Greek Ethical Identities in Continuity and Change: A Social Networks Approach of Applied *Philotimo* in Economo-scape of Local Communities; the Case of Cooperative Banking

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Abstract: *The core value of Greek philotimo derives from the root concept of kalokagathia and is manifested in the institutional and transactional ethos of Cooperative Banks in Greece. A major case study of Cooperative Bank of Chania (CBC) is presented to introducing the analytical approach of social network analysis, via UCINET, to represent membership ties and managerial ties in the second largest Greek cooperative bank. The concept of ethics in doing business is extended in a deliberate tendency to build transactional networks that enforce pre-existing social networks and stay tuned with sustainable local economies, a notion consistent with locality in multicultural Europe. Cooperative banking operates in intersection of emotional capitalism and social enterprise, as a cultural process through which new interactional- emotional scripts of economic relationships are illustrated by the cultural frames of cooperation or team work. The case of CBC of Chania shows how non-commercial ties of buyers- sellers matter in "major purchases" and insulate from crisis. Most such transactions take place among kin, friends, or acquaintances that substitute impersonal markets, especially when decisions involve high uncertainty; so common values like philotimo promote connectedness and builds trust that prevails in dealing with risk in order to make financial decisions, sustain and support them.*

Keywords: culture, philotimo, kalokagathia, network, cooperative banking, homopolar ties, trust, IPA, ethics

Greek *Philotimo* Meets *Kalokagathia and "We-rationality"*

The Greek value system since antiquity offers insights on atomistic behavior, private ownership of property and its protection, the division of labor, free foreign trade, exchange value, money and interest, and policy issues using the ideas of Hesiod, Democritus, Plato, Xenophon, Aristotle and others (Doukas, 2007: p. 140; Petrochilos, 2002). These theorists seem to converge in the concept of *kalokagathia*, as the ethical basis of life in the Greek city-state. Originally kalokagathia uses human physique (*kalos*) coupled with virtue, justice, and wisdom (all in *agathos*) that emphasizes the moral responsibility found in Homer's texts. The pragmatic content of the concept suits to a community organized on the basis of scattered individual households to defend against enemies (of the time) in a society with a shame culture. So, *agathos politis* (good citizen) becomes the one who contributes to a prosperous of the city in general, practicing *philanthropy* as a primary service explained by Contantellos (2008). Hellenes considered *eco-nomics* (governing the *oikos*) as part of their inquiry on ethics, politics, and their social organization. So, while profit making is legitimate since ancient Greece and part of the atomistic system (Doukas, 2007: p. 222-223), profiteering (*aishrokerdia*) is punished back in mythological times: Creon in Sophocle's Antigone threatened the guard under the suspicion that he has received money to allow the burial of Polynices (Petrochilos, 1999). Greek economic thought is placed within the Mediterranean tradition that perceives economy as embedded in a web of social and political institutions, regulated by religious and ethical norms (Baeck, 1994). Applying this concept in developing interpersonal relationships based on mutual respect of oral commitments, trust, pride and honor the virtue of philotimo is emerging (Ioannou, 2009).

Greeks since antiquity put emphasis on integrity (*akeraiotita*), the primary layer of current philotimo[1]. Integrity originally reflected the public pressure to behave uprightly, a norm of the citizen. It would be unthinkable that someone without integrity - in terms of honesty, justice, truthfulness- is admired. Philotimo seems to gain the status of a collective conscience in modern Greece, where people no longer philosophize about it but take it for granted and assume its widespread existence.

Greeks are an "*ethnos anadelfon*" or brother-less nation (Sartzetakis, 1985). Philotimo is defined as an innate faculty that may boost people to do more than what is expected, to offer yourself without expecting anything in return. Hence, philotimo is a life principle for Greeks; it is interpreted as love for honor, honor "to show" for the others and honor "to receive" from the others, a characteristic of intense in small communities of the Greek periphery. It is a case of an ideal occurrence where participants generally accept a norm based in the foundation of that normative society, as defined by Habermas (1990: pp.182-183). This type of normative ethics transcends deontology of duties and rules, as well as consequentialism. In this sense philotimo closer matches with virtues and moral character that define virtue ethics. Furthermore, the three central concepts of virtue ethics *virtue*, *practical wisdom* and *eudaimonia* are comprehensible, objective, and empirically truthful (Held, 1980: p.331) in various manifestations of philotimo. It is a virtue that matches with credibility, with the tendency to cooperate and the ritual of keeping your word (face and commitments) without reserving it in a contract; it is a way of life with *ethos*, consistent with the teleological approach of Aristotle. Philotimo has its anthropological roots in the "*poetics of manhood*" (Herzfeld, 1991: p. 8) that are easily observable in micro-communities of the Greek periphery, like Crete. It is also a direct counter measure to *rouspheti* – the reciprocal dispensation of favors (Clogg, 2002: pp. 4-5) – as practiced and enforced during the post-Byzantine Turkish rule of Hellas, and remains as a major modernization obstacle. This attribute of personal integrity, keeping face and trust is essential for any banking practice and gets institutional support in community networks that form cooperative banks with elements of collective rationality. It is a script of a collective programming of mind (G. Hofstede, 1991: p. 25) for Hellenes, a determinant of the foundation of cooperative and credit- related institutions in the European Mediterranean culture and the Greek tradition. In monetary transactions and intimate relationships trust is mutually co-produced and goes beyond *Homo Oeconomicus* of "rationality," "calculation," and "efficiency" or institutional "*economization*"[2] as impersonal economic imperatives.

Cooperative and Social Enterprise and International Cooperative Principles

Traditional Greek value of philotimo is the origin of security and status that are very important for Greeks in business, as well as the need for self-esteem (Bourantas & Papadakis, 1996). These cultural traits explain to an extent the "small, family-owned firm" phenomenon in Greece. In such a format business ventures somehow deal more with agape and altruistic behavior, accountability, professionalism, symmetry in action and impact, and put in act the heart of survival as a "*collective entity with a common destiny*" to rediscovering community (Muel, 2004). A reflection and extension of the socially organized business finds an exemplary application in cooperative economy and banking. The same notion seems to be the cultural foundation recognized with a Nobel Prize for the institution of Grameen Bank with seven million borrowers (Yunus, 2006). The bank is self-financed and makes a profit with a high repayment percentage, as the borrower maintains face to their own community that guarantees normality and solvency in bank's operation. That is a characteristic example of an amalgam of social and value capital supported by a banking network that redefines entrepreneurship and social fabric in small communities.

The nature of social business is closely associated with the return of material capital not in monetary units but in units of social capital (like resources, solidarity, mutual recognition, respect and the sense of belonging and contributing), embedded in the structure of social entrepreneurship. A major type of such enterprises are the modern cooperative banks, in which money transactions are complemented with service agreements that give birth to active reciprocal relations among their members. Such banks are important in order to accomplish sustainable characteristics in a reference society, providing the material base to ensure the reproduction of monetary and social capital (Lin, 1999). Cooperative organizations in specific sectors like agriculture, with the Raiffeisen Agricu1tural Banks Association and the Irish Agricultural Organisation Society, have emerged with some considerable degree of success (Yerburgh, 1896). In 2007, the CEO of CBC underlined that "*in the past 16 years cooperative identity made the difference based on self-assistance, equity, solidarity and communal responsibility;*

with no deviation from our principles CBC evolved in competition by utilizing its size with flexibility. It was not a highway but a footpath coupled with humans as our capital."

The Cooperative Movement represented a complementary, ethically motivated, incentive of this response to capitalism and, with its ideals of local support, mutuality and democratic participation, was to become a dominant force in the 20th century and beyond. Robert Owen, the father of cooperation, defined social structures and not individuals as responsible for "*the moral degradation of capitalism*" (Donnachie, 2000).

ICA[3] defines a cooperative as "*an autonomous association of persons united voluntarily to meet their common economic, social and cultural needs and aspirations through a jointly owned and democratically controlled enterprise*." Cooperative doctrine is identified by seven internationally recognized principles of cooperatives with a literal description in all constitutional agreements of cooperatives: i) voluntary and open membership, ii) democratic control by members, iii) member economic participation, iv) autonomy and independence, v) education, training and information, vi) cooperation among cooperatives, vii) concern for the community. Thomas (1997), following Owen's[4] organizational experiments, applied the above principles in defining the member entities of a cooperative in the banking context. This "cooperative globe" represents his notion on Inclusive Partnership Approach (IPA) to business (Figure 1):

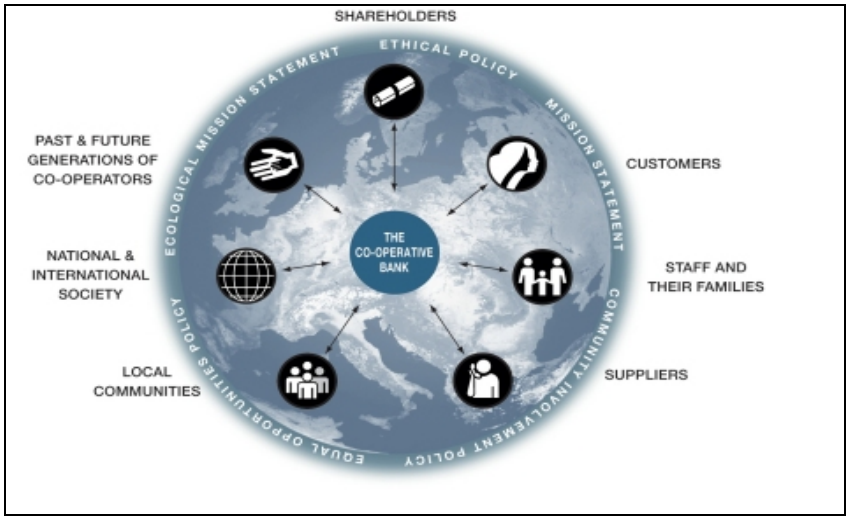

Figure 1: Cooperative bank partners as of Owen (adopted from Thomas, 1997)

IPA designed above identifies seven partners to whom companies (and banks) have a responsibility: shareholders/members, customers, employees and their families, suppliers and partners, the community at large, wider/global society, past and future generations of co-operating entities. This approach was officially accepted in Greek Cooperative Network, as an institutional declaration of commitment in the Association of Cooperative Banks in Greece (1999).

Social Network Analysis in Cooperative Bank of Chania Case study

Currently, sixteen cooperatives banks operate in Greece with a total network of 220 branches covering the major part of the country, except the islands of Cyclades and Eptanisa[5], with 210,000 members allover Greece. Bank of Greece has granted approval for two of these banks (Pancretan and Chania Bank) to operate country-wide, while another four have reached the cooperative capital required to allow them to expand their operations in the neighboring regions as well.

The island of Crete, till the start of 2011 with the "Kallikratis" reform plan, consisted of four prefectures and is the base of the two largest cooperative banks in Greece with a cumulative network of 84 branches allover the island. The capital of Crete is Heraklion, the base and headquarters of Pancretan Bank and another historical main city is Chania, the base of several public and military authorities and the birthplace of Bank of Chania.
CBC is a low profile bank founded by the people and governed by them and their directly elected executives; operates for their greater good as a whole, consisting of pre-existing ties of homophily[6] that transmute to homopolar bonds among members of the community of Chania. Three are the primary attributes of social entrepreneurship that boost stability and growth for CBC: (1) deep knowledge of local environment, people, and their relations (2) hands-on engagement with the economic and social life for employees and customers; and (3) referral trust and solidarity, crucial for self-employed individuals and small-medium size enterprises living in Crete. At a community level as living in affinitive local societies, members of CBC transform their cultural values to ethical – originally meaning *daily-expected* – traits when they decide to register, pay the ticket-share and

start doing business[7]. This is an Aristotelian ideal that "*we are what we repeatedly do";* ethos is a way of life diffused through the cooperative network fabric. The core value of Greek "*philotimo*" safeguards integrity and performance in Cretan society, as an enthymeme of a social added-value. Greekness as identity[8], manifested in Crete with philotimo, enriches transactional ethos with a social dimension that makes CBC ethical and a benefit dimension that makes it sustainable. The application of social network analysis of CBC via UCINET[9] as described in Scott (2007) generates a typical dependency matrix (viewed as ego network of main branch, Figure 2):

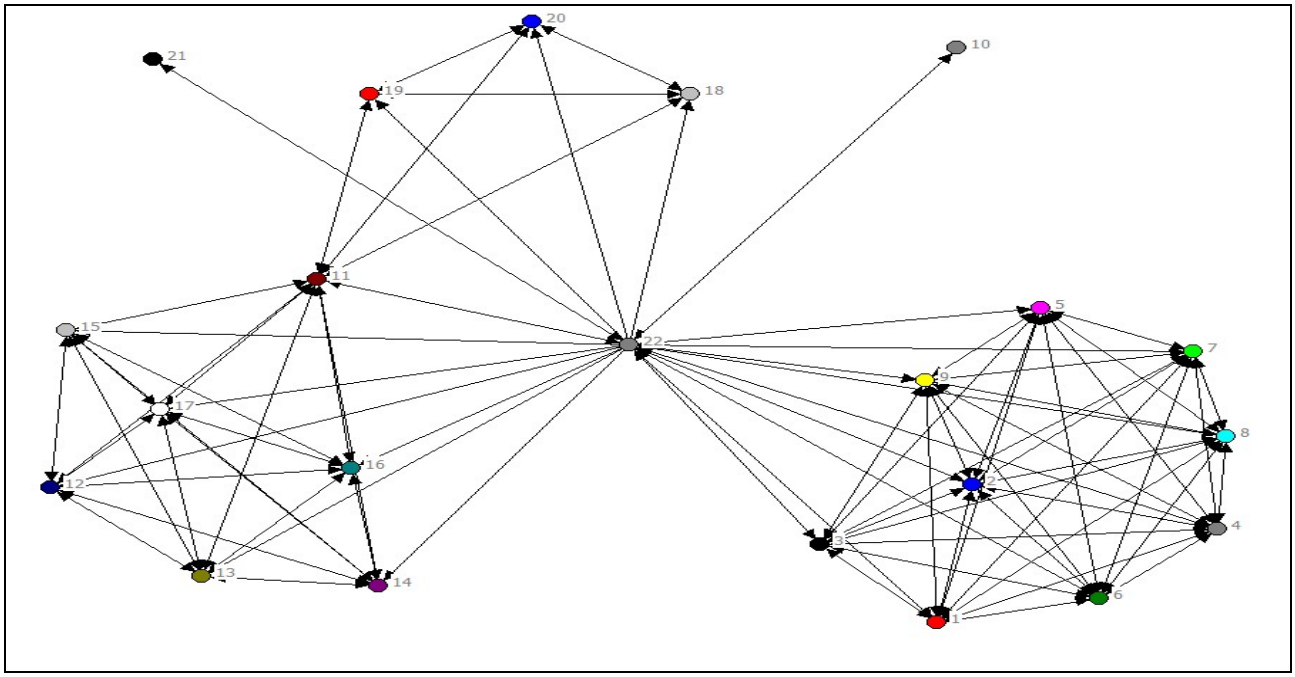

Figure 2: Dependency Matrix and the ego network of Branch No 22

Cooperatives, in many respects, are just like other banks. The important difference is that these are the only banks that give customers transparency in how their money is managed; most importantly, "*by encouraging their input into the ongoing development of bank's ethical policy"* (Brooke et al, 2000). Consequently, cooperative bank has achieved its differentiation by drawing a generic identity on the philosophy of the cooperative movement, in order to place itself within a separate position in the banking industry (Wilkinson & Balmer, 1996); cooperative identity becomes a social accepted brand when sometimes banks find their future in examining their past.

Discussion

The Greek Commercial Banking System is generally considered as social responsible in the past decade (Arapoglou in HBA report, 2008; p. 51). But competition and complementary character of cooperative banks seemed to play a decisive role in a bottom-up approach of enriching banking operation with ethical principles. Further research is needed for a detailed representation of formal hierarchical ties that exist in Bank's organization chart and a comparison with all the overlapping lines of connection. Additional analysis of the dimensions of philotimo and their compatibility with cooperative principles may reveal structural connections that connect social relationships with doing cooperative business. Other network related inquiries in the intersection of managerial attributes with philotimo traits are the following: determine what *members* think of their co-operative, how do *they* value its performance and in which ways *they* understand that it meets *their* needs, *who* they choose to share important information with, etc. In the end people have to decide whether they attribute "homophily" in their bank or they feel a mirror image retrospective to their own characteristics and personality. They have the right to choose as banking competition is unrestricted (in Greece) but when they choose they have to interpret their understanding in the following value component: *"utility value, affirmation value, ego-support value, stimulation value and security value"*. The network setting is responsible of holding local communities tight together, when the concepts of "value", "success", and "philotimo" are among criteria of action for individuals. In the end, such an approach has to assess how *central* a cooperative bank is in *their* strategic approach for self-sufficiency and sustainability in local communities. In the case of Greece a comparative review of the parameters of trust – with personality constraints, cultural expectations, learned attitudes, and decision mechanisms - and philotimo as an interaction factor that may lead to the probability that "*A will connect with B*" could reveal intersections and overlaps useful to analyze the cooperative phenomenon.

CBC encapsulates a back to basics approach that dictates the motto "*teach your company to feel small again* (as when it started)." That is what makes people pay attention to

detail, work around the clock, stay involved when they are not in office, and put an effort that is worthwhile for their community. In CBC doing business is another facet of the social networking coin. Social cohesion grounded on *Homo Dictyous* is the novel legacy that persists overtime for the continuity and resilience of Greek society, as a whole, and for self-sufficiency and sustainability in its local communities.

Endnotes

1 John Psaropoulos explains the concept in his article *"From Homer to coops"* in Business File Quarterly Review No. 74, Economia (Dec 2009).

2 As G. Provopoulos, Governor of the Bank of Greece, commented on http://www.enet.gr/?i=news.el.oikonomia&id=97433. Also see Paul Krugman, *The Banks Are Not All Right*, NY Times op-ed, October 18, 2009 at http://www.nytimes.com/2009/10/19/opinion/19krugman.html (both accessed on October 2009).

3 ICA principles are described in http://www.ica.coop/coop/principles.html (accessed on May 2009).

4 Lord Thomas of Macclesfield was the Managing Director of The Cooperative Bank (of Manchester in England) until 1997.

5 The Association of Cooperative Banks of Greece (ESTE) reports 220 branches for the group of cooperative banks, in the $_{end}$ of 20_{10} (available at http://www.este.gr/en/index.html, accessed on $_{Februrary}$ 2010)

6 McPherson, Smith-Lovin and Cook (2001). *Birds of a Feather: Homophily in Social Networks*, Annual Review of Sociology, pp. 415-444. Also see Kaduchin at http://home.earthlink.net/~ckadushin/ (accessed on October 2009). The term "homopolar" is taken from chemistry contrasted to ionic to denote mutually contributed electrons in a covalent bond.

7 Geert Hofstede provides a well- documented analysis of cultural aspects in business in several publications and in his site at http://www.geert-hofstede.com/ (accessed on October 2009).

8 Managerial and behavioral aspects of philotimo are explained in: Bourantas D. and Papadakis V. (1996), Greek Management, International Studies of Management and Organization, Vol. 26, Issue 3, pp: 13-32. Skiftou V. (2005), Within Social and Cultural Practices of Greek Society Subjects Negotiate a Series of Issues that are Related to Family and the Complexities of It, LSE Doctoral Conference. Vassiliou V. G. & Vassiliou G. (1973), The Implicative Meaning of the Greek Concept of Philotimo, Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology, Vol 4, No 3. Recently US President Obama provided a detailed encounter of "Greekness and Philotimo" in March 9, 2010, at http://www.whitehouse.gov/photos-and-video/video/honoring-greek-independence-day.

9 UCINET software by Hanneman & Riddle (2003) is one of the standard tools used by The International Network of Social Network Analysis.

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Civil Society in Greece: Preliminary findings from a case study of Thessaloniki

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Abstract
Civil society in Greece is traditionally considered to be weak, however there seems to be limited empirical social research on this subject. In Thessaloniki, the second larger city of Greece, the following paradox appears: it is a city with a heavy presence of traditional state institutions and a medium social capital; however, in the last 15 years civic engagement seems to be flourishing. This paper is an attempt to map the associational life of the city and to classify organisations according to their relationship with the state. A research in the archives at the First Instance Court as well in the press and in the web has lead to some preliminary findings, which highlight some strong and weak aspects of the city's civil society.

Civil Society in Greece: Preliminary findings from a case study of Thessaloniki

The purpose of this paper

This paper is a prerequisite part of the Phd research I am currently engaged in, which is a study of the features of civil society in the city of Thessaloniki and its relationship with the state.

The purpose of the present paper is twofold: Primarily it is an attempt to map the civil society in Thessaloniki, adopting a conceptual frame which does not limit itself in the organizational element (Fioramonti &Fiori 2010). The second goal is to classify these organisations using the distinction between Civil Society I and Civil Society II (Foley and Edwards 1996) and to highlight the strong and weak aspects of the associational life of the city in order to reach to a better understanding of the function of the local civil society.

For the mapping of civil society, two main forms of research were conducted: primarily an investigation in the archives at the First Instance Court of Thessaloniki, where formal associations are registered. Secondly, field research, personal observation and monitoring of the press and of the web, which lead to the discovery of unregistered, informal groups and associations.

Conceptualization and measurement of civil society

Civil society and its relationship to the state have been the subject of intense research particularly over the last two decades. In literature, civil society, social capital and political culture have often been regarded as contributing factors to the improvement of the quality of democracy (Putnam 1993, Rice and Feldman, 1997; 1160, Paxton 1999, 2002, Muller and Seligson 1994), as well as factors of political change (Eckstein 1988, Werlin and Eckstein 1990).

However, the concept of civil societyv aries among the different social and political environments around the world. In modern theories, civil society is usually situated in the third sector, i.e. the sphere between state, market and the family. As a general rule in literature "*..the more normative-orientated the study, the narrower the definition of civil society (Heinrich 2005,213)*. This difference arises mainly from the fact that, normative approaches tent to regard civil society more as a positive asset of society, rather than a distinct sphere within society. Civil society is conceptualized as an ideal type, carrying a certain set of values and norms (such as civility, public good orientation, internal democracy etc). As a result, normative definitions of civil society usually have a rather exclusive character. This concept of civil society seems to reflect the liberal conception of associational life and its positive role to democratic governance, as found in the work of Alexis de Tocqueville "Democracy in America" and as it has been recently expressed in the work of Robert Putnam (1993, 1995).

Nevertheless, with the emergence of a growing number of empirical research, broader concepts of civil society have come in the forefront. Since the 1990s and drawing from examples of civil society in Eastern Europe and in Latin America, these analytical approaches emphasize on the importance of civil associations as a counterweight to the authoritarian state. They tent to use a rather inclusive concept of civil society, defining it as a social arena within the larger society (Heinrich 2005). This concept seems to echo the second school of civil society theory, namely Gramsci's notion of civil society as the site of struggle for cultural hegemony in its cultural dimensions.

Foley and Edwards (1996), refer to the above two dimensions of the third sector as "Civil Society I" and "Civil Society II". The first includes citizens' associations which have a "neutral" relationship to the state (such as sports clubs, cultural associations and voluntary unions). These

organisations, according to Putnam (1993) incorporate and increase social capital through the "bridging" of social and political divisions, contributing this way to the effectiveness of democratic state and economy.

On the contrary, Civil Society II refers to civil society as an independent sphere of action; due to this independency, civil society can resist to authoritarian regimes. However, this distinction leaves out numerous examples of associations within democratic regimes, which act oppositional and "as a counterweight" to the state and which, "*..are often more likely to generate Putnam's activated citizenry than the choral societies, birdwatching clubs, and bowling leagues he is so fond of citing" (Foley and Edwards, p 49)*. Thus, in the model of Foley and Edwards, Civil Society II refers to all the associations which oppose the regime itself ("transforming social movement organisations" e.g. the anti-global economy movement), or challenge specific policies of the state ("reforming social movement organisations" e.g. civil rights movements and woman organisations)[1] (Hasenfeld and Gidron, 2005). We could consider that in this distinction, Civil Society II refers to organisations with a permanent claim towards the state.

Foley's and Edward's distinction:

Civil Society I	**Civil Society II**	
Neutral to the State	Oppositional	
	Regime (transforming)	Policy (reforming)

The measurement of civil society is a delicate task, as the shapes and forms of civil society vary depending on the culture and the location of every society. A widely known approach for the measurement of civil society is the structural-operational definition, used in the Johns Hopkins Comparative Non-Profit Sector Project (CNP)[2], which regards non-profit organisations (NGO's) as the core expression of civil society. To qualify as a civil society organisation, an association has to be organized, private, non-profit distributing, self- governing and voluntary (Salamon et al., 2004). However, when using only this criterion, this approach omits key characteristics of the concept of civil society, such as collective citizen action outside organisations, as informal associations and social movements[3] (Heinrich 2005).

Another approach is the functional approach, adopted by CIVICUS[4] Civil Society Index, which focuses on the nature of activities undertaken by various actors such as individual citizen participation, demonstrations and other unorganized forms of civic engagement, within "the arena" of Civil Society (Heinrich 2005). However, in reality this approach seems to lack on sufficient specification and clear guidelines. Literature points out the need for the structural approach to increase the level of abstraction and for the functional approach to move into the direction of a higher operational specificity. (Heinrich 2005, Howard 2005, Sokolowski, Wojciech and Salamon 2005).

[1]Building on this distinction, Hasenfeld and Gidron also emphasize on the "non-profit sector" dimension of civil society, introducing Civil Society III. It consists of organisations that may legitimate and reinforce state regimes and policies, but often depend on the state, either for their legitimacy or for tax-exempt status, e.g. Hospitals and professional associations (Hasenfeld and Gidron 2005).

[2]This indicator is based on the comparative research of the non-profit sector (Comparative Non-profit Sector Project CPN), conducted by Johns Hopkins University and in the last decade has been used for the study of the economical dimensions of the non-profit sector in more than 40 countries.

[3]For the opposite opinion see: Sokolowski, Wojciech and Salamon 2005, p236f.

[4]This indicator has been designed in 2001 by Prof. Anheier and is currently implemented in more than 50 countries, focusing on Africa, Latin America, Asia and post-Communist Europe and Eurasia.

The case of Thessaloniki

In Greece, the prevailing opinion suggests that, for the period after transition to democracy, civil society has been weak and unable to develop in the oversized Greek state (Makrydemetris 2002, Mouzelis & Pagoulatos 2003). The weakness refers mainly to this civil society, which intervenes to the public sphere, either addressing certain claims to the state or opposing state policies[5]. At the same time, according to the 4th European Social Survey (ESS) social capital is considered to be low in comparison to othe european countries[6]. However, this view is challenged by empirical research and experience, which indicates some examples of informal aspects of civil society, which emerge "from below" and shouldn't be left outside the academical discussion (Voulgaris 2006, Sotiropoulos 2004). Advocates of both theories agree on the need for further empirical research and for more complicated and differentiated interpretations of the aspects of the Greek civil society.

The case study of the present paper is Thessaloniki, the second largest city in Greece, where the following paradox is observed: The state is particularly oversized and the social capital of the region (Central Macedonia) is considered to be "medium" (Jones, Chrisovalidis, Iosifides & Sophoulis 2008 p.183-186). However since the early 20th century (Mazower 2006, Papagianopoulos 2009) the city has shown a flourishing organisational life. Specifically in the last 15 years, the city seems to boast intense forms of formal or informal collective associations acting either against or in line with the state using various means of action. The recent results of the municipal elections, where a candidate with origins of the city's civil society has been elected major[7], overruling the 24-year long government of the conservative party, may as well be considered as an example of the reinforcement of the opposition through the interaction within the civil society associations (Paxton 2002).

Thus, the following questions arise: How can the paradox of a flourishing civil society within a normally adverse environment for civic action, be interpreted? Can it be that there are some aspects of civil society which are stronger than expected and can only be traced through empirical research? And can it be that these aspects mostly refer to social mobilization from below?

In order deal wich these hypotheses, we had to look into the features of two forms of civil society organisations: formal and informal. As formal civil society, we refer to the organisations which are registered in the archives of the First Instance Court of Thessaloniki. As informal civil society, we refer to unregistered associations, which have a permanent, structured and active presence in the city.

[5]In Foley's and Edward's distinction this would mainly refer to associations of CS II and a small part of associations of CS I

[6] See the results of the 4th European Social Survey in Greece (ESS) (http://www.ekke.gr/html/gr/NewsEvents/ESS4_results.pdf)

[7]The new major is Giannis Boutaris, who is a funding member of the NGO "Arcturos" for the protection of the "dancing bear", the environmental NGO "Fysi", the "Association of the citizens of Thessaloniki", an active member of the National Museum of Contemporary Art and member of the board in the "Centre for the Environment and Sustainable Development". In his campaign he emphasised on his civil society origins.

Research on Formal Civil Society[8]:

An investigation in the archives at the District Court, where formal associations are registered reveals the following data: The number of registered organisations until the end of 2010 is 9007. For the last 20 years, the average number of new associations is 209,6 per year.

The lowest number of newly founded organisations for the period between 1990-2010 appears in 1993, when after general elections, the party of PASOK came into power. This supports the argument that there is an inverse relationship between the foundation of new associations and the holding of general elections (Sotiropoulos 2004). However this is not the case in 1996, another year of general elections, where we find the peak in the number of new organisations. Since then, the rates of new registrations have been relatively stable for the last 15 years, with an average registration of 226 new associations every year (Table 1). The lowest rate of the last 15 years appears in 2010, a fact that can be attributed to bureaucratic reasons due to the change of government in 2009, or can be related to the psychological and social effect of the economic crisis and the recent austerity measures. It can also be indicative of a new alternative tendency of creating associations without legal personality. However, this is still something that needs further elaboration and thinking.

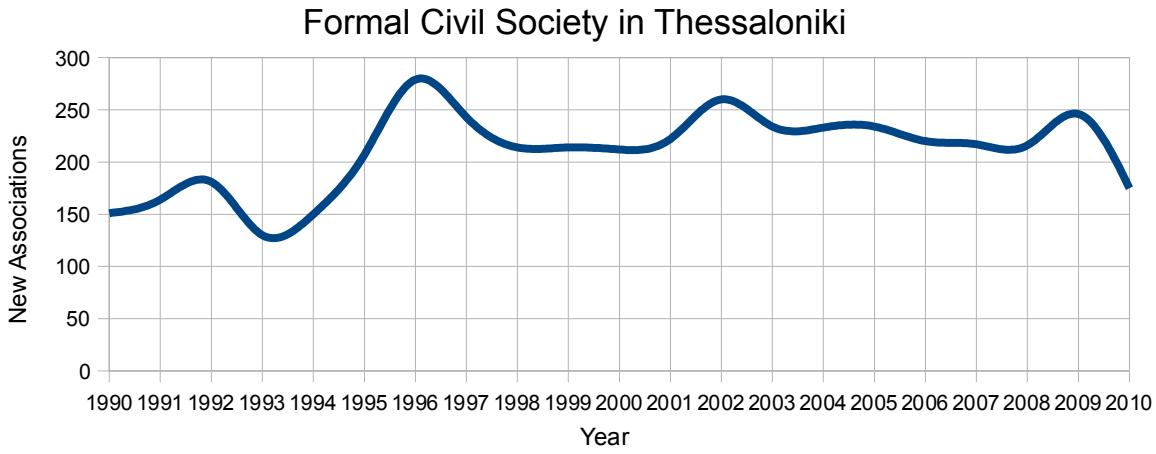


Table 1. New associations in Thessaloniki

A closer study on the nature of the registered organisations for the period between 2005-2010 reveals the following findings: In these 5 years, there were 1307 new organisations registered. When employing the distinction of Foley and Edwards between Civil Society I and II, we can see that there are no transforming organizations, whereas the number of organisations which seem to challenge specific policies of the state[9] is 66. This number represents only a 5,05% out of the total number of civil associations.

There are various remarks following this finding:

First of all this counting does not contain organisations of CS II, as they are unconstitutional and unlikely to obtain a legal personality.

Furthermore this kind of research does not take into account the "death rate" of the organisations i.e. the possibility that a number of organisations may cease to exist (Howard 2005). Although organisations are obliged to declare any change in their status, usually only a few follow this legal obligation. We can only hope that their recent registration minimises this risk.

[8]There are two legal forms of civil society associations: the Unions [somateia] and the Societies of civil law [astikes etaireies].The present research refers only to Unions, which is the most common form of formal civil society associations.

[9]Two main criteria were used for this classification: 1. the purpose of social change 2. the challenging of general public policies of the state.

Additionally, the counting of organisations misses the crucial role of the size of the membership. If the membership of these organisations is not measured, then these data remain purely quantitative and cannot be considered as representative (Howard, 2005). The form of membership is also important: the distinction between "active" and "passive" membership is often used in the literature (Putnam 1993, Paxton 1999).

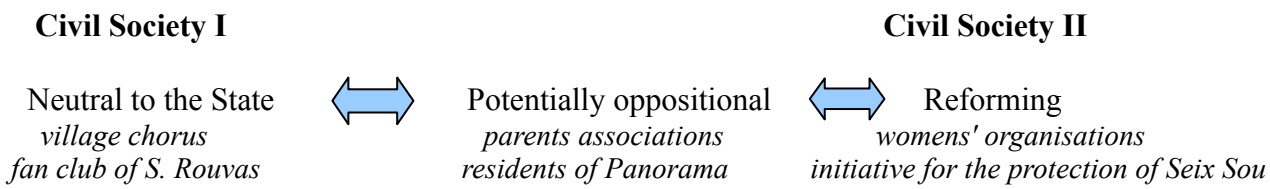
As far as the classification into CS I and CS II is concerned, it can only be regarded as indicative for two main reasons: as the Civil Courts only proceed into a typical control of the organisation's regulation, various associations can be registered under a general name and purpose, which would indicate a neutral organisation of CS I, but act in reality, against particular policies of the state (see also Karayannis 2008). Furthermore, as the boundaries between Civil Society I and II remain fluid, there is also the possibility that organisations evolve over time to *"multi-purpose hybrid organisations"* (Hasenfeld and Gidron 2005) incorporating multiple features of both forms of Civil Society.

All the aforementioned remarks are pointing out the need of an additional qualitative research e.g. through interviews with the leaders of the associations or personal observation and participation, which would further reveal the real nature of the organisations.

Furthermore we would argue that in the case of Thessaloniki, the "oppositional" character must not be perceived as a feature which is obvious and permanent in every aspect of the organisations' activity. Building on the distinction of Foley and Edwards, we would suggest a qualitative distinction within the associations of CS I and the formation of two separate categories: the one will consist of organisations with no relationship to the state (neutral) such as the "motorbike association" or "the greek music society". The second one will include organisations which are likely to intervene in the public sphere in order to address a material claim towards the state and challenge specific policies of the state, using protest or other means to achieve the promotion of their interests and goals. The examples of such associations vary and can refer to interest groups, "residents associations", "hunter's clubs" or "parents associations". Some parts of it like trade unions or strudent factions are in reality extremely political and party-dominated, supporting the argument of a weak civil society. It is also likely for these associations to evolve into organisations of CS II, aiming for social change e.g. the case of trade unions[10] when there is a horizontal salary reduction. In this concept, these associations could be regarded as "potential CS II" organisations rather than "neutral".

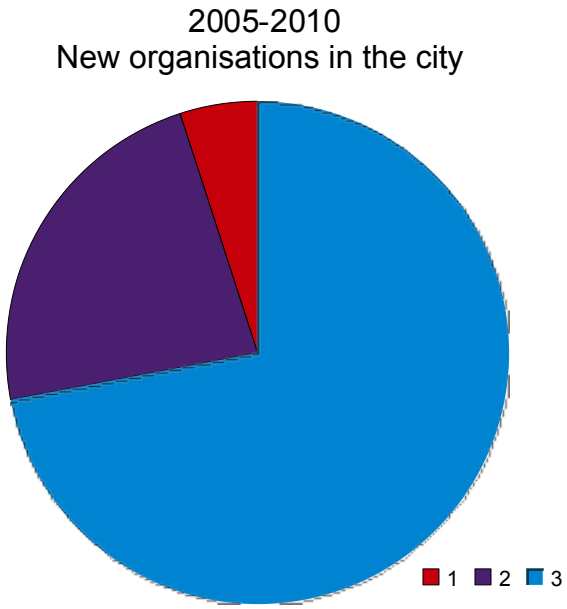
Employing this further distinction of Civil Society I, the number of organisations in such a category would be 300 out of the 1307[11]. This number represents 22,9% of the total number of civil associations. We would argue that, despite their particular character, "potential CS II" associations should be taken into account when searching for civil society associations, which interact with the state.

<u>Building on Foley's and Edward distinction:</u>



[10]Although in the literature trade unions are often considered to belong to CS II as they represent the labour movement (Heywood 2002), in the case of Greece I would consider their function to be mainly particularistic.

[11]Two main criteria were used for this classification: 1. the "private and particular" character of the interest groups 2. the possibility of challenging the state for the promotion of their interests



1= reforming associations, 2= potentially oppositional , 3= neutral associations

Table 2: association's relationship with the state

Research on Informal Civil Society:

As previously discussed, the research of the registered organisations of civil society can still not be characterized as representative of the civil society activity in Thessaloniki, as it it ignores the informal level of social and economic life in the country[12]. In the case of civil society this refers to the formation of informal and unregistered associations, equivalent of formal ones (Sotiropoulos 2004). A minimum observation of the city's political and social life reveals numerous examples of informal civil society as the citizen's association, which protested against the building of an underwater tunnel in Thessaloniki and succeeded in the obstruction of the planned work, or the movement for the use of former military camps as parks and public spaces.

These informal associations have a stable presence in the city, clear purposes and missions and tent to use the web as a means of communication with their members. They advertise their actions through sites of social networking like "Facebook" and "Twitter", where they subscribe members and call for support in their protests. In other words, their only difference from the registered organization is that they are not registered in the archives of the Court. A reason for that is that their leaders often don't think that it is necessary to gain a formal form, if they do not want to get state funding or have some other kind of economical transaction. As Sokolowski and Salamon would say, they are "organisations" in a sociological and not a legal concept, as they have "*..some boundary, some structure and some permanence over time*" (Skokolowski and Salamon 2005).

These organisations are not easy to be traced, however, a brief preliminary research in the press and the web as well as personal contact with some of the most active organisations, has come to the following findings: For the period between 2005-2010, we spotted at least 40 newly founded informal organisations. They usually identify themselves as "initiatives", "teams", "networks", "open social associations", "collectivas" or "movements". The issues they refer to are: environmental (promotion of cycling, protection of wild life), public spaces (use of camps,

[12]For examples of informal and unregistered patterns of social interaction see Sotiropoulos 2004, p. 10

cultural interventions in public space), free use of goods (transport, music, files), infrastructure (pedestrian zones, undersea highway), unemployment (unemployment committee), anti-austerity movement ("can't pay, won't pay"), women's movement, antiauthoritarian movements, legalization of cannabis, anti-smoking campaign etc.

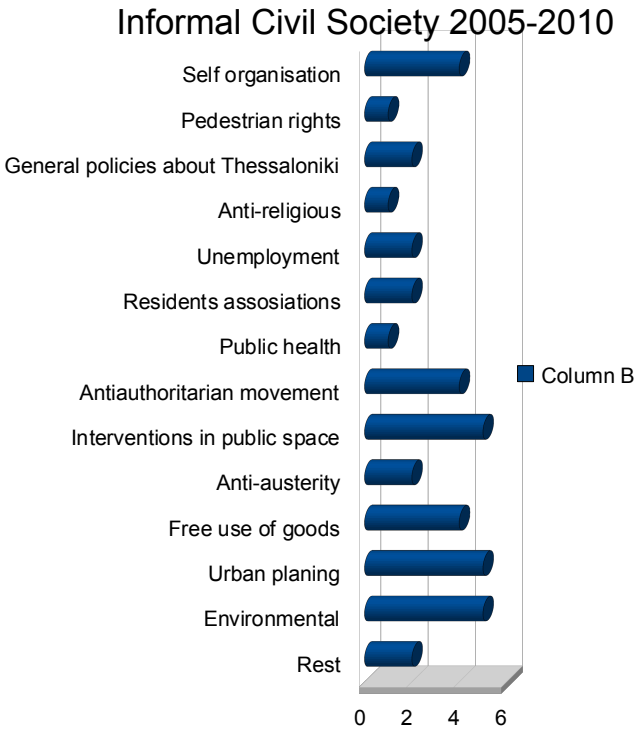


Table 3. Categories of newly founded informal associations

The above associations have to be classified in their majority as CS II, as they oppose either the regime or protest to certain public policies of the state and mobilise for social change. The number of new informal associations is lower than the number of CS II organisations located within the formal civil society, however this is only a first sample of the most active and representative informal organisations, within a vast field of unknown and diverse unregistered associations in the city. In contrast to the formal CS II associations, these association have a stable and active presence.

It would be bold to predict that there is a higher ratio of CS II organisations within the informal Civil Society, than the ratio within the formal Civil Society. There are two arguments in favour of this hypothesis: The first one is that informal organisations are the only possible form for "transforming" associations of CS II. The second one refers to the mentality of "oppositional" associations, which usually espouse for social change and often reject conventional means of representation. On the other hand we should take into consideration that, due to their "confrontational" character, informal associations of CS II would be more "visible" and more easily traced through the press, web and personal observation, than the ones of CS I. A snowball sample and the mapping of informal CS I associations will be a further step in this research. However I would argue that a further research would in general increase the overall rates of CS II in Thessaloniki.

Conclusion

It seems that Civil Society in Thessaloniki is represented by two main categories of associations: Formal and informal ones. Employing the distinction between associations "neutral" to the state (CS I) and associations "oppositional" to the state (CS II), we could argue that formal associations appear in their majority to have a "neutral" relationship with the state; however, we argue that there is a considerable part of it, which either attempts to reform the policies of the state, or interacts with the state in order to promote particular interests of its members.

Informal associations would be classified in their majority in CS II in Thessaloniki. It remains to be seen if a further research would increase the overall ratio of CS II in the city. In any case, the distinction between a "neutral" CS I and an "oppositional" CS II is not able to capture every aspect of the relationship between civil society and the state in Thessaloniki.

In view of these preliminary findings, I would hypothesize that the most visible political and party-dominated segment of CS I, composed of traditional, material based interest groups, is only a part of the whole of Civil Society in the city. Another part is an evolving mobilisation from below, either formal or informal, which can be traced mostly through empirical research. The size and impact of this mobilization within the city's social and political life requires further empirical research. In any case, it is a strong aspect of civil society in the city, which opposes to the argument of the overall weakness of the Greek civil society and indicates the need for more relativised and complicated approaches of the associational life. It also encourages further examination and differentiated interpretations of the interaction between the associations and the state, in order to provide a better understanding of the paradox of a vivid associational life in a city with a heavy state presence.

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MICHELANGELO PAGANOPOULOS (GOLDSMITHS)

DRAFT OF PROPOSED PAPER (INCLUDING PROPOSAL):

TITLE OF PAPER:

The Double *Economy* of two monasteries of Mount Athos: Contemporary issues and moral dilemmas

In the monasteries of the autonomous monastic Republic of Mount Athos, the term '*economy*' means the 'law (*nomos*) of the house (*ecos*)'. The term is as old as the rule of the *Avaton* (meaning 'no pass'), the thousand year old prohibition of all females from the peninsula, which separates monastic from secular life. The *economy* of the Athonian monasteries has internal and external aspects: Internal exchanges take place in the night through a set of private and collective practices associated to spiritual activities regarding the cultivation of the self in terms of *apatheia* (meaning 'no passions'). Such activities take place within an informal and spiritual hierarchical system, that equally emphasizes both on the detachment of each monk from his materialist and sexual desires, and from the emotional ties that he carries into the monastery from his secular past, in order to liberate him from such 'passions'. On the other hand, external activities refer to the daily work that needs to be done regarding the financial survival, legal status, and vocation of the Monastery as a contemporary institution in the Orthodox world. The two realms are conceived separately: the spiritual hierarchy is headed by the priest-monks with liturgical duties in the night and working tasks in the day regarding the running of the community from inside, while the administrative hierarchy is headed by the Elders, who are responsible for administrative, financial, and legal matters of the monastery. However, as I shall show, in everyday practice, the spiritual and material realms are complementary to each other. Their interdependence becomes evident by looking at the impact of recent changes in monastic life, namely, the importation of new technologies such as the Internet that undermine the *Avaton*, the impact of the increasing religious tourism that burdens the daily timetable of the monks, the exploitation of the forest for logging and exporting wood, the exploitation of Athonian tradition by selling copies of 'miraculous' items through the Internet and a network of shops and churches from Greece to the US, the consequences of accepting funding from the EU, the issue of monastic properties outside Athos (*metochia*) and taxation, and the political involvement of the monasteries in Greek public life regarding 'matters of faith', all reveal the increasing tension between the spiritual conduct of each monk inside the monasteries, in contrast to the external conduct of the monastic institutions outside Athos, which largely contradicts their 'virgin' way of life and communal values inside. The paper will briefly investigate these tensions between internal (informal) and external (formal) aspects of monastic *economy*, by comparing the economic organization of two rival monasteries, in order to highlight the contradictions and moral dilemmas rising from their conduct within the neo-liberal market and contemporary politics of faith.

Key Words in Athonite dialect: *economy, virginity, Avaton, apatheia, tamata, metochia, kosmikos, Old Calendar*

1. Introduction: 'Virginity' and 'Economy'

This section begins by introducing us to the concepts of 'virginity' and 'economy' on Mount Athos, highlighting their antithetical but complementary role in miracle regarding the Virgin Mary, whose miraculous rescue at the shores of the isolated peninsula made Athos her "Garden". This tradition supports the rule of *Avaton*, the prohibition of females and cattle on the peninsula (first introduced in the 9th century over land disputes, Paganopoulos 2006) which morally separates monastic from "worldly" life outside Athos (*kosmiki zoe*). The monks describe the communal life inside the monasteries as "spiritualist" ("*pneumatiki"*), egalitarian, and "unchanged for a thousand years", in opposition to the secular "materialist world" ("*elestikos cosmos*", where the word "cosmopolitan" is rooted) of self-interest and rapid change outside Athos. In this context, Mount Athos illustrated Durkheim's definition of monastic life as an 'escape' from the profane and secular world (1995: 37). Interestingly, the Christian monks' separation supports both Durkheim's and Weber's evaluation of the concept of 'community' as higher of that of individualist interest as their notions of the 'sacred', the 'internal', the 'private', and 'tradition', are all identical in a sense that they refer specifically to *religious ties*, which are utilized by a set of customs, rules, and symbols into a unified moral system, the 'sacred' in Durkheim's terms, and/or a 'traditional economy' in Weber's terms, in opposition to an external 'world' of amorality, self-interest, and antagonism. This separation is symbolized by the *Avaton*, which illustrates how it is 'important to separate them from the impersonal, profit-oriented relations of capitalist production' (Goddard 1996: 185-6) in order to retain their purity untouched: 'The code is represented as an agency of self-defence against encroachment *from the outside* or as a result of conquest' (*Ibid*: 171, *my emphasis*). This separation has two levels: first in terms of protecting the purity of the land from external threats, and second, in working the pure to support the self-sufficiency and autonomy inside.

On the other hand, the term 'economy', meaning the 'law of the house' was first introduced with the coenobitic rule of St Basil in the in 10th century in the first Royal monastery of Meghisti Lavra, by St Athanasius the Athonite, the spiritual founder of the Republic, with funding from his childhood friend the Emperor Phokas (Paganopoulos 2006). Tradition states that at the time when St Athanasius was considering to abandoning Athos, because of the protests of the hermits who had lived there before who saw his connections to the

'cosmopolitan' capital Constantinople with suspicion (Papachrysanthou 1992:147, Gillet 1987: 65), Mary appeared to him introducing herself as the 'builder' (*ecodomos*) of Meghisti Lavra, and encouraging him to complete his work. After Athanasius's accidental death in 1004 in Meghisti Lavra, Mary re-appeared to the first Abbot of Meghisti Lavra, introducing herself as the 'economos', meaning the 'stewardess' of the monastery. Following the apparitions, the role of *economos* was established with a double duty shared by the priest-monks, involving as double responsibility: to organize the cleaning and preparation of the church and chapels for the night liturgies, and to paying the lay workers in the evening for their daily work in the monastery.

In Greek, the term '*economia'* is translated as the 'law' ('*nomos'*) of the 'house' ('*ecos'*) referring both to the internal organization of communal life, and the external vocation of each monastery in the Orthodox world. Accordingly, the monks' activities are divided into 'inside the wall activities regarding several people who arrive as potential monks, pilgrims, or visitors, researchers, traders', and 'outside the wall activities of the monasteries regarding the missionary work inside and beyond the Greek state' (Alpentzos 2002: 14-15). Internal activities have to do with the traditional self-sustainability and independence of each monastery (theologically supported by the apparitions of Mary as *economos*), while external activities, referring to the financial, political, and military support to the Royal monasteries, offered by powerful "cosmopolitans" (meaning 'world [*cosmos*] citizens [*politis*]'), such as Emperors, traders, European Kings, and Ottoman Sultans (Papachrysanthou 1992: 226-32), have been historically described as 'reciprocal' (Loizos and Papataxiarchis 1991: 16). This double economic engagement of the monasteries illustrates Weber's concept of the 'economic impulse' of 'traditional brotherhoods' which morally distinguishes an internal and an external aspect of economy (Weber 2003: 356, and Paganopoulos 2009).

But the recent changes in monastic life, such as the rise of religious tourism that affects the monks' daily program, the importation of new technologies such as the internet by some monasteries that undermined the separation of Athos from the "world", the over-logging and overuse of natural resources, legal issues regarding the funding the monasteries receive from the EU and the compromises they might have to make, and the active involvement of the monasteries in Greek public life both in financial and political ways which have led to several scandals, all challenge the ideal separation of monastic from secular life, rather revealing the direct connection of the monasteries to the same "materialist world" they morally and

practically denounce in their daily lives. Inevitably, the recent changes on the Holy Mount have divided Athos in terms of how the monks should re-adjust their life according to the changes taking place outside Athos, or in the extreme view by rejecting all change, and thus, dogmatically following the 'sacred tradition' (*iera paradosis*). Such contemporary issues reveal the increasing tension between the internal life and external conduct of the monasteries on two levels: first, against the concept of 'a world' out there that is threatening to enter and destroy their eternal tradition; and second, the monasteries themselves, which are contesting the same tradition, while serving their current political and financial interests in the same 'world' ('*cosmos'*) they reject.

I chose to do my fieldwork in two neighbouring but rival monasteries, Vatopaidi and Esfigmenou, because they represent the two extreme poles in how the monks deal with the recent changes on Athos: on the one hand, the Vatopaidians call the monks of Esfigmenou the 'fundamentalists' of Mount Athos, because of their ultra-Orthodox life and political activism outside Athos, while the monks of Esfigmenou call their neighbours 'traitors' to their 'true faith', because of the Vatopaidians engagement with Europe, and their financial and political involvement in Greece. Central in the dispute are "matters of faith", such as an economic dispute over the land of St Gregorius Palamas who became a monk in Vatopaidi in 1315, but also the abbot of Esfigmenou 20 years later, to political issues such as the adoption of the 'new' Gregorian calendar by monasteries such as Vatopaidi, and the transformation of the monastery (according to the monks of Esfigmenou) into a 'hotel'. The paper will be discussing these issues in relation both to the internal regimes of the two rival monasteries and their external conduct (as in Loizos 1994: 76).

2. The Vatopaidian model of 'Economy'

I will be focusing on "economy" in three levels: first as an "economy of passions" in building a "Christian moral person" (Mauss 1985: 19) according to traditional values and practices; second, as the means of conduct inside the monastery, in achieving a "meaningful connection between something inside oneself and the world outside" (as in Hart 2005: 13); and third, I investigate the turbulent relationship of the monastery of Vatopaidi to the Greek state, regarding its financial and political involvement to the secular world, in other words, Vatopaidi's "economy" as a religious institution. Internal and external activities are organized

according to two distinctive hierarchies, “an informal spiritual hierarchy which exists parallel to other more institutionalised forms of rank” (Sarris 2000: 8-9). The “informal” or “spiritual” hierarchical system is based on the relationship between Father and Son, echoing the relationship of God to Jesus. It takes a number of different forms depending on the context it is adopted, such as between Elder and deacon, or priest and visitor, forming a kind of “spiritual kinship” (Iossifides 1991), on the basis of various forms of “spiritual” exchanges that take place *inside* the monasteries, through practices of faith, which aim to develop each monk’s “inner world” (“*esoterikos cosmos*”). Iossifides, looking at the life of convents, has pointed to the impact of the increase of religious tourism in Orthodox monasteries (1991:136), in order to highlight the transformation of the economy of the monasteries from agricultural, associated to the ‘local economy’, to a ‘capitalist global economy’. For Iossifides, the ‘spiritual kinship’ and traditions of the nuns depend on the material world outside the monasteries, as ‘the nuns have contact with and knowledge of the world beyond their convent walls (Ibid: 137).

Accordingly, the “formal” or “administrative” hierarchy has to do with the vocation of the monastery as a whole, referring to the set of exchanges taking place between the monastery as a religious institution of the Orthodox world and “cosmopolitan” institutions *outside* Athos. The “administrative” or “formal” hierarchy is peaked by the abbot and the Council of Elders (*Gerontia*) who distribute the annual tasks according to each monk’s “cosmopolitan” background, education, and skills. The aims of this latter system are collective, organized in the impersonal terms of ranking: Abbot, priest-monks, priest-deacons, ordinary monks, novices, as it has financial and political ends, constituting the vocation of each monastery in the Orthodox world. The two hierarchical systems function on a double timetable, that is co-ordinated according to private and collective prayer in the night following the Canonical Hours, and rest and work during the day according to “worldly” hours.

Double Organization of time and human activity
a) Administrative / spiritual Hierarchy
b) Liturgical/ worldly time
c) Liturgical/ administrative tasks
d) Separation of visitors’ area from monastic cells

Imports: Rapid rise of religious tourism and impact on everyday life (internal economy)

Exports: Sacred products, such as the miraculous ribbons of the Virgin Mary (Paganopoulos 2007) produced at the sacred ground floor of the monastery, packaged by the visitors at the middle floor, and exported from the computer rooms at the top floor through the internet and a network of churches and shops that expands from the US to Russia (external economy).

Division of space: 3 floors — Sacred Products: Outwards the "world"

Top: Abbot's Office, Council of Elders, Secretary, recording Studio, Workshops
Middle: guest-house (in between sacred world of ground floor/ profane world of top floor
Lower: sacred ground (church, chapels, refectory, vineyard, oven, wine/oil storage, phiale)

Visitors, monks: Inwards the sacred self

Finally, I will also briefly look into the issue of the Vatopaidian *metochia* and scandal involving members of the Greek government, journalists, lawyers, and other agents regarding secret exchanges that illegally took place between the monks and the Greek state, against the protests of local councils.

Women breaking the *Avaton* in protest for the stolen land, January 2008

Women protesting over 4,500 square kilometres of disputed land, Thessalonica Court, Pictures taken from Greek newspaper *Eleutherotypia* 15/1/2008

3. Esfigmenou's Embargo Economy

Esfigmenou is under embargo since February 2003, because of the brotherhood's political activism and ultra-orthodox views the divide Athos. Since 1971, in protest for the adoption of the 'new' Gregorian calendar by some monasteries, such as Vatopaidi, Esfigmenou raised a

black flag on the monastery's highest tower calling for 'Orthodoxy Or Death', refused to participate in the *Holy Committee*, the central Athonian authority with administrative powers situated in the village of Karyes, and to commemorate the 'Ecumenical (Greek) Patriarch of Constantinople' in their prayers. Furthermore, the new zealots have also been engaged in political activities and protests in Greece, Russia, and the US among other places. In response to their protests the Holy Committee and the Patriarchate refused to recognize the abbots and brotherhood living in the monastery since the 1970s, and have cut all means of communication with them.

Arrest of monk of Esfigmenou, from http://www.esfigmenou.com (27/5/2009)

But ironically, the longer and harder the embargo lasts the more the reputation of the monastery increases as the 'last tower of zealots'. Despite Esfigmenou's rejection of the technology, money and other 'products of the devil' there are more than 500 sites in the internet in reference to its political situation. In this way, the reputation of the monastery is its basic financial resource: the longer the embargo lasts the more famous the brotherhood becomes, the more visitors jump the border in the night, in order not to be seen by police, and walk ten kilometres to reach Esfigmenou and help the isolated monks by giving them donations, petrol, medicine, and food.

Conclusion: The Vatopaidians endorse the opportunities the new technologies offer, while at the same time, lead a strictly ordered way of life that emphasizes on the separation of 'spiritual' from administrative duties. In daily life they demonstrate the values of 'obedience, virginity, and poverty' (Vatopaidian priest-monk 29/9/02). Their presentation of themselves in the community is based on the 'economy of passions', such as anger, jealousy, pride, and so on, which is understood as the personal attitude of each individual towards a non-excessive and non-wasteful life, in the sense of Weber's analysis of early Christian asceticism in the "spirit of capitalism" (1905), where he understood the spirit of capitalism to be in the ascetic morality of not being excessive (Paganopoulos 2009: 366-369). The aim is to achieve

apatheia (meaning to be 'without passions'), as a way to detach from the material surroundings.

By contrast, the monks of Esfigmenou demonstrate a passionate way of life, which emphasizes public manifestations of faith such as exorcisms, as spectacles that reveal the struggle of monastic life. The Esfigmenites do not confess and receive the Holy Communion as frequently as the Vatopaidians, following a rather semi-hermetic and stricter way of life. Furthermore, they do not accept monks younger than the age of 35, as they believe in experience and catharsis, rather than in the youth as the educational character of Vatopaidian life revealed to me. The emphasis on different aspects of monastic life is illustrated by their contrasting attitude towards the central values of *filoponia* (meaning to be 'a friend of pain'): while for the Vatopaidians it is the *means* in achieving salvation, for the monks of Esfigmenou it is the *ends*. The comparison shows that tradition, including both its interpretation and the ways of organizing and performing practices of faith on a daily basis, is a 'pliable entity, inevitably subject to interpretation and contestation and a vehicle for claims and counter-claims regarding power and authority' (Goddard 2000: 7). In this context, the claim for "sacred tradition" (*iera paradoseis*) becomes a matter of contestation towards an emergent hegemonic position, which encloses the historical, political, economic changes, and conflicts, that still take place on Athos between the rival and neighbouring monasteries of Vatopaidi and Esfigmenou.

Herzfeld defined 'cultural intimacy' as: 'the recognition of those aspects of cultural identity that one considered a source of embarrassment but that nevertheless provide insiders with their assurance of common sociality' (1997:3). He illustrated the concept by juxtaposing two antithetical, but also complementary, conceptions of Greek identity: first, as '*Hellenes*', a reference to the European idealism of ancient Greece (*see* also Tzanelli 2008:129-141), and second, as '*Romii'*, a reference to the Greco-Christians of the Ottoman years (Herzfeld 1997:14-16). This ambiguity is echoed by the marginal status of Mount Athos, reflecting by its paradoxical position, within and against the Greek state, the inability of the Greek state to define its relationship to Mount Athos in clear financial and political terms. This paradox becomes is illustrated by the controversial involvement of the monasteries in Greek public life, especially in light of the recent economic scandal following the collapse of the Greek economy. For many Greeks, their relationship to the monasteries is certainly not 'reciprocal', but rather patronizing -by a Republic that is not even Greek. Others see the Republic as an

opportunity for Greece to attract foreign investment by increasing international religious tourism. In this context, it is the Greek state that has yet to clarify its ambiguous and self-contradictory position towards the Republic: how to retain the 'Byzantine spirit' of Hellenism, and at the same time get rid of an 'Ottoman burden' to the national economy.

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