of this proximity through the presentation and analysis of two accounts of queuing within two historical contexts. Firstly Psathas' account of queuing for food rations during the famine will be presented, followed by an account of queuing for petrol in Trikala. The relevance of the two stories will become clear and the perceived proximity between the two events will become apparent. Like the women queuing for spinach in Psathas' narrative, people in Trikala today believe that they are being

pushed to their limits of survival and their anger and frustration is beginning to flow over. This has been demonstrated by the violent protests that were witnessed in many urban centres in May 2010 and the continuation of national strikes. People feel betrayed by their government and do not know where to turn; so they turn to what they know, what they have been told by their parents and grandparents, what has been explicitly portrayed through the nationalist discourses of the Greek educational curriculum and media coverage, or in some cases the hardship that has been experienced personally, what seems so poignant in the face of uncertainty – previous narratives of crisis.

The Queue – Athens, 1941 – as narrated by author Dimitris Psathas (1944:15-18)

Woman1:	Mister Thanasi.
Grocer:	What do you want, woman?
Woman1:	When are you going to distribute the spinach?
Grocer:	Don't be in a hurry woman. Do you hear me? For God's sake! Here your violence does not work and if you don't like it go somewhere else!

To go somewhere else: but where? The words of Mr Thanasis were sarcastic, confident and malicious. He knew very well that Athens was a huge desert where you could walk for days without finding a single leaf. Knowing then, that the spinach that he was holding was a treasure, once again he was behaving like a Maharaja who was just about to open his treasuries and distribute his gold to the people. That's why he could talk to people as he pleased, despite the length of the queue and how long people had been waiting.

That was the language of the time, because the grocer suddenly found himself within the class of the powerful people. Before the war he was "just Thanasis", but suddenly the war grabbed him and made him "the honourable mister Thanasis". The situations raise some people whilst other people are doomed. The situations are favourable to *some* people.

That day, the queue at Thanasis' grocery was comprised entirely of women. A variety of women; ladies, lady-likes, servants, housewives, socialites, respectable girls, gossipers, worriers, peaceful ones, catty ones and ones foaming from the mouth. Thanasis was finding a peculiar kind of pleasure in torturing all these women, making them wait and by moving at a glacial pace.

The first half an hour of waiting went relatively well, the second a bit worse, and the third much worse. The queue was buzzing like a beehive. Women were discussing and gossiping about life in general; their husbands, work, inflation, love affairs, scandals, famine, death, transportation, the Germans, the Italians, the black market. But all these relieving conversations were interrupted by a fearsome female with an acid tongue.

Woman2:   You stupid grocer!

Good heavens! This provocation was destined for the Maharaja!

Grocer: Are you speaking to me?
Woman2:   You, indeed. Who do you think you are, behaving like the bride at the wedding? *Vre*, for three hours we are dead on our feet, catch the death yourself, you moron, you have been elevated to the status of the humans and you don't give a damn for the people around you – move your blooming legs for you are driving us crazy.

Never before was royalty wounded so deeply during the apotheosis of its grandeur. Pale like a corpse, the grocer turned to the woman and screamed at her:

Grocer: You filthy *expletive*.
Woman2:   You are the one who is *expletive*, you and your whole family. You ravenous rogue, who until yesterday were begging us to buy your filthy aubergines from your filthy grocery which no living soul was visiting and you were about to die from hunger,

you God teaser. And now you pretend to be a gentleman. Get lost, get lost you filthy scoundrel.

That was the last straw. The grocer abandoned his scales, his conversations, his spinach, everything, and jumped onto the woman. But she was ready, out of the queue and ready. Fearsomely she retaliated.

They started pulling each others' hair. A policeman tried to separate them but the rest of the women took position against the grocer. All of these women together; the ladies, the lady-like, the servants, housewives and socialites, the respectable girls, the gossipers, worriers, the peaceful and the catty ones – united in a glorious moment of solidarity – they were threatening to crush the grocer.

Stories such as this taken from the work of Dimitris Psathas entitled '*The Winter of '41'*, from which this is one of many that I could have chosen, document the famine in Athens during the German occupation of Greece and tell of the inverted social roles, corruption, the black market and the never-ending search for food – including the necessity in some cases to resort to eating cats, dogs and pack-horses (Psathas 1944, Hionidou 2006). The work of Psathas is well known in Greece, even outside of Athens. He was a celebrated journalist and writer of novels and theatrical scripts. Indeed, many of his plays were adapted for the silver screen, thus enhancing his reputation further. Additionally, Psathas is a popular figure at the centre of many discussions of literature in Greek schools. Psathas witnessed the famine in Athens in the 1940s and went on to write numerous books with this as the central theme meaning that his work is now taken as a national barometer for the years of the Great Famine.

The Queue – Trikala, 2010 – as narrated by mechanic's secretary Dimitra Papafotis

The nation-wide freight and haulage strikes that crippled Greece from Monday 26th July 2010 to Monday 2nd August 2010 caused a major fuel shortage. The strikes were in dispute over the government plan to cut licence charges for lorry drivers in accordance with IMF stipulations. The fear of the drivers was that by

liberalising the sector there would be increased competition for freight and haulage contracts. Additionally, the existing drivers' unions believed it unfair that they had to pay inflated rates compared to the new entry levels. Although the strike only lasted a week, significant upheaval was caused across the country and a fuel shortage spread panic nationwide. Eventually, Prime Minister Papandreou signed an order granting permission for the arrest of drivers that refused to go back to work. However, by this time the economy, especially the crucial tourist industry, had suffered huge losses, riots had broken out in many urban centres and military vehicles were chartered to provide fuel to hospitals, airports and power stations[145]. By the fifth day (Friday 30th July 2010) privately licensed trucks were being hired to transport fuel to the major urban centres. The following account, narrated to me by Dimitra, 33 and self-employed, takes place on Friday 30th July, when one such private truck brought fuel to a petrol station in Trikala.

It was 45°c by midday. The queue for the petrol station was getting longer and longer by the minute. It had started the night before when some people had got inside information that after a week of strikes one specific petrol station was going to receive a delivery. The cars parked on the petrol station forecourt had long been abandoned, but it did not matter as nobody could move and, what is more, no petrol had turned up. Now, at 1pm the queue was stretching for kilometres, from the forecourt, around the corner, past Dimitra and Angelos' shop, over the level crossing and into the town centre. Outside of the shop two young girls, queuing since 9.30am had erected two beach parasols stuck out of the car windows to shield them from the burning sun, "*like Victorianas!*" Some people were saving spaces for family members and friends by strategically increasing the usual 5 millimetre space between bumpers when a relative turned up. Others were calling friends and relatives on their mobile phones, either to inform them that petrol was expected for later in the day or, more frequently, to ask someone to come and save their place whilst they took a break from the sun. Some people even ordered cold coffees and pizzas to be delivered to them in the queue, giving a description of their car to the delivery boy rather than a house

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[145] www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-10815363, July 30 2010, www.guardian.co.uk/business.

address. Lakis, Dimitra's friend, called his mother to bring him some cheese pie and a beer for lunch as he had been waiting since 8.30am when he was supposed to be at work.

Dimitra started work at 9am and, after a week of strikes, desperately needed petrol. "*The only option was the bicycle if we could not get petrol this time … so many people had resorted to the bicycle; it was like going back in time, but terribly impractical with a three-year-old child*". The petrol station is about 300 metres from the front of the shop. Dimitra pulled out of the driveway and immediately joined the back of the queue, all of 5 metres away from her own doorstep. She left her car and went back into the shop to help her husband with the work. From there they could observe the queue. Every now and then Angelos was shouting at her to move the car another 10 metres as someone had inevitably given up hope of a delivery and returned home.

One woman, seeing that progress was slow, had left her car in the queue indefinitely and returned home to make dinner for her husband and children. Dimitra thought, "*ah, like that is it, whilst we suffer here you leave for home and expect to return just like that? … We will see what will happen*". After a couple of hours, and with little movement in the queue, the woman returned. All those that surrounded her started yelling and hurling abuse in her direction:

Woman1:   Eh, you, woman, what, do you think we are stupid or something, to wait here baking in the sun whilst you return home.

Woman2:   Don't expect to get back in the queue now, no, you left, go to the back, we are not stupid otherwise we would all do that.

Woman3:   Do you think you are better than us? Eh, you, I am speaking to you woman.

Woman1:   Ah, so you are the good housewife are you, don't you think that we all have other work to be doing now?

The fact that the woman was, according to Dimitra, "*playing the good housewife*" aggravated the other women who had been waiting in the scorching

sun for hours. There was one particular woman who was especially vocal in her criticism of the absentee car owner. "*She was constantly screaming ... being encouraged by the men of the vicinity, including a mischievous Angelos and the man in the neighbouring shop ...*"

Man1:   Don't let her get away with it, tell her what you think.

Man2:   (Ironically and knowingly) What did she do? I don't believe it. Come here and tell me.

Man3:   She thinks she's the good housewife ladies … she's not getting fried under the sun.

Simultaneously an older man had parked his car next to Dimitra and Angelos' shop. Angelos invited him in and gave him a chair to sit in the shade. He offered to make the man a *frappé* and stopped work for a chat. Soon after the man left his car people started realising that he was sat in the shade drinking cold coffee. They were adamant that he would not be allowed to rejoin the queue. This time the abuse was heavy and incorporated more expletives than one could possibly fit into a single chapter of a doctoral thesis. The general flavour went as follows:

Man1:   Fuck you arsehole, get to the back of the queue.

Man2:   What do you take us for, stupid arseholes, why don't we all sit in the shade, you missed your chance, the queue has moved, fuck off.

For the next ninety minutes the man, back in his car, was trying to creep unnoticed down the side of the queue to regain his previous position. Every time he moved people were tooting their horns and hurling abuse out of the window. "*It started to get physical, people were stood out in the road in front of him, the old man was pretending not to hear them, not to see them, he was trying to get back to his place without being noticed*".

Man3:   (with his arms outstretched in front of the car) No, get back, you're not getting past here, you left the queue, we have been

waiting in the sun. You think that you are cleverer than us, ah go fuck yourself.

"The other drivers were determined that they would rather create an accident rather than let him back into the queue. He was advised to go at least back past the distant traffic lights. The other drivers were keeping only 5 millimetres between their cars so he couldn't get back in. Eventually, after ninety minutes someone that knew him let him back into the queue to avoid an accident."

By the time Dimitra got to the petrol station it was 6pm. She filled up the car and two jerry cans with petrol, for there was uncertainty about when the next delivery was to be expected. The prices were inflated on the week before, approximately 25 cent a litre more for unleaded petrol. There were still abandoned cars parked on the forecourt; not all people had either the time or the patience to sit all day waiting for the delivery. Some cars were abandoned near Dimitra and Angelos' shop – remnants of people that had "gone home for lunch" and not returned. Another car had to be pushed to the station as it had run out of fuel before it could reach the forecourt.

Apart from obvious similarities between the two accounts – both take place within the context of the queue, a usually very un-Greek past time – there are numerous points that I wish to extract from the narratives.

Firstly, in both cases a consumer good is in demand at a time of scarcity. German strategies during the Second World War meant that goods such as spinach and butter beans, staples of the Greek diet, were not readily available and often only accessible on the black market (Archer 1944, Psathas 1944, Hionidou 2006). The haulage strikes of July 2010 meant that fuel, a staple of modern Trikalinoi life, was in very short supply. Only those with inside information could get hold of small quantities of fuel and people were resorting to using their long-redundant bicycles to go about their daily business. In both cases tensions were rooted in the fact that a staple necessity was being denied and, furthermore, there is a limited amount of the product, thus internal

competition is rife. Tempers were frayed as the fear of not acquiring the product increased. The anxiety of crisis was in the air in both cases. In Trikala in 2009/2010 the anxiety was apparent through everyday conversation; 'fear was in the air'[146]. The queues for fuel in July 2010 exacerbated the fear of returning to the rations of the Great Famine. Dimitra remarked after the fuel shortage that "*only now can we begin to understand what our grandfathers went through in the war; we don't want to experience it further ... I fear for my child and her livelihood ... I don't want for her to pass on the stories of how she suffered because of some corruption in Athens ... how her mother couldn't provide for her*". The local feeling was intensified by media reports of hospitals unable to function without fuel deliveries and hoteliers losing custom from tourists in the time of economic austerity.

In both accounts, power relations are another source of tension. For Psathas, the grocer had acquired a new social status due to his control of scarce resources. The conflict was between a united group of diverse women and the grocer, who was deemed to be deliberately aggravating the situation and taking advantage of his new social role. In Trikala, the conflict was enacted between the customers themselves. Although, as expressed by Dimitra, the ultimate anger and blame lay with the 'corruption in Athens', the tension on the day was directed by the people towards each other. Neither men nor women wanted to be out-smarted. Everyone emphasised that they too had better things to be doing with their time in a form of competitive suffering. Especially the woman that 'played the good housewife' (*noikokyra*) became the focus of much derogatory abuse. By leaving her car to return home, she implied that she could not afford to wait in the queue as she was 'a busy woman'. This was an insult to those that remained in the queue as by prioritising her work in the home the other women were put in 'a subordinate position' concerning their ability to be an effective housewife (Hirschon 1989:101-102, Kirtsoglou 2004:108)[147].

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[146] The fear and anxiety present in Trikala is surmountable with Low's account of how nerves are experienced; it is rarely adequately captured in ethnographic texts (Low 1994:139).

[147] For a discussion of the role of the housewife (*noikokyra*) see Hirschon (1989), Cowan (1990), du Boulay (1991), Faubion (1993), Dubisch (1995), Kirtsoglou (2004).

Based on his own experiences of famine, Serres has argued that forgetting runs the risk of repeating. 'People remember as they do not wish to repeat, they do not ignore history for fear of repetition' (1995a:53, also Das 1995, Sutton 1998:1). There are actualities of the past, such as the rationing during the Great Famine, that are still active in the present (Serres 1995a:54). Time, the epoch of past crisis, is still active in the present; crisis "reveals" the experience of history. Like Serres' thought being shaped by his childhood experiences, so Trikalinoi are shaped by personal narratives, institutionalised accounts and the education system. Hence when in Trikala there is a shortage of a staple good, resulting in an extravagant queue, recollections of the Great Famine are brought to the fore.

Food and Crisis in Trikala

In times of crisis food takes the form of a 'context shifting marker'. By this is meant an indicator of a change in contextuality. Food no longer stands for commensality, festivities, the sign of a good housewife, or a status symbol of a man's successful employment (cf. Herzfeld 1985, Papataxiarchis 1991, Argyrou 1996, Goddard 1996, Sutton 1998, 2001, Kirtsoglou 2004). Instead, food is the marker of hunger, fear and desolation. This shift in the contextual meaning of food is due to the combination between the recurrence of crisis and the embedded narratives of past events, such as the Great Famine; it is evocative of time, place and circumstance (Goddard 1996:207). The marker of crisis – the contextual change in the cultural symbolism of food – is transported across time, from an era when food was linked to crisis and not prosperity, little and not plenty[148]. This is all incorporated with the dynamic and powerful meanings and structures relating to food (Douglas 1966, 1971, Sutton 2001:3).

Kirtsoglou highlights an occasion when drink selection is a marker of a shifting context, rather than chosen on the merits of commensality. In her case, Jack Daniels is regarded 'as the appropriate drink' for the occasion of separation. The drink, 'dark and strong and analogous to the darkness and intensity of emotions' that come with separation, facilitates the expression of pain and loss (2004:90-

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[148] This is in opposition to the general discourse of "the good old days" (Sutton 1998:3) that are also present in everyday discourse.

91). The choice of drink is not based purely on notions of commensality (although this does play a part as the girls split into 'support groups' for about three days in order to aid the separated partners), but more so on the perceived qualities that identify with the shift in context and change in emotions – the separation.

Fani's grandfather (who lives with Fani, aged 37, and her mother, 60) always tells her to 'eat up'. "*What you need to experience is a famine*" he tells her. "*You don't like your food, eh. You are choosy. You need a famine, then you will understand, to appreciate what you have*." These lines are repeated by many people that experienced the Great Famine. Even Fani's mother once told me "*eat Daniel, go and help yourself from the cupboard. We don't have a famine you know … not yet at least*". During the fuel crisis of July 2010 panic broke out among Trikalinoi who were concerned with the lack of deliveries to supermarkets. Fani narrates;

> "All the shelves were bare. Nothing. Aisle after aisle of empty shelves. People had bought everything, it was like the stories of the famine, no food could be found in the supermarkets, we all had to resort to what we had in the freezer. My mother gave me some meat from a neighbour who slaughtered his chickens. Not only did the shops look like there was a famine, but people started panicking about what would happen if the deliveries didn't start again. Where would they find food? Most people in Trikala don't even have a back garden for vegetables (although the same is not true in the villages)".

Although such narratives may seem farfetched, they play on the minds of the Trikalinoi. 'Food permeates memory', Sutton tells us (2001:2). In this case food as a marker of crisis pervades memory; "In those days it was a matter of survival. Food was scarce and was not a cause for celebration" Stavros, the local cafeteria owner in Livadi, tells me;

> "The first thing that comes back to our minds is 'what would happen if the same happens again?' Food is no longer about survival, but about

indulgence and prestige for the house, but things are changing, our eyes are opening to the serious situation and as you know … Greeks are obsessed with food … so we start thinking about the stories of famine, how would we cope, what would we do?"

Sutton describes how families on Kalymnos hoard food in order to always have provisions. During the Italian occupation (1912-1942) wealthy people would buy large quantities of foodstuffs to sell-on when prices rose, in what he describes as part of the ethic of hunger (2001:23). Food denotes social well-being and therefore such symbolic obsessions can be linked directly to times of hunger and shortage (ibid.:27, 166). In the current economic conditions Greeks have taken to hoarding olive oil rather than selling it in current market conditions[149]. This practice has a two-fold purpose; firstly, by starving the market of olive oil the prices will inevitable rise, secondly, many people understand the current socio-economic conditions to be so precarious they see the hoarding of a valuable resource as 'an insurance policy'. This activity mirrors the wartime practice of hoarding foodstuffs and valuable resources whenever possible as little faith was put in stable market conditions and a wavering currency (Mazower 1991, Mazower 1993:32, Hionidou 2006). Yet again a practice directly related to the Great Famine and the wartime years has been one of the first to reappear in the current crisis.

Even in times of prosperity undercurrents that relate to the years of famine are ever-present, even if one has to observe a little more carefully. On my arrival in Greece I was asked on numerous occasions as to why I was thin; "*do you have a famine in England? It looks like they don't have food there. Perhaps you are really from Ethiopia*." These helpful observations have continued on a daily basis for many years both among first-time acquaintances and long-term family and friends. I am repeatedly reminded that I should make the most of the food and eat; "*you are so thin, it is unhealthy, it looks like you are starving. It is not*

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as if we don't have any food nowadays."[150] This is in contrast with Herzfeld's observations of Glendiot assumptions that foreigners always have more to eat due to their wealth, thus they (the Glendiots) are victimised by Athens and its moral and economic corruption (1985:37).

Such comments are usually not intended to be malicious[151]. They are justified by people 'making the most of what they have got, whilst they have it'. The same ideology applies to other everyday situations involving food, including how people 'pounce' on food as soon as it arrives on the table, as if it will disappear. When bringing back a shopping bag full of fast food to the house one night I was amazed to discover that by the time I had put the bag on the table and made a trip to the bathroom, the bag was on the floor, the food unwrapped, and the culprits – who had already eaten that evening – already half-way through their first *giro*. Food cannot easily be 'put to the side' for later consumption. On many occasions I have gone to the kitchen to retrieve something I had reserved, or bought, for an evening snack and it has disappeared. The answer; "*why save it when it can be eaten now. You will have to hide it better*".

Food is given a prioritised position on every occasion and is never taken for granted. It will rarely been thrown away; there should be no waste. When Antonia, whose family I was staying with, tried to discard remnants of her evening dinner her mother abruptly intervened; "*What are you doing my girl? Don't do that.* Po po*, remember what your grandfather went through in the famine, you mustn't throw it away*."

The entanglement between food and social memory has been discussed in the ethnographies of Greece in terms of layers of commensal meaning and history (Seremetakis 1994:10). Food can provoke the emergence and awakening of layered memories, provoking a re-calling of past events and feelings. In this sense, food as object is laden with "perceptual recall" within which shared

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[150] Goddard recalls how whenever she returned to Naples from London she was inevitably greeted by horrified laments referring to how "thin and haggard" she appeared. This anxiety only subsided when she accepted a large plate of pasta or soup (1996:212).

[151] Sutton notes the repetition of comments concerning his diet, especially likes and dislikes, whilst conducting fieldwork in Kalymnos (2001:1-2).

histories and perceptual topographies that transcend time and space are formed (ibid.:11, Bloch 1998:120)[152]. Whereas other entwined histories can be eradicated or forgotten, 'percolating through time rather than getting caught in the filter' (Serres 1995a), food retains an extraordinary place in the weaving of social memory, history and artefact (Sutton 2001). Invested with sensory memory, even the abstract concept of food, employed as a transformative idiom rather than an object itself, incorporates social experience. It is transmitted as a cultural code, as a 'constant contemporary', assembled at each moment according to the continuous social fluctuations in the process of time. Concepts relating to food stand against onrushing changes brought by the time that has percolated, it remains as 'an island of historicity' (Seremetakis 1994:12, Sutton 1998).

> "Those things, spaces, gestures, and tales that signify the perceptual capacity for elemental historical creation … the buried, the discarded, and the forgotten escape to the social surface or awareness like self-supporting oxygen" (Seremetakis 1994:12).

Such an awakening has its basis in the recurrence of crisis.

Conclusion

This chapter has been concerned with how apparently distant events can be embodied in one simultaneous contemporary moment; what I term cultural proximity. The 'closeness' of distant events, such as the Great Famine, form an assemblage of the contemporary moment. This proximity is facilitated by the recurrence of crisis. Certain objects, actions and narratives come to the fore as culturally and historically significant. This process is more than simply 'remembering the past' as historical moments are embodied through a range of media – first-hand experience, inter-generational narratives, nationalist discourse, artefacts and objects.

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[152] However, I do not agree with Seremetakis that "the memory of the senses runs against the socio-economic currents that treat artifacts and personal material as dust" (1994:12). Without rooting such claims within any regional ethnography or stating specific socio-economic contexts, Seremetakis lumps 'socio-economic currents' into a singular category and goes on to state that such circumstances do not treat objects as artefacts with meaning and history. This is quite obviously not the case, from systems of gift exchange in 'capitalist' societies like Japan, dowry and trousseau in Greece, to the classic ethnographies of Malinowski and Mauss.

The work of Michel Serres assists in the understanding that it is common perceptions of time as lineal that cause problems with the comprehension of contemporary simultaneity of distant events. By thinking of time not as lineal but as percolating, fluctuating and folding, indelible moments of the past can begin to be understood as more than simply memories. When Serres employs the metaphor of the handkerchief, crumpled up in his pocket, the superimposition of multiple moments of time seems more plausible. Couple this with accounts of what is clearly the embodiment of hunger, famine, starvation, in the face of a new crisis then the understanding of time as topological rather than geometrical helps explain such experiences (1995a:60).

The three main sections of the chapter – Serres on time, comparative accounts of queuing and the role of food in cultural proximity – highlighted the complex integration of time, past events such as the Great Famine and the cultural importance of food. The Great Famine has been specifically etched into Trikalinoi for a number of reasons. In comparing accounts of queuing for groceries in Athens during the Great Famine and queuing for petrol in Trikala in 2010 obvious similarities are identified by my informants. This goes further to highlight the role played by nationalism in embedding narratives of historical events into communities that did not directly experience them first-hand. The plight of Athenians during the Second World War is not only identifiable but actually felt by many modern-day Trikalinoi. It is also worth noting that the activity of hoarding olive oil is also directly linked back to the collective experience of famine, as are other practices such as goat stealing (Herzfeld 1985) and hoarding valuable foodstuffs (Sutton 2001).

The current economic crisis in Trikala is continuously understood in relation to past crises. Some articles operate as context shifting markers that denote the change between socio-economic prosperity and crisis. Such is the case with food. Food has become more of a catalyst to describe fear, hunger and hardship rather than celebration and affluence in everyday discourse. The cultural proximity of the Great Famine has meant that mediums of prosperity can now be employed as labels of crisis.

Chapter Eight: Social Status and Mobility in Trikala

One beautiful August morning in 2008, before thoughts of crisis had significantly begun to enter the public mindset, I was invited to go on a day-trip to the beach with one of my best friends, Maro, and her *parea* (company). I had met many of her friends on numerous occasions, at dinner parties, whilst waiting in the hairdressers, or just 'about town'. That morning at 7.30am the lawyer, Dora, the shop owner, Stella, and the tour guide, Giannis, joined Maro, the hairdresser, and myself in gathering in central Trikala to 'go to the sea'. We were to be met in the town by Tassos, a communications system designer for the Greek Army, and Apostolis, who works for a major telecommunications company in the town. I was rather excited as despite my multiple visits to Greece spanning over twenty years as holiday-maker and later anthropologist, I had never visited the Thessallian coastline. The nearest place, Maro informed me, was just the other side of Larisa and would take just over one and a half hours to reach. This destination was quickly dismissed as "*for children*" as it is popular with families. "*The sea is not good there, too rocky*" Giannis exclaimed. It was decided that we should head for Volos and may be the small village of Chorefton, 170 kilometres and 2 hours and 50 minutes drive away.

The two cars arrived in the centre of the town on time. Apostolis, a single man in his mid-thirties, wanted to give me a guided tour of his new Mercedes that he had especially imported from Germany, paid for with a bank loan. He told me that it had lots of gadgets and the leather for the seats he had specifically selected himself. It had a top speed of 160 miles per hour. Tassos, 43 years old and also single, said that this was nothing, "*come and have a look at my BMW*". We loaded the cars with parasols, beach bags and inflatable goodies. It was finally agreed after much heated debate that I would go with Tassos whilst Dora, Maro, Stella and Giannis would go with Apostolis. Tassos, the more extroverted character of the two, was pleading his case to me "*you have got to see my gadgets, I want to show you ... I speak much better English than him, I went for conferences in England ... I want you to meet my friend that we will pick-up in Larisa, he is a big name in the army.*"

We set off just before 8am and Tassos started to speak to me in English. No matter how many times I switched the language to Greek he would reply in English and English only. It became apparent that, benefited by two trips to London to attend army conferences and subsequent private lessons, Tassos did indeed speak fluent English, better than anyone that I had met in Trikala. He was quite obsessed by displaying his knowledge of England: the sights of London, the footballers, the universities, the behaviour of the adorable English girls (an opinion that was no doubt informed by the highly publicised behaviour of English tourists in Greece). His second favourite topic was his own success; he was only in his early forties but would be retiring within two years. These years of prosperity served him well. Evidently, Tassos was involved in the development of a specialist satellite communications system for the Greek Army and was only one of five people in the country that could teach others how to use it. He was therefore not only involved in the development of the product and teaching others to use it, but was also highly informed as to international business deals and geo-politics. I initially took this as male bravado, but over the course of the day it turned out that Tassos really knew what he was talking about and was indeed a highly competent specialist.

When we hit the main road between Larisa and Volos, and with his friend safely collected from Larisa, Tassos began playing with his gadgets. First it was the multi-mixing CD player and the remote controls, then the air conditioning that would cool the car to within 0.5°c of the desired temperature. Then the *pièce de résistance*: the cruise control. At 120 kph Tassos programmed his car to drive at a constant speed within a regular distance of the car in front. This gave him the chance to show off the swivelling driver's seat which, I was assured, could turn all the way around. He put his hands behind his head and put his feet on the dashboard. With a booming voice he commanded the car to dial the phone number of Apostolis who was following just behind. Apostolis answered and they agreed that he should overtake using the cruise control. Apostolis drove past on the outside with both his hands placed firmly behind his head.

After a brief consultation it was agreed that Chorefton was to be the destination of choice. "*Let me program my top of the range GPS*" said Tassos. The route was programmed and we drove into central Volos. After getting lost in Volos due to road closures, we appeared somewhere near the Panthessaliko Stadium[153] and re-programmed the GPS. After driving around an industrial district we turned off onto a dirt track and slowly ascended a steep mountainside. Barely a car-width wide the winding track climbed up the mountainside for 10 kilometres, a journey of some twenty minutes. Numerous phone calls were flying between the two drivers; "*this is what the GPS says, we are nearly there*" insisted Tassos, "*it is just over the other side of the hill*". Suddenly the track came to an end. In front stood a single ramshackle farm building with a small ginger and white dog barking fiercely at the unexpected visitors; an old man was watering his flowers. Now the big shiny silver BMW was covered in dust and parked in the driveway of an old man and a ravenous dog.

Tassos:	Sorry
Old Man:	(slightly perplexed) What are you doing my child? Who are you?
Tassos:	We are trying to get to the beach
Old Man:	(gesturing down the mountainside) The beach is down there
Tassos:	I know, how do we get there, can we walk over the mountain?
Old Man:	Which beach?
Tassos:	Chorefton
Old Man:	Where? That is 40 kilometres from here over the other mountain, go back to Volos
Tassos:	How? I thought it was here (laughs)
Old Man:	Come inside my child, bring your friends, I will call my wife to make us some coffee … she has just made food, come and have some

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[153] The Panthessaliko Stadium was a major construction project located in Thessaly for the 2004 Athens Olympic Games. The construction started in 2002 based on plans by Hasapis, Sargentis and Associates and was built as a joint venture between three Greek construction companies. The cost of the stadium was over 50 million Euros and it served as the location for football matches during the 2004 Olympic Games. The capacity is 22,700, making it the largest in Thessaly, and it will host the 2013 Mediterranean Games (www.stadia.gr).

After politely refusing the invitation for coffee and lunch by explaining that by now it was 12 noon and we should have been at the beach hours ago, we slowly reversed down the mountain track and back to the main road – among much general hilarity about how the old man "*must have thought that his son had arrived from Athens with his new woman for the wedding*". "*This time*", insisted Apostolis, "*We will ask locals for directions*". Back by the stadium we stopped at a cafeteria and asked for directions. We were told to go straight through Volos and out the other side. On the pretence of the terrible road works in the town, Tassos persuaded the friends to trust his GPS one more time, as he had programmed it wrong on the previous occasion. Obviously we agreed. The GPS told us to go in the opposite direction from the cafeteria. Within ten minutes we were at a dead end. A road that should have been constructed in time for the 2004 Olympics was still unfinished in 2008 and did not yet entirely exist. We drove back past the cafeteria (with an ironic toot of the horn) and, more than five hours after leaving Trikala (and two stops to show me the views of the bay of Volos), we arrived at the beach. "*You see what brilliant air conditioning I have. Apostolis' car was so hot and you were perfect in mine*" was the parting remark. Apostolis' passengers agreed.

It also became apparent throughout the day that as well as competing for the attention of the English anthropologist and competing in all aspects of consumerism, Tassos and Apostolis were also competing for the affections of the same woman. Apostolis drove us home as Tassos was going to stay the night with his friend in Larisa. He decided to play 'English music' all the way back, with his particular favourite, Blondie, delighting us with her greatest hits. "*You hear her London accent?*" he asked me. I said that indeed I could (although she is American), but at 2am at the end of an adventurous day it was the last thing I was concerned with. Interestingly, at 11pm, having by that time been out of the house for 16 of the eventual 19 hours, Eugenia, the mother of the family I was staying with, called me to see where I was. Although not insisting that I should return immediately, it was suggested that I should have called her to inform her where I was. This thought had never crossed my mind as it was something I had not done since I was at school; I prepared my humble apology to be delivered in the morning.

On this day competitions for and conspicuous display of status were vast[154]. Both Tassos and Apostolis are from families whose fathers worked the fields to the west of Trikala, neither is highly educated and despite respectable jobs, much of their disposable income is borrowed. Apostolis paid for his imported Mercedes with a bank loan, mainly because Tassos, who has a higher income from his work, had just bought a new BMW. There were competitions for knowledge exhibition, demonstrations of consumerism, competition for the same woman and even for the rightful appropriation of the anthropologist. Such displays, often taking the form of what is best described as tournaments, are commonplace in Trikala. Often material artefacts are the main focus, although similar competitions take place for the outward display of knowledge or even demonstrating one's potential political connections. This chapter explores perceptions of social status and mobility among the Trikalinoi and discusses how such status competitions are conceptualised, played-out in everyday life and ultimately affected by changing economic conditions.

Perceptions of Social Status – prosperity and crisis

<u>Brief Historical Notes</u>

The changing social topography of the 1920s-1950s contributed significantly to current notions of status and mobility[155]. The redistribution of the ciftliks meant the creation of private property; property that could be divided between children or sold to release the capital[156]. Even if this was not an immediate consequence of the land redistribution programme, as social ideals began to change away from land ownership and towards urbanisation and education during the postwar

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[154] Drawing on an array of work in the Mediterranean context, du Boulay analyses competition in rural Greece in terms of 'limited good'. Intense competition for limited resources such as land, health and honour demonstrate how competition spans both the material and non-material aspects of society (1987:15-16).

[155] Bennison 2010 (personal communication).

[156] From another perspective, Faubion describes how even after the redistribution of the ciftliks the previous landlords maintained a sense of "gentry and its administrative officialdom". Often this resulted in a sustainable "status that money itself could not buy" (1993:190). From the rural perspective, the break down of local power structures through land redistribution opened new corridors for social mobility (Sutton 1983:231).

period, the valuable asset of private property could be realised. Even if land was not entirely sold, the income provided through agriculture was enough to support a child through post-gymnasium (secondary school) education. This, according to Karavidas writing in the 1930s, is due to the fact that "the traditional aspirations of our rural population do not lie in farming … When the harvest is a success, the surplus is used to open a shop or to send the son to Athens to study law!" (1931:496). Additionally, improving postwar mechanisation resulting in increasing production levels meant that some children were not required to work the land. Some land could even be let out for sharecropping (Friedl 1976:373). In some cases the social status of Trikalinoi has been acquired generationally rather than by recent material expenditure and can be traced back to the management of and investment in land holdings, farms and agricultural production. This is despite the relative low status associated with these occupations in contemporary Trikala.

These processes coincided with the internal migrations during the civil war. The socio-economic impacts of these movements were significant. The majority of the migrants originated from mountainous regions of northern Greece so were not only detached from their livelihoods left behind in their villages, but also had limited interest in becoming arable farmers on the plains. In the villages of Greek Macedonia, for example, the most prestigious employment was in the construction trade; an occupation that afforded little status in Trikala. These migrants found themselves at the bottom of the social ladder in Trikala, living in *parapigmata* that were little more than suburban shanty towns. They had few social networks in the area which were integral to advancing social position when relocating to a new region (Friedl 1976).

The restructuring of the Greek state after the upheaval of the 1940s led to steady economic growth and rural development. As conditions improved so aspirations towards education and urbanisation gradually increased. According to Friedl, during this period the ultimate goal of all parents was upward movement in rank of order of occupation based on the criteria of required education, opportunities for security and advancement, and potential consumption standards the

occupation could support (1976:364)[157]. In Trikala the 1950s witnessed the first steady stream of migrants to Athens for purposes of education (initially often as teachers who would return to placements in Trikala following completion of the degree) (cf. Sutton 1983). The economic situation of increasing employment opportunities and agricultural mechanisation allowed for more prospectors to move to the city for university education. This was a period of political and economic stability; an Athenian industrial boom fuelled by migration, high levels of construction to accommodate migrants, expansion in public services and infrastructure, low inflation, and improving public transport marked an era of prosperity in which social mobility was made increasingly possible to peripheral communities. In these cases most were accredited with upward social mobility upon completion of university education. The prestige of jobs, economic security and potential disposable income were decidedly better than what was on offer through education in Trikala.

From the 1940s crises and subsequent prosperous restructuring came another, sometimes more temporary, source of social status and mobility. Rapidly changing social conditions created spaces for economic opportunism – a phenomenon which has repeated itself from the opportunistic purchase of ciftliks at low prices by Greek businessmen in 1881 (despite the state promise of redistribution), through times of war and conflict to the stock market explosion of the 1990s. This opportunistic entrepreneurism is an inherent facet of both economic prosperity and crisis (cf. MacGaffey 1987, 1998, 2000). In times of crisis social status can be temporarily enhanced, such as in the case of Psathas' grocer who had access to valuable resources during a time of scarcity. During the Great Famine the black market was thriving as desirable resources were hoarded and sold to the highest bidder. The grocers were addressed with the title *Kýrios* (Mister)[158] which was not apparent before the War and accepted large

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[157] In the context of Southern Italy, Colclough's informants attribute three main factors to both upwards and downwards social mobility, namely fortune, cheating, and the acquisition or loss of power (1992:67).

[158] See Hart (1992:74-75) for a discussion of terminologies that imply social status. On Meganisi Just describes how the common financial ascendancy of a group of wine-makers resulted in them being known as "the rich", "the Athenians", due to their associations with Athenian businesses (1991:129).

sums of money for desirable goods. The transitory position of power that the grocer enjoyed was a product of social turmoil[159].

The purpose of this chapter is to explore how social status and mobility are experienced today by a cross-section of Trikalinoi during a transitional period between prosperity and crisis. The concepts of status and mobility are entangled in multiple layers of history spanning numerous times of prosperity and crisis. Sometimes social status and mobility are obtained through spontaneous opportunism or forced adaptation, other times by strategic planning and long-term investment; there are a range of options open to different social actors (Sant Cassia 1982:643). In Trikala and the surrounding villages there is an intricate relationship between village and town, town and city (Athens and Thessaloniki) and town and the global which harbour multiple connotations of status and mobility. The terms by which status and mobility are identified are no longer associated with agricultural productivity or solely communal cohesion but more often by education and employment opportunities or by material consumption and conspicuous display.

Introductory Notes

Due to the "incomplete and uneven character of capitalist penetration and modernization in Greece" (Seremetakis 1994:39) in many aspects of everyday life traditional networks of patronage and clientelism operate simultaneously alongside, or 'underneath', the façade of capitalist systems. One may well feel inclined to perceive these as potentially conflicting[160]. This 'duality' is apparent in many social arenas, from preferential medical treatment to employment opportunities (cf. Lisón-Tolosana 1966). On other occasions a strong capitalist initiative has challenged and sometimes completely penetrated the traditional systems of relationships and 'getting things done', underlining the often

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[159] In a similar vein, MacGaffey (1987, 1998) notes how entrepreneurs in war-torn Africa utilise social networks in order to open small businesses that cater for the demand of scarce resources. The products on sale are often acquired in a clandestine manner and sold at highly inflated prices. However, through this opportunism small minorities of the population can permanently enhance their social position.

[160] According to Taussig, when a commodity exchange system and pre-capitalist social formations come into contact, new socio-economic forms are created (1980:127-128).

"awkward relationship between Greek actors and the agents of the state" (Theodossopoulos 2000:60), or in this case the Greek actors and the government-endorsed rhetoric (cf. Campbell 1964, Loizos 1975, Herzfeld 1991, 1992) [161]. Such is the case with the indiscriminate and unquestioned loaning of money from national and multinational banks in the town during the years of economic prosperity. The interaction between patronage-clientelism and capitalist business is strongly affected by the socio-economic circumstances; different situations call for various modes of resolution.

Changes in the modes and methods of socio-economic relations, coupled with shifting economic contexts of prosperity and crisis, inherently alter the measures by which people in the town negotiate and define certain criteria of their personal and collective lives. Such is the case of perceptions of social status and social mobility.

In the Greek case it is difficult to speak or theorise status in terms of class (Mouzelis 1976). Concepts such as class appear problematic and insufficient to explain the multiplicity of Greek social life as well as concepts of social status and mobility. Nevertheless, for analytical reasons I have decided to proceed with a categorisation of the population in terms of upper and lower sections. Towards this sectioning I follow the commentary of my informants who tend to divide social strata into two opposing categories. In the local understanding this sectioning does not accord to notions of class as these are developed in British society. My informants usually talk in terms of *upsili koinonia* (high society), *kalos kosmos* (good world), *tzakia* (literally fireplaces but implying the powerful families); this is what can be deemed the upper section. At the other end of the spectrum is *emeis oi upolipoi* (the rest of us) who are *o laos* (the people). The upper section includes the *neoplouti* (nuevo riche), ex-ciftlikades, *autodimiourgitoi* (self-made businessmen who rapidly progressed themselves) and politicians. Additionally those people that studied as teachers in the 1960s and 1970s are also perceived as of higher status due to the era of their education. The display of status is vital to both social sections.

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[161] The conflict between capitalist government authority and 'traditional' belief systems has been discussed by Taussig (1980).

There are two specific sections of Trikalini society that measure and demonstrate their social status in ways which reflect the current duality of socio-economic conditions oscillating between 'traditional' and 'modern'. The two sections of society, which shall be termed the 'upper section' and the 'lower section', define their status differently within their respective groups but are by no means bounded mutually exclusive communities[162]. Some concepts of status overlap between the sections. Education is one such point where cross-section comparisons of value can be made. When linked with idioms of kinship, the display and concealment of education is imperative to both the upper and lower sections. The two sections do however demonstrate highly differentiated social and material desires (Simmel 1978:71) which constitute patterns of 'shared styles of living' (Bell 1994:51-52). These styles of living have not been affected homogeneously with the onset of economic crisis. The two social sections include both male and female actors, although the way that status is materially externalised may differ (for example; the males of the 'lower section' often invest in cars whilst the females prefer to buy extravagant clothes and jewellery). The argument presented in this chapter is based on the externalised displays of these diverse understandings of what constitutes social status and mobility, externalisations which are markedly different. At all times these perceptions of status are presented as they are discussed and understood by my informants. There is often internal competition between the members of each section as to who can fulfil the perceived requirements of 'status' to the superlative, yet little cross-section competition is externalised. It is acknowledged that this detachment of two social segments is not unproblematic, but it became apparent in the field that there was a clear distinction between two typical ways of defining social status, as expressed by the informants themselves. The decision on how to define the two sections has been based on the perceptions of the informants of what constitutes social stratification within society[163]. Perceptions of social stratification are expressed by Trikalinoi both

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[162] As Bell (1994:28) puts it; residents may vote for the same council, use the same roads, and often worship at the same church, but circulate socially in fairly homogeneous subcommunities of wealth and associated cultural differences.

[163] This is a method that ethnographers such as Bell (1994) have found to be the most beneficial when dealing with concepts of social stratification 'in-situ'.

conversationally and in terms of 'cultural symbols' and their interpretation (Colclough 1992:62)[164].

The Lower Section

The 'lower section' is generally comprised of subsistence farmers, taxi drivers, manual labourers and part-time unskilled employees and civil servants as well as high school teachers with recent training. These people define their social status mostly in relation to material artefacts and consumer-orientated goods. There is much competition, especially among the males, to surpass each other with who has the latest, the most expensive or most desirable material possession. In this case money, and specifically the display of possessions to give the impression of having money, is central to their understanding of social status and indeed upwards social mobility. This competition has been facilitated by the unquestioned and indiscriminate loaning of large amounts of money by national and multinational banks during times of economic prosperity in the late 1990s and early to mid 2000s. On many occasions my informants have taken out loans for vast amounts of money for such things as expensive cars, holidays and houses, fully conscious of the impossibilities of repayment. Perhaps this is where one area of global capitalism – for as we have recently seen in the context of economic crisis such large bank loans have been an unstable phenomena of the Western world for the past twenty years on both individual and governmental levels – has fully penetrated the lives of this social group to the extent that pre-existing social and economic practices have been bypassed. Before the indiscriminate loaning of money from a faceless, spaceless institution, Trikalinoi had to rely on friendship networks, favour exchange, familial financial support and inheritance and years of savings for things which during global, national and local prosperity could be immediately purchased with somebody else's money.[165] When coupled with the highly influential

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[164] Tentori notes that such cultural symbols of status can include 'intolerance', 'idleness to work' and the prioritisation of education (1976:274-276). According to Bell (1994:44), such markers of social status can be income, occupation, family background, housing, material possessions (e.g. cars), life-style, education, property ownership and social acquaintances.
[165] For a discussion on 'credit' through a patron-client system, see Colclough (1992). One point that Colclough makes is that as most families now have a regular source of cash income, credit

phenomenon of the global mass-media, possessions that were once beyond the reaches of the majority of inhabitants of rural central Greece have become widely available and increasingly desirable. This consumerist phenomenon was further facilitated by rises on the Greek stock markets that benefited many Trikalinoi with financial resources literally coming 'from nothing' (even more literal when a high percentage for companies did not actually exist in the first place). The 1999-2000 stock market crash was soon forgotten when national banks started to approve loan applications almost indiscriminately.

During the first months of fieldwork in Trikala the repercussions of not being able to repay loaned money seemed not to intimidate my informants. "*The worst they can do is repossess my car*", I was told. Due to the fact that in such cases money is seen as 'free' as there is no face-to-face relationship involved (cf. Crozier 1964) the threat of accountability is perceived as less of a problem. Nevertheless the desire for status and recognition "*na eisai kapoios*" (to be somebody) often concludes with the opposite effect; by losing face which is the exact opposite of being somebody. The case of Andreas is suggestive of this as someone who accumulated a great deal of material wealth, only to lose it all.

Katerina and Andreas, both in their early sixties, live in a small flat near the centre of Trikala. Andreas is a son of a builder and Katerina originates from a small village towards Kalampaka. Sparsely furnished, their flat it is a modest space that is adequate for the couple and their two sons, both in their twenties, when they return from university for the holidays. This has not always been the type of lifestyle that Andreas and Katerina have enjoyed. Andreas narrates the story; "*We used to have it all. Whatever Katerina wanted, whatever the boys wanted, the latest clothes, the expensive house, whatever we wanted ... but I did not have the peace in my heart that I have now*". Indeed, as Andreas sits there relaxed, chatty, drinking a can of Heineken on the veranda, I think how much he has changed as a character from the first time that I met him some six years previous. Andreas and Katerina took substantial loans from their extended family in order to set up their own furniture shop in Trikala. For many years

from shopkeepers is not required (1992:64). However, in Trikala many other sources of 'credit' are regularly required in order to support the family consumption patterns.

their lifestyle was excessive. They kept borrowing money from numerous banks and members of the family, always promising to 'pay them back'. The family loans were given in order to pay off the other loan demands from "various sources". Andreas was not particularly good at returning these 'family loans' that went into tens of thousands of euros[166]. They used to have two houses in Trikala, one very extravagantly furnished with chandeliers, Persian rugs and stone statues, all the markers of an affluent and prestigious social position. All the time the business was losing money. Andreas constructed a four-storey house in the most expensive conservation area of Trikala, despite already possessing an inherited house in the town, passed down from his father. He eventually sold the inherited house to finance the building of the new one which he never managed to finish. His specifications were for 'perfection' and the 'ultimate finish', including expensive marble staircases, plush furnishings and bespoke woodwork. Furthermore, the exclusive neighbourhood added to the status and mobility that Andreas and Katerina were displaying[167].

Additionally, the two boys wanted the latest designer clothes and went to Athens for university studies. This was where a great deal of the money went. Katerina was extravagant in her spending too; fur coats and Persian rugs were her forte. Indeed, Georgia, Andreas' sister, squarely blames Katerina for the extreme

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[166] Campbell makes it clear that family loans are usually expected to be repaid (1964:99).

[167] The neighbourhood of residence is very important. The area in which Andreas resided consisted of villas and large spacious apartments owned by established professionals. It is a ten minute walk to the town centre where he had his business. The central street, Asklipiou, is the centre for socialisation and business in Trikala. It is the place to see and be seen. To rent shop space is very expensive here. Lisón-Tolosana expresses the exact same sentiments attached to 'the high street' in Belmonte, Spain;

"The high street is considered the most elegant; one cannot go out in it dressed just anyhow, especially women. When they go out shopping in the street they change their clothes and do their hair … Whenever there is a chance one sells a house situated in any other street in order to buy one in the high street; no matter if the price is higher or the comforts fewer, as sometimes happens" (1966:96).

Many of his sentiments concerning 'the high street' are mirrored by the Trikalinoi. Asklipiou is the desired place to own a business and any of the adjacent roads are highly desirable for residential flats, as are conservation areas such as the 'old town'. As well as elitist neighbourhoods within the town, some small villages on the outskirts have become popular with wealthy professionals. This has given rise to many 'complexes' of villas in villages such as Livadi, a place which is now often referred to as an 'affluent suburb' where rising professionals purchase communal land to build grand houses. In Lisón-Tolosana's case, the location of property on the high street is of such social prestige, the inheritance of a house along this street "generally arouses violent disputes among the heirs" (ibid.).

expenditure, yet when I first met Andreas he too was draped in a leather jacket and blacked-out sunglasses, a gold ring shining from his index finger. His demeanour was aggressive and businesslike.

In 2007 Andreas was facing bankruptcy. His official loan repayment demands were enormous and he was facing imprisonment. Andreas sold off nearly all his assets; "*I couldn't go to prison*" he says with a smile on his face, "*what would this lot have done* (referring to his wife and sons)". He sold his house, his shop and most of his possessions and is now an employee for a small kitchen-fitting company. Everyone in his family acknowledges how this was a change for the better. Andreas goes on; "*I couldn't enjoy life. I was always thinking about where the money was going to come from, how I could repay this person, that person ... there was no need for the big house, the jewellery, the holidays, sure it was nice to look at, but my mind was never free enough in order to enjoy it ... I feared every knock at the door and every time I went to pick up the post*". I asked him if all of this expenditure got him any social prestige. He replied that it brought him 'credibility' when among like-minded people and that although there was external pressure to participate in competitive consumerism he mainly did it because that was what he and his wife wanted and what they valued. I know that Andreas has made many contacts through his business. In my experience these were always other small business owners or friends of fellow 'villagers'. Despite his material possessions he has always been without the social and political contacts to advance his social standing on a patron-client basis. Coupled with his lack of education past the secondary school level, his ability to be upwardly mobile, as he tells me that he aspired to be, was severely limited.

Andreas' case reminded me once more of Argyrou's study in the context of Cyprus. Argyrou discusses the 'big-spenders' (*fouartas*) that make public displays of money and demonstrate their 'power to purchase'. This is another aspect of how the social persona is cultivated. These actions were made by 'any man who respected himself and expected to be respected' (Argyrou 1996:74). The rhetoric of the 'big-spenders' is that "money is for spending", although Argyrou relates this stance to the concept of 'the good heart' and the social

stigma of being 'stingy'. Yet in Andreas' case it was not his money that he was spending. A feeling of status was however created and noticed by the people in his social arena – family and friends. This following quote taken from Lisón-Tolosana's work in Spain, sums-up how money and the display of wealth can gain social prestige. One of his informants says;

'When I had money
they called me *Don* Tomas;
now I have none
they just call me Tomas' (1966:81).

This example resonates with Psathas' account of the grocer during the Great Famine acquiring the title *Kýrios* before his name as a sign of elevated status, although his wealth was not primarily monetary. A person can gain many degrees of esteem through the display of wealth, although it is socially contextual within a certain time and space. What became apparent in the case of Andreas and Katerina was that such a display was not sustainable due to the lack of a sufficient socio-economic basis. It is open to speculation about the sustainability of such a lifestyle if, lets say, Andreas had a significant network of influential political contacts (perhaps the court cases could have been dropped?) In any case Andreas has descended the social ladder if ever he could be considered to have climbed it, partially due to faulty business administration and partly because of material excess (cf. Lisón-Tolosana 1966:116, Colclough 1992). Andreas is conscious of this change in terms of displaying himself. He is no longer attired with labelled clothes, and no longer resides in the most sought-after area of Trikala; neither does he live in an expensive house. He is adamant that his loss has changed the way people perceive him. He does notice that people treat him differently now, "*probably they think I am a villager (*choriatis*), not a businessman, and people treat villagers different to businessmen*".

Their debts spiralled out of control and familial loans were not sufficient enough as well as causing great tensions among the kindred. Andreas felt respected within his social circles and faced ridicule from bankruptcy. Rather than risking

being deemed pusillanimous, he continued to invest in a lifestyle of material luxury that he had no means of sustaining.

Material success is a primary concern for many of the 'younger adults' in Greek society. Hirschon argues that through material success the family receives recognition and prestige in the eyes of the community (1989:226). Furthermore, the financial power must be "shown by expenditure, particularly on consumer goods (electrical appliances, furnishings, clothing), meaning that external appearances become extremely important" (ibid.). In the context of Cyprus, Argyrou notes that, "every Cypriot man who respected himself … wanted us to know that he did not respect money" by exhibiting the ability for excessive expenditure (1996:21, Lawrence 2007:90, cf. Lisón-Tolosana 1966:ch.4).

This was the case in Trikala during the first part of my stay, and for the majority of my long-term 'fieldwork visit' in 2008 before the first rumblings of global economic troubles. The rhetorical display of 'economic hardship is not affecting me' meant that the common opinion of rising prices, low wages and economic hardship, as well as later rumours concerning impending economic recession, was contrasted with extravagant spending of money gained from a variety of sources. The first suggestions of global recession in late 2008 and the eventual Greek economic crisis changed such perceptions drastically. The consequences of outstanding loans – and the banks' leniency on repayment – and the practical reality of curbing excessive expenditure has, for the time being, altered the opportunities for the public display of social status. Narratives of consumption that once criss-crossed the public sphere have been replaced with narratives of crisis, famine and hardship. What will be termed a 'tournament of consumerism' has, to some degree, become a tournament of hardship and suffering, as demonstrated in chapter six and the social gatherings on Asklipiou. The public narrative has shifted focus as economic prosperity turned to crisis. In direct relation to the 'lower section', social status based on conspicuous consumption (Veblem 1899) has often not proved sustainable during times of economic crisis.

<u>The Upper Section</u>

What is defined as the 'upper section' of Trikalini society consists of professionals and the 'grand families' (*megales oikogeneies*) who have built up a notion of social status over the course of generations occasionally stretching back nearly one hundred years (Sant Cassia and Bada 1992, Faubion 1993, Just 2000)[168]. The indicators of social status for these people are less about material artefacts as indicators of prestige – although these do exist in a different form – and more focused on education, family reputation, employment and social networks, all of which accumulates into social capital[169] (Bourdieu 1977, Mach and Wesolowski 1982, Narotzky 2004, Narotzky 2006b, Narotzky and Smith 2006). Many of the informants categorised as belonging to the 'upper section' work as doctors, dentists or academics within the town and have usually been educated abroad. The collective sense of status within this group is not openly defined in relation to those of the 'lower section' and status is related to concepts of reputation and socio-political networks rather than explicit financial capital and consumption. Socialisation, both inside and outside of work, is desired between those of a similar status, although this is sometimes attributed as being 'natural' as these people are more likely to enjoy the same things and inevitably be working together in the first place. If material artefacts are desired, Dionisis, a dentist, informs me, he and his friends prefer to buy rare vinyl records or foreign antiques for personal consumption, rather than designer clothes and big cars to put on public display. He states that recreationally people "enjoy life" differently (cf. Tentori 1976:274). Dionisis claims that money is a by-product and a good education and an ambitious nature to succeed is what should be prioritised. The benefits of opening up political networks through education and employment can be enjoyed and political favours are commonplace. These enhance social standing in terms of reputation and

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[168] Familial reputation in Mediterranean societies has often been linked to the notion of honour (Campbell 1964, Sant Cassia 1991:11, Colclough 1992:63). Bourdieu attempted to show how honour could be understood as 'symbolic capital' (1977). According to Sant Cassia, on some levels honour can be "linked to material factors such as wealth, poverty etc." (1991:11).

[169] In terms of networks of relations, Narotzky (2004:57) defines social capital as "the importance of embeddedness … for successful economic organization". Thus economic development incorporates "noneconomic" social relations for the establishment of dynamic entrepreneurial practices.

reliability (and sometimes in terms of material rewards). It is important to note that the sense of internal competition between peers appears less of an issue within this social segment.

Yet even within the same social section there is a wide variety of status display. Yannis, a doctor, places significant prestige on the display of family heirlooms. He emphasises how inherited handmade rugs can be a signifier of status. As will become apparent, both Dionisis the dentist and Yannis the doctor generally agree as to the ways they display their wealth and status, but the means to do so are not monolithic.

Yannis, 63, is a prominent doctor and a self-proclaimed 'political consultant' to the town council. Nowadays he can be considered as being from one of the elite families in Trikala, what Lisón-Tolosana may term "a strong house" denoting a very well known family with a lot of possessions (1966:81). His wife, Maria, is a university professor and comes from a wealthy family with a good reputation. They live in the most prestigious neighbourhood in Trikala and the family own houses in their villages of origin in Greek Macedonia[170]. His medical practice is on Asklipiou, the central street in Trikala. Working for many years in the building industry as a contractor, Yannis' father also had 'his hand in' with local politics. He further owned many properties in Greek Macedonia. He was originally of Vlach origin, a fact that Yannis is very proud of and to which he attributes much of his success.[171]. Maria is a Karagouna and received a significant dowry (cf. Sant Cassia 2002 for the manipulation of a wealthy dowry for advantageous marriage). Her family's name, wealth and profession counterbalanced the fact that she was not of Vlach origin. Their son is a budding

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[170] As Sutton (1983:241) argues, migrants participating in rural-urban movements or relocations across significant geographical distances in Greece rarely sever their connections to their 'home area'. Often this connection entails maintaining houses and land in their home villages (1983:242).

[171] Vlachs in Trikala are often stereotyped as 'taking care of their own'. Furthermore, Vlach men are often required to marry women of the same cultural origins. Numerous are the cases in Greece where Vlach men who have gone against such family wishes, yet the partner is often rejected by the man's family. In one case a Vlach, Theodoros, has been married to a Karagouna woman for 35 years, yet she remains "*outside of the family*". If anything goes wrong in their lives or in their relationship the man is reminded that "*he should not have married a Karagouna, what did he expect. A Vlach woman would not behave like that*". For further discussion of stereotypes of Vlach populations in Greece see Cowan (2000).

local politician, now employed in the local council as an agricultural advisor, with a US university education to Masters level.

Yannis' father managed to accumulate significant monetary wealth over his lifetime when he eventually sold most of his property in Greek Macedonia. Yannis inherited most of the wealth due to the premature deaths of his two elder brothers (one of a childhood illness and the other of cancer). This money was primarily used to fund Yannis' university education and help set up a small practice in the town. Furthermore, Yannis was facilitated by his father's extensive contacts made whilst travelling around the local villages in the Trikala area and the clientelism of the closely knit Vlach community. He tells me that he "*fulfilled and surpassed*" his father's expectations and can only hope that his children will do the same for him.

> "I felt an increased obligation to my father, being the only surviving child … he wanted me to go to university, to be somebody, to be recognised … he was thinking of this, even though I was still so young … We had humble origins (referring to his grandparents and his parents), but I am lucky (he pauses) no, not so much lucky, we (him and his wife) worked hard for this. It didn't come from nowhere. My grandparents back in the mountains were quite poor and my father worked very hard to build up his business. After the tragedy with my brothers I was feeling that I needed to please my father, educate myself and become somebody in the town. I hope that my children will never face any hardship. This is what my wife and I are working for".

Similar to the case of Dionisis presented later in this chapter, Yannis has an idiosyncratic way to display his social status. Clearly belonging to the social elite of the town he claims:

> "I have great friends, a great reputation and I long for nothing (implying that he is financially secure) … I buy my cigars like any other man, I enjoy sampling other cultures and their cuisine, travelling when I can."

His house is furnished with plush inherited rugs and chandeliers and old handicraft pieces that have been passed down from both his and his wife's grandmothers. Many of these familiar 'positional goods' demarcate the fact that he has 'really made it' and not just buying into consumption patterns with borrowed credit. It is very important for him to display his colourful *kourelou* (rug) – a precious handicraft that his grandmother produced on her private loom. The inherited goods display the proud family history and connections to his village of origin in Greek Macedonia (cf. Mitchell 2002:95). He thrives in his position as medical consultant to the town council and his relatives and friends benefit from his contacts with top surgeons in Thessaloniki and Athens.

Yannis also insists that high education abroad – and as a result, occupation – is the key ingredient for success, status and social mobility. I ask him for his opinion of the people that 'throw their cash' (and the bank manger's cash) at expensive goods. "*This is a game*" he astutely replies. "*They try to out-do each other ... you have this watch so I must get one bigger ... they do not seem to worry about the consequences ... I wouldn't be able to sleep ...*" Yannis gives and receives strategic favours, and lets me understand that his son has got a prestigious post on the council at a young age as a result of a *chari* (favour) from one of his close friends (although he says that he would have got the position anyway in due course, it was just slightly 'hurried up'). He occasionally 'fixes' (meaning 'organises') some paperwork for his close friends[172] and has also used his position as a prominent member of the community to help get problems in his family's village fixed at short notice. Such was the case when some apparatus in the children's playground was broken or when persuading the council that a dangerous junction on the outskirts of the village needed to be altered. I was, on many occasions, a grateful recipient of contacts that I would

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[172] Colclough (1992) notes that in Pertosa, Italy, schoolteachers are often accused of 'buying' their teaching certificates. Both Yannis the doctor and Dionisis the dentist admit to 'organising' documents some of the time. Indeed, Campbell discusses how through strategic contacts at government institutions bureaucratic processes can be sped up (1964:98). To the extreme, it is not rare that degree certificates are 'bought' by Trikalinoi from Romanian and Bulgarian universities.

otherwise have struggled to gain access to and which allowed for, in Campbell's words, 'flexibility in the administrative machinery' (1964:247).

In the remainder of this chapter the differences between the multiple understandings of social status in Trikala will be illustrated through a series of ethnographic examples. This will take into consideration the incomplete and uneven capitalist penetration[173] in and around the town of Trikala and the subjective value criteria of the people under discussion. These status perceptions will be related to the intertwining of the traditional identifying factors of status and those encouraged through capitalism and mass-consumerism. It will be demonstrated how the opening of alternative socio-economic gateways to the 'unprofessional' sections of society in Trikala has meant that there is at least a two-fold understanding of social status at play in the town. The impact of ensuing economic crisis on the social groups will then be analysed. As Simmel (1978) has argued, the increasing individuation that money brings about results not just in the individual's independence of the group, (in this case an independence from the pre-existing patron-client systems in relation to material goods), and new forms of association, but the replacement of honorary prizes by monetary prizes as ultimate recognitions of achievement. He goes on to note the dual-relationship between how social systems change and 'men remain' and visa-versa thus leaving the actors with a duality of criteria by which to measure their achievements and aspirations (1978:353). Such has been the case in Trikala, even more so if the consequences of the change from times of economic prosperity to crisis are taken into consideration. In this case the social conditions have rather suddenly been drastically shifted, yet 'men remain' with the consequences of previous economic decisions. In line with Sant Cassia's argument (1991:15) that much of the Mediterranean is currently 'somewhat in between two types of social formations', such a dual relationship between capitalist criteria of social status and that of the 'traditional' has allowed for different sections of the Trikalini society to measure status by a multiplicity of

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[173] Like Crozier's (1964) discussion of bureaucracy, capitalism has certain 'bases' that are applied, constructed and re-constructed in different national and local contexts. It can also 'mean' different things to different people depending on multiple socio-cultural, political and geographical circumstances.

criteria and means that the consequences of economic crisis are not homogeneously experienced.

How perceptions of social status affect the capacity for social mobility as this is perceived as the direct result of accumulating status is also alluded to. Put bluntly, just because an individual can accumulate a relatively large amount of material wealth it is still difficult to become upwardly socially mobile through this alone, which again highlights the insufficiency of the class concept to define the complexity of the Greek social case. Although social status is now defined both in terms of *material* capital and *social* capital, mobility is still governed primarily by the pre-existing notion of patronage and socio-political networks. This is to say that money can only get you so far up the social ladder. Indeed, very often money and material wealth alone are not sufficient to move beyond one's original social group. Where as the availability of material artefacts has been fully penetrated by the capitalist system, the modes of advancing social position in relation to other 'sections' has yet to be so, thus illustrating the complexity and multi-faceted nature of Trikalini society between the classical definitions of 'tradition' and 'modernity' as defined in the works of scholars such as Sayer (1991).

Social arenas are not rigidly delineated and thus to a certain extent contain within them micro-strata of inferiority and superiority. This creates a sense of competitiveness on many levels. The outward display of money by the acquisition of material artefacts (Mitchell 2002:95) – such as purchasing status with cars and clothes – are not (to the greatest extent) symbols of social status and mobility across extensive inter-group social boundaries. This is because the value judgements placed on objects and display varies across the social strata.

Theoretical Ponderings

In terms of theoretical direction, the work of Simmel (1907, English translation 1978) will be considered alongside the theories of exchange, money and value proposed by Appadurai (1986). Through employing the theories of Simmel, Appadurai discusses the idea of the 'exchange of sacrifices' (Appadurai 1986:3). Through the exchange of sacrifices the distance[174] between the desired objects and the person who desires them can be overcome; "that is, one's desire for an object is fulfilled by the sacrifice of some other object, which is the focus of the desire of another" (ibid., Simmel 1978). In Trikala the distance between desired object, or indeed 'desired position' in relation to employment opportunities in particular, can be overcome through either the exchange of favours as in a patron-client relationship or on a capitalist consumer-orientated exchange basis.

The exchange of sacrifices fits in nicely with these overlapping economic systems. For those who do not prioritise equating material possessions to social status, exchanges of sacrifice may work along the lines of the following case in the context of Trikala.

An employee in a supermarket has a brother who is out of work. She has been an employee with the company for five years and has got to know some individuals in the management hierarchy[175]. She uses these contacts in order to get her brother a job in the supermarket, although there are no real 'vacancies' and he has no prior experience of this line of work. In return for giving him this opportunity – and one could argue that the manager underwent sacrifices both financially for unnecessarily employing the man and in terms of the quality of work – the woman provides her manager with an array of vegetables from her well-stocked garden. Although the employer is understood to have taken pity on her for her unfortunate social situation, it has also been suggested that she provided him with a financial contribution later on. The use of an employee's relationship with an individual in the managerial hierarchy in order to get their

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[174] It is interesting to note that Miller believes 'distance' to be a 'central element of modernity' (1995).

[175] Narotzky notes that acquiring jobs through friends or relatives can increases tensions between friends due to hierarchies of authority in the workplace (2006b:345).

brother a job overcomes the distance between desired position – that of employee – and the original position of being unemployed. In this case, a third party bridges the gap between position of desire and the person that desires it. The exchange is made two-way due to the obligations imposed on the woman (cf. Mauss 1954). She also feels obliged to be available to cover for other employees when they are unable to work. In the case of medical treatment a monetary sacrifice in the form of a '*fakeláki'* may always be more appropriate in order to bridge the distance between desired treatment and the person that desires it. Other exchanges may include using political networks in order to 'get jobs done' in return for votes or other 'favours' (cf. Boissevain 1966, Zinn 2001, Pipyrou 2010a) – once again the exchange of desired non-object 'things' that are valuable to the individual participants. In this sense one could argue for a 'commoditisation of services'. It has been noted that the 'value' of the 'things' desired by the exchanging parties is situationally relative and may be deemed illogical or unequal by the observer (cf. Simmel 1978:ch.1, Kopytoff 1986).

For some sections of Trikalini society material artefacts have become more and more desirable. These can only be gained through the 'sacrifice' of money for object; desires that can rarely be fulfilled through a patron-client system.[176] Money can be understood as both a medium of exchange and a measure of value, as regularly outlined since the classic work of Adam Smith (1982 [1776]).[177]

Many informants believe that there is little point having wealth if it is not demonstrated outwardly in terms of materialism "external appearances (of expenditure) become extremely important" (Hirschon 1989:226). The word 'sacrifice' takes on a multi-faceted dimension when it can be employed not only

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[176] Bloch and Parry have argued for the highly contextual understanding of money. They argue that money can be 'symbolically represented' and put the focus on the 'moral evaluation of monetary and commercial exchanges', although this does not exclude individual competition (1989:1). For Taussig, money is an abstract mediator that leads to 'objective value' in the form of established prices (1980:194), an idea that can be traced back to Marx (cf. Sayer 1991), for whom money is 'an eminently civilised vice' of the capitalist world (1858:155). However, for Schneider, money "is material, it is power, it is impersonal and unqualified by considerations of sentiment and morality"; it is seen as a polluting substance (1980:48, Carrier 1997:144).

[177] For Smith, money was useful as a common instrument of commerce due to its 'durability, divisibility, recognisability and trustability' (Narotzky 1997:59).

in the discussion of giving money for artefacts, but also to identify the sacrifice of basic standards of living in order to outwardly project the ability to demonstrate status through the purchase of often unnecessary objects. The use for such goods can be deemed 'rhetorical' and 'social' or as a 'register' for the ability for consumption (cf. Appadurai 1986:38). Objects are elevated within a socially formed sphere of desirability, wherein the perceived need for the object in question becomes completely undivided (Simmel 1978:65) and often with a basis illogical beyond the specific social arena. In relation to wedding celebrations, Argyrou discusses the work of Surridge in 1920s Cyprus; 'he found it difficult to come to terms with the fact that a people living at the brink of poverty squandered their resources to stage grand celebrations … "The very natural temptation to show off on these occasions and to pretend that their financial circumstances are better than those of their neighbors leads peasants to cripple themselves"' (Argyrou 1996:74). Interestingly, Surridge notes that up to sixty percent of the dowry was paid for by loans (ibid., Surridge 1930:25).

As demonstrated in this chapter by cases such as that of Eugenia, these exchanges of sacrifices generate economic and social value. Value is never an inherent property of objects, but is a judgement made about them by subjects (Simmel 1978:66-67, Appadurai 1986:3-4)[178]. The judgement made concerning social status by my informants affects the different value placed on a variety of economic activities. The judgement of sports cars and designer clothes equating to symbols of socio-economic status by some informants, makes these objects both socially and economically valuable within this community. The social value of such objects would be debateable within the sections of society that place higher value judgements on political networks and education (or indeed other 'artefacts' such as antiques, paintings or inherited rugs). Likewise, the value of exchanging money for education and the 'degree certificate' would not hold weight in other sections of society. In both cases Simmel's theory that economic value is generated by such exchange of sacrifices seems to be pertinent within specific groups of people with similar value judgements.

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[178] Simmel argues that the inability to access an object of desire endows it with a value disproportionate to the enjoyment it will bring due to the remoteness of the object. Thus value judgement is directly related to the desire to purchase (Simmel 1978:66-67).

In this sense, the mutual valuation of object value that Simmel deems to be sourced in exchange is assessed in value-specific social arenas. For example, the mutual valuation of material goods by people of the same social segment is assessed by publicly parading objects in certain social arenas thus creating a desire in others to partake in the sacrifice of exchange – if the objects are judged to have significant social or status value. The desires of others are played out in communal life and the display of objects allows the opportunity for physical impressions of others and the consequential evaluation of desires to originate from the observations of the external world (Simmel 1978:471). Although this assessment of value is never static as new, innovative objects enter the market and new desires and demands[179] are created, this system is in part self-reproducing as 'walking advertisements' for artefacts are evaluated within "specific cultural and historical milieus" (Appadurai 1986:4). This contextual valuation creates a space where exchangeability for some other thing becomes a "socially relevant feature" (ibid.:13). In this context everyday material experience generates the perceptual codes of 'elemental historical creation' (Seremetakis 1994:12). Elements of material possessions find expression in everyday life since the latter is "a privileged site of political colonization" where agents can formulate their new identities and collective perceptions of the material (ibid.:13). Going beyond Appadurai's discussion of advertisement in terms of 'textual and graphic images' (1986:55), the mutual observation of the objects on show from others that belong to the same social arenas means that the objects become not only desirable, but "reachable". In the public domain actions constitute 'informing spirits' that pervade the experience of life within the group and facilitates the flow of social exchanges (Bell 1994:52-54). Thus the impulse that Simmel discusses of facing financial uncertainty in return for material purchase is at least partially socially created and endorsed. During times of prosperity in Trikala from the mid-nineteen-nineties until 2008, these financial uncertainties seemed a small sacrifice to make in return for desirable goods.

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[179] I follow in the line of Appadurai and his argument that demand emerges "as a function of a variety of social practices and classifications rather than a mysterious emanation of human needs, a mechanical response to social manipulation … , or the narrowing down of a universal and voracious desire for objects to whatever happens to be available" (1986:29).

In addition to the advertising of value through public displays of artefacts, an extra element of advertising commodities as being of social or status value is through gossip[180]. The power of people to use words to put value on objects should not be underestimated and gossip could be deemed as another form of public display. In Trikala I was constantly confronted by people all too willing to inform me about Mr X's latest acquisitions, or communicating their utter disbelief at the apparent disregard shown to money by Mrs Y when purchasing something for her grandson. This was usually accompanied by the underlying desire to obtain a similar 'thing' for oneself and sometimes a projection of mock distain for the irresponsible transactions of others.

In Livadi, on the outskirts of Trikala, people seemed to know all the details of each other's most recent economic activities in regards to material objects, whilst gossip concerning economic and political activity was also encountered on a nigh daily basis. In the town bars the conversation would often start with the phrase '*did you know ...*' and the discussion would incorporate the details of the recent exotic holiday of a mutual acquaintance. In each case, one may pay no attention to the information gathered if it is not relevant to the criteria that is set in one's own social arenas, or conversely – as was usually the case – choose to act upon the information received. This helps feed the 'tournaments of consumerism' discussed later in this chapter.

The different criteria of what constitutes social value and status value set by my two groups of informants discussed in this chapter govern the exchangeability of commodities, artefacts and services. Indeed, Appadurai notes that in an intra cultural setting there can be "deeply divergent perceptions of value" taking place within "regimes of value" (1986:14-15). However, in both the cases of material and non-material exchanges the consumer, in order to purchase the goods and

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[180] Gossip should also be understood as a socially accepted, and arguably necessary, form of 'padding' employed during utilitarian conversation and information exchange. It helps build the relationship between those exchanging utilitarian information and such 'unnecessary information exchanges' help the cohesion between the exchanging parties, not only at the time of one single conversation, but also in reference to past and future encounters. On a slightly different note, gossip as a form of advertisement could be viewed as an equivalent to product placement advertisements in films. People are requested to buy into ideas and rhetorics concerning a product – in this case the person/persons and their activities – alongside the 'plot' of everyday utilitarian narratives.

services desired, must first purchase access to the transaction (Kopytoff 1986:73) – be it through taking out a substantial bank loan or partaking in a patron-client relationship.

'Show Me the Money': cars, clothes and holidays as social status

As mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, depending on the group in question, the criteria by which people in Trikala gauge social status varies. For those who may be considered, according to my informants, as belonging to the 'lower section' of society – subsistence farmers, taxi drivers, cleaners, manual labourers and part-time workers – money and material possessions are what categorise social position. Christina, a shop owner in Trikala, told me that "*money (*lefta*) is everything, without money you are nobody, you cannot exist*". It is the outward display of this wealth that is of social importance and this was in part what Christina was referring to.

Through a range of ethnographic examples the parameters by which Trikalinoi in the 'lower section' of society understand and play-out social status in relation to various forms of social activity and materialistic consumption will be explored[181] (cf. Hobsbawm 1981, Colclough 1992:61). This activity, Bennison suggests, is a result of the steady increases in real incomes for the majority of the Greek population since 1951. As incomes grow an increased amount is available for the purchase of manufactured goods (1979:446). This has been more recently coupled with the substantial loaning of money from third-party institutions.

One of my key informants, Lakis, 32, a waiter in a bar, among many others, often stressed to me the importance of "*money, designer clothes and a great car … then in Trikala you have everything, you are someone. You are noticed and have credibility*". It became a recurring theme that the car and the clothes[182]

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[181] See further Hobsbawm (1981) for a discussion of how people have come to understand consumption as an identifier of social segmentation and stratification.

[182] Friedl has noted as early as the 1950s that clothing "signifies a family's degree of modernity" (1962:44) a point that Hirschon reiterates (1989:226-227). Bell (1994:28) has referred to the fact that cars can be symbols of status identification in a British context.

were status symbols for men of all ages. *"It does not matter where the money came from to get the Mercedes. You may have to return it in six months because you cannot repay the loan, but you have a Mercedes and people see that ... I can walk up to any bar on any night and choose which girl I want to pick up. They see the style, I flash my money and I get the girl. I am better than her boyfriend that only has a donkey!"* I asked him if there was much competitiveness between his friends and acquaintances to surpass each other in terms of material status symbols. The response was affirmative; *"I know I am better than him. I have the charm, but really they think I have the money. When someone passes me on Asklipiou they think, 'that is Lakis I want to be like him'"*.

Lakis was not alone in his perception of 'buying status'. Among my male informants of this social sector it was specifically the car – the make, the customisation and the noise – that were at the forefront of their search for social credibility. Most were bought with substantial bank loans and were not kept for more than a few months before the repayments surpassed the financial capability of the owner. Tassos and Apostolis, introduced in the opening narrative, were both single men who prioritised the purchase of their most cherished possession; the car. Apostolis took out a bank loan to import his car, partially in response to his best friend, Tassos, purchasing a BMW. The car modification business is also very significant in Trikala where mechanics make a living by modifying and customising normal road cars to increase speed, volume and aesthetically enhance the vehicle. As Sakis, a mechanic with a private garage, tells me, *"the only problem is that we have far too many of these places competing for custom in Trikala. I know another ten garages just from my group of friends"*. The car then represents a conquering of previous socio-economic constraints. As a machine it is an extension of the ego. The ideals of both are a cultural construction; the machine stressing the mastery of social surroundings which previously regulated certain groups of people (Serres 1995a:140-141)[183].

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[183] Many people were also very interested in what cars my family owned. To my surprise, a Rover and a Vauxhall was seen as rather prestigious, mainly due the former's relationship to MG and the fact that Opels (Vauxhalls) are not readily available in rural Greece.

From the above narrative of Lakis, the comparison of having a car better than the boyfriend's donkey is striking. Lakis himself comes from a family of agriculturalists that reside in a village five miles from Trikala. As with the majority of his fellow village residents, his family were using animals to cultivate the land up until the late 1960s when a communal tractor was purchased (cf. Layton 2000)[184]. He believes that his jet-black Mercedes gives him a status that others desire, but ultimately fail, to compete with. His friends also aspire to the same material status that was generally lacking from his parents' generation. The objects are put on display in the centre of Trikala as he sips his *frappé* and watches the world go by from behind his dark sunglasses. He is not alone on Asklipiou, the cafeterias would often be full to bursting point during 2008 – an observation that was contrary to the general rhetoric of a declining economic situation in the town – with the majority of people between the ages of eighteen and thirty, but also up to the age of fifty, highly-groomed and basking in the morning sun or partially hidden in the midst of the late evening shadows. The conversation is often based on observations about others in the vicinity[185].

According to Appadurai, exchanges – in this case exchanges of symbols of status between individuals – can turn into 'tournaments of value' whereby status, rank, fame or reputation of actors and social prestige are being transacted (1986:21)[186]. These transactions are usually in terms of material goods – with no actor wanting to be surpassed in his material offerings. Appadurai talks of

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[184] In the village of Livadi there is still a set of communal farming equipment stored on the edge of the village. As well as two tractors there is a small plough, a baler, large trailer and numerous other accessories to which approximately ten individuals have regular access. In the context of rural France, Layton (2000) extensively documents the purchase and access to communal farming machinery which began to increase throughout the 1950s and 1960s. Often agricultural activity took place through co-operatives so as to manage communal pasture (still a feature of the villages around Trikala), stud bulls, and agricultural machinery (2000:96). Agricultural co-operatives operate around Trikala, especially in relation to the harvest, storage and distribution of cereals.

[185] In my experience of central Greece, Tentori's (1976:274) observations of an Italian community where the upper section of society "was characterized by the possibility of enjoying idleness" does not hold strong. In Trikala it was the young generation of what in Tentori's language would be deemed the 'peasants' that were prone to being idle and living off the loans from their parents. Most weekdays the cafeterias of the central street, Asklipiou were packed full of young men and women of working age, posing in the morning sunshine.

[186] Appadurai uses the case of the Trobriand Kula exchange system to illustrate this point (cf. Appadurai 1986:18-21).

'tournaments of value' taking place periodically and the participants being 'privileged'. In the case of Trikala 'tournaments of value' are ongoing events open to all social actors sharing the same criteria of 'value'. Although the term 'tournaments of value' could well be employed to describe the social processes at play in Trikala, perhaps a variation of the term is more appropriate – namely, 'tournaments of consumerism'. This is more appropriate when discussing the purchasing of social prestige in Trikala. The actual ability to engage in consumerism is as important, if not more so, than the inherent value of the object purchased – a point alluded to by Hirschon when she discusses how financial power must be "shown by expenditure, particularly on consumer goods" as the "external appearances" are of great import (1989:226). Therefore the social value stems originally from the ability to partake in the consumerist transaction in the first place – an ability that is oblivious by choice to the necessary subsidies required to facilitate the transaction. Yet this does not render *all* objects inserted into space and time meaningful in this context (Seremetakis 1994, Pipyrou 2005). It must be strongly emphasised that by making this distinction not all objects belong to the sphere of capitalist consumerism and social value is played out on many levels simultaneously – a specific social arena is referred to. In a Greek context the traditional dowry and trousseau[187] would be an example of this incompatibility with a tournament of consumerism (cf. Seremetakis 1991, 1994, Sant Cassia and Bada 1992, Pipyrou 2005).

The tournament could be played out in the cafeterias of Asklipiou, through the gossip in the village shop, or at the *pista karta* (go-kart race track) to name but a few overlapping arenas. In the first location – that of Asklipiou – the competition is usually direct, observable and stimulated by the presence of the material goods. The second situation – that of gossip concerning mutual acquaintances – has multiple locations and does not require the presence of the actor or the artefacts under discussion. The third example, that of the *pista karta*, is the one I wish to discuss further at this point as it is an interesting and illustrative context where ideas of social networks and tournaments of consumerism are highly visible.

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[187] The trousseau can consist of linen, handicrafts, clothes, loomed carpets etc.

The *pista karta* is a small race track on the north-western outskirts of Trikala, just off the main Trikala-Kalampaka road. Here a group of men, and the occasional woman, gather up to three times a week – and always on a Sunday – to drive their modified cars. The cars are entered into races all over Thessaly and many of the men work as mechanics and technicians on cars that are entered into the national championships. Angelos, aged 36, is one such person. He partially owns an old red 1970s Vauxhall which is driven by his friend Lakis (of above narrative fame), aged 32. The men are often accompanied by numerous young ladies in their early twenties who live in the Trikala area. On Sundays the gathering sometimes becomes more family-orientated as many of the men are accompanied by wives, girlfriends or children. There is a cafeteria, viewing balcony, children's playground and free rides on the petrol go-karts for the children. First the background of my relationship with Angelos and his obsession with cars and their outward status symbolism needs to be outlined before going on to discuss our experiences at the *pista karta*.

Angelos' car is his pride and joy. As a mechanic he devotes much of his spare time to 'doing-up' his 1990s Ford Escort. It now has a large spoiler, alloys, hand-made large exhaust pipes and racing wheel-arches, red brake disks and a rally-car interior. The bonnet has a large picture of a caricature animal advertising his mechanics company, with a slogan propagating his hand-made car parts. He takes great pride in driving around Trikala with his dark sunglasses on … with his wife and two-year-old daughter in the back. One evening Angelos, who lives in the centre of Trikala, came to Livadi to drop off some melons for his mother. He arrived in Eugenia's car, a small white Nissan Micra, which he had borrowed earlier in the day. He then had the idea that we ought to go and buy *spatula*, a syrupy Greek sweet. Angelos insisted that the best *spatula* was to be found in Kalampaka, but in order to go there he would have to drive back to Trikala (10 minutes in the opposite direction) in order to drive to Kalampaka in his beloved Ford. When I asked why, he excitedly exclaimed, "*what if someone sees us. I can't be seen in that car, vvvrrrooommm vvvrrrooommm* (imitates the engine noise of his Ford) *I will lose all credibility, no one will come to my shop anymore*". Angelos returned thirty minutes later in

his Ford. At 9pm we were driving in the dark with the window down and sunglasses on in order to purchase some *spatula*[188].

In an intriguing episode Angelos took me to the *pista karta* which he frequents twice a week to "have fun". This is his main arena of socialisation outside of work. On the way he informed me that "*tha kanoume plaka stin pista*" (literally, "*we will 'make fun' at the race track*"). It became apparent that Angelos wanted to exhibit me to his friends – and rivals – as an anthropologist who had an uncle in England who is one of the top mechanics. Therefore, Angelos told me, I must 'play-along'. Evidently, my lack of knowledge on the mechanics of automobiles deemed it impossible for me to have a father as a top mechanic, so an uncle would have to do. I had to tell them, he said, that I could get anything for Angelos from England and that I have come to see the cars and how they compare with those in England – and how they can be improved. I intriguingly agreed to 'play along', but told him that I needed to state that I myself was an anthropologist doing fieldwork. He agreed.

Angelos wanted to show that I had 'connections' and that I could help him get parts from England. This was supposed to make his rivals envious. Not only did Angelos have connections in England – itself a highly prestigious asset in such circles – but, according to Angelos, I was there to 'assess' their performance and report back on their success, or lack of it, to my influential uncle. By offering Angelos to become a client through my family connections, he would gain prestige. As it turned out this was not much further from the truth as Angelos utilised his friendship with me in order to order car parts from an English supplier on three separate occasions during my stay. This started with an internet search and a telephone call from Trikala to East Anglia and ended with an insight into the Greek banking system. In this relationship it is interesting to note that we both utilised our 'contacts', the global information service and a multi-national shipping corporation to supply his self-employed mechanics garage. Angelos' plan worked, to an extent, as his fellow competitors were eager

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[188] Angelos has bought an old car for his two year old daughter. He plans to 'do it up' over the next ten years in order for her not to have that expense. Of course, it is another Ford.

to talk to me and find out more about the role of my uncle. He was keen to keep the story believable and not to over-elaborate the points that seemed implausible.

The competition in material artefacts can therefore be developed into a competition for social networks. In the same way that cars and clothes – or Kula shells as Appadurai discusses (1986:18-21) – are displayed in a tournament-style setting, so too are the other non-visible perceptions of social status such as networks. The competition is rife at the *pista karta*. Angelos moans about the lack of financial support in the form of advertising – only Billy has this privilege due to his brother being the area manager of a well-known bathroom sales company. Although the competition between material possessions was on show in the form of the cars, on this occasion Angelos wanted to demonstrate the fact that he has more useful social networks than his fellow racers. This linked back to the materiality through the emphasis on him being able to gain access to good quality 'racing gear' that the others could not purchase. On top of that Angelos emphasised the cheap price at which he could purchase his parts and that he would not have to save up (or more likely to take a loan) like Billy or Sakis (both drivers at the *pista karta*). On this occasion there is a significant overlapping of the consumerist desires for material goods and the prestige emphasised on the social network itself, however the network was always referred to by Angelos in terms of access to material artefacts to further his own social prestige. The fact that he could get a special price for otherwise expensive hardware was another key aspect; his consumerism was not restricted by money.

Connections are highly prized assets within Angelos' circle of friends. The reasoning is twofold; it is considered that knowing the right people is the primary way to enhance one's own position and connections to foreign bodies – and especially to businesses in England – which are highly desirable and often quite inaccessible to people in this sector of society. Secondly, the networks themselves provide access to privileged material goods that bring social status and prestige to the individual outside of the manner of purchase as it is difficult to compete with objects to which one does not have access. In this case Angelos would have won the tournament of consumerism as it was impossible for his

friends to acquire the same goods due to their lack of connections. This highlights how Angelos' social activities lead to the regard of certain objects and connections as valuable and ideal. Instrumentalist friendships – although these friendships are often formed on the basis of, or acquire over time, emotional frameworks (cf. Papataxiarchis 1991, Pipyrou 2010a) – are indicators of the ability to further oneself. Among my 'upper section' informants such relationships are understood as the *par-excellence* unit by which they define themselves and by which the actor could enhance social standing and reputation. Although it is widely accepted that such relationships exist across the board in Trikala, according to my 'professional' informants, such socio-political networks are more meaningful in their circles because they are often constructed with influential council members, politicians and other professionals. Thus any personal advantage resulting from such relationships is likely to have greater significance to their everyday lives. Yet Angelos' desire to show to his fellow competitors that he too had significant social networks was driven much less by the desire to equate himself to a different social arena – for this he does not much care – but to demonstrate the ability to purchase unique goods at special prices through a network that nobody else at the *pista karta* had access to. This type of social network is not durable in times of economic crisis as the service offered by its appropriation is based on the availability of investment capital. Whilst the concept of being linked to prestigious people in foreign countries may still bring prestige, utilising these connections in a practical sense is not possible. Indeed, Angelos has now stopped ordering any new car parts from England, a source which brought him much prestige, due to the economic conditions in Greece and through a fear for the sustainability of his private business.

At the *pista karta* I also met Marianna, a young lady aged eighteen. She told me that she had studied seven years of English in school but hardly spoke a word; only "sorry" in a Californian accent. Her nails were long and black with the tarr of cigarettes. I found the opportunity to engage in some explanatory conversation concerning my research in Greece. Over the course of five hours I learnt that she is, supposedly, working in logistics in the family firm but states that she is *"bored to work"* ("*variemai na doulepso*"). She currently spends most

of her time at home, watching television, smoking and drinking coffee – and not bothering to turn up for work. Nevertheless, she insists that she wants to one day own a Porsche Carrera, at least £30,000 worth. I asked how she plans to get the money for her aspiration. The response is along the lines of "*a miracle or win the lotto*". She expects that I work a lot for my doctorate and is in disbelief as to how anyone would want to work so much.

Most of the spectators at the race track are employed as mechanics or car salesmen, live in villages around the periphery of Trikala, and are uneducated beyond secondary school[189]. Many wear leather jackets adorned with race and manufacturer logos, but not sponsors. They take much pride in their clothing and the jackets are admired in conversation[190]. The outward appearance was obviously extremely important. The competition in the banter off the track was more intense than the competition on it, for they were all very respectful and protective of each other on the track. This was demonstrated on such occasions as when a tyre is seen to be shredding, a faster car wants to overtake, someone loses control temporarily, or, such as on one occasion, someone's scarf gets caught around the wheel. At a later date there was great hilarity when Lakis crashed his old Vauxhall into the telephone pylon at the track whilst trying to chat-up the female passenger. The car was a write-off but, Lakis exclaims proudly, "*the telephones in the village had interference on the line for 15 years. The company would not do anything about it. Now they are perfect, so clear – thanks to me*". The pylon remains to this day at a 45° angle.

Cars and clothes are the material artefacts that denote status to some members of Trikalini society. It does not matter how they are acquired, as long as one can display them to others. Another purchase that Stella, my travel agent friend, insisted is part of the perceived social status is holidays. Over the course of my fieldwork it became apparent that holidays were an explicit example of how social status is gauged through the ability to engage in capitalist consumerism.

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[189] The exception to the aforementioned demographic is Sakis. Sakis, 55, is a teacher from Trikala who contributes some money to the running of the cars on race days.
[190] Friedl notes that clothing "signifies a family's degree of modernity" (1962:44).

Perhaps in this context the term 'tournament' is at its most pertinent to the informants themselves.

Stella is 27 years old and moved to Trikala nine years ago from Germany (via three years in Thessaloniki)[191]. Her grandparents were originally from Trikala and after much resistance her parents, presently residing in Germany, funded her to set up a travel agency in the town. She takes great pride in being Greek, but "*not as Greek as the locals*" as she claims. Every day at 4pm Stella has a tea break. She purchases tea in Germany on her return visits and invites employees from the neighbouring shops to join her at 4pm for tea and cake. She was very excited about sharing this with an Englishman as she equated it to the practice of English aristocracy. Tea in rural Greece is more usually equated with illness, thus in Stella's case tea is another context shifting marker where the meaning of a cultural practice is shifted away from immediate collective assumptions. The 4pm tea break formed the basis for an enduring friendship in the field.

Concerning the expensive and exotic holidays, I asked her how, when I am constantly told that the Trikalinoi have no money, there is appalling unemployment and everything is so expensive (this is the rhetorical stance even in times of prosperity), can people afford to book such holidays (in exotic destinations including five stars hotels and yacht vacations), who books them, to where and for what reason?

> "It is what people in Trikala do Daniel … They want to compete with each other. It is not the wealthy people, the people with money and good jobs that book these types of holidays. Many people get loans to go to such places. Loans are so easy to get from the bank now, for anything – to improve the house, go on holiday or buy a car; people forget that you have to pay them back. They don't think about that. Their friend goes to Dubai and tells everyone about it. The next person then wants to go somewhere better, more exotic and further away, so they go to the Maldives (a favourite among the Trikalinoi). They return

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[191] It is now commonplace that second or third generation immigrants return to their towns of family origin in Greece to set up small businesses (Hart 1992:70).

and tell their friends. The next person then either wants to go to the same place, the Maldives, or somewhere more exotic, like Mauritius. They try to outdo each other. To be able to say that they have been there. For no other reason. That is why Trikala is such a good place to have a travel agency. That is why there are so many here[192]. I worked in a travel agency in Thessaloniki and it was totally different. Thessaloniki is a big place and people don't speak to each other so much. Here everyone knows each other and try to go 'one higher' than the people they know. Also, in Thessaloniki the attitude is different. They are not so competitive. Exotic holidays are not a way of showing that you have money, here they most certainly are. That is one of the main reasons that I decided to set up my business in Trikala … People don't even know why they are going, what they are going to do when they get there or even where the place is … for example …

"I had a woman that came in the other day who wanted to go to Java. I said 'why do you want to go to Java? That is unusual'. She replied that her friend had just come back from Java, was talking about how wonderful it was and now she wanted to go too. I asked, 'what do you want to do in Java?' The woman replied that she did not know what she wanted to do in Java, she did not know what there *was* to do in Java, but she wanted to go, she was sure. "It is not far, I want to go there" she insisted. "Ok", I said, "do you know where Java is?" "No", the woman replied, so I had to get out the map to show her. She still booked a two-week package holiday to Java. I really don't know what she is going to do when she gets there!

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[192] Stella tells me that the competition is fierce, with 30 travel agencies in central Trikala, 25 dealing mainly in domestic and foreign coach travel – a Greek favourite – and five dealing in a variety of travel. In recent years the encroachment of transnational companies offering convenient travel at competitive prices has affected the local businesses but not to the extent that the growth of hypermarkets has similarly altered the food retail sector in the major urban centres (cf. Boutsouki and Bennison 1999:98). This is mainly because, Stella tells me, Greeks still feel more confident booking with Greek operators at short notice, rather than with budget companies in advance. Also, the fact that Trikala does not have an airport means that cheap flights are not as appealing to the locals as they would be, lets say, to inhabitants of Thessaloniki.

"The other type of competition where people have to go one better than their friends is for 'cultural' destinations. If someone goes to Paris, their friend wants to go to London. *Their* friend then wants to go to New York. Only for the weekend or four days. In Thessaloniki it was only the wealthy people that wanted to do this. May be that is why it is so popular here now, to say "I am going to London"".

In her narrative Stella refers to the role played by face-to-face relations in increasing competition between her customers. 'If one person goes to Dubai, their friend wants to go to the Maldives' she says[193]. For Stella the size of the town and the ability to 'be seen' and communicate the fact that you have been on holiday to Dubai plays a crucial role in this competition for prestige. A similar phenomenon occurs when walking through Trikala with Lakis, the waiter. He seems to know every other person he sees and we had always to stop on multiple occasions to greet people and exchange news. There is the inherent knowledge that any information exchanged will be passed on to other people in the same village or neighbourhood and thus be circulated to other members outside of the immediate community (du Boulay 1974, Zinovieff 1991). This is another form of advertisement for the social desirability of consumer goods.

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[193] I was once privileged to accompany 43 mainly elderly residents of Livadi and neighbouring Agios Georgios on a coach excursion to Arachova and Delphi in February. Arachova has many prestigious connotations as being the ski resort of choice for many famous Athenian actors and politicians. Delphi and the ancient Temple of Apollo is one of the most famous sites of Ancient Greece. At Delphi the villagers were allotted one hour to look around the museum. Within 20 minutes they were sat back down in the coach waiting for the lone Englishman, myself, to emerge a lonely figure from the building. "*We are not interested in such things*" I was told, "*all these small artefacts*". This was obviously the case as one gentleman insisted on flicking a 3000 year old bronze pot which he found to make a rather amusing noise. On returning to the bus the driver announced that there was no need to see the ancient Sanctuary as it was "*just a lot of stones that you can see from the bus*". After a brief lunch break in the village of Arachova, where only two people of the party chose to visit the main feature of the village – a wonderfully restored church – the coach proceeded to battle its way through the snow for four hours to reach the peak of the 2500 metre mountain just as it was getting dark. After admiring the skiers for 10 minutes and refusing a coffee due to the extortionate prices, the coach set off back down the mountainside. The villagers then took great enjoyment from passing comment on the unacceptable nature of all the expensive private houses on the mountainside and collectively worrying about possible attack by bears. The new houses with large gardens were seen as inappropriate and all foreign tourism was collectively denounced. We left Trikala at 7am and returned at 1am due to problems getting stuck in the snow; however we could all say that we had been to 'see' both Delphi and Arachova and all those expensive houses.

The topic of loans in order to purchase often expensive items has been brought up by both Lakis and Stella. In the theoretical introduction to this chapter it was noted that the desire for such items often resulted in informants placing themselves in positions of financial uncertainty. They often lost the control over their own financial assets. It was noted that this went beyond the natural impulses suggested by Simmel and were, at least partially, socially created and endorsed. Loans are difficult to repay and one's money is often at the discretion of the bank – the ultimate 'faceless party'. Furthermore, the repayment of loans has put a great deal of tension on family relations, as the first people to turn to at a time of financial difficulty are the parents, who in turn feel an obligation to rise to the request and make 'sacrifices' (in another sense of the term) in order to facilitate this[194]. The desire for expensive items in this context directly relates to Simmel's theorisation that a person becomes 'completely concerned by the satisfaction' of the desire and pays little or no attention to the economic consequences of the transaction (1978:65). The actors are fully immersed into the tournament of consumerism.

In relation to this point I would like to once again refer to the work of Argyrou in Cyprus. Argyrou discusses the 'big-spenders' (*fouartas*) – the display of money and the demonstration of 'the power to purchase' – as another aspect of understanding how the social persona is cultivated through such actions. These actions were made by 'any man who respected himself and expected to be respected' (Argyrou 1996:74). The rhetoric of the 'big-spenders' is that "money is for spending" although Argyrou relates this stance to the concept of 'the good heart' and the social stigma of being 'stingy'. For Argyrou, Cypriot weddings were the ideal opportunities for the 'big-spenders' to practice and display their generosity. This example illustrates the alternate meaning of the term 'sacrifice' as mentioned in the introduction to this chapter through the ethnographic example of Surridge and the significant loans taken out for Cypriot weddings and their accompanying dowries (1930). Nowadays, Argyrou notes, 'big-spending' is "antagonistic and competitive and largely determined by what

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[194] I was to find out that as money became more readily available for the general population, especially the 'lower section' of society, it was reinvested into the children of the family by paying for material goods rather than in long-term financial arrangements.

one's peers do and how much they spend … If others persist in staging grand weddings despite the costs involved, then, one has no option but to follow suit" (1996:97). This is an observation that I believe sits well with my argument for competitive consumerism in Trikala during times of prosperity.

Status and Prestige through Generations, Reputation and Social Networks

As previously mentioned, the social values that are believed to denote status and prestige among the 'upper section' of Trikalini society include familial reputation and the construction and reaffirmation of status over generations[195]. A brief theoretical background to the generational approach is required. This is followed by a variety of ethnographic cases of how some Trikalinoi have built up social status – and indeed mobility – based on reputation or through education, employment and 'good character' over the course of many years[196]. Thus social status is accumulated and stabilised, enhanced or even downgraded over time.

In his work in central Spain Lisón-Tolosana (1966) has broadly defined generations as[197];

> "an age-group of men and women who share a common mode of existence or concept of life, who assess the significance of what happens to them at a given moment in terms of a common fund of conventions and aspirations" (1966:180)

Lisón-Tolosana argues that through the sharing of time and a 'common image of the world and of life' people create and are conditioned by ideas and attitudes constituting 'the fundamental nerve of a generation'. Thus every individual, regardless of age, that adheres to the aforementioned way of life belongs to the same generation (ibid., cf. Kertzer 1983, Loizos 2007). He makes a striking

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[195] The building of both economic and social capital over generations has been understood as a key aspect of social stratification in Britain (cf. Bell 1994:39-40, Strathern 1981, 1992).

[196] In the context of Italy, those members at the 'top' of the social ladder are select families known as the *signori* (Silverman 1975:88, Tentori 1976:274, Colclough 1992:61, White 1980). The *signori* are highly educated and are employed as the doctors, lawyers, teachers and government officials within a community. These people and those of a slightly lower socio-economic position, the *mastri*, have the greatest access to the political arena and the local councils, so therefore often act as patrons.

[197] Also see Loizos (2007) and Kertzer (1983) for definitions of 'generations' and the analytical problems this term may cause.

point that this refers to 'social generation' and not necessarily 'biological generation'. This is especially interesting when considering social status as constructed generationally. Lisón-Tolosana explicitly notes that a generation is directly affected by both the "cultural legacy" of former generations and "the new contribution or contributions" of the members of the current generation (Lisón-Tolosana 1966:181). Political ideologies and social position may be inherited through generations and result in certain individuals occupying positions of governmental power not usually associated with their biological age. When discussing social economics in a rural Greek context it must be noted that socio-economic change over time has been dramatic. Lisón-Tolosana notes that in Spain the 'declining generation' can remember when money was rare and most transactions were by barter (ibid.:182, Humphrey and Hugh-Jones 1992, La Pradelle 2006). This image of time and economic conditions goes a way to the understanding of how indiscriminate loaning[198] of money by banks in Trikala has opened the door to social sectors who have not inherited social-economic position through the generations to a new dynamic way of acquiring social status within their community. When entangled with the history of economic crisis in the region it is clear that access to new channels of money is an enticing prospect. It may also suggest as to why the 'upper sections' negotiate their status identity in accordance to codes/attributes that are not accessible to the 'lower sections'. This is to say that people cannot simply purchase a social history of status, yet the dynamics of capitalism allow for them to represent status through a different set of codes that are meaningful to them in the present. The legacy of generational social status has been formed from within a time where consumerism was not the merchandise of status. Both material and non-material aspects of inheritance can be understood as opposed to economic individuality by tying the individual to a sequence of generations with moral and social obligations (Simmel 1978:354)[199]. In this respect a reverse aspect of the (im)moral economy comes to the fore where accumulation and

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[198] According to Lisón-Tolosana (1966:191), the attitudes towards loaning money from banks are directly related to the world view of different generations. Such generational attitudes towards economics shape the types of transactions on a local scale and furthermore affects other social dynamics such as kinship relations and the division of labour (ibid.:192).

[199] Simmel notes that family continuity has always been the objective of Greek aristocracy, especially in relation to inheritance. Furthermore, he suggested that in ancient Greece to sell inherited property was a violation of the ancestors (1978:353).

preservation is prioritised, yet often entailed with patronage, favour exchange, bribery in the form of *fakelákia* and social prioritisation (in terms of being given precedence and flexibility when dealing with banks, schools or local government officials).

In Trikala, if one's family has been in a position of power in terms of socio-political administration or professional respectability for generations – on the council to borrow Lisón-Tolosana's example – then one's networks (and hence the family networks) reach to areas such as medicine, teaching and politics. These networks, if maintained, are part of the non-material inheritance and can be modified, enhanced or erased accordingly over time.

Capitalism (hand in hand with processes of globalisation and transnational policy) has helped develop rich political and economic networks to encompass an even more diverse social and geographical spectrum[200]. These networks can be maintained for future generations. Kamaras argues that in a capitalist Greek context "networks that link firms and connect persons across them … (in such networks) the unit of entrepreneurship is not the isolated individual but networks of actors … (while networks) are not simply resources of the past but can serve as resources of the future" (2001:2-3). Economic networks can thus be formed on nearly every level of the social stratification, yet the types and socio-political influences of such networks varies greatly across the board (cf. Simmel 1978). Thus capitalism has added another line to the already dense Greek entrepreneurial web and has inherently been incorporated into pre-existing notions of inheritance. Traditional patronage networks have been enhanced and expanded through late capitalist enterprise.

Case.1: Dionisis the Dentist

Dionisis, 60, is a prominent dentist in Trikala. I built up a relationship with Dionisis over the period of a few years. He has a well rounded figure and sports a bushy jet-black handlebar moustache and a large mass of curly black hair. He

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[200] Kamaras (2001) discusses the socio-economic networks of Greek business entrepreneurs in the Balkan region.

owns a third floor surgery on Asklipiou – the central street of the town. He gained his degree from the University of Thessaloniki and has been practicing dentistry for thirty years. He is the son of a well-known builder – the occupation that was the pride of his provincial village. His wife, Eleuteria, 58, is also from a family of labourers and is a beautician with a university education. She owns a studio next door to Dionisis' surgery. They have three sons, all educated in British universities. His house is in a sought-after suburb of Trikala and is furnished elaborately inside with chandeliers and Persian carpets. Dionisis' external display of wealth is very limited. He told me that he does not care for clothes or cars, as they are a waste of money … "*look at me*" he exclaims "*imagine me driving round in one of those cars*". He owns an old battered red Nissan and prefers to collect rare antiques and records. When asked whether his friends are pursuing similar hobbies he informed me that his social circles are usually with doctors, politicians or professionals, therefore their hobbies would inevitably be similar. When questioned about 'political favours' he says that he is often asked to use his contacts to help his friends and relatives. He does not always say 'yes' however – it depends on the circumstances. He rarely uses his socio-political networks for people that he does not know. On numerous occasions he put me in contact with teachers, doctors and university professors with 'inside knowledge'. Once he called the curator of the local archives centre, informed her that I would be around 'immediately' and to give me any help that I desire. Dionisis told me that he obviously wants the best for his family and friends, thus he will do anything to help them (including financially) if they present a good case. Some *hares* ('favours') may include the writing of official 'papers' and references or putting in a 'good word' to help someone gain a job.

His obsession is education. Apart from his own specific university education, he is highly informed on many academic topics. During my visit in September 2008 he was halfway through reading Jane Cowan's (1990) ethnography '*Dance and the Body Politic in Northern Greece*' and is always willing to engage in anthropological and philosophical debate. On my first visit he almost seemed apologetic that he was a dentist and emphasised his childhood aspiration to be a philosopher – but that was not deemed economically plausible at the time of his university education. I was often questioned about the academic reputation of

Durham University, as his youngest son is currently at University College London. There seems to be some internal competition between him and his friends as to where their children are educated. This was brought to the fore when he asked for my opinion of a certain Scottish University that he was interested in transferring his son to. When I answered in a rather ambivalent way, he congratulated himself for not going through with the transfer. He has explicitly repeated that education is the primary mark of social status in his opinion – and this has to backed-up by a respectable job for, "*it is not good to be like these kids you see on Asklipiou, returned from university in Athens but sitting drinking coffee all day until they are 35 (years old) and living off their father's money*".

Dionisis and Eleuteria choose to holiday in cities such as London[201]. This line of questioning was selected so as continue one of many specific comparative lines between informants. Dionisis was quick to point out that he does not go to London as a tourist; "*We like to see the real place ... the real people ... you do not get that in the tourist places. We like to sit in that park ... what is it called ...* (I prompt him) ... *ah, Hyde Park, yes. We take our lunch and a rug and sit there with all the local people ... We also like the street markets; that is where we can find old English records that I like*". His emphasis on not being a tourist is because "*these things do not interest us ... we can go wherever we want, but we go there for the experience of the people, the culture, not because we have to impress our friends. We also love the Greek Islands. Why to go to Barbados when we can get on a boat and be in such a beautiful place, a unique place, within a few hours?*"

At this point I will refrain from any analysis of this case and proceed immediately to my second case study.

Case.2: Eugenia

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[201] In the popular Greek filmography of the 1960s – the famous '*Finos Films*' – the offspring of Athenian aristocratic families are portrayed as having vacations or being educated in London, Paris or New York.

Eugenia, 60, was born in a village of *nomos* Trikalon after her parents – builders – moved from the village of Kalimera in Greek Macedonia in 1947. They moved due to the impact of the civil war in northern Greece and the increasing amount of kidnappings occurring in the mountainous regions. Additionally, and consequentially, there was more work available for her father in Thessaly[202]. She explains that the villages were relatively poor and the work was low paid, yet in the town there was enough work in order to support a family, although the levels of prestige were lower. This status was confirmed by the terrible conditions in which the family resided in Trikala upon their arrival. The *parapigmata* were small, cramped and often only made of corrugated iron and timber. Eugenia's father was a well respected and a popular man in the Macedonian village, an image that was enhanced by his wife who 'worked like a man' along side him on the building projects as well as looking after a young family. She was respected publicly not because of her chastity or cultivation of shame, but because of a hard work ethic and the charismatic personality in both public and private realms. As a builder his reputation spread to surrounding villages and many of the stone houses he built are still inhabited in Kalimera[203]. Eugenia's extended family currently own five houses there, one of which is Eugenia's, her brother inherited the parents' house and Eugenia's daughter also has a house in the village, as do her cousins. All family members own at least one other property outside of Kalimera, primarily in the towns of Trikala and Kozani. This is not unusual for the migrants from the mountainous areas to urban centres such as Trikala. Houses – in various states of repair – are often retained in the 'home' or 'ancestral' villages.

Eugenia's father built their first house in Trikala, which Angelos, her son, now inhabits with his young family. Eugenia herself chose to become a teacher in a local primary school after attending university in Athens. Her first husband was

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[202] This can be equated to the 'forced migration' as discussed in relation to generations by Loizos (2007).

[203] Kalimera is now only seasonally inhabited apart from the one remaining goat herder, Aris, and his wife Toula. People left the village due to the civil war and to find work during the mid-twentieth century. Most moved to one of the two closest large towns – Kozani and Trikala. Eugenia's extended family is split between these two towns, two hours apart. The village comes alive in the summer as the families return to spend their vacations and participate in the *'Panιyiri'* (a public religious or commercial celebration). Thus the village has become a vibrant 'summer community' (cf. Hart 1992).

a French-educated academic who set up the first ever foreign language school in Trikala and her daughter obtained a doctorate in a British university. The job of her husband was very prestigious and he was a renowned scholar. His reputation was somewhat famous for his work in the school. The family name is still well known within Trikala.

After the divorce, Eugenia had to take up multiple jobs in order to support her two young children as her ex-husband refused to make financial contributions. The refusal to make payments towards his children was in direct retaliation to Eugenia requesting a divorce. As well as working during the day as a teacher, she has been at intermittent times simultaneously; a travelling kitchen hardware (pots and pans) saleswoman, a weaver and seamstress, a part-time employee as what can be best described as an 'odd-job tailor', and a paid babysitter (as well as other 'seasonal' jobs when the school was on vacation). She tells me that she didn't even think about it, as she had two children and the children had needs; she had to work. Through doing such diverse work Eugenia started creating an extensive social network both in the town and the surrounding villages. Her skills as a seamstress were, and still are, admired and she gained much respect from the female contingent for raising two children on her own.

In the mid-nineteen-nineties Eugenia remarried and moved to what is publicly perceived to be a wealthy suburb of Trikala, after having travelled around Europe with the regional choir and with her children grown up and living elsewhere. She had what can be described as a partially-arranged marriage to a retired tax-collector from a neighbouring village. As his job meant a lot of local travel, he was also well known in the area. They both have a good state pension, as both were *dimosioi ipalliloi* (public sector employees) but by no means have extensive monetary wealth. The wealth that has been accumulated has been more social capital than monetary. The reputation of her parents and her first husband helped raise the social profile of the family name. When coupled with the 'good character' shown from the raising of two children – and the devoted care of her elderly parents who resided with her for ten years – and her social networks created through work, she is a publicly recognised and highly respected figure. Theodossopoulos notes in his study of a Greek Island

community that some people are 'still treated with high respect' within the community for 'noble' acts that were carried out forty years ago – in his case it was the selling-off of plots of land at low prices to local people, a respectable act that showed good character (2000:62). In a similar vain Eugenia's profile is partially based on the public recognition of her good character.

Eugenia is still very socially active. Because she is a recognised figure within the local communities, people contact her when they need to communicate with members of her family or friends. She does all the manual and physical work for the immediate family, more so than her husband or her son. She organises all public rendezvous and deals with the builders and business men and is the public head of the family[204].

Her social networks spread through family and friends so as to incorporate regular favours and preferential treatment from surgeons in Thessaloniki, local dentists, the education authorities and architects. Her cousin is a surgeon, another cousin's husband is a dentist, her close friends are involved with the education authorities and her family name is renowned in the building trade. When asked, Eugenia says that she values a good character and a good education as the most important things to be respected. These are her understandings of social values that demarcate status. This has been underlined in practice by the funding of her daughter to complete a Ph.D. in Britain which has caused her to make personal sacrifices in terms of material possessions. This in return has enhanced Eugenia's social status – she takes much pride in her daughter's education and now takes much satisfaction in saying that her daughter is a lecturer in Britain – who however insists that this was not her original motive. The most important thing, she argues, is that her daughter will now be economically secure. This reiterates Friedl's observations that economic security and the level of education required for the occupation are paramount to notions of social status (1976:365, Kirtsoglou 2004:127). Her own economic situation is affected by the fact that she is contributing highly to the repayment

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[204] I have found from my female informants that often their friendships and 'connections' get utilised for personal ends to a similar extent to that of the men. Men often seem 'bored' to ask friends for favours or to employ their services as a patronage utility, yet women such as Eugenia are often very forthcoming when utilising their contacts.

of her step-son's credit card loans, as her second husband has contributed to his step-daughter's foreign education. The step-son, 45 years old and working in Athens, has a good job, drives a sports car and is unmarried. Eugenia replied that he cannot afford his own repayments so they assist him. Here I remember the story about Andreas, Eugenia's brother, his loans, the threats of the bank and Eugenia 'bailing him out' just before he went bankrupt and his house was repossessed. However, the 'loan' from Eugenia to Andreas was always promised to be repaid immediately, yet years passed and Eugenia was lending him more and more money. Eugenia agreed with her second husband that they should financially support their children whenever possible. The reputation of the family can be enhanced or decreased according to the activities of the children.

In both ethnographic cases (Dionisis and Eugenia) the externalisation of understandings of social status is not outwardly material but focused on education and employment. This is more than mere rhetoric; it is an ideological position built on generations of cultivating reputation and social networks. Generations from where consumer objects were not the primary mark of social standing[205].

Dionisis understands the collective emphasis of he and his *parea* on education as an indicator of status 'natural' as all his friends are of similar professional dispositions and deem this route best for their children. This means that whilst financially supporting his children's education, he will not concede to all favours requested by his immediate kin. In one conversation he actually checked with me the living costs of a student in London to make sure that he was not giving his son too much financial aid. He insists that materialism is secondary and does not in itself bring social prestige. Such goods are more for internal consumption than external competition (although the loci of competitiveness do lie elsewhere). He often seems to deliberately distance himself from such competitive consumerism. This could be because his family has built up a reputation over generations through other means, and the participation in

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[205] Scholars such as Lisón-Tolosana (1966) have suggested that in a Mediterranean context the 'possession' that marked social status would usually be land.

tournaments of consumerism was not a necessary, or desired, route to status. Dionisis further encases the decision in a rhetoric of moral justification.

Over time, the entry of new generations into Eugenia's world has caused inevitable changes in the familial organisation and economic priorities. Eugenia went against the perceived norm for a woman of her generation by taking multiple jobs outside of the house. She has now received much social credit for this. She has found that her socio-economic position is such as to be able to fund the education of her daughter abroad, a significant status symbol for the 'upper section' of the Trikalinoi. The 'customary limits', to use Lisón-Tolosana's term, of both education and employment have changed over the generations. Eugenia enjoys telling people of her daughter's educational activities and always plays the uninformed and subordinate role in relation to the knowledge of her daughter. She has come from a humble but well respected background and has developed the educational background of her family members – first she went to university in Athens to complete a degree, her husband went to France to be educated up to Masters level and now her daughter has a doctorate in England. This has been accomplished by the allocation of money away from explicit materialism and towards the funding of education, a difference in the prioritisation of capital investment. If we follow Lisón-Tolosana's line of thought then such a movement towards education is as much a 'generational' feature as it is a element of 'mobility' (1966:193-195, Kirtsoglou 2004:127). Eugenia was 'direct heir' (Lisón-Tolosana 1966:198) to the reputation and social position of her father, which was consolidated and cultivated and consequentially her daughter has become 'direct heir' to the social and economic investments of Eugenia and her husband[206].

Case.3: Christina

Concerning how people construct status over a period of at least three generations, we can consider the case of Christina. Her case demonstrates how

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[206] In the context of central Spain, Lisón-Tolosana notes that the 'style of living' of those educated at university and thus with a 'prestige-bearing profession' is radically different from that of previous generations (1966:199).

generational status and mobility is intertwined with ever-changing and expanding modes or 'passages' to assist mobility over time.

Christina, 39, is a beautician who owns a small salon in the centre of Trikala and close friend of Maro, the hairdresser. Due to both women working in the 'beauty' business of Trikala they constantly feed each other's clientele with new customers. Christina is divorced and lives in an adequate three bedroom flat just off the main street, Asklipiou, with her two teenage sons. Her locale is considered rather prestigious. Her grandparents worked the fields on the outskirts of Trikala as hired labourers and were themselves relatively unambitious in terms of employment, but were highly revered for their hard work ethic and ability to support adequately their two children. They were uneducated past their early childhood. Christina puts this down to the equivalent in English as 'the sign of the times'[207]. Christina's parents were also employed manually (her mother assisted her father) but, thanks to a small inheritance on her mother's side and the relative economic stability of the 1960s, they were able to become self-employed and set up a small carpentry business based in a village just 5 kilometres outside of Trikala.

> "They both worked very hard and all the business came from word of mouth. The friends – even the former employers – of my grandparents would give them work when they needed a carpenter."

Based on the good reputation of the grandparents, the next generation were given opportunities to get the business up on its feet.

> "When people saw the quality of work and passed on his (Christina's father's) name to others, my father realised that the business was viable. In order to support his children and his elderly parents he was taking on bigger projects, working with my mother … some were even commissioned by the local council. He eventually specialised in

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[207] In her 1960s ethnographic account of Vasilika, in rural Greece, Friedl notes that it is believed that 'rational judgement' cannot be formed through formal academic education (1962:85).

building children's playgrounds in the villages of the area … that one in Livadi, he worked on that too".

From an early age it was obvious that Christina was a talented athlete. Her parents sent her to extra training sessions at the municipal stadium with aspirations of their daughter going to the Department of Sports Science in Thessaloniki. Unfortunately Christina did not acquire the sufficient grades to go to the academy so, after gaining the correct certificate, she set herself up as a travelling beautician. She recalls;

> "My father especially was very upset that I didn't quite make the grade. But personally I was not so disappointed. I was already hired as an assistant to work next to one of the best beauticians in Trikala. The customers liked me and I came to like to the job. When I decided after some years to go out on my own my father did not hesitate to give me the money necessary. He even supplied a lot of the first customers – family, friends … I am happy with my life now, but I do wonder what would have happened if I had kept up the athletics and went to Thessaloniki".

In 2005 an opportunity came up for Christina to purchase her own salon in the centre of Trikala. Apart from Christina's parents, this enterprise was aided by a European Union grant to encourage new small private businesses (my mechanic friend Angelos, hairdresser Maro, and Stella, the travel agent, have received similar government grants to help set up their own businesses). The money is paid in 3,000 euro instalments, twice a year for three years and comes from a European Union led scheme to encourage the establishment of small businesses[208]. Christina's last instalment was due in May 2008 and she is already being subsidised by her father and maintenance payments from her ex-husband. Christina's beauty salon is currently making approximately 1100 euros profit a month, "*which is a respectable salary in Trikala*". She has built a significant customer base, but informs me that 'passing trade' is almost non-

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[208] In some cases there is an additional initial payment of 20,000 euros to fund the purchase of the shop space and first product lines.

existent, even in the town centre; it is all based on a word of mouth, friends of friends basis and previous attempts at local advertising have turned into substantial financial losses. Christina's aspirations for her children are for them both to be university educated, preferably in England. Her eldest is due to start in Thessaloniki this year (2010). Indeed, Christina herself has recently attended the state school for blind people in order to be trained to teach blind and partially-sighted students.

Christina, herself 70 per cent blind in one eye, was accepted on a one year programme. She was trained in reading in brail, computing for blind people and teaching languages. After her graduation, and public quota allowing, she could be hired as a civil servant in a position on the local council. She believes that this would have been a good alternative had her work failed to support her and her children financially, especially during the economic crisis.

In Christina's case, generational social mobility has been rather slow, yet irrefutably 'the family' has acquired upwards social mobility over the period of seventy years albeit still in the same social section. From paid labourers to self-employed unskilled labourers to petty entrepreneurs, facilitated at first by personal contacts providing a clientele and secondly by the development of different channels for available investment capital. Christina's children will most probably both go to university. Her eldest is already enquiring to British universities as to the qualifications required to be accepted for a Masters degree, although Christina is now concerned with how she will fund his education. Small government contracts given to tradesmen, such as Christina's father, allow for political networks to be built up and for reputation to be enhanced occupationally (Colclough 1992:66). Governmental and European Union grants given in times of prosperity have become essential to providing livelihoods to members of the lower section of society with entrepreneurial tendencies. The small businesses are often economically insecure and require a pre-existing network of potential clientele and additional funding from family members. The availability of the grants means that competition between similar businesses in the town is fierce. Yet such external funding is potentially a very efficient route to sustainable social mobility.

As an explicit account of generational status and mobility relating to this narrative, one of the most detailed works in a contemporary Mediterranean context is that of Yanagisako in Como, North Italy. In her most significant generational narratives, some informant's families had gone from sharecroppers to one of the top twenty elite families in the silk industry (2002:42). This was achieved by the continuous reinvestment of limited financial assets. One such 'decisive break' in the family history is the founding of a self-employed business rather than working *for* someone else. This certainly resonates with Christina's narrative; she altogether enjoys being her own boss. In this situation if one does not work in the public sector[209] then self-employment in the urban context is always preferable to other forms of manual labour as it is understood as an indicator of both social prestige and upwards mobility.

Although it could never be claimed that Christina's family have reached the pinnacle of social prestige in Trikala – they are not local aristocracy (cf. Faubion 1993), nor have they reached beyond their social section – on many criteria they have advanced their social positioning; the ownership of positional goods such as their own home and business in good neighbourhoods, some plush furnishings, the ability to educate oneself and one's children – Christina eventually managed to somehow educate herself and has aspirations for her children to be university educated – and a small, yet quite sufficient disposable income.

Family aspirations play a role in generational mobility. Every parent of my informants always had higher aspirations for their children, and often material goods and more "comfortable ways of life" were sacrificed for the benefit of the

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[209] A joke on the very popular satirical show *Al-Tsadiri News*, hosted by a son of Thessaly, Lakis Lazopoulos, highlighted the 'perks' of being employed in the public sector:

'There was a Chinaman, an American and a Greek.
The Chinaman told of how, back in China, the roads were so good that his father, who works so far away, can be home within one hour and sat down eating dinner.
The American said, "bah, this is nothing. My father works much further away and within 30 minutes he can be home and sat down eating dinner".
The Greek said, "well, my father works in the public sector. He finishes work at 2pm and he is home eating dinner at 1pm".'

children (cf. Friedl 1976, Davis 1977:32, Argyrou 1996:36, Just 2000:70-71). This is pertinent throughout the ethnography of Greece and goes beyond rhetorics of competitive suffering (Faubion 1993:189, also Davis 1977). The aspirations of ambitious parents are a recurring theme throughout the ethnographic cases and especially after the 1960s this is often manifested through the desire for education. Education is often seen as a way past the hard work of the fields (Lisón-Tolosana 1966:89, Friedl 1976, Just 2000:71).

According to Friedl (1976:364) in Vasilika, rural Greece, people are always "striving for the improvement of the conditions of life for one's children". Furthermore, the nuclear family believed that collective resources should be manipulated towards that goal; "The major criterion for improvement was movement upward in a rank order of occupations" (ibid.). This is exactly what happened in Christina's case. In the context of Vasilika – and very similarly in Trikala – "the ranking was based on a combination of the level of education required for the occupation, the opportunities for security and advancement it afforded, and the consumption standards that the income from it could support" (ibid.). Many of these criteria still hold true today; especially the pooling of family resources and the desirable occupation:education ratio. In contemporary Trikala the routes to such realisations have been complemented by new passages such as governmental and European Union grants and bank loans. Additionally, Argyrou argues, during the mid-twentieth century skilled craftsmen started to rise higher on the socio-economic scale and the occupations of carpenter, builder, mechanic, became 'professions'. In contrast the 'unskilled labourers', shepherds and cultivators were dropping towards the lowest strata of society[210]. This led to a "recasting of the occupational structure" (Lisón-Tolosana 1966:123).

Another informant, Ioanna, 28, described to me her father's aspirations for her to "*either become a doctor or university professor, anything with good money*

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[210] According to Argyrou, the primary route for social mobility at this time was a high-school education (1996:34-35, cf. Lisón-Tolosana 1966:59, Colclough 1992:64-65).

and social prestige ... or at least join the family business[211]". When she dropped out of university and stated that she wanted to set up a retail outlet in Trikala, her father refused to listen to her suggestions for six years whilst she was told to "*look for a respectable husband instead*" (cf. Lisón-Tolosana 1966:82-83, Friedl 1976:365). After a lot of serious pressure from Ioanna, her father eventually gave in and matched the amount of the government grant in order to buy a shop space and set up the business. The money he gave her was what he had saved whilst working in Germany during the 1960s and 1970s. In 1950s and 1960s Greece much emigration was of a temporary nature, and a common source for the investment of savings made while working abroad was in a shop, which was often in the emigrant's home town or village (Bennison 1979:452). "*Now he couldn't be prouder*", Ioanna insists. "*I, for my part, am happy for doing what I intended to do and earning a respectable income. I am known in the business world of Trikala and I often travel to Thessaloniki and Athens and once a year to London to in be informed for the latest fashion trends*".

In both Ioanna's and Christina's case, the father's aspirations had unfortunately 'escaped from reality' (Lisón-Tolosana 1966:356). Nevertheless, both women managed to craft for themselves a social space within which they enjoy the status of the self-made professional woman. They managed successfully to build upon the resources put in place by their parents and thus step up on the social ladder.

A Further Note on Education

Education as it relates to occupation has been understood as a central aspect in the discussion of social status and mobility in Greece by anthropologists such as Friedl[212]. The roots of contemporary social status and mobility in many parts of rural Greece can be traced back to the periods immediately before and after the

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[211] For an extensive excursus on the generational inheritance of family companies see Yanagisako (2002).

[212] In a British context Bell (1994:35) notes that the money spent on education is one of the key aspects of class identification.

Second World War[213]. The increasing social value of a good education over the "unquestioned acceptance of the agricultural and pastoral life" (du Boulay 1974:248) coincided with changing farming conditions and an altered conceptualisation of self-interest. According to Friedl the possibilities for improving one's conditions of living are enhanced by education (1976:364-365). In the same vein, one's possibilities for enhancing social status are also improved and the 'standards of living' are affected by the diverse social networks formed through education, as discussed in Eugenia's narrative. Loizos notes that many parents will emphasise the security of professional career choices, just as their parents did to them (2007:3), an element that is less likely to be stressed among the less educated 'lower-section'.

Yannis' family status has come a long way relatively quickly – especially when compared to Christina above. He has achieved a position of power and influence from the origins of a building contractor. His father had the money but he did not receive the social recognition that Yannis enjoys due to his education, profession, a good marriage, successful children and implication in politics. His father's[214] aspirations have, it seems, been surpassed. It became a recurring theme that the elite families of the town, or those striving for significant upwards mobility through education, have always sought to distinguish themselves in terms of university qualifications (Kirtsoglou 2004:128). Until recently, a university education has been "the pinnacle of esteem and repute" (Lisón-Tolosana 1966:81, Faubion 1993, Mitchell 2002). Indeed, in 1960s central Greece, any education[215] beyond the secondary school allowed for a greater chance of secure employment as there were few 'eligibles with university or higher education training' (Argyriades 1968, Friedl 1976:368, Colclough 1992:61, Pardo 1996:74). This line was echoed by Argyrou in

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[213] According to Layton (2000:260), social change in many European contexts started before the Second World War, thus anthropologists must go beyond the usual historical boundary of placing change as a result of the upheaval of the 1940s. Many social processes of change were 'deferred' by the Second World War (2000:267, on the issue see also Vaughan, Kolinsky and Sheriff 1980).

[214] 'The father' is referred to throughout this text as this is the term most frequently used by my informants.

[215] Just notes how members of the extended family may provide money towards the education of children (2000:176). Alternatively, parents could emigrate ahead of their children in order qualify for residency and therefore the subsidised 'foreign' education of their offspring (Just 1991:119).

Cyprus; "Education, not land, had now become the most valuable asset" (Argyrou 1996:35)[216]. Hence people with university education from this period have more social status than those with a similar education gained more recently.

Faubion argues that schooling is "the catalyst of social mobility" and one of the securest means of "procuring social and symbolic "dignity"" and power. He states that the petty bourgeois go to enormous lengths in 'seeing to' the education of their children. This is linked to the 'economy of distinction' present in the capitalist context (1993:59).

Yet often education had to be complemented with circles of friends with inside information on job vacancies. This was a time consuming process for many students who went to study and later reside in another city, such as Athens, as they had no pre-existing contacts (Friedl 1976:368-369). This again stresses the importance of constructing social position over generations. By the time that the second generation migrated to the same city for educational purposes, the first generation, who had by now settled into life in Athens, "were sufficiently well placed to have information about superior schooling and housing, and eventually have access through contacts to better jobs" (Friedl 1976:380, Argyrou 1996:35, also Davis 1977, Pardo 1996). According to Friedl this insured upward mobility because as well as these recent connections, the money sent back to the family from the first generation also allowed for more money to be put into the livelihood of the next generation (1976:380). This means that, in Davis' terms, 'prestige is achieved in their native communities' as well (1977:30). This was demonstrated in the case of Eugenia whose daughter received her doctorate from a British university.

Just notes that during the 1980s, young male Meganisiots were receiving a tertiary education in Athens on the proceeds of their father's employment in the merchant marine (2000:71). The generational 'progress' in occupation was

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[216] In a different ethnographic context, that of Sri Lanka, Stirrat notes that education as a route to social mobility in the 1960s was often 'unattractive'. This was due to the high levels of unemployment in the 'educated youth' and the low incomes of the middle classes (1989:110).

acknowledged by Just's informants who stated that; 'first we were agriculturalists; then we were sailors; now the young people are educated' (ibid.). Just argues that this different occupational and educational structure allowed the young generation access to "those social (rather than strictly economic) means of reproducing and consolidating advantage" (ibid.). However, he goes on to say that such opportunities eventually allow the individual to break away from a strictly generational formation of social status (ibid.).

University education in Greece is free[217] and has become the norm for all cross-sections of society (Faubion 1993:189). Thus it is seen as a state responsibility and as long as the correct grades are gained, a university place is guaranteed (ibid.). If sufficient grades are not obtained for the top universities in Athens and Thessaloniki, then other universities in Greece usually accept the students[218]. Thus university education is available on a mass scale. Recently, in order to distinguish oneself, one must obtain either a undergraduate degree from a foreign – preferably British, French or US – university or, as is most common, go abroad to gain a Masters or Ph.D. Foreign education is far more expensive and, the argument goes, of a higher quality, thus the 'pinnacle of esteem and repute' can be recaptured. Faubion also suggests that; "Greeks who receive their educations at the University of Athens typically acquire less social and cultural capital with their degrees than those who receive their educations even at relatively undistinguished universities abroad" (1993:189). The situation with university qualifications in Greece and the wider Balkan region where many Greeks go to study has been stigmatised further by instances of people 'buying' degrees from institutions without attending or passing the course. Thus, on two bases – that of social prestige and on the practicality of distinguishing oneself in the workplace – a foreign or higher degree has become the stipulate for educational distinction[219].

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[217] As of 2010 there has been much talk concerning the privatisation of higher education in Greece. The topic was reduced to a political sub-text with the onset of the current economic crisis.

[218] According to Faubion, education is more 'distinguished' in Athens, to the inevitable disadvantage of provincials (1993:189).

[219] Piault's ethnographic film '*My Family and Me*' (1983), based in Ano Ravenia, Epirus, Greece, captures conflicting ideologies regarding the best way one can earn a respectable

According to Lisón-Tolosana,

> "A man who has received higher education enjoys the highest esteem and social status. The superior knowledge of anyone with a degree is recognised not only in his specific field of study but in all spheres of knowledge and activity … other reasons why a career implies superior social position are the comforts, style of living, manners and speech that go with it. In this aspect of the educated man the relation to wealth also appears" (1966:91-92).

Social position is then often a combination of education plus *x*. The 'style of living' can be imitated, as in the case of Andreas and Katerina above, yet the 'wealth' is not sustainable. A distinguished education, as in the case of the doctor, will usually be required in order to have a respectable career to support such expenditure. Likewise, an education may not be enough without social networks (Friedl 1976).

Thus the priority of a *distinguished* education must be emphasised here, as what constitutes a high education is constantly changing; once it was a high-school education, today it is at least a Masters degree in most cases. This is what Faubion terms 'the economy of distinction' and in a capitalist context this is world-systemic (1993:59). A *distinguished* education in turn often results in more affluent, influential and prestigious forms of employment. This allows access to a diverse pool of social and political contacts, which can be added to, erased and utilised over time.

Education brings prestige to the whole family. It is the focus of social status and mobility in Trikala and thus the centre of many parent's attention. The prestige received by the distinguished education and resultant occupation outside of the

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livelihood. In Trikala, such ideologies have recently been replaced with the prioritisation of university education over 'systemisation'. In Piault's film a dialogue ensues between a teacher and the shepherd father of one of her students. Whilst the teacher advocates a good education as to furthering one's livelihood, the father insists that 'connections with the right people' is the only way for the child to succeed in life. Both opinions are well grounded in the actor's own experiences of life in rural Greece.

Slightly conversely, in the context of Spain Lisón-Tolosana states that if a schoolmaster informs a father that his son "would make a good student", the family would "spare no effort or sacrifice so that he can study" to get a position in the city, or at least not in the country, although he does no suggest how this is best achieved (1966:17).

patron-client networks of the town is directly conveyed to the whole family. It is often certain that an overseas-educated graduate will find employment in Athens or remain overseas to match their level of education. This is also imperative in order to achieve higher levels of status and mobility (Just 2000:77). There are however individuals who return to Trikala to be inserted into prepared positions often organised by their fathers. The education is always linked to the ability for good parenting and the financial investment in the children. In the past, strategic decisions had to be made in order to accommodate post-gymnasium education. As this has become commonplace, postgraduate studies in foreign universities have become imperative for social distinction. The financial strains of foreign education are well publicised by Trikalinoi but can provide social mobility for the whole family rather than simply the individual (cf. du Boulay 1974:254). This phenomenon is exacerbated by the nigh absolute investment of only family capital into higher education. Although loans for university have been advertised over the past ten years, not once in my seven year association with Trikala have I heard of anybody paying for foreign university education through government loans or private grants. Sometimes small bank loans are taken to subsidise living costs of children studying in Athens, but the domain of foreign (usually postgraduate) education is related to the upper sections of society or those realistically striving toward it. Hence all foreign higher education is self-funded. The consequences of economic austerity and financial uncertainty in contemporary Trikala will seriously affect the number of students able to study abroad, further adding to the great worry of parents concerning the cost and competitiveness of education (Hart 1992:73).

The Consequences of Crisis

With the onset of economic crisis in 2008-2009 the difference in perceptions of social status were underlined. Much status among the lower section of society proved not to be sustainable during the economic downturn. The first sign of this was on the streets of Trikala around Asklipiou and in the accountancy books of small businesses. As the mass media began to focus on global recession there was an observable downturn in the amount of shopping bags passing up and down the central commercial streets. Stella's travel agents experienced a sharp

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downturn in exotic holiday bookings with people preferring to holiday either on Greek Islands accessible by coach or simply in the coastal resorts of Thessaly. She believes that she may be facing closure by the end of 2010 when her grant expires if she cannot diversify further. Angelos stopped importing his exclusive car parts and now complains about the queues for petrol which regularly block the entrance to his garage. The tournaments of consumerism still take place but on a more subtle scale – the cars are still present, yet not in such great numbers. As with crises that have gone before, economic activity has been checked as uncertainty concerning the future sets in. Extravagant consumerism is observably down in Trikala whilst people take stock of the emerging situation. It feels as though people are waiting to see what will happen next; although patience is already starting to wane.

The indiscriminate bank loans were one of the first things to stop. Both from the perspective of the banks and the clients, high-risk loans were no longer an option. When loans could not be immediately repaid many possessions were repossessed and on rare occasions courts proceedings were instigated. This route to social status has for the time being been curtailed. The general reliance of the lower section of society on material consumption and observable wealth to maintain social status was not sustainable. Where people have already purchased valuable items such as clothes or jewellery these are still displayed and rarely sold. If money is needed desperately then family networks are called upon to provide financial assistance.

Another aspect severely affecting social status among the lower section is unemployment. Cutbacks in the highly inflated public sector have left many people without a job. One informant, Takis, 45, lost his job working for a telecommunications company when approximately 100 people were laid-off. Due to his lack of political connections, he tells me, the only option was to share a taxi shift with his best friend (who was already a taxi driver). "*It was this or return to the fields … I have to put the food on the table* (for my family)". Disposable income is now widely valued as better invested in bank accounts (or in one case under the bed in a tin) than worn on the back or being driven.

Some consequences of the economic crisis resonate with the stock market crash of 1999-2000 when over 100 billion euro were lost by small-scale investors, only this time many Trikalinoi find it hard to see any light at the end of the tunnel. The crisis was almost as unexpected as the stock market crash, but the consequences even more widespread. As Simmel aptly puts it 'society changes but men remain' (1978:353), even more striking when considering that the people to lose out on the stock market were the same to be most severely affected by government austerity during the economic crisis.

In the upper section of society the economic crisis has had a more limited effect. Although expenditure is now restricted and Dionisis the dentist decided to visit London once in 2009 rather than the usual two or three times, the upper section has been less affected by unemployment and austerity. The majority do not have significant bank loans to repay and the intricate socio-political networks built up over generations have become a safety net to avoid the devastating consequences of austerity measures. When jobs have been threatened then often the ability to acquire favours from politicians and business managers has meant that family jobs remain secure whilst other people have been made redundant.

Where the upper section has been significantly affected is with continuing to fund their children that are studying abroad. This is once place where the global recession has really impacted the local community. Among my informants, all children studying abroad were funded by their parents and grandparents. Usually the amount of money provided was far above the basic living costs of the students – meaning tuition fees, accommodation and food. The amount of money that people like Dionisis or Eugenia allocate to their children studying abroad has drastically fallen as fear and uncertainty sets in to all sections of Trikalini society. It is generally considered that relative living costs are rising as a result of the government austerity measures in Greece and that no investment is now completely secure. Dionisis has asked his son "*to be careful with the money ... don't buy so many books from Amazon, go to the library instead*". He has told his son on many occasions that "*things are not like they were here, may be we can't secure you a job on your return ... we have to be careful with our investments*". The localised consequences of the Greek economic crisis are

coupled with higher relative living costs and unemployment in the host countries such as Britain and France where most Trikalinoi foreign students study. Thus the financial strain is at the liberty of the economic policy of at least two national governments and many more institutions. Hart notes in her ethnography set in the Peloponnese that "the cost and competitiveness of education is a great worry to parents" with the rewards of education depending on the current economic situation (1992:73). With the cost of university education in Britain set to rise further, the long-term consequences for foreign education remains to be seen.

Dionisis' stance also reflects the loss of confidence in socio-political networks. The national economic situation is understood to be very serious – it is often the only topic on all news broadcasts – and the influence of local contacts is now considered as unreliable at best. The intervention of the European Union and the IMF has put pressure on the national government to reform. This pressure has consequences further down the political line and there is a feeling among small businesses and the public sector employers in Trikala that everyone must first look after themselves and their immediate family. Hence Dionisis warns his son that there may be difficulties in finding him a job upon his return.

As alluded to, the local economic situation is much more explicitly linked to the national political crisis and the global economic circumstances in the experiences of the upper section of Trikalini society. Small and medium businesses are affected by global trends and national policies and the decline in overt material consumption on both the local and sometimes transnational level resonates through their businesses. In this respect some of the upper section rely on the sustained consumption patterns of the lower section in order to facilitate their regular income.

Generational status has passed through many eras of prosperity and crisis since the break up of the ciftliks during the agricultural reforms, through geographical displacement and political asceticism. Where generational status is still in its early stages the economic situation is more uncertain. Often it depends on what bases early-stage generational status, and mobility, is based on – education and

social investment or solely financial ventures. The latter often have more limited alternative financial and social resources to draw upon. Conversely, Nikos, the large land and property owner who played the stock markets (chapter four), was a member of 'the high society' in Trikala due to family association before he began to invest his family's wealth. After the sudden crash he was still widely regarded as belonging to the upper section of society, despite having gone bankrupt and losing most of his property. Thus it is apparent that economic fluctuations can have severe consequences on individuals' financial circumstances without necessarily altering social status. In the lower sections of society, the inability to participate in unconcealed material consumption automatically relegates social status.

Fear, worry and despair of the current economic situation transcend social boundaries. Here the collectivity is at its strongest. Fuelled by the mass media and overtones of nationalism, all sections of Trikalini society despair over the crisis and the perceived persecution of the Greek population by the national government, the very wealthy (usually referred to as 'Athens') and the European Community. The circulation of blame toward these actors runs throughout the cross-section of society. Feelings are homogeneously expressed in public, as is sympathy for 'the Greek people' and anger towards those in power who are not brought to justice. Hence historical events such as the Great Famine are recalled in order to evoke the collective suffering. Such notions unite both the upper and lower sections of society, even when the consequences of crisis are subjectively experienced. Thus, although the economic crisis has affected the routes to status in very different ways, often the public accounts of the crisis are very similar.

Previous shifts from prosperity to crises and back again have led to alterations in how social status is perceived on the local level. In the 1950s ownership of land and livestock was seen as culturally desirable and provided a great deal of status (du Boulay 1974:248). This was especially the case after the peasant uprisings and the creation of wide scale private property and the later land repossessions by the Germans during the Second World War. These two events meant that land was an incredibly valuable social asset. With the liberalisation of markets and increased access to global ideals of material prestige, from the early 1990s

onwards land owners were not considered of high status among any section of society. The lower section based status on consumerist materialism and conspicuous monetary wealth, the upper section primarily on socio-political networks, education and profession[220].

Panayiotis, in his mid-thirties from the village of Pyli near Trikala was courting a girl from Larisa for over two years. Panayiotis owns 200 stremata of land and was financially very secure (1 stremma = ¼ acre). The girl, Litsa, was persuaded that Panayiotis was not a respectable husband as he was uneducated. Litsa's father was a schoolmaster and her mother a philology teacher. They had little money and only a few material possessions. However both parents were educated at university level and believed that they would one day have access to the aristocracy of Larisa. Panayiotis even built a new house on his land to demonstrate that Litsa would be well provided for, yet Litsa was eventually persuaded not to marry him. As Hart states in 1992 the general perception was that a life of farming should be escaped from by all means (Hart 1992:71). Indeed, by the mid-nineteen-sixties Friedl listed 'unskilled farm work' on small plots of land at the very bottom of the hierarchy of occupations (employment requiring post-gymnasium education was at the top, jobs such as lawyers, doctors and university professors) (1976:365, Hart 1992:77). This couplet taken from Argyrou's work in Cyprus highlights the significance of marrying an educated partner with the promise of secure employment and the common perception of agriculturalists and pastoralists[221];

> "I don't want him mother,
> the dirty shepherd,
> I want a lawyer
> or an office employee" (1996:35).

In current times of economic crisis such security is highly desirable and I suggest that such individuals as Panayiotis will begin to regain some social

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[220] According to Lawrence, the opening up of European markets offered the opportunity for Greeks to escape "the forms of class and gender domination that characterized postwar society. Many rural Greeks perceived an opportunity to subvert the old structures of patronage and dependency that had locked them into chronic underdevelopment" (2007:89).

[221] According to Sant Cassia and Bada, in nineteenth century Athens, marriage did not signify 'the capture of economic power' or 'a vehicle for social mobility'. It was more a 'demonstration of having arrived economically' and having a 'morally safe urban lifestyle' (1992:55).

status, and once again become marriage material. As people experience the "less happy sides" of capitalist materialism more social value may return to livelihoods such as agriculture (ibid.). As du Boulay states, "land … is immortal – it cannot die, it is always a secure investment" (1974:250). The same logic applies for public sector workers. With more redundancies in this sector the employment positions will become rarer. This scarcity could, I propose, have two alternative effects on the status of this post. Either public sector jobs will rise in status due to scarcity and the declining inclination for employers to allocate unnecessary new positions simply to accommodate family and friends, or the placements will no longer be considered as secure due to the amount of mass redundancies. In the case of the latter, other forms of employment may become more socially desirable, such as landholding.

Panayiotis is not alone in finding it difficult to marry due to shifting notions of social status. Another informant, Petros, 39, owns over 200 stremata of land near Trikala plus an assortment of livestock. Despite being a relatively handsome (and financially secure if not extravagant) gentleman he cannot find a wife; "*people don't want an agriculturalist … working the land when another man could be taking them out for coffee on Asklipiou*"[222].

Economic crisis has had significant impacts on perceptions of social status in Trikala as well as the ability participate in competitions for status; especially with respect to tournaments of consumerism and foreign education. However, many aspects of how status is altered by the current crisis remains to be seen. For example, there is currently little sign of any dramatic shift in values among either section as to what constitutes social status. The general feeling is one of suspended liminality. There are some clues from crises past concerning how status values may or may not change, such as the loss of all property not being terminal to the status of some people in the upper section of society and the

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[222] Hart notes that 'farming women' in the Peloponnese do not go to the village square to eat *souvlakia* at the taverns in the evenings. This is considered the arena of the 'big ladies'; women who have moved to Athens and exhibit a great deal of self-regard. The issue is treated with much sarcasm by the villagers (1992:75). According to du Boulay, in the 1970s a farming man could not even "gain a relative prestige from his fellow villagers" (1974:251). She goes on to say that rural villagers cannot compete with their 'civilized' counterparts who can "dress up and sit in a café 'like a human being'" (ibid.:253).

shifting perceptions of status as associated to forms of employment. For socio-economic value can only be gauged by the terms of the present day, thus are liable to change (du Boulay 1974:251). It is fascinating to note that despite the consequences being diverse and manifold throughout the cross-section of society, the public rhetoric surrounding the effects of crisis is harmonious. A collective outward projection glosses a multitude of experiences of the current crisis. This highlights that fact that despite the upper and lower sections of Trikalini society gauging status and experiencing crisis in a multitude of manners, they are not detached from wider collectivities – primarily each other and the nationalist rhetoric of the state. Businessmen rely on the extravagant consumerism of the lower section, which in turn involve bankers, prestigious family businesses and national/transnational tour operators in order to purchase status in the context of their own social groups.

The local is not detached from the national consciousness in terms of collective suffering or the global economic trends and political decision making located in Athens, Brussels or London. There are local cultural patterns that operate on wider sets of cultural structures and economic trends. Indeed many of the perceptions of material status among the lower sections are initially not cultivated locally but through international media productions and global advertising. The interaction of cultural patterns with economic trends is facilitated through global channels; in this respect desires are constructed and fulfilled according to both local and global perceptions of status. Trikalinoi are thus consequentially affected by national and global times of crisis as well as prosperity. The cultural patterns give a localised flavour to a national and global phenomenon and in Greece as a whole this has contributed to the severity of the economic crisis in both its formation and its after effects.

Notes in Conclusion

This chapter aimed to highlight the significant differences in the externalisation of understandings of social status and mobility among Trikalinoi. Through indiscriminate bank loans which facilitate the prioritisation of material objects, the 'lower section' of Trikalini society place significant value in the 'here and now' consumerist lifestyle. This results in overt tournaments of consumerism; the ideals of which are constructed and played out in the public realm. For the 'upper section' of the inhabitants, there is a different understanding of both time and investment. The investments – although material to some extent – are made as much for the future as for the present. Financial and social prioritisation is usually given to education and socio-political networks. In these alternative placements of value lie a history of generational status and unequivocal relations to the patron-client system.

Simmel argues that value "is not a particular quality of the objects of valuation, but consists rather in the significance that the objects have for us as subjects through their position in the order of that ideal realm" (Simmel 1978:68). If we take the 'ideal realm' – which Simmel believes to 'not lie within us' – to be the social ideal as conceived by a certain socio-economic group then we can understand how specific objects or social networks are placed at the top of various 'orders of desire'.

Furthermore, I would like to invert Marx's (1859) theory that 'material life conditions the social, political and intellectual life process in general'. In the case of Trikala, social, political and intellectual positioning informs the patterns of material consumption creating 'definite forms of social consciousness' (ibid., Bell 1994). In the same respect, crisis is thus experienced differently, located as it is in a range of value judgements. Yet in the case of crisis the actors are publicly united under a collective rhetoric of suffering, victimisation and the search for accountability.

Chapter Nine: Conclusions: Socio-Economic Patterns, Crisis and Proximity

This thesis was concerned with how aspects of history and culture inform local experiences of economic crisis. By examining ethnographic accounts of crisis experience in Trikala, central Greece, the case was made for understanding crisis trends with global implications within the context of cultural repertoires and historical frameworks. Similarly, economic processes have localised traits and meanings; they interact with specific social institutions on numerous cultural stages. The history of crisis is pertinent to the contemplation of current events and cannot be overemphasised. By considering time as not merely a lineal substitution of chronological events, the consideration of past events as imperative to the formation of present crises can be comprehended. The concept of cultural proximity was introduced to illustrate how certain key events such as the Great Famine could be embodied in the present to assist the understanding of current events. Furthermore, past events do not simply form a 'background' for studying contemporary crises, but are themselves felt and experienced by the Trikalinoi as simultaneously present moments of a-linear time within the realms of the spatio-temporal present. Cultural proximity staples specific events together as culturally close through socially embedded practices such as narrative transmission, the nationalisation of keystone events, and the significance of certain aspects of culture, such as food.

The discussion of social status and mobility further highlighted the complex intertwining and varied interpretation of economic systems on the local level. Present perceptions of status and mobility are also embedded in the local history of crisis and prosperity, as well as global economic processes. Forms of status identification and mobility perception draw on numerous modes of socio-economic relations. However, these interactions are not homogeneous even on the local level. Certain sections of society place higher value judgements on specific social and material indicators of prestige. The intricate economic channels facilitating forms of status and mobility lead to a complex nexus of social relations spanning spheres of patronage and social status ascription,

global capitalism and market systems. Hence the investment in different modes of social relations – each with their own cultural flavour – stimulates alternative forms of socio-economic status and mobility, as well as internal competition within different social groups – tournaments of consumerism in the case of the lower social section. Furthermore, the consequences of economic crisis are not homogeneously experienced due to the alternative paths toward status and mobility in times of economic prosperity. Thus opportunism must not only be understood as the selective investment of time and capital in times of crisis, but also the strategic economic decisions made in times of affluence and prosperity. A singular notion of status and mobility is not adopted locally, neither is one form of economic investment. Subsequently, there is not one all-encompassing consequence of crisis. Once again, history is the most appropriate guide to understanding these alternative decisions (cf. Layton 2000). For example, the stock market crash of the late 1990s emphasised the impact alternative forms of capital investment provided for the lives of Trikalinoi, and the reliance on national and global 'abstract' markets for creating money, elevating status and upholding consumerism. This phenomenon was in itself the consequence of national market liberalisation after accession into the European Union. It was also part of a wider global phenomenon at the time, focused on investment in shares and bonds. However, the employment market in Trikala still very much operates on a patronage basis regardless of the transnational ownership of companies. For adequate medical treatment one must invest in both patronage and the cultural interpretation of capitalist exchange – namely bribery in the form of *fakelákia*. This income goes undeclared so as to evade taxation and, especially in situations of life and death, forms a distinctive part of the (im)moral economy. This is most certainly a case of 'moral money' (cf. Bloch and Parry 1989).

Historical events are also inextricably linked to notions of social status and mobility. The peasant revolts and the eventual creation of private property through the redistribution of the ciftliks created spaces for strategic investment. Generational social capital has been under construction since before the Second World War. The constant reinvestment of time, property and finance has been abundant among some Trikalini families since the 1960s. These strategic

decisions to invest have often been materialised in the education of children. This has been a long-term investment which has long-term consequences on social mobility. Another investment in generational mobility has been in the form of social networks. Patronage relationships are constructed over long periods of time and are entwined with increasing standards of education and politicisation, as well as emergent prestige. Such investments have been fairly resistant to fluctuating times of crisis and prosperity. Indeed, patronage relations allow for a greater deal of entrepreneurial opportunism in times of both turmoil and affluence. On the other hand, short-term investments in the stock market and through materialism have helped people acquire social mobility. This mobility is often intra-sectional and has proved less resistant to fluctuating periods of economic crisis and prosperity as there is more risk involved with such investments. Often the investment capital is borrowed in the first instance. The lack of generational status accumulation has meant that some people have status devoid of social capital beyond their own immediate social group.

Strategic investments and calculated risks are prevalent on both the local and international level. The incorporation of Greece into the European single currency was acknowledged as a risk by many international advisory bodies. This has turned out to be a major contributory factor to the intense regional circumstances of crisis, yet was deemed a measured risk at a time of global economic prosperity. Thus local decision making processes were mirrored on the national and international stage. This is a similar case to the embeddedness of cultural economic patterns such as tax evasion, bribery and 'petty corruption' that proliferate at the grassroots and governmental levels. It is part of the Greek way of 'doing economics' (Bratsis 2003, Featherstone 2008). The investment of time – including a low retirement age and an outspoken emphasis on the prioritisation of 'the good life' (*kali zoi*) – is another cultural factor that has contributed to the intensive experience of crisis within Greece. In short, when the cultural patterns of Greek capitalist economics merged with downward global market trends, here commenced a perfect storm of personal and collective vulnerability, market instability, fiscal failure and search for ever elusive accountability. The fact that the current economic situation is being compared to the Great Famine is not a matter to be taken lightly. In Trikala, the effects of the

economic crisis and subsequent austerity measures have had a severe impact on the local community, both ideologically and practically. This ranges from the inability to partake in tournaments of consumerism, hence a loss of social prestige, and disillusion with market economics, to bankruptcy, unemployment, fuel shortages and the fear of starvation. The sudden nature of the crisis and the experience of two decades of nigh-uninterrupted prosperity increased the impact still further. The investment in material goods until late 2008 often went unchecked and was undertaken with little apprehension. By 2010 food is hoarded and queues for petrol are reminiscent of wartime rationing in the minds (and the bodies) of the informants.

Public spheres are significant as realms where hypotheses of crisis can be disseminated. This ranges from the cafeterias on Asklipiou to televised political debates and the streaming of European Union forums. Public spheres have become integral to the communication of crisis, as mediators between publics and the state, vehicles for collective suffering and victimisation and as channels for escalating hypotheses of blame. The mass mobilisation of publics in protest and in victimisation has been channelled through mediums such as the television and internet. This activism is fuelled by the inward-looking Greek media that often portray the nation as closed, alone and victimised in itself. Often the links to external socio-economic networks and their current conditions are ignored unless the purpose is to direct blame elsewhere. The recessions in other nations are now rarely mentioned. Thus Greece is depicted as an island disconnected from European markets and global trends, as self-sufficient and suffering alone. This nationalist approach increases the sense of persecution and collective suffering and stimulates political activism directed at those who are perceived as possessing the power to stem the persecution. Thus there is a battle of propaganda, both on the streets and from political bodies, with the public domains as the forums central to debate. From a top-down perspective the media channels are the spaces for political control and reassurance. There are continuous shifts in the location of blame and accountability and deliberate blurring of boundaries between national and international, collective self and other, bounded and open economic systems, and notions of self-destiny and enforced austerity. The same nationalist processes elaborating on the Great

Famine as an event of national experience are present in emphasising notions of internal control and stability in the face of economic uncertainty.

But although 'the Greek crisis' has become a political trope for mobilising fringe political movements around Europe, the general publics in Trikala have also taken to sharing the experience of crisis through public spheres, such as the appropriation of Asklipiou for 'private' gatherings in the public domain. Thus some public arenas have been transformed by the economic circumstances; they take on a different social purpose. Here blame and accountability are located in numerous places and political rhetoric is critiqued both within and against a milieu of nationalism. The result is the construction of numerous nodes of blame depending on political inclination and agenda and degrees of cultural proximity. The main focus is either towards corrupt national politicians, the European Union, the external Other or sometimes (but rarely) inwards towards the everyday people themselves. Discussions of this type have transformed the public spheres in Trikala. The intrusion of the mass-media into the private domain of the home has forced people out to congregate as 'privates within the public'. This is perceived as a form of escapism but at the same time enforces the perception of collective suffering. Here narratives of crisis past and present criss-cross nexuses of private and public relations. It is here where history, not political rhetoric, is the main informant of potential futures. Times of embodied crisis – both those experienced first-hand and those of generations past – assist people with the negotiation of political unrest and economic uncertainty. The multitude of complex factors contributing to cultural patterns at both the grassroots and governmental level, coupled with the ambiguous nature of global economic markets means that blame and accountability are more difficult to locate.

Local Patterns, Global Crisis

Global economic trends fused with local socio-economic systems and bound with culturally embedded economic patterns such as tax evasion, petty corruption, and patterns of consumerism have exacerbated the current economic crisis in Greece. This combination has also contributed to a distinctly Greek

crisis exacerbated by a distinctly Greek way of doing economics. Formal institutions do not operate within cultural vacuums or independently of each other (Crozier 1964). The underlying cultural patterns associated with Greek socio-economic behaviour interacted with global economic trends – both prosperous and critical – to concoct the perfect economic storm. At other times the interaction has formed the perfect economic affluence, assisting social mobility in certain social sectors. In terms of structural patterns, consumerist competition, petty corruption (in a cultural sense) and patronage relations run through society from the very top of government to the grassroots level, as was apparent in Trikala.

Periods of crisis and prosperity allow for dynamic spaces of augmentation and social change, as has been demonstrated throughout the history of Trikala. From the peasant uprisings leading to land reform and private property, to liberalising the markets after the military junta, from civil war to European Union membership, political crises, economic upheaval and severe conflict, Trikala has undergone many changes over the past one hundred and twenty nine years. Times of crisis and hardship are not forgotten, most poignantly demonstrated by the collective embodiment of the Great Famine which is integral to the contemporary experience of crisis. This demonstrates how the social environment is a formation of the social actors and not a homogeneous prescribed context. In Trikala, the appropriation of economic channels for enhancing status and mobility are not homogeneous. Instead they are strategically selected according to social background and economic prioritisation. These decisions form part of the complex cultural and historical canvas through which international trends are realised. Assumed universals such as capitalist market systems and the role of money (see Taussig 1983, Gudeman 1986, Bloch and Parry 1989, Gudeman and Rivera 1990) are open to cultural interpretation, yet this interpretation must not be supposed as all-encompassing in any given society. This sounds like cultural relativism to the extreme, but these are interpretations of wider structural processes within diverse cultural repertoires. The repertoires are made even more diverse by localised prioritisations of historical events. The interpretation and selective embodiment of historical events contribute to the direction of social change and strategic

investment (cf. Layton 2000) in times of prosperity and to strategies for experiencing and dealing with crisis.

Economic relations are bound up in social and cultural relations in a form of embeddedness (Polanyi 1957, Granovetter 1985, Levi 1997, Narotzky 2004, Thiel 2010). The local operation of 'economies' rely on socially embedded relations which are not in themselves 'economic' – or at least not in the sense of neoliberal global capitalism (Narotzky 2004:59). Cultural patterns based in institutions such as kinship, religion, politics and cultural associations, bind with different forms of 'doing economics', deeming economic action as culturally embedded (ibid.). This does not however mean individual agency is restricted. As Layton (2000) suggests, interaction with the cultural environment and 'imported' concepts can lead to innovation and diverse possibilities for strategic decisions. Furthermore, the cultural embeddedness of economic relations is not impenetrable. Through notions of 'autonomy' certain individuals within the community can forge and sustain socio-economic relationships with individuals and institutions outside of the immediate cultural setting (Narotzky 2004:61). Successful economic development and individual entrepreneurship must therefore imply different forms of economic relationships. A separate economic level is thus rejected as "material relations cannot be theoretically separated from their cultural expressions which, in turn, are materially produced and embodied" (Narotzky 1997:7). This approach does not deliberately pay homage to formalism, substantivism or cultural economics, but instead suggests an appropriate consideration of the three; from formal structural institutions to cultural economic relativism.

The cultural patterns operate alongside and entwined with wider sets of economic structures and trends. Social action, including strategic investment, is facilitated through numerous channels of local, national and global discourse. In observational terms, these complex interactions are most evident within public spheres in Trikala. Tournaments of consumerism reflect a certain interpretation and implication of global trends and routes of resource investment within a section of Trikalini society. Although the transactions at source are very much within the realms of neo-liberal capitalist relations, the purpose of the

transactions and the subsequent display of artefacts are highly socially qualified. Some examples will be offered here.

The cultural proximity of the Great Famine in the current economic crisis is an event that is a significant reference point in local history. The import is escalated through processes of nationalism; the nationalisation of significant events. The reverse is true of the civil war, where nationalism has glossed over sinful events as the outcome of external actions, yet on the local narrative level in Trikala these sensitive events are not openly discussed. Public competition for employment within multinational corporations is at the discretion of local managers who operate within other realms within the cross-over of socio-economic relations, namely patronage. Such is the case with patronage and bribery as well as with multiple employment and tax evasion, which go hand-in-hand. Political support and business custom is based on similar principles of patronage and allegiance (cf. Just 2000). Still within public arenas, the reappropriation of Asklipiou in times of crisis has changed the space both physically and on a narrative level as historical events, corruption, and collective suffering are discussed in relation to global economic systems and transnational political bodies such as the European Union. The materialisation of these patterns is fuelled through another form of public communication – the mass media. The media offers forms of representation and misrepresentation (Hendry and Watson 2001), often with nationalist overtones. It operates as a form of both direct and indirect communication of global economy, international politics, the importance of historical events, and the current national crisis. The mass media therefore perpetuates cultural patterns.

Trikalinoi interrelate within a wider socio-cultural background which operates within dyadic relations of cause and effect. Hence from the structural, institutional, level, to the cultural, narrative level, there is interplay between vast nexuses of relations. It is within this matrix that the causes and consequences of economic crisis and prosperity must be discussed. The interaction of people within cultural patterns and economic trends is often facilitated through channels of nationalised and globalised discourse. Trikalinoi therefore experience times of national and global crisis and prosperity in a specific

manner. The cultural patterns lend a localised nuance to national and global socio-economic phenomena, often contributing to the severity of crisis.

'The Greek Crisis' as Political Trope

Trikala may be considered a microcosm for the study of the pan-European economic crisis. The often abstract consequences of global economic trends are being played out within the context of a small town in central Greece. This study is then representative of the processes at play within wider socio-political spheres such as the eurozone; in this instance Greece would be the mediocosm and Europe the macrocosm. With escalating social unrest, increasing public spaces for the opinions of once niche political parties, the circulation of blame and overtones of xenophobia, the 'Greek crisis' is a political trope which highlights the complex relationship between global systems and local experience.

On the political level opportunity on national stages has been created due to international media coverage of the Greek crisis. The event has been appropriated by political bodies throughout Europe. 'The Greek Crisis' has been employed as a political trope (Fernandez 1986, 1993), a persuasive 'story seed' (Carrithers 2007:2), and a filter for political aspirations rich in both metaphor and narrative. In the realms of European publics the 'Greek crisis' is synonymous with poor government, austerity measures, financial bail-outs, civil unrest and economic turmoil. Hence it has become a piece of political propaganda that successfully provokes fear, panic and movement for political change. Additionally the crisis rouses the necessity for accountability – be this through regime change or in terms of targeted xenophobia.

The consequences of 'the Greek crisis' advertised in the salons of Europe as being of national making has it effects both internally on people such as the Trikalinoi and far beyond the national borders as a metaphor of persuasion. This has led to Trikalinoi and their Greek counterparts alike calling for the installation of 'O Allos' (the Other, someone else, implying none of the present

political figures) to government[223]. This is an idiom that has been seized throughout Europe on the basis of economic circumstances. Layers of rhetoric have been built around the crisis and disseminated on the global political stage.

As other nations experience economic downturns and political uncertainty, the metaphor is employed by opposing parties around Europe on two main principles. Firstly it is to place blame for the global economic circumstances firmly on the national governing bodies. The contemptible state of national economies must be due to similar mishandlings akin to that in Greece, it is postulated. The Greek crisis has become a model to signify governmental mismanagement, unregulated markets, corruption and capitalist intemperance of the powerful, to which no politician desires to be compared. The people of Greece are portrayed as those unfortunate souls that, despite contributing to the situation themselves through equally contemptible tax evasion, suffer the consequences of economic austerity. The second aspect relates to the notion 'we don't want to end up like Greece'. This is the acknowledgement that although economic conditions may be adverse in European nations, there is potentially worse to come. If the first point can be defended by governments in power, even against the backdrop of 'corrupt' expenses claims, then the second attack is harder to repel. It is a hypothetical situation of a possible future and a hypothesis that can only be denounced through solid economic data. Such data are often unattractive to the public imagination when politicians are denouncing claims of impending crisis. The metaphor of the Greek economic crisis is thus employed to empower collectivities to strive for political and social change in order to avoid a similar socio-economic situation. Through panic and fear, uncontextualised claims and political propaganda stimulate public interest as a paradox to the commonplace "disenchantment with public politics widespread in modern democracies" (Narotzky and Smith 2006:170). As such the implementation of the Greek crisis as a political trope is both a top-down and bottom-up process as enduring iconic 'verbal and visual imageries' are constructed around critical events such as economic crises (Das 1995, Goddard 2010:131).

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[223] During the Argentine economic crisis of 1998-2002, the country had five presidents within two weeks (Page 2009:1, Goddard 2010:131-132).

This highlights on a more macro-level the highly complex process of social destruction and creation caused by economic crisis. On a local level crisis may create opportunities for social mobility or opportunistic entrepreneurship (these are also reflected on the macro level). On another stage, crisis is employed as a political trope to provoke governmental change. In this instance the idea that 'we must start afresh' in order to avoid economic disaster ('on the scale of Greece') is promulgated to serve many purposes. The metaphor of the Greek crisis is used to "help people persuade themselves" of the need for social and political change (Chomsky and Barsamian 2001:ix). Through persuasion based on the propaganda of crisis many political aspirations can be achieved and opportunities for political and social change are identified. Crisis opens multiple spaces for opportunism and change such as economic diversification (MacGaffey 1987, 1998, 2000), political change (Mazower 1991) and social mobility (Kirtsoglou and Theodossopoulos 2001). These dynamic spaces are formed as phenomena and epiphenomena of crisis. In this respect crisis is akin to a mass extinction facilitating numerous forms of opportunistic growth.

One comparative example of the implication of 'the Greek crisis' as a political trope comes from the context of the United Kingdom. During the 2010 election – against a background of exaggerated expenses claims and over a decade of highly publicised political spin – the question was constantly posed as to whether Britain faced a similar fate to Greece[224]. The generic response was 'we have to be careful but probably not', yet the propaganda for just such a situation was ubiquitous. Fuelled by the imagery of rioting on the streets of Athens (screened live on Sky News), headlines focused on how 'Britain is facing its own Greek tragedy' (BBC, 28th April 2010). Opposition parties were suggesting parallels between the Greek situation and the potential fate of Britain. The Conservative Party continues to this day (October 2010) to frequently emphasise that they are dealing with the remnants of Labour's economic mismanagement and they alone are stopping Britain sliding deeper into economic turmoil; they are the heroes saving the nation from a perilous fate. Any such comparisons

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[224] This notion was invoked in other nations across Europe, such as the Czech Republic, in order to motivate people towards political change.

with Greece were dismissed by the then Labour foreign secretary David Miliband as "economic illiteracy"[225], yet the proposition would not disappear. One week before the election Vince Cable, then treasury spokesman for the Liberal Democrats, told of how "the country risks following Greece into crisis" unless there is a change of government; "unless the next government gets seriously to grips with the deficit problems, as we're determined to do, we could have a serious problem". David Cameron's line had a similar precautionary tone; "Greece stands as a warning to what happens if you don't pay back your debts … You can't go on borrowing at this level forever" (The Times, 28th April 2010, Buenos Aires Herald 29th April 2010). The line coming from the Unions concerning political change in times of economic uncertainty was more hard-line; "If you want a snapshot of what we are facing take a look at what's happening in Athens today. Junk status, key services ripped to shreds and workers on the streets. Greece today – UK after May 6" (the date of the 2010 general election [Bob Crow, quoted in The Times, 28th April 2010]). As recently as October 2010 former Chancellor of the Exchequer Kenneth Clarke informed journalists of how dramatic spending cuts amounting to some £81 billion over four years were necessary in order to save Britain from 'the Greek alternative', reiterating remarks made in March that the United Kingdom was living on "borrowed time", only to be saved by new Conservative economic policy (The Guardian, 18th March 2010). The October spending review and the re-entry of the Greek crisis into the public domain of political debate was understood by many in esteemed political and economic arenas as a façade for other political power-games, although this truly is a matter of opinion.

One question remains concerning the longevity of 'The Greek Crisis' as a political trope. Will this crisis remain a trope that is associated with poor government, economic mismanagement, corruption and public rebellion – a future reference point for impending crisis as is the panic of 1907 (cf. Bruner and Carr 2007) or the Great Depression of the 1930s and the associated images of Wall Street bankers throwing themselves off buildings? On an international scale the answer is probably "yes" and "no". Economic crises come and pass;

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[225] (http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/10089494)

South-East Asia (1997), Argentina (1998-2002), Turkey (2000-2001). Like these events, the Greek crisis will occupy a limited time in the global public arena, its impact as a clutch phrase for political debate is finite. The difference though is that this particular regional elaboration on a global crisis had far wider transnational consequences than any of the aforementioned three, with direct repercussions on the Eurozone and European Union politico-economic policy. Yet Greece is a peripheral economy, a non-Anglophone nation that is experiencing its fifteen minutes of global infamy. The moment for political opportunism based on the international panic instigated by the Greek crisis will be temporary. The power to persuade based on this trope has stringent temporal limits.

In Greece the events of 2009-2010 will be recalled with great poignancy when similar situations undoubtedly arise on the national level in the future. The event itself will become part of past historical experience, to be embodied as culturally proximate at some point in the future. Indeed the current economic crisis has led to extensive public discourse focused on drawing parallels with the Great Famine of 1941-1943, especially narratives of food shortages and hoarding. It is as if the experiences of previous generations are being relived in a kind of Serresian culturally proximate moment of simultaneity (cf. Serres 1995a). In this sense, the economic crisis will remain as a constant point of historical reference, the consequences of which will be at the fore of public imagery for decades to come. Therefore the 'trope' is more than merely metaphor for Trikalinoi, yet through this microcosm the wider implications of global economic crisis can begin to be understood.

A Final Remark on Cultural Proximity and the Role of History

Thomas was born in Greek Macedonia in December 1911. His life-story encapsulates much of what this thesis has been about; periods of crisis, historical import, social mobility. Thomas was the son of a builder who moved to Trikala as part of the internal migrations of the 1940s. After fighting the Italians on the Albanian front during the Second World War, he secretly fled his village with his nuclear family and his brother-in-law in 1947 due to the upheaval of the civil

war. The impact of this period on his village was great, including the constant threat of kidnap. Thomas' narratives of his time in the Greek Macedonian village are vibrant and recount multiple eras of social change. He tells of trade between 'Turkish' villages and 'Greek' villages, explaining the fact that he, like many of his generation, speaks pidgin Turkish.

Late one afternoon Thomas' brother-in-law met him outside a small church in the village in an attempt to persuade him to leave for Trikala (some 115 kilometres away). There had been increasing rumours that communist guerrillas were planning to ransack the village within the next two days, an act that had already been executed in numerous surrounding villages. Thomas, who was uninterested in the politics of the civil war, had already lost two brothers to kidnap and murder, but his wife was heavily pregnant. He tried to convince his brother-in-law to wait until after the birth to travel; his wife had already lost one daughter to childhood illness. Yet Thomas was persuaded that there was no time to hesitate, the attacks may even commence that night. Thomas and his family fled the village later that night. After a few days on the road they stopped at a monastery halfway between the village and Trikala. Here the nuns provided a separate room for the heavily pregnant woman and Thomas continued on his own towards Trikala. Two days later Eugenia, Thomas' only surviving daughter, was born.

When he took the decision to relocate to Trikala Thomas permanently changed the trajectory of his family's life. Indeed, this population movement was to become a significant event in the history of sociality in Trikala. Himself a builder, after living in temporary accommodation for the first year, Thomas constructed a house for his family on the outskirts of the town. Construction workers were highly valued in Trikala during the late 1940s-early 1950s so work became plentiful as he developed his reputation. Thomas embodies multiple eras of social change. Just a selection of keystone events that he has lived through include land reform, the Greek-Turkish population exchange, German and Italian occupation, famine, dictatorship, and European integration. All events have had differing impacts on Thomas. For example, consider the adoption of the European single currency in 2001; Thomas, at the age of 90,

took this completely in his stride. His pockets were lined with euros as his set off for the coffeeshop every morning.

His family became socially mobile, partially due to their relocation, emphasising the important link between historical events and current circumstances (Wolf 1982, Narotzky 2004). His daughter attended university in Athens and obtained a secure public sector job that would have been impossible if they had remained in the village. His granddaughter was educated abroad and now holds a prestigious academic post. Thomas' accumulation of property is also noteworthy; after building the first family home he would build another two as well as the two in his Macedonian village. He additionally owns a range of small pieces of registered land. Both his daughter and his two sons have been able to purchase separate houses in Trikala.

The event that Thomas would most often discuss would be the German-Italian occupation and subsequent famine. The civil war that displaced his family and claimed the lives of two brothers was not a topic of everyday conversation. Neither was his time spent on the Albanian front line. What increases the poignancy of the famine in relation to Thomas and his fellow villagers is that at the time under-equipped and unprepared occupying Italian troops were themselves starving to death in the mountains of northern Greece. The villagers tell of sharing the little food they had with Italian soldiers who;

> "… were worse than us. They had no food, no shelter, they were dying. We all tried to help them, not leave them dying in the mountains. We shared our bread and gave them shelter … sometimes they would stay in the church.

> "You people have to experience famine to understand difficult lives … When you complain of food, being hungry, and the plate is half finished … you need famine to understand the significance of food".

The prominence of his everyday references to famine serves a pedagogical purpose, but also acts as a warning. This warning has penetrated into the culture.

His granddaughter says that this warning was the most important thing of all. This was the greatest fear of all for Thomas. "*He always tells us to not throw any food away. Do not let it go to waste. We do not know what famine is like; I hope I never have to experience it. He embodies the hunger, it is in his body*". The warning, according to Seremetakis, "is a knowledge of future events and processes that are manifested in the present through a conventional system of signs" (1991:48). Furthermore, warnings intertwine 'the natural and the social, life and death'. In a similar line to Seremetakis in relation to death, the expectation of finding the roots of why famine is embodied during the current economic crisis is allusive; the 'event' is already happening as a constituent part of embedded social reality (ibid.:49). That is to say that it is an underlying simultaneity imbued into cognitive processes that penetrates both past and future 'histories' (cf. Seremetakis 1991:63). It is yet another example of the intricate socio-historical weaving of time.

Thomas has experienced many social changes, but for him this was the most prominent, the one closest to society on a daily basis. For Thomas, hunger is a distinctly embedded form of cultural proximity; the embodiment of a specific event that is simultaneous with contemporary lived experience and brought into public domains of collective consciousness during times of crisis.

Throughout this thesis the role of history has been advocated as central to the understanding of crisis experience and the linking of global processes to a localised context. It has become apparent how aspects of local culture such as perceptions of social status and mobility are shaped by the intricate entwining of global and local economic systems and specific historical events. The impact of the current economic crisis must be understood on these grounds.

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