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The Greek small farms paradigm: between decline and persistence

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Abstract

Although Greece is one of the older Member States of the European Union, its agricultural structures have not followed the same evolution compared to those of other Western European countries. In the majority of the latter, the number of farms and farmers has declined subsequently to the modernisation movement, while Greek agriculture has maintained a high number of farms and farmers. The Greek case can be considered as a paradigm between two EU country groups: the old and the new Member States.

This paper deals with the reasons leading to this phenomenon: how do Greek farms manage to resist to an increasingly liberalised environment and to the reduction of EU and State financial support? Why do young people go on dealing with agriculture? This is a curious fact given the hostile natural environment, the low productivity and intensification of these farms. Moreover, this paper deals with some other questions relevant to the ways small farms function and contribute to landscape planning, environmental management and sustainable development of rural areas in general.

Finally, some scenarios are developed about the future of European agriculture in the context of forthcoming changes that result from the CAP reform and liberalisation.

Keywords: Farm reproduction, Agricultural model, Greece.

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The present paper treats the question of the good rate of reproduction of Greek farms which is closely related to the functioning of the Greek agriculture. The special interest of the Greek case is that it can be considered as a paradigm because of its intermediary position between two European Union's country groups: the old and the new Member States. In fact, its functioning and its evolution give some elements that can be important to the comprehension of the other European agricultures as well as to the planning of the future Common Agricultural Policy and to its national implementation.

1. INTRODUCTION

Even though Greece is one of the oldest Member States of the European Union (it joined the EU in 1981) its agricultural structures have not followed the same evolution compared to those of the other Western European countries. In the great majority of the latter, the number of farms and farmers has declined subsequently to the modernisation movement. On the contrary, Greek agriculture has maintained a high number of farms (860°150 in 2007) and farmers (568°710 in 2007) (EUROSTAT, 2009). Indeed, Greece counts more farms than France nowadays (table 1).

Table 1: Evolution of farms' number in the south European countries and in France, 1990 - 2007 (x1000)

	<i>EU-15</i>	<i>Greece</i>	<i>Italy</i>	<i>Portugal</i>	<i>Spain</i>	<i>France</i>
1990	8 582,9	850,1	2 664,5	598,7	1 593,6	923,6
1993	7 253,7	819,2	2 488,4	489,0	1 373,6	801,3
1995	7 370,1	802,4	2 482,1	450,6	1 277,6	734,8
1997	6 989,1	821,4	2 315,2	416,7	1 208,2	679,5
2003	6 238,9	824,5	1 963,8	359,2	1 140,7	614
2005	5 846,5	833,6	1 728,5	323,9	1 079,4	567,1
2007	5 662,4	860,1	1 679,4	275,1	1 043,9	527,3
% (1997/2007)	-34,03%	+1,18%	-36,97%	-54,05%	-34,49%	-42,91%

Source: (EUROSTAT, 1990-2005)

In 2006, the percentage of farmers as part of the total active population of Greece was the highest among the old Member States and it was in many cases higher compared to many new Member States (it ranks 4th, with 12% of the country's total active population employed in agriculture, behind Romania, Poland and Lithuania).

At first glance, the above statistical data shows that the number of Greek farms is slightly higher nowadays in comparison to the '90s. Even if a certain number of these farms exist only in papers (mostly for fiscal and for social security cover reasons) the general trend is opposite to that, one can observe in most of the other European countries during the last years.

The agricultural labor in these countries has also shown a rapid decrease as a result of agricultural modernization along with farm size concentration (table 2). It's because of these facts that Greece is presented as a special case in the group of western and southern European countries: Greek farms manage to resist better than farms in the other countries of the above groups to an increasingly liberalized context.

Table 2: Active agricultural population as a percentage of the global active population

	<i>EU²</i>	<i>Greece</i>	<i>Italy</i>	<i>Portugal</i>	<i>Spain</i>	<i>France</i>
1980	7,4	30,3	14,2	28,6	18,8	8,8
1985	8,5	28,9	11,2	23,9	18,5	7,6
1990	6,5	23,9	8,8	17,8	11,8	5,6
1995	5,3	20,4	7,5	11,5	9,2	4,6
1999	4,5	17,0	5,4	12,6	7,4	4,3
2004	4,0 (in 2003)	16,0	5,2	12,9	7,1	4,1
% (1980/2004)	-45,95	-47,19	-63,38	-54,90	-62,23	-53,41

Source: (EUROSTAT, 1980-2005)

2. THE NATIONAL DATA

Trying to find out the reasons that led to this very different evolution compared to Western European standards, we sought explanations in various fields: on the one hand, in the general characteristics of the Greek agricultural system, but also in the analysis of the national economy, as well as in the laws of succession and in the historical heritage of the rural world, and finally, in the analysis of the agricultural policies followed in Greece under the impulse of the State and the EU.

2.1. Agricultural and general economy

One of the main characteristics of Greek agriculture is that it employs a great part of the country's economically active population (16% in 2004), but this high rate of agricultural employment does not go with an important participation of the agriculture in the creation of wealth in the country. In macro-economic terms, the sector's position remains marginal: its gross added value presented only 5,4% of the country's Gross Domestic Product in 2003 (OECD, 2005), and the agricultural trade balance has been negative since the entry of the country to the EU (the deficit was 2 632 000 US\$ in 2006 (FAO, 2006)). So, Greece is a net importer of agricultural products, be it in value or in quantity.

Greek agriculture is led by very small-scale (their average surface per farm was 4,8 ha in 2004) (Eurostat, 2005) and parcelled out farms. Even when taking into account regional differences, the maximum level is up to 8 ha in the North of the country (region of 'Dytiki Macedonia') (Chatellier & Delame, 2007). Higher levels of land fragmentation, can only be found in some Eastern European countries: 2,3 ha per farm in Romania and 2 ha in Bulgaria in 2000 (Sabates-Wheeler, 2002). Moreover, the Standard Gross Margin (SGM) per Greek farm measured in European Size Units (ESU) is so low that it can only be compared to those of Eastern European and Portuguese farms: it was 6 ESU per farm in Greece, 4 in Poland, 5 in Slovenia and 2 in Hungary, in 2003 (Eurostat, 2005).

The importance of family labour in these farms is vital. Moreover, pluriactivity is a large scale phenomenon, both on farmer and on agricultural household level. Farmers are relatively old (one out of two is older than 55) in an identical proportion as in the new member states (Chatellier & Delame, 2007). So, the generally good rate of farm reproduction cannot be attributed to a general entrepreneurial dynamism.

The study of the global data accentuates the "paradox" of Greek farm reproduction: neither the economic performances of this agriculture are significant nor the work conditions in

² It concerns the EUR-9 in 1980, the EUR-10 till 1984, the EU-12 till 1991 and the EU-15 beyond this year.

agriculture are favourable enough in order to justify a high rate of agricultural structures' reproduction. The global economic context does not justify either such a development: the unemployment rate in all the economic sectors of the country (7,5% in 2008) (EUROSTAT, 2009) is not lower in comparison with the other European countries and, therefore it does not justify a possible retreat into the agriculture from the other economic sectors. Moreover, agricultural incomes seem hardly attractive, especially compared to those of farmers in other European countries.

2.2. History: Ottomans and emigration

The history of the country is marked by the long Ottoman occupation and the egalitarian land reform that followed the Ottoman's departure. This reform that concerned only some of the country's regions left as an inheritance a great number of small, very fragmented and economically low profitable agricultural structures. Moreover, this historical background left behind as an inheritance, a clientelist way of functioning specific to the Ottoman Empire (Vergopoulos, 1975).

Later, during the 1960's and 1970's, a lot of rural people that were working mainly in farms migrated. Although the Greek countryside was deserted during these years, small "microfundia" farms persisted thanks to the mobilization of family networks. In fact, family members that had not emigrated took charge of the farms of their relatives that quit the country in order to work abroad. The latter were sending regularly money to their family members that stayed back to the villages; this money intended to cover not only the family's living expenses but also the farm running costs (Damianakos, 1997). This solidarity among family members constitutes one of the basic elements of the so called "Functioning Model of Greek agriculture" in the scientific literature.

2.3. Informal arrangements: concerning land and inheritance

In our days, Greek agriculture, in the greatest part of the country's territory, continues to be founded on solidarity between family members (financial or physical mutual aid etc), pluriactivity, low level of mechanization and inputs (pesticides, fertilisers etc.) and on agricultural systems of extensive mixed-farming. Family arrangements between relatives still follow this same logic of solidarity that narrowly mixes social and economic goals.

In the case of farm's succession, these arrangements cancel out the negative effects of the egalitarian succession laws. In fact, the egalitarian division of the properties and the absence of strict land occupation plans could encourage further fragmentation of Greek farms through the increase in the owners' number. Under these conditions, taking over an economical viable farm would require such an amount of repurchases that it would be impossible for the young successor to refund their joint-heirs; therefore the farms' survival would be threatened. However, in practice, this refunding takes place on the basis of negotiations between family members who follow goals of economic, cultural, symbolic and emotional order. Even if these family arrangements play a very important role to the farm transmission (in favourable terms for the successor), they do offer only a partial explanation to their high rate of reproduction: family arrangements mainly aim at avoiding farms parcelling out.

These kind of informal arrangements also exist in many Eastern European countries. In most Eastern European countries, informal initiatives are being pursued by landholders in order to provide temporary relief from some of the major constraints hampering the agrarian sectors, such as social, labour and land fragmentation in the post-communist era (Sabates-Wheeler, 2002).

2.4. Immigration

The fall of the communist system and its consecutive events had particularly concrete, rapid and brutal consequences in Greece. The opening of the borders of the ex-communist block countries was a particularly advantageous episode in the history for the Greek agriculture. A big number of immigrants, Albanian in majority, flowed into the country. The agricultural sector became the greater employer, before the construction sector, for clandestine immigrants (often irregularly employed), who work hard for low remunerations (Lianos & al., 1996). Even if the work conditions (working hours, wages etc.) have changed because of the regularisation of the larger part of these workers during the last years, this historical episode gave the opportunity to the Greek agriculture to use cheap labour instead of expensive material investments.

Consequently, this labour has contributed to the improvement of Greek agriculture's competitiveness as well as to its revitalization. This contribution has been more important in the case of economically fragile farms to the point that one can say that their present and their future are based on it, even though this labour is not easily quantifiable in general terms. But, even if the contribution of the migrant labour force is very important to farm reproduction, it would be abusive to consider that the good level of the Greek farm reproduction depends entirely on it. The reason for this is that high numbers of farms had already persisted since the former period.

2.5. The entry to the EU and CAP's implementation

Before the entry of the country to the EEC in 1981, its agricultural sector was surviving thanks to the efficiency of its traditional model of functioning (family solidarity, pluriactivity etc.) and this, despite the absence of a protectionist national policy. During the years that followed the entry, Greece has not taken more advantage of favourable EU political measures compared to other Member States. On the contrary, it seems that the CAP often supported more northern European production than specific Mediterranean products (Maraveyas, 1991). The entry of Greece was supposed to converge its development model and its economy to those of the other European countries and to accelerate the modernization of its agriculture according to the model of the modern family farms of Northern Europe. This model would have imposed a radical change compared to the former traditional model of Greek agriculture. But, the latter does not seem to have been transformed radically (Papadopoulos A. G & Daouli, 1999) and to follow the same model of development as the agricultures of the other European countries.

Even if the reasons why this scenario did not become reality; the analysis of CAP measures implementation (Vounouki, 2004) to a country-wide level provides some interesting information. In fact, the Greek State has very rarely pursued clear, sectoral goals concerning agricultural matters. On the contrary, the social point of view was always dominant during CAP measures' implementation (elevation of rural incomes, establishment of income balance between rural and urban people etc.). At the same time, the Greek State kept on using CAP's modernisation discourse in order to justify its choices. In fact, CAP was used as a cheap and consequently very effective instrument for the social handling of the rural world for many years (Vounouki, 2004). Thanks to it, the depopulation of rural areas was avoided. At the same time, the high employment rate in agriculture contributed to maintain the general rate of unemployment on a relatively low level. So, the CAP helped to promote global socio-economic goals, as economic stability and social peace.

Contrary to what happened in the countries of Northern Europe, the wave of modernization in Greece did not cause the disappearance of the extensive systems which often remained traditional and characterised by low productivity (Beopoulos & Damianakos 1997) even if a regional diversity exists. That's why following the CAP reform of 1992, "Greek farmers were reappraised by the CAP and GATT" (Jollivet, 1997). It was only after the reform of the "agenda 2000", inaugurated in 1997-1999, when the emphasis was put on the multifunctional dimension of the agriculture that the analysts have started to judge the Greek case differently and to consider that its agriculture at two or three speeds can become a paradigm.

2.2. The importance of informal networks

Another important specificity of the functioning of Greek rural society relates to the generalized utilisation of informal networks. These networks cross also the Greek urban society and penetrate as well at the administration system. The CAP has partly relied on them for the implementation of its measures. But, at the same time it has reinforced them while important CAP funds have passed through them. This is happening because the informal structures complete the formal ones in an effective way by carrying out some of the official tasks of the latter (Vounouki, 2003). The relations between institutional and informal networks are very delicate: the latter never replace completely the former and the nodal positions of both often coincide, in a way that the same person can sometimes play an important role on both sides. The relations between the two spheres are often organized on a clientelist basis. These relations justify, among others, the institutional complexity of the country's administrative structures at the same time as they contribute to exceed it. The mobilization of the informal sphere seems very important concerning farms functioning and reproduction.

In any case, two kind of critics can be made to the above analysis: the first one is that the general good image of Greek farm reproduction appearing through the global data does not take into account contradictions between national and local-scale data as well as differences between various productive sectors. Secondly, one can argue that this good reproduction is seen as a consequence or a by-product of a different reality, more or less conceptualized: the European policy, the clientelism which is an integral part of the Greek political and social life, the weakness of distinction between countryside and urban areas... without never being considered as a part of an ensemble, that can be shaped, in its turn, by this reproduction.

3. DATA ON DEPARTMENT LEVEL CALLING INTO QUESTION THE GENERAL MODEL

In order to have an in depth analysis of the farm reproduction subject and to answer to the above critics, we studied³ two rural areas in the department of Kilikis in the north of Greece, close to the borders with the Former Yugoslavian Republic of Macedonia. Even though it is a rural area located near the large agglomeration of Thessaloniki (1 000 000 inhabitants), the primary sector plays an important role in the local economy. The department is in an intermediate situation as far as its development level is concerned, being neither particularly favoured nor lagging behind.

Even if data referring to the national level give a very positive image as for the reproduction of Greek farms, those collected on the department level show a different aspect of the phenomenon: here, the number of farms falls (table 3).

³ The results that are presented here come mainly from the author's field research for her PhD thesis.

Table 3: Evolution of farms' number (%)

	Total (Greece)	Total (Kilkis)	Cows breeding (Picrolimni)	Wine-growing (Goumenissa)
1971/1981	- 17,73%	- 28,99 %	Non available	+ 2,76 %
1991/2000	- 5,49%	- 12,91%	- 58,33 %	+ 28,39 %
1961/2000	- 22,20%	- 38,15%	n.a	- 12,82%

Source: (Service National des Statistiques de Grèce, 2001); (Organisme du lait, 2000)

This fact can be interpreted in two ways: either this department is a special one from the point of view of our subject, or that the functioning model of Greek agriculture does not fully work everywhere.

The first hypothesis can be abandoned quickly because the data concerning the agriculture and the other economic sectors, (unemployment rate, different age groups and composition of the population...) on this department showed that it is an ordinary area of the Greek countryside. In fact, it was for this reason that it has been chosen; so that the results of the field research can be valid, at least partly, to the other departments of the country.

In fact, the functioning model of Greek agriculture was idealized by the analysts. Although this could globally explain the good reproduction of Greek farms for a long period, this is no longer the case or at least not in all cases. Subsequently, in order to escape from the effects of statistical globalisation, which often hides the diversity of the situations (sectoral, cultural, economic etc), a local study has been carried out in two zones of the department: in Goumenissa which is a semi-mountainous area, far away from the urban centres and in Picrolimni which is a plain area, much closer to the urban centres of Kilkis and Thessaloniki.

The two areas are comparable in terms of density of the population, but they appear very different in terms of spatial organization: in Goumenissa, the local life is organised around a central large village, while in Picrolimni such a centre does not exist. Because of its enclosed geographical situation, the first zone undergoes a slow reduction in its total population, while the second one gains in population, as it is situated within the external commute belt of the two cities.

The demographic evolution of the two zones influences obviously their dynamism and the decision of young people that intend to start up in agriculture. This is because such a decision means also the acceptance of a simultaneous territorial attachment. This attachment is very strong in the case of the agriculture in comparison with some other economic sectors because this job imposes a strict space framework that influences on both personal and professional life. The results of the field surveys showed that young farmers give a great importance to their place of residence. That comes out especially from their aspirations concerning living standards and leisure facilities that are often equivalent to those of non farmers. Even if they think in general that rural life (and countryside in general) provides a certain quality of life, they always seek for a certain degree of services. In fact, rural areas are appreciated as long as they are not assimilated to isolation. For this reason, the automobile plays an important role in young rural people lives, because it does not only represent a symbol of success and wealth but also the link between rural and urban world.

For the above reasons, one could believe that the reproduction of farms located in the zones having an easier and more rapid access to the urban centres would have been higher than in the distant and relatively isolated zones. However, data concerning cow-breeding farms

situated in the zone nearest to urban centres (Picrolimni) and wine-growing farms situated in the zone of Goumenissa prove the opposite (table 3). That shows that the geographical proximity of the urban centres is an important but not a sufficient condition to ensure the reproduction of the agricultural structures in the concerned areas (Vounouki & Gardin, 2009). It should be noted that the urban influence on the arable lands of Picrolimni cannot explain this evolution: even if the old villages are occupied more and more by commuters, the number of new constructions remains very limited and the landscape remains dominated by field crops.

4. SECTORAL LEVEL: VARIED CONFIGURATIONS OF THE GREEK FUNCTIONING MODEL

The analysis of the research results showed that finally among the discriminating factors that allow to identify why some farms are being reproduced better than others, the most important is the production sector: this is the result that arises from the comparison of reproduction levels in wine and dairy sectors. Farms number remains stable and high in the case of the wine-growing farms of Goumenissa whereas it falls quickly in the case of stockbreeders of Picrolimni.

The two studied sectors present a lot of similarities and differences that influence the rate of farms reproduction (table 4).

Table 4: Factors that influence on farms reproduction in wine and milk sector

		WINE	MILK
Similarities	Obstacles from CAP	Wine register	Milk quota
	Farmers' Unions	Bad representation	
	Family contribution	Important (financial and physical aid, decision-making)	
Differences	Nature of product	Quality	Mass
	Production system	Multi-crops	Specialization
	Pluriactivity	Strong	Weak
	Functioning model	More traditional	More intensive
	Dependence on big marketing firms	Weak	Strong
	Relations with these firms	Interpersonal	Weaken, impersonal
	Administrative structures	Flexible	Rigid
	Informal networks	Horizontal, in a familial, local or friendly base	Vertical, modeled on the administrative pyramid, becoming a satellite around EU funds
	Coexistence formal/informal networks	Pacific	Conflicting
Farms reproduction	Strong	Weak	

Both face similar obstacles set by the CAP. These obstacles under the form of milk quotas in the case of the stockbreeders (referring mainly to the situation before 2004) and of a strict, "locked-up" register in the case of wine-growers, intend to control the global production and to avoid surpluses. However, at the same time, they restrain the free entry of new farmers in these sectors. Another common element between the two sectors is that the farmers' interests are in both cases very badly defended by farmers' unions and cooperatives. This is the reason why young farmers feel excluded from the political system. This feeling is much stronger in

the wine-growers even if they are not dominated by a system as rigid as the one of milk quotas. Despite the fact that the cows-breeding sector is dominated by a powerful administration, stockbreeders feel more able to influence the policy that is relevant to their sector. This opinion of the stockbreeders, surely linked to the strict administrative regulation of their sector, contradicts the macroeconomic analyses which show that Greek stockbreeders are in a rather marginal position in the frame of negotiations in the European Union. In fact, milk sector is a very regulated one, but this protection seems to be more adaptable to northern European farms that are highly specialised to this type of produce. So, in all scales (European, national or local), the capacity of negotiation of the Greek dairy stockbreeders is very weak. In the UE level, they have been very underprivileged because of the weakness of the total number of milk quotas allotted to Greece. However, neither this fact nor the crisis of the sector in the early '90s, due to a too high productivity, does stop some of them from idealising the development model of the sector in Northern Europe. Indeed, it is because of this idealisation that their great majority thinks that their position is less favourable than the position of their European counterparts.

Moreover, some other common elements between the two sectors have also emerged, referring to the ways the farms function, such as the great importance of the domestic community to the starting-up of the professional career of young farmers. In fact, the great majority of starting-ups have been realised within a family framework. A numerous family strategies exist concerning the designation of the successor and the choice of the adequate moment for the transmission of the farm. Usually the young successor is one of the sons of the family and more rarely, a daughter. In addition, the young successor is often the least educated of all brothers and sisters; it seems as if the latter accept to follow longer studies as a reward for giving up their farm part to the successor. Instead they get diplomas that can help them to find easier a well-paid job. Even if these family strategies exist, one has to note the absence of a clear and regular correlation between the temporality of the starting-up of the young successor and various important events in the family life (weddings, births, retirements etc). This fact is the result of the great confidence that Greek young farmers grant to the family support and the fact that both agricultural and family life are indissolubly linked. Besides, all family members, including the former farm manager, feel always concerned by the family farm. As a consequence, the change of the farm manager has rarely been considered as a rupture that causes a radical transformation of the power relations within the family members. Yet, this does not mean the total absence of tensions or conflicts between family members during the change of the leadership of the family farm.

The unity and cohesion of the domestic group still are the principal objectives of all family acts. Thus, even if passing the family farms from one generation to another change family's relations with the external world, relations between family members do not change fundamentally. Family's contribution to the functioning of almost all the farms, in both sectors, remains paramount: financial aid, involvement of family members in agricultural tasks and in decisions concerning the farm etc. Subsequently, it is not in the sociological analysis of the family that one can find the explanation of the different reproduction rate between the two sectors, because the use of family aid is the rule in all the farms that have been studied.

On the other hand, what influences strongly farm reproduction and functioning, is access to information. This access is often ensured by family and public relation networks which integrate young people in broader formal or informal networks.

If the general conditions of production regulation and family relations present strong similarities, it is on an intermediate scale that we found clear differences between the two sectors.

As far as trade circuits are concerned, both sectors are dominated by large trade firms that transform and put into the market their products. But, contrary to the stockbreeders who are completely submitted to the large marketing firms, wine-growers have developed more ways to escape from the large distribution chains completely or partially. However, when wine-growers collaborate with them, they become very dependent and the relations between producers and firms take an almost interpersonal aspect. But, this dependence turns less strong by the fact that vine-growing is often a part of a mixed-farming system. So, the rest of the crops permit farmers to obtain a relative independence face to wine-growing vagaries and pressure from trade firms. On the contrary, the commercial relations developed within the milk trade circuits are weaker and impersonal and they concern almost all the stockbreeders. Cow-breeding is their principal and unique activity and almost all their crops are primarily used as animal feed.

The possibility that only wine-growers have to escape from large commercial circuits is due primarily to the nature of their product. The wine is a quality product, having a personal character which gives more opportunities to develop alternative forms of transformation and marketing, like the *tsipouro*, a traditional Greek aperitif. Moreover, these qualities allow the deployment of a variety of informal arrangements through a wide system of exchanges. These are exactly the practices which reinforce social bonds and structure informal networks of cooperation and mutual aid. On the other hand, milk is a mass product and its marketing passes almost obligatorily through large milk firms.

Another important difference between the producers in the two sectors is the greater number of pluriactive wine-growers compared to the stockbreeders: the first ones are twice as many as the second ones. However, pluriactivity is one of the fundamental elements of the traditional Greek agricultural model. We can assign this phenomenon to the nature of the two productions: cows-breeding needs much more regular workload than the wine-growing whose workload is concentrated over certain periods of the year. No matter the reason of this difference between the two sectors, it seems that in general wine-growing comply more with the traditional Greek agriculture model than cow-breeding. One can therefore attribute the better reproduction of wine-growing farms in comparison with the cows-breeding ones exactly to this fact. In addition, it seems that the productivism has gained more ground among the stockbreeders, causing the conventional processes of land concentration and disappearance of a significant number of farms.

In a parallel way, and always because of the differences in the marketing of the two products, the apparently similar institutional supervision of production does not have the same effects in the two sectors. In both cases, the institutional system which supervises the two sectors is inefficient regarding its official missions (in particular concerning the control of the production volumes). In addition, in both cases, informal networks, parallel to the administrative structures, have been developed. These networks function in a more flexible way than the official ones because they resolve partially the problems related to the bureaucratic inertia.

In the case of milk, the greatest rigidity of the administrative structure leads to the constitution of vertical networks that are modeled on the administrative pyramid. The horizontal networks

developed at a family, local or friendly basis have a very weak influence on these vertical networks. In the wine sector, official and informal networks coexist in a rather peaceful way. This coexistence ensures the good conditions of wine-growing farm reproduction and leaves space for alternative development to the wine-growers principal activity. However, this is not the case of the cow-breeding sector. Although stockbreeders are more actively involved in mutual aid networks than wine-growers, they remain blocked, imprisoned, to a very complex and rigid official system, which is subordinated to the vertical powerful informal networks. Contrary to the wine sector, the informal, parallel to the official structures networks of the milk sector only increase the already important official restrictions. These networks are held and organized by qualified civil servants who take advantage of the Community funds. Managing the milk quotas, these people have created a whole informal market from which they have earned substantial financial and symbolic returns. But at the same time, they act as negative forces to the reproduction of cow-breeding farms.

5. THE INDIVIDUAL STRATEGIES

Apart from this sectoral differentiation, there is another major difference related to the various farm types and to the individual strategies. Starting from the farm characteristics and their leaders' behavior and beliefs, a typology has been elaborated in the basis of four different ways of functioning: from the more "peasant" to the more "professional". Between these two categories we defined two intermediate types which are closer to the first or the second previous standard. In these two groups, farm leaders have also a second alternative activity, parallel to the agriculture.

Each of the above models has some strong points as well as some weaknesses with regard to the question of farm reproduction. However, it is important to emphasize that for the moment, the Common agricultural policy has not led to significant differences on a farm reproduction level, among these various categories. That can possibly change in the future, but it is not obvious why the "peasant" model should suffer more tomorrow than today: farms of this category have a serious handicap because of their low level of modernization in an increasingly competitive environment. But, at the same time, this model is the subject of a renewed interest because of its more environmental friendly practices and because productivism is currently being called into question.

On the contrary, farms that belong to the "professional" model are closer to the functioning standards of northern European farms and consequently could survive easier in a neoliberal and competitive environment. But the problem for these farms is linked to the fact that the productivist model is no longer promoted and the new common policy's guidelines insist on quality rather than quantity.

Lastly, farms of the "alternative" model categories represent many advantages, because they are less dependent on Community subsidies and on market fluctuations. Moreover, they are more compliant with the new CAP orientations and especially with the promotion of the multifunctionality in the countryside. In addition, they maintain numerous links with the traditional functioning of Greek farms. It is difficult to evaluate the change in the "alternative" farm numbers because this change does not depend only on the evolution of agriculture but also on the evolution of the country's economy. However, it seems that the effectiveness of the opportunism that characterizes the Greek agriculture depends less on farm type than on production sector because of the different configuration of the networks that this sector implies.

To draw a conclusion, this study enabled us to identify certain specific characteristics of the Greek agriculture and to distinguish the context in which farm reproduction take place and to distinguish the polymorphism and the heterogeneity hidden behind the global statistical data.

6. OPPOSITE INTERPRETATIONS OF THE GREEK PARADOX

Two types of interpretations emerge on the question of successful reproduction of Greek farms. From the one side, a corpus of texts presents Greek agriculture as essentially multifunctional, and, consequently, as having powerful weapons to resist the reduction of its productive structures. On the other hand, another corpus presents Greek agriculture like handicapped by the artificial character of its productions: from their point of view, the productive structures have survived only thanks to European subsidies, attributed rather to political than economic reasons. But as this was just a temporary phenomenon and these subsidies are going to come to an end (in the horizon of 2013), Greek farms will soon face serious problems.

These extreme positions are not solely found in scientific texts. One finds the equivalent of it, in the field, in the farmers' views when they evoke the advantages and the drawbacks of the local mutual aid, when they give their opinion on the role of agriculture to the general development of the country or when they describe the ideal farm they have in mind (Vounouki, 2004).

From our point of view, it is the combination of the previous explanations that helps to determine the good level of reproduction of Greek farms. So, the element that mostly characterizes Greek agriculture is not its capacity to reproduce its farms, starting from its own forces and according to an internal logic, but its capacity to use the opportunities. Since the land reform of the 1920s and the beginning of the massive emigration of the Greeks towards the industrialized countries, the agricultural world always knew how to benefit from opportunities offered by its relations with the rest of the world. Firstly the financial returns of the immigrants, then the European financings and finally the flow of Albanian immigrants are chronologically the three major reference marks that benefit the Greek agriculture.

7. SCENARIOS

The entry of 12 new Member States has reinforced the high heterogeneity of European agriculture. This heterogeneity is not due solely to different physical characteristics (relief, climate, potential) but also to different agrarian history and policies. The vision of each country about the importance and the role of its agriculture, is vital when it comes to adopt an agricultural model. Several visions can exist inside Europe: some countries consider the rural space more as a space where nature has to be preserved (this is the case of England), some other countries consider this space mostly as a productive one (ex. France) and finally some others give more importance to the maintenance of the rural space and of rural and agricultural population as a mean to maintain the general social peace (the case of Greece). It is possible that the visions of the new Member States will follow the same paths.

These different visions shape also the Common Agricultural Policy: its subject-matter, its priorities (which sector to protect and which not), the level of the protection to adopt, as well as its position towards the international pressures for higher liberalisation. In this context, it seems difficult to formulate a really “Common” agricultural policy. The great risk of this is to obtain finally a fragmented European policy that will lead to a duality of the European rural space: from the one hand, a well-protected nature, with a large number of small,

multifunctional farms and from the other a space with few big highly productive farms. This duality will certainly have an influence on farm reproduction.

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