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Entrepreneurial sons, patriarchy and the Colonels' experiment in Thessaly, rural Greece

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Existing studies within the field of institutional entrepreneurship explore how entrepreneurs influence change in economic institutions. This paper turns the attention of scholarly inquiry on the antecedents of deinstitutionalization and more specifically, the influence of entrepreneurship in shaping social institutions such as patriarchy. The paper draws from the findings of ethnographic work in two Greek lowland village communities during the military Dictatorship (1967–1974). Paradoxically this era associated with the spread of mechanization, cheap credit, revaluation of labour and clear means-ends relations, signalled entrepreneurial sons' individuated dissent and activism who were now able to question the Patriarch's authority, recognize opportunities and act as unintentional agents of deinstitutionalization. A 'different' model of institutional change is presented here, where politics intersects with entrepreneurs, in changing social institutions. This model discusses the external drivers of institutional atrophy and how handling dissensus (and its varieties over historical time) is instrumental in enabling institutional entrepreneurship.

Keywords: institutional entrepreneurship; patriarchy; family farming; peripherality; rural change

1. Introduction

Can entrepreneurs change social institutions? The question cannot be answered from the available institutional entrepreneurship literature that has so far concentrated on how individual or organizational action influences economic institutions such as industries (Leblebici et al. 1991; Holm 1995; Thornton and Ocasio 1999; Lounsbury 2007), professions (DiMaggio 1991; Greenwood, Suddaby, and Hinings 2002; Townley 2002) or markets (Fligstein and Mara-Drita 1996; Ahmadjian and Robinson 2001; Rao, Monin, and Durand 2005). It was Eisenstadt (1980, 851) who first spoke about institutional entrepreneurs as being those actors that 'serve to connect different types of rebellion and combine changes in different institutional spheres' and thus become a stimulus for institutional change. Such institutional entrepreneurs are not viewed here as brokers or islands of exchange but rather as actors historically embedded in ongoing social relations and a continuous social world (Granovetter 1985; Uzzi 1997; Jack and Anderson 2002; Kalantaridis and Bika 2006; Bika 2007, 2011). To this extent, their enterprising is strongly affected by the need (opportunity) to solve normative disagreements (politics) and yet itself affects practice selection (institutions) in the social world in which these actors are embedded. Such

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opportunities are seen as being more enacted than discovered (Baker and Nelson 2005).

The research aim here is to show why and under what circumstances judgemental gains or losses are precipitated, versatility of response is created and possibilities for actors to engage in practice selection and to influence the process of institutional change are opened up. The claim is that it is possible to distil from a rural ethnographic study in Greece, the southern periphery of Europe a different model of institutional change, which is summarized in Figure 1. To this extent, this empirical study is particularly concerned with how entrepreneurship is enacted by totalitarian politics and its accompanying regulatory influences to produce institutional atrophy or non-isomorphous change in a social institution such as patriarchy. Greenwood, Suddaby, and Hinings's (2002, 74) earlier assertion that highly articulated arenas of social construction (such as dictatorship and its mandatory character are) "may make change easier to achieve despite the highly institutionalized setting" appears to be applicable here.

Extant literature on institutional entrepreneurship focuses more on how it works and with what effects or in other words the manner in which interested actors influence their institutional contexts (Garud, Jain, and Kumaraswamy 2002; Greenwood, Suddaby, and Hinings 2002; Maguire, Hardy, and Lawrence 2004; Munir and Phillips 2005; Greenwood and Suddaby 2006). Significantly, this literature has ignored what sets institutional entrepreneurship in motion and what activates it, resulting in 'more' or 'less' powerful, embedded and stratified actors being both interested and situated in dominant subject positions of institutional entrepreneurship. This former literature primarily pays attention to how serious dissent has been avoided or neutralized by institutional entrepreneurs rather than how dissent itself (and its varieties) was instrumental in establishing the dominant subject position of institutional entrepreneurs. Such literature is more concerned with the right hand side of Figure 1 portraying endogenous process models of institutional change rather than discussing its external drivers. This study aims to rectify this omission by shedding light on the links between the notion of dissensus and judgemental decision making (and by implication entrepreneurship).

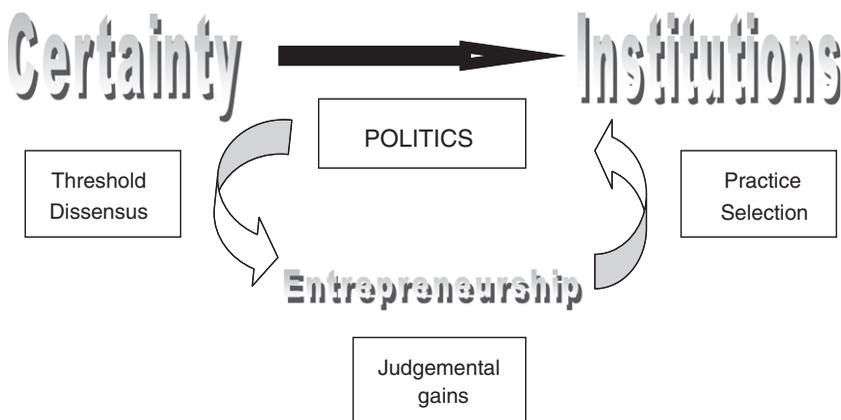


Figure 1. Politics as an external driver of non-isomorphous institutional change via entrepreneurship.

The paper is organized as follows. The first section explores the key role of dissensus in understanding entrepreneurial judgement. Methodological considerations in the collection of the paper's oral history data are discussed in a separate section. The main body of empirical evidence is presented in the following two sections covering different historical periods. Finally, an institutional theory discussion and conclusions are offered regarding the ways politics (as an external driver) intersects with entrepreneurs in changing social institutions.

2. Dissensus and entrepreneurial judgement

A key element in this paper's understanding of entrepreneurship is concerned with the demand-side perspective on how surrounding context and environmental factors influence the number of problems requiring judgement and thus the need for entrepreneurs. Casson's (1982) definition of entrepreneurship as the process of making judgemental decisions¹ about the coordination of scarce resources begs the question of what constitutes judgemental gain. Anthropological evidence from the example of rural Greece is applied here to illustrate how such judgemental gain results from handling dissensus rather than a vague notion of uncertainty that is born by the entrepreneur in return for profit as it is suggested in classical entrepreneurship theory (Cantillon 1755; Knight 1921; Harper 1996). Dissensus elevates entrepreneurs to a position that structurally enables them to recognize opportunities and act as institutional agents as well. Such conceptualisation moves the theoretical emphasis from the rational elements in entrepreneurial action to its transformative powers and most importantly, pays attention to temporality and thus the different historical conditions that underpin entrepreneurial action.

The notion of dissensus has previously been employed in business studies of top management teams to explore its positive contribution to organizational performance in new ventures (West and Meyer 1998) and in political studies of elite-mass relations to assess its constraining influence on European integration (Hooghe and Marks 2008). Dissensus is defined as disagreement over issues of 'right' and 'wrong' action or in other words disagreement over choice rather than truth (Kock 2007). Disagreement about what is valuable represents the conditions that allow social actors to create new resources of value and engage in new practice selection. Dissensus has been selected as a tool of thought on the grounds of its dual capacity to leave behind the conceptualisation of the state-as-the-external 'other', whilst at the same time explores practical politics and cedes 'voice' at the rural grassroots and their evaluative judgements on an obligatory rule. Dissensus is used here to analyse in-depth how political conditioning delineates the varieties of available choices but also to embrace the fuzziness of the distinction between micro- and macro-level interpretation (Sayer 2000, 2001).

As Swedberg (2000, 37) argues, 'successful entrepreneurship usually involves more actors than the entrepreneur himself or herself' such as the state, parents and a variety of civil society organizations. If entrepreneurship is conceptualized as an economic rent (excess payment) on dissensus, then institutional entrepreneurs emerge as being those agents who respond to normative challenges that might exist in a community and use their individual judgement to 're-socialize' themselves and others and in this way, they strategically reconstruct conventions. The incidence of institutional entrepreneurship itself (especially in instances when entrepreneurs

influence social institutions) is dependent on such a dissensus (see Figure 1). As Biggart and Beamish (2003, 444) explain 'conventions are shared templates for interpreting situations and planning courses of action in mutually comprehensible ways that involve social accountability, that is, they provide a basis for judging the appropriateness of acts by self and other'. If judgement becomes individuated as a result of external reasons, then conventions themselves follow suit. Following Thompson's (1967, 96) view, entrepreneurs are understood here as being those agents who wind the clock-like mechanism of belief up (such as time, patriarchy and citizenship) and consequently shape social institutions.

Rossi and Berk (1985) discuss varieties of normative dissensus in social systems that have also been applied to organizational research (West and Meyer 1998). They distinguish between three forms of dissent: *threshold* dissensus, a condition in which persons differ in their intensities of adherence to norms and there are inter-individual differences in judgement with little or much room for error being left to individuals' judgement; *segmented* dissensus, in which persons differ in the norms to which they subscribe and there are social group differences in judgement and individuals with 'different degrees of influence between levels of authority' in West and Meyer's words (1998, 400); *domain* dissensus, a condition in which individuation in norms applies and there are emphasis differences on the fundamentality of issues. Rossi and Berk's three varieties of normative dissensus are used in this paper to delineate the nature of dissensus that led to the deinstitutionalization of patriarchal rule. In this fashion, the following configurations of dissent are distinguished: collective (or individuated) dissent configurations are those characterized respectively by moderate (or high) threshold differences among their individual members' belief in authoritative judgement; totalitarian (or grassroots) dissent configurations are those characterized respectively by correlation with little (or widespread) segment influence; personalized (or bureaucratic) dissent configurations are those characterized respectively by high (or moderate) emphasis differences on procedural norms in the domain.

As a general principle, it is argued here that threshold dissensus differences define entrepreneurial opportunity and pave the way for the slow erosion of social institutions, whilst both segmented and domain dissensus differences are respectively structural indices of fragmentation or heterogeneity. To this extent, entrepreneurs emerge as productive or unproductive rent-seekers (Baumol 1990) dependent on society's pay offs to dissensus. It is now important to illustrate in what ways dissensus has emerged in the case study and in particular, its various participants' oral history accounts of institutional change.

3. Using an oral history methodology

The case study constructed here derives its ethnographic research findings from two main villages in Thessaly, an advanced agricultural region located in the middle of continental Greece in a low plain surrounded by high mountains. The two village communities, Kotsari and Zobas, resemble each other markedly in their relatively affluent cotton producing economy, their natural resources, the accessibility of their location (35 km from the chief town) and their demographic conditions (1500 inhabitants). The only difference is in their cultural characteristics as they draw their origins from different ethnic groups. Kotsari is a long-established village inhabited

by native Karagounis, whilst Zobas' first dwellers were ethnic Greeks of Eastern Rumelia (Bulgaria) who had arrived as refugees in 1924, when a voluntary population exchange took place. Most importantly, it should be noted that all farm families under investigation here started on an equal footing as a result of Thessaly's land tenure history (Triantafillidis 1906; Tsopotos 1912; Arseniou 1994). In the days of land reform (late 1920s), Zobas's family units were allotted 6.9 ha expropriated land of relatively poor quality, whilst Kotsari received only 4.5 ha of arable land per family unit by virtue of higher population density and better opportunities for irrigation. Half a century later highly differentiated property groups² were found to accurately portray the variations between the size of the interviewees' landholdings. An end result of convergence between the two villages would be embodied in their economic transition from wheat to cotton monoculture in the decades to come, whereas cultural resistance would be mainly registered in the refugee community where a slightly slower rhythm of change was witnessed.

3.1. Participant observation

The findings of this paper are based on a year's participant observation as a researcher in 1997 and the reworking of the collected oral history data under the fresh influence of the literature around the concept of institutional entrepreneurship. It is considered pertinent to use robust qualitative data collected more than a decade ago to capture institutional change through historical time and thus respond to key issues identified in the relevant burgeoning literature. Yet, participant observation remains the backbone of this primary data because it gave 'an idea of interaction and the interrelationships of social relations' in a changing village society, and the 'sense of process' that one could not get in any other way, as Frankenberg also argues (In Burgess 1982, 52).

Participant observation also enabled the researcher to shift focus as interesting new data became available in the course of her taking 'a particular role within a village culture' and thus 'examining at first hand a social situation from a participant's point of view' (Burgess 1984, 98). To this extent, the researcher 'hung around', made friends and thus came to understand what is socially regulated and meaningful, 'what does it take to "be somebody" in this world' beyond the obvious material warrants (Gubrium and Holstein 1997, 23). Participant observation helped the oral history interviewing process 'to begin, not altogether with the words of people, but with a pre-examination of what they have built around themselves physically and to what purposes' as Hunter (1993, 39) explains in his notes on the ethnography of local community elites.

As a participant observer, the researcher witnessed the significant absentees, or 'networks of interaction and the deference and demeanour displayed' in a public setting which was used as background to prepare her for more-informed oral history interviews (Hunter 1993, 47, 51). 'Learning the local culture required attention to vocabulary and absorption in the milieu', so 'hearing what people said (e.g. during the interview) was often less important than observing what they did' (Hunter 1993, 49). Such insight was obtained by being exposed to both the formal and informal social relationships among villagers via participant observation. A parallel attempt was made to develop some key informants, mostly her different landlords and other village notables, and to spend sufficient time with them as a way of identifying

recurring patterns and distinguishing between myth, reality and elliptical accounts from the side of the interviewees. To this effect, the researcher observed people, events and interaction, which helped her to give precision to the data, combine rival accounts and work personal stories together in order to explore patterns of institutional change and how such changes were constructed.

3.2. Sampling and data analysis

The study's primary material includes 60 oral history interviews (equally split between the two villages), unstructured, open-ended and in-depth, and archival work on the minutes of their Community Councils since 1950. The interviewer used a list of topics on which the respondent³ could talk and the whole process corresponded to the conversational procedures of village life that were learned during participant observation. Its object was to find out what kinds of changes have happened over time and then to analyse how these historical changes were constructed and configured within such narratives. Overall, less than half of the sample was interviewed on a one-to-one basis (25 individual interviews), 6 were group interviews in public places, whilst the rest was made up of conversations in home situations with more than one family member participating (29 family interviews). Snowball sampling was employed, which involved using key informants to identify households typical of a differentiated community membership. A number of variables were noted so that each oral history respondent was accurately placed in the economic setting (labour status, occupation, access to land – i.e. land ownership and land rent) and their partial account adequately assessed as being from a different status situation (gender, clan, neighbourhood, generation, education, leadership and partnership scheme). The interviewees were allowed to talk at length, and in their own terms. The interviewing process normally lasted 2–3 hours, whilst tape recording was used for 1–1.5 hours in each case.

On returning from the fieldwork, the data was marked out in three time-frames (post-war, military dictatorship and EU membership), whilst uniformities or irregularities were picked up and summarised. The data-source triangulation involved the horizontal and vertical comparison of tape transcriptions, field journal notes and the minutes of the councils between, within and throughout the post-war history of the two research communities. The criterion of principality in terms of family farm decision making (rather than gender) alongside a research emphasis on generational elements and how the story telling unfolds were employed in both the sampling and data analysis. As Stanley and Wise (1990, 44) explain 'in investigating the textually mediated, institutionally located social relations of ruling, there is no way in which a focus on men can be excluded'. No attempts are made in this paper to renounce the regularities of the Greek rural world because they remained androcentric and applied old redundant peripheral values to masculinity and fatherhood.

4. Early post-war patriarchal order and consensual leadership (1950–1966)

The slow but continuous decline of patriarchs as socially knowledgeable actors (of habitual knowledge and customary economic conventions/values) and agents of logics reproduction has failed to come to surface in a recent body of Western European rural literature (Oldrup 1999; Brandth 2002; Shortall 2002; Bennett 2004;

2006; Price and Evans 2006). Greek rural studies (Stratigaki 1988; Gourdomichalis 1991; Gidarakou 1999; Kalantaridis and Labrianidis 1999; Kazakopoulos and Gidarakou 2003) have also paid little attention to the patterns of change in historically-embedded patriarchal conventions and the fluctuation in the bargaining power of the social actors involved. In the Greek rural context, patriarchy became central in applying theoretical concepts such as the 'domestic mode of production'⁴ and its endless possibilities of cheap adjustment to capitalism (Psychogios 1982, 1985). However, the findings of all these rural studies did not challenge the *status quo* in general theories of patriarchy, where it is mostly conceptualized as either an ahistorical universal (Feminist analysis), a derivative from capitalism (Marxist analysis) or articulated with capitalism at an abstract level (Walby 1989, 1990), but most importantly as being exclusive of a generational element. To this extent, patriarchal conventions have been condemned unequivocally, as if their historically contingent habits of thought characterized only one spiteful social group, judgement or system.

Rethinking, however, the iron discipline of the early modern patriarchal family through an institutional lens puts the analytical focus on its ability to legitimate its benevolent purpose by functioning as an effective bulwark in times of troubled economic matters. The Weberian usage of patriarchy (1947) as a system of control in which fathers rule through their legitimate position as the head of household is adopted here. In this conceptual framework the early post-war Thessalian reality remained simple: land was constantly flooded and the most valuable asset of flocks could easily be wiped out ('sheep could get sick and simply die'), whilst the only certainty came from family labour. Consequently, this consciousness fostered a patriarchal society built upon consensus and the crucial question of 'how many sons does one have?' In this milieu of kin-group authoritarianism, open friendship was discouraged, while blood-clan solidarity and team work was the order of the day. The division of family labour was decided the day before by the patriarch and was accepted by everyone without any thought of objection (Petros Koutsomitis, ex-village president and flourmill owner in Zobas). Roles and responsibilities of the members were ascribed and strictly defined, the patriarch dealt peremptorily with any cases of misbehaviour or deviation, whilst the use of a non-mechanical plough restrained unequivocally the division of labour between sexes. Inter-individual differences in judgement were kept defacto to a minimum.

'We lived as an extended family (12–13 members: two married brothers, one single brother and grandparents. Our whole house consisted of 3 rooms and one hall. The members of my family quarrelled only behind each other's backs, never in the open, because the patriarch was very tough and prickly. He, my grandfather, was very tough even on himself, he was very hard-working' (Andreas Mauridis, private agronomist and owner of 15 ha)

In a traditional society of ascription rather than achievement, the new faces had less authority than the accustomed, the young obeyed their elders because of so-called 'respect', whilst extended family members submitted to the will of the patriarch and acknowledged dutifully the gendered legitimacy of unequal shares of food, authority, and entertainment. As Aris Skarlos, Kotsari's ex-village president and owner of 5 ha described: 'the best portions were for men. . . Men and women did not sit to eat together at the same table. Women spent their time serving and ate what was left over'.

The early post-war patriarch's authority was, however, perceived as benevolent, because his power was based on an awareness of the life cycle. He was always right in a village where life repeated itself, generation after generation. His decision making was beyond doubt in a world that lacked education. Any potential sceptics were not in a position to question his authority, because the patriarch's power was consolidated by his holding of the purse strings, and so in charge of any available patronage in the family. The fear of family exclusion, i.e. the 'black sheep', pictured the main threat against individuated dissent. In any case, the patriarch's authority was welcomed because of the consoling assurances and the economy of effort that it brought to a world of hardship. Consequently, gerontocratic polity prevailed as long as experience held the key to survival and therefore employed to its best advantage this 'time-honoured' predictability and a routine model of action (as opposed to strategic) (Dorado 2005). As Christos Katsaganis, an owner of 10 ha in Zobas, explained:

'I was an orphan. My father died in 1945. We were 4 brothers and one sister and I was the eldest brother. I became a construction worker because I happened to attend a technical school in 1954, which was situated in our village after the earthquake. My grandfather attracted our respect and he was in charge of our household and the family accounts until he died at the age of 85. *He never made mistakes, because he was aware of life.* He was able to look after us. Until 1968, I gave all the money that I earned as a construction worker, to him. I was 28 years old then. I was not forced to do so, but did it out of respect'

In this period the patriarch's authority could not subside as long as he proved to be assured of quotidian political and economic process. The patriarchal household economy and its obligatory co-habitation was mostly consensual and tended to reduce the impact of family disputes and to deprive them of any long-term strength. Younger male or female members of the extended family might have hated the patriarch, but no one could contemplate breaking away or to taking the risk of living by their own means. Family members had 'interests' even at this early phase of institutional development but one could only apply discretion rather than strategic agency in such uncertain environments (Beckert 1999).

'Leaders held the purse strings and were the patriarchs. The patriarchal family life was necessary, because there were not enough houses, so 'living together' was compulsory. The sisters-in-law did not like each other, so the eldest one thought about taking her husband and leaving. Then the patriarch intervened: 'wait until I sell the maize and I will buy you some timber so you can build a new hut next to ours. Finally they contemplated: 'why is it us that must leave the paternal house? Maybe next year'' (Aris Skarlos, ex-village president and owner of 5 ha in Kotsari)

So the only thing that could be discerned in the village society were status groups differentiated mainly by the persona of their patriarchal leaders, their competence and determination to work hard. The patriarchal power in the village was not structured as a pyramid. As Stavros Vasiloudis, carpenter and owner of 12 ha in Zobas, remembers:

'In 1957, I finished primary school and took my brother's position in grazing our sheep. My brother was 20 years old then, so he went into Vraona and became apprentice to a carpenter. He stayed there two years and his skills became a great benefit to all of us. Since 1968, we have had a carpenter's workshop. My brother stayed in the shop, while I dealt with the farm work. We had one money pot. My father sold our sheep in 1959–60,

because he wanted to buy some land (1.5 ha). Until 1980, all the land that we bought was in my father's name'

Unsurprisingly of course was the complete inability and lack of willingness on the part of farm women to openly intervene in cases of family disputes which were traditionally deemed to be part of the male domain. Nor were they at the front of the developments opposing the rigidity of patriarchal rule. Greek women acquired the right to vote in 1952, whilst all legal differentiation by gender became unconstitutional only in 1975 (full implementation in 1983). In any case, farm family rifts caused by filial rebellion and dissent had dire consequences for the powerless, as the following case reveals.

'In 1962, I fell out with my father. I had carried 50 carts of stones in order to build a barn. I asked my father for 1500 Drs. in order to finish construction. He refused because he said that I did not ask for his permission before I started building. I was 27 years old then. I stopped speaking to my father for one month. I said to my mother: 'Why didn't you say to my father to give me 1500 Drs.?' Her answer was that she was not allowed to do so and then started singing. Then my wife and I went to the new house allocated to me for free after the earthquake. Since then, I started working as a day worker during the harvest, I irrigated the fields of a large landowner. We did not even have spoons, then Karouzou gave me 4 spoons, but I paid him back later on. There was no floor or windows in this house. I accepted one sack of flour from my father-in-law. My father gave me nothing' (Panos Sfakianidis, owner of 5.2 ha in Zobas)

Segmented dissensus and its manifestations as clan sectarianism and hatred was what happened to all those who found themselves embraced by a patriarchy in which only deference could flourish. A person's social standing determined his moral rights and duties as a villager. The position of certain affairs was not evaluated according to its pros and cons, but it was regulated normatively by strict rules. There was a brutality in people's actions that reflected the brutality in the fields. The patriarchal tale to explore and exploit the human need for commitment, to give back to the extended families from where villagers come, often gave rise to visceral reaction rather than conscious reasoning. There was little room for individuated dissent.

'Then things were different. If a member of your clan or extended family quarrelled with somebody, your relatives would intervene and support you against them, it was a kind of solidarity: even if you were wrong, and thus the evil was built up. We had vendettas. The villages were divided into different parts with the upper quarters of the village superior to the low ones. This was a heritage from past times' (Tasos Trixopoulos, owner of 5 ha in Kotsari)

The ethos of sheltered living in clans dictated blind loyalty and a series of counter-revenges. Different village quarters represented different clans, different neighbourhoods and consequently different social statuses. Disputes among rivals living side by side were inevitable when an ethos of variable and discriminatory consideration was experienced as a daily routine. The capitalist tide may have ebbed quietly at the edge of the early post-war village but the full force of its flow was yet to make the impact of transition in lowland rural Thessaly.

5. Entrepreneurship and the impact of the Colonels' experiment on patriarchy

5.1. *Enforced depoliticization*

The Colonels (1967–1974) were not ideologically in favour of powerful patriarchs, comprising a Greek peasant bourgeoisie because they subscribed to the schematic

notions of populist corporatism and an undifferentiated ‘people’. ‘Among their initially popular measures were decrees fixing prices, increasing pensions, redistributing land, and compelling government departments to deal with all complaints within two days’ (Woodhouse 1991, 290). To this extent, the Colonels were extremely successful in depoliticizing the rural mass and in buying off any potential protest (An Economic Observer 1972, 35). Their popularity was quite remarkable. Until the 1960s, the rural sector had been treated harshly, an industrial reserve army of labour and a source of cheap food. The Greek peasantry was kept in subservience by way of insecurity which supported the continuation of the patriarchal rule and the ‘otherness’ of Southern European peripherality. During the Dictatorship, however, this prolonged destitution was ameliorated but also mediated by a more intense political coercion against any social group differences in judgement, a matter more of image than of substance as perceived by the Thessalian peasantry.

‘The Dictatorship was a milestone in the life of villagers. If I called you a communist and you reported it, I would go to prison. We were living in harmony, this period made us think about nothing but football. *We did not care or talk about politics because we were having a good time financially, we were not afraid, we just forgot about everything else*’ (Apostolos Loukopoulos, owner of 10.7 ha in Kotsari)

During the Dictatorship the political world as a whole suffered from a ‘one body’ totalitarian system. The Colonels removed the focus of any legitimate struggle from ‘the behind-the-scenes manoeuvring’ for the benefits of patronage among eminent patriarchal families dependent on the state for their consolidation, towards the realization of a nation as a purportedly single-interest group. The horizontal links of community life no longer enjoyed the space to develop towards either consensus or conflict, and village practices such as *mitzia* (i.e. a cry for help for labour) and other collective customs presupposed by a kind of local grouping went into decline. Any fellowship of interests other than patriotic was prohibited, whilst private gatherings of more than five persons were forbidden. As Orestis Bastas, owner of 10 ha in Kotsari explains: ‘The police could come and ask you to dance in the national fiestas regardless of your political beliefs. We had to stay outside and clap our hands. *They were watching you*’. Measures were also taken to eliminate parochial distinction and peripheral traditions with this dirigiste culturalism having particular importance and impact in Zobas:

‘The Dictatorship ruled that some things were foreign and that it would be for the better to prohibit some of our folklore customs, which they characterized as Bulgarian. They thought that if Zobas’ dances continued as they were, a Bulgarian pocket of dissent would remain in Greece’ (Themis Tsantilidis, owner of 3 ha in Zobas)

During the Dictatorship ‘there was no political factionalism, politics went to bed, it fell into oblivion’ (Thanasis Karouzos, electrician and owner of 45 ha in Zobas) and this time operated as a period of amnesia. The Colonels wanted ‘an apathetic brotherhood’ for all Greeks, which could help sustain their time in power. However, it was difficult for the villagers to stand on such a general platform, when everyone was put under a different political identity. The old communist and anti-communism schism inherited from the civil war period (1946–1949) was ready to be eradicated.⁵ ‘When the Colonels came into power the slogans were: “Greece of the Christian Greeks”, “all people are equal”, “work if you want to earn your living”, “the bank will give credit to everybody irrespective of political ideology”’ (Thanasis Karouzos,

electrician and owner of 45 ha in Zobas). 'In contrast to most of the previous instances of praetorianism, the Colonels did not intervene on behalf of any given *parataxis* or political family, only to withdraw from the political arena once their favoured political clients had been established in office' (Clogg 1992, 164). The Colonels' contempt for professional politicians was escorted hand-in-hand by a renewed establishment where bribes were found to be unnecessary (Woodhouse 1991, 291). The Colonels tried to build a 'no-party' state, where the civil right to express an opinion was not allowed, and with villagers able only to join and work hard, but not to engage in group or issue judgements (and fights). In the peasant's eye view the village was no longer separated into beneficiaries and victims of the civil war legacy or in other words, into 'sides' that previously formed segmented dissensus, but instead its members were transformed into political prisoners of an artificial prosperity. As a result, 'conflicts were abolished' as Tasos Trixopoulos, an owner of 5 ha in Kotsari, stated. Group politics were forgotten, suppressed or wished away. 'We had in our mind only football and profitable hard work, while before 1967 everybody was involved in politics' as Kostas Zervas, an owner of 25 ha in Kotsari, explained.

Such enforced depoliticization reflected a new deal to replace the old personalized partisanship of the past and transcended all social, political and economic boundaries where different groups had previously been framed, and consequently prospered, suffered or starved. The military regime made a plea to the individual entrepreneur, or gave a command to the leading non-conformist that no political dissent would be tolerated. As Aris Skarlos, Kotsari's ex-village president of left-wing persuasion explains, 'the totalitarian regime attacked only the left wing MPs, affecting the heads of the villages and the party leaders'. To this extent, the Colonels left the silent masses undisturbed, allowing them to go about their lives as long as they behaved properly as 'real' or 'supposed' supporters of the regime. Political divisions were muted during the Dictatorship, while the army jointly with the police were the powers responsible for reducing a patriarch's disposition to segmented dissent. Old scores among patriarchs now would only be settled by way of gossip or a word in the ear of the authorities.

5.2. Cheap credit

By the end of the 1960s, the Colonels as 'authority' of their subjects were able to project themselves as the 'saviours of the countryside' by providing the rural and peripheral locality with a new bond to the state. This bond was a generous credit institution alongside the other negative precedents of conscription and requisition. 'During the Dictatorship one could go directly to the Bank, there were no mediators anymore' (Minas Rounis, owner of 5 ha and Kotsari's co-operative president. The parochial identity based on local patriarchal bosses was commensurately undermined. It was, in short, a time of entrepreneurial opportunities and the effects were therefore distributed differentially. 'Not all the peasants had the sense or wits to understand that if they raised big loans, they could then buy land, even when the Colonels said "rural people open your eyes, this is a time for asking"' (Grigoris Louloudis, president of Zobas's co-operative during the Dictatorship). It was impossible for them to predict that produce prices would triple in a few years time, as Grigoris Louloudis contemplated, though this was not only because they were 'slow

on the uptake, or scared of debts' as he reasoned. Whilst in earlier more traditional times, a peasant's needs were satisfied within the extended patriarchal family and the peripheral village both being largely independent of the urban reality, now the same needs prompted people to also turn to the richer external resources of an aspatial modernity. These however could be secured only by individual means and differentiated adherence to norms. The entrepreneurial drive to compete, succeed, become well-to-do and any number of other self-gratifying acts were locally fused, occurring when villagers were subjected to the artificial eradication of segmented dissensus and the magnetic stimulation of a booming market. As Gerasimos Ramalidis, owner of 10 ha in Zobas and of left-wing persuasion, explains:

'In 1972, I bought 11.2 ha of land with my brother. I never thought about putting profits first but I had a goal. I raised this loan, because I felt sore about being unable to open a water drilling in my fields, which were very parcelled-out with the biggest whole piece being 0.1 ha. I was not eligible to apply for such a loan because I did not meet the prerequisite minimum land ownership of 0.3 ha. Other villagers owned 0.5 ha and could get a loan to open a drilling. *If I remained idle, I would remain left behind, and I would not be able to earn my living*'

The Dictatorship period entered the peasants' lives like a cloud. Suddenly, it was 'raining cheap money and hardware' and villagers had to manipulate these political circumstances to their own benefit. It was the Dictatorship period that initially promoted the capitalization of agriculture. 'This cheap credit kept peasants' children at home, prevented migration, and gave a poor villager the chance to apply for a loan without any long bureaucratic problems' (Aris Skarlos, Kotsari's ex-village president and owner of 5 ha). These social and economic functions began to dissemble from the one all-embracing patriarchal structure and become institutionalized in their own right. Periklis Gleoudis' story of his claim to autonomy reflects this change:

'My father-in-law and I worked together. There was a difference of twenty years in our ages. In 1967 I told him that I would buy a tractor. There were only 5 tractors in the whole village and these were used to plough other villagers' fields. His answer was "*I will not help you but I will not hinder you either. Do it yourself*". By working very hard on other people's fields during the summer and autumn, I managed to secure all the money that I needed in order to pay back the whole amount when the first instalment was due' (Periklis Gleoudis, owner of 10 ha in Zobas)

An entrepreneurial son could now dare to have a voice individually against, or even in agreement with the patriarchal will. The patriarch himself was facing constant surprises even in connection with the age-old wheat cultivation and unprecedented yields: 'My grandfather never saw so much wheat before in his life, he did not know where all this production could be stored' (Christos Katsaganis, owner of 10 ha in Zobas).

The Greek Dictatorship thus signalled rural society's transition from a hierarchy of rank to one of individual entrepreneurial status. It started to be considered more degrading 'to work for someone else' than to raise a loan. It was the totalitarian state that gave rural entrepreneurs, for the first time, this new option for the improvement of their personal status. An individual identity in its own right was created by the military state, based on a separation of the local patriarchal power from its legitimate right to exercise authority. An 'individual activism' emerged, stimulated not by kinship, sentiment or an endangered minimum welfare, but by an economic interest entangled with a rising income. Cynically, it was the arrival of the Dictatorship

period that prohibited segmented or domain dissensus and offered a different perspective.

'During the Dictatorship, villagers understood that they had an individual voice, a sign of personality, and could make a claim for whatever they needed. Villagers could go to the Agricultural Bank and make claims on their own. The Bank could now offer funding without the need for substantial collateral' (Antonis Stasinopoulos, cotton trader and owner of 20 ha in Kotsari)

The Dictatorship offered not only cheap credit to the peasants, but also showed them that they could free themselves from their dependence on the local patriarchal elite. For the first time, entrepreneurial sons could alter the local patriarchal power structure and consequently participate in the struggle for power, via the economic route of increasing their capital assets and land area and therefore improve upon their fringe social position. 'The Dictatorship enlightened us, so we straightened ourselves up' (Aristides Bitakos, cotton trader). The patriarchal dichotomies, which in the past had been rooted in membership of the village community, were thus gradually dissolved by economic change. Sons could take the lead, patriarchs could step down, powerful clans could face setbacks because young male entrepreneurs were provided with the opportunity to initiate their economic future, not by attachment to the representatives of the *status quo*, but by individuated dissent, personal achievement and occupational mobility. The credibility of the patriarch's authority began to fade, when his experience and time-honoured judgement was no longer a valuable guide to the most appropriate action and thus entrepreneurial sons started to challenge his word or bypass him.

'In the period of the Dictatorship, the appropriate guidelines and necessary funding were given by the Agricultural Bank and we managed to take the initiative, we got a grip on our business. Before we were stuck in a rut. It gave the producers trust in their own labour force, the help was not only financial. We raised loans and bought machinery. We wrestled with the loaned capital that we took out, finally managing to improve our lives' (Thomas Levantis, owner of 10 ha in Kotsari)

In any case, patriarchs failed to adjust to the conditions of this new reality with clearer means-ends connections. This time, their mistakes could not occur out of sight, concealed behind institutionalized collectivities, where the individual responsibility was lost and leadership pretended to have an intrinsic unquestionable value. For instance:

'The appointed village president belonged to the old school. He was the last to buy a tractor, because he believed that all the yards would eventually be full of obsolete ones and their prices would fall so much that he could buy them for half of the price or even for free. In the end he bought the most expensive tractor. I was nothing compared to him, I had less land, my fields were not so fertile, but he did not deal with agriculture as an entrepreneur, so he was left behind, because he did not dare to take risks. He was afraid of debts' (Kostas Karidis, owner of 8 ha in Zobas)

The politically moderate entrepreneurial son who had not suffered the seizures of the civil war thus became an agent seeking economic success, by following a *uniform* (with only moderate emphasis differences on procedural norms in raising loans – that is domain dissensus) but also *totalitarian* state-driven process. During the Dictatorship, the milieu of deference was corroded and 'no backstairs influence dependent upon political ideology was needed then in order to claim one's rights' (Minas Rounis, owner of 5 ha and Kotsari's co-operative president). Entrepreneurial

sons no longer had to wait and exercise a maximum patience as their ultimate 'form of despair' in relation to powerful state officials. The more open availability of credit, the buying and selling of merchandise on a large scale, secure tenure in now redistributed land,⁶ and the newly found niches for social mobility empowered these entrepreneurial sons and generated mobility.

'If you applied for a loan on Saturday, you could receive money on Monday. Since the days of the Dictatorship, villagers started to receive the income that they deserved. *They became their own bosses and masters of their assets, because they could now sell their crops*' (Thanasis Karouzos, electrician and owner of 45 ha in Zobas)

As Yannopoulos points out (1972, 125), 'the Greek peasant managed during this period to secure for the first time a small share from the growth of the national income'. Hard work, state credit and a new legitimacy played the key roles in developing an individual entrepreneurial status for the villagers in the 1970s. As a result, village notions of aspiration and esteem were fundamentally altered in this rural and peripheral milieu. Entrepreneurial sons were now involved in a race of individual destiny and judgement (threshold dissensus) linked to the reconfiguration of the farmers' national status rather than being simple members of their fathers' inherited and shared yokel identity (segmented dissensus).

5.3. *Privacy and competition*

At another level, the acknowledgement of this individual entrepreneurial identity was refracted as part of the village housing structure. Importance was attributed to privacy by the villagers' attempts to build fences and indoor toilets (with the latter enforced by fines), while more accessible road communication to the outside of the house, neighbourhood, and group increased solitary exchanges and deconstructed the patriarchal power of 'all-in-one group meetings'. More small private meetings with one's own peers started to take place with electrification changing the peripheral village setting forever. As Zobas' community secretary remembers: 'On the 20th of November 1968 electricity lines reached the village for the first time and these shops bought freezers as well and started to sell frozen meat and fish'. The individual entrepreneur's ability to respond to opportunities without interference from others was facilitated just as much by this new infrastructure as by the new cultural context in which it had developed.

Even in leisure the changes took their toll, whilst the transformed way of village entertainment in the 1970s confirms this process of rising entrepreneurial individualism. 'In the pre-Dictatorship past we needed one pair of trousers per year, we had no idea what was meant by entertainment, shops or good houses' (Maria Stafillogianis' husband, owner of 7 ha in Zobas). Hardship was lessened but consumption and pleasure were increasingly becoming the end result of individual judgement and entrepreneurial choices. During the 1960s locals 'still had the Sunday walk, the weddings, the fiestas, the village fetes and the whole village went to football matches, after the 1970s, things changed. We started going to the seaside with our children in our new truck' as Dimitra Loukopoulou, a young truck driver's wife then and current owner of 10.7 ha in Kotsari, recounted. The transition from a localized clan participation in village amusement into personalized gratification beyond the village was by then well underway. Entrepreneurial sons' decision to choose a particular line of entertainment and life style in general provided confirmation that one's culture comes into being only through deed and desire. Education, offered

away from the peripheral village that was even deprived of secondary school provision, was another avenue of escaping patriarchal will.

‘When a villager had a new tractor instead of a cart and could go to the town market for shopping, his lifestyle became completely different. He could toddle over there or even take his wife to buy her a Christmas coat. Before, he had only an oxen driven cart and travelled short distances by overcrowded buses. I went to high school, because there was a new trend that children should study in order to escape village misery’ (Andreas Mauridis, Zobas’s private agronomist and owner of 15 ha)

This approach to education, consumerism and entertainment was thus directly connected to the increased entrepreneurial opportunities and threshold dissensus differences that the Dictatorship period conferred on the younger generations. As long as productivity was kept low, the entrepreneurial son was not able to separate himself from the patriarchal will in order to aggrandize himself. The duty to help was part and parcel of being a member of the old patriarchal world.

‘My father had a land holding of 6 ha. If we divided this land by six, then our productivity would be zero. Before the 1970s, all family members worked together in order to earn their daily bread. There was nothing left for entertainment, clothing or extravagant meals. When I did my military service in Cyprus in 1964–65, I sent money home. I was not used to spending money, so I saved. I received letters saying that my brother had trouble irrigating our land, because he could not afford the petrol, so I sent back 1500 Drs. to help him buy enough fuel for the whole summer period. *We were deeply immersed in our village so we said “no” to opportunities that we came across in our lifetime*’ (Stavros Vasiloudis, carpenter and owner of 12 ha in Zobas)

During the Dictatorship, however, ‘working together in the form of extended families’ (patriarch and co-habituating brothers) lost its previous vigour and *raison d’être*, so new kinds of partnerships began to develop among neighbours and in-laws. Giannis Vardas offers an account of how his family partnership with his brothers-in-law (jointly owns 37 ha and cultivates 50 ha in Kotsari) and not his *own* brother began as a result of an effort to take advantage of their adjacent fields’ shared access to irrigation, and why it was successfully maintained in an increasingly diverse and mobile society: ‘This partnership helped us to buy our first tractor... when water shortages arise, such a liability affects all partners equally. If we separate, then it will harm one field and one partner only’. However, the new type of business venturing carried very different exactions and expectations over partner competence and collaboration, and an exposure to those who seemed to be under-skilled for certain jobs. As George Ramalidis, an owner of 10 ha in Zobas points out: ‘The wives created the trouble. They kept asking “Why do you work more than your partner who happens to be your brother?” Individuated dissent was thus spreading everywhere. Cutting remarks and class antagonisms would boost entrepreneurial competition even further in the future.

To summarize, the Colonels’ experiment exposed the younger generations to the lessons of how to focus their individual entrepreneurial will for a ‘just’ purpose that went beyond their household and challenged the patriarchy as an effective means of dealing with the market and state. With the intrusion of totalitarian politics, clear means-ends and personal ambition drove entrepreneurial sons to make their own plans for the first time and exercise judgement behind closed doors and regardless of status and the patriarchal hierarchy. But such ‘knowledge is highly interdependent with resource availability’ in a limited resource environment, as Kodithuwakku and Rosa (2002, 436) also argued. The

research issue here is thus not whether all or most younger family members became more alert to taking loans or buying machinery (seemingly natural for both young males and females) but rather that many young males were enabled for the first time to express this alertness in practice.

6. Discussing a 'different' model of institutional change

The oral history presented in this paper examined the role of entrepreneurial individuals in shaping institutional change in Thessaly, rural Greece and in particular the transition from farm families bound up in patriarchy to individualized family farming. It denotes consensus and dissensus politics as the conditions that respectively constrain or enable such institutional entrepreneurship, whilst a high threshold dissensus is considered to be a prerequisite for judgemental gains underpinning opportunity recognition. Whilst patriarchs previously responded to conflicting societal demands by allowing discrete variation or exercising outright power (a set of 'must' rules), their entrepreneurial sons were now enabled to pursue their own individual interests despite the highly institutionalized setting that the Colonels ordered at this time.

Paradoxically, the Colonels' regime reduced uncertainty by creating expectations in the behaviour of others and recognizable means-ends relationships, even though these were often negatives such as totalitarian law enforcement. Their politics allowed only threshold dissensus differences to surface, whilst it prohibited segmented or domain dissensus that could overturn the totalitarian regime itself. The Colonels' breakdown of old hierarchies had freed entrepreneurial individuals from patriarchal rule and their vigour sprang momentarily from an accessibility to the state that was now taken away from the old patriarchs who no longer monopolized finance, knowledge or location within supra-local networks. The illegitimate totalitarian regime empowered entrepreneurial sons to exercise judgement, legitimize matter-of-fact criticisms of patriarchy and unintentionally deviate from its previously taken-for-granted rules that could no longer overpower 'interest' (Beckert 1999; Dorado 2005), as institutional theory asserts to be axiomatically true. This was not a rebellion but a depoliticized movement. The theoretical implications of this 'different' model of institutional change that saw entrepreneurs shaping even family practices are now examined below.

Institutional theorists have debated on either how political dissensus, state autonomy, clear means-ends relations (certainty) and high subgroup strength lead to deinstitutionalization (Selznick 1957; Oliver 1992; Evans 1995; Leblebici et al. 1991; Beckert 1999; Greenwood, Suddaby, and Hinings 2002; Gibson and Vermeulen 2003), or conversely, on how political consensus underpinned by organizational myths, confusing institutional arrangements, external dependence and goal ambiguity (uncertainty) lead to institutionalization, contagious diffusion and isomorphic convergence (Meyer and Rowan 1977; DiMaggio and Powell 1983). In these writings, it can be crudely presumed that fragmentation builds up institutional forces of staged (incremental) change, whilst heterogeneity generates institutional continuity at the organizational field-level. There is a thin line, however between fragmentation and heterogeneity if different combinations of contestation and consent to societal requirements as a result of changing power distributions are taken into account. In these conditions (which are encountered in modern economies),

entrepreneurship emerges as the capacity to exploit the creative friction when multiple (fragmented or heterogeneous) orders of worth⁷ are in play (Stark 2009). In other historically-specific instances, however, when entrepreneurial action influences social institutions, it is argued here that there has been a higher order of worth (societal-level forces) that causes discontinuity in some of its practices (of justifying worth) as a result of threshold dissensus differences. By contrast, fragmentation exhibits an association with segmented dissensus, whilst heterogeneity (that is, agree to disagree) is closer to domain dissensus. To this extent, the evidence presented here highlights the significance of politics in externally infusing higher order constraints on people's action (a set of 'must not' rules) and offers an alternative account of what drives strategic agency to the existing institutional literature that has excessively focused on spontaneous orders of worth, coordination and self-enforcement issues (Hodgson 2006). In a context of external enforcement, such as this case study represents, the nature of normative dissensus that instigates institutional entrepreneurship emerges as being a matter of degree (adherence intensity), not location (connectivity radius).

Organizational research has recently focused on how multiple, competing logics or rationalities have shaped practice diffusion not in a period effect mode (Thornton and Ocasio 1999) but rather in location-effect terms such as the case of New York-based performance vs. Boston-based trustee logics leading to variation in how mutual funds established contracts with independent professional money management firms (Lounsbury 2007); or in 'value sphere' terms such as that of Alberta Museum staff's interplay of cultural and economic rationalities resulting in a variable response to the governmental efforts of introducing business planning and performance measures into cultural organizations (Townley 2002). Viewed from another angle, this literature suggests that dissensus over the location, value sphere or timing of a particular practice underlies institutional variation. In Lounsbury's research on institutional logics (2007, 303), it is even admitted that no deinstitutionalization took place and that 'ironically, neither of these logics has led to an "autonomous" profession of money management as they have both led to commodification of service'. What is missing from these accounts of institutional change is paying attention to any signs of longitudinal differentiation in individual judgement amidst chaos and order that lead to deinstitutionalization. This paper fills that gap in the literature.

Following Oliver's definition (1992, 564), deinstitutionalization is 'the process by which the legitimacy of an established or institutionalized practice erodes or discontinues' with the added remark that such a practice rarely seems to disappear in its entirety and in the greater part, it just readjusts. The patriarchal rule is conceived here as such an institutionalized practice infused with hierarchical power dynamics, value-laden judgements, rituals, resource dependencies and historical contingency. In this empirical study, early post-war patriarchal rule emerges as being not goal-oriented (Levine 1980), but rather brokerage-based – bridging disconnected segments, that is Burt's well-known 'structural holes' and placing oneself as an outsider in the rare cases of entrepreneurial pursuits (Burt 1992; Stark 2009; Vedres and Stark 2010). In this sense patriarchy's governing style is perceived to be near-consensual, risk averse and part of a system of dispersed power, whilst threshold dissensus was introduced as an outcome of totalitarian politics and its aversion towards multiple orders of worth. Drawing

upon this study's findings, different institutional logics⁸ are seen to challenge one another and most importantly erode when they are used by the same individuals who increasingly choose or 'make a case for' loyalty to *x* over *y* frame of action and not when used in parallel by dissenting social groups (Thornton and Ocasio 1999) or in heterogeneous domains (Friedland and Alford 1991). Institutional change literature has rarely made this important distinction.

We are also informed that efficiency solutions infused with value, or in other words institutions, cannot change without the enabling condition of internal contradiction (Sewell 1992; Clemens and Cook 1999) that leads endogenously to variation; or that of actors' peripheral social position (Leblebici et al. 1991; Dorado 2005; Battilana 2006) that leads to deinstitutionalization by facilitating alternative selection perceptions engrossed in opportunity recognition. 'Technology is said to be the source of variation' (Leblebici et al. 1991, 335) in the first enabling condition of institutional change, whilst institutional entrepreneurship fits better into the second condition and is seen here as result of a certainty intractably connected to politics, institutional discontinuity and new external dependencies (Figure 1). In this paper's line of analysis, central or peripheral social position is conceptualised in dissensus terms – (as disagreement about what is considered to be 'right'). What if one then assumes that it is institutional selection associated with an injection of certainty (Hannan and Freeman 1984) instead of variation, even an anomalous one (Lounsbury and Crumley 2007) that leads in practice to deinstitutionalization? What are the origins and structuring of such certainty? The answer given here is 'subjective certainty' that is dependent on the politics of a decision-making involving multiple actors positions with inconsistent preferences and most importantly, dissenting opinions – an index of normative dissensus conditions (Figure 1).

More specifically, the empirical enquiry pursued here has shown the *nature* of normative dissensus that might facilitate or hinder the deinstitutionalization of historically-entrenched patriarchal practices, using as a geographical focus rural Greece – part of the Southern European periphery. Furthermore, it is argued here that social (e.g. changing societal values) and functional pressures (e.g. changing utilities) only aided rather than triggered such deinstitutionalization. It was political pressures (e.g. changing external dependencies) that transformed the peripheral social position of male offspring (in terms of their diminishing adherence to prevailing norms and improved but also now neutralized access to state funds) and thus enabled their differing entrepreneurial judgement on intra-family farm interests and resources to alter practice selection patterns and thus erode the patriarchal rule. These findings answer earlier criticisms regarding institutional explanations' disregard of political processes (Oliver 1992) and offer an insight on the antecedents of deinstitutionalization.

6.1. In Conclusion

The evidence presented here suggests that institutional entrepreneurs in the case study area (Thessaly, rural Greece) were not found to be disembedded from the institutional arrangements and rules of early post-war Greek family farming (1949–1966). However, it is the impact of the farm family cycle that was unexpectedly minimized by its adult male offspring enterprising in the following period (1967–

1974) that was characterized by the Colonels' coup and ascendance to power. The focus of such totalitarian politics expediently narrowed from emphasizing patron-client relationships and various cooperative (or antagonistic) links between farm families and their representatives (patriarchs) to concentrating uniformly on relationships within individual family farms that could also be easily controlled. In this political context, entrepreneurial sons were seen to mobilize the Colonels' higher order of worth and its accompanying farm modernization principles along with ample credit that were exogenous to these actors and at the same time, were unintentionally used by them to change the patriarchal rule. These entrepreneurial sons used the causal powers of the totalitarian structures, centralization and financing to empower their differing individual judgement and remove their farm families from the sole control of their eldest male members and in this paradoxical manner, they eroded patriarchy.

This paper uses institutional theory conceptualization to explain the modalities of entrepreneurship, goal-oriented agency and strategic choice that led to the deinstitutionalization of patriarchal rule. It is a narrative on the impact of a recent totalitarian regime's politics and its agricultural policies on the formation and perpetuation of error-making in patriarchal practices, coordination and routine knowledge that led to the shake up of the social institution itself. It was entrepreneurial inadequacies intertwined with judgemental losses that marked the local patriarch's fallibility as an institutional agent under the new circumstances that reduced peripherality, improved communication to the controlling centre of the economy and prohibited both segmented and domain dissensus. Was it meant then to be this way by any of the macro- or micro-actors involved in the making of patriarchal rule atrophy? As Lawrence and Phillips argue (2004, 705), institutional entrepreneurship has mostly been presented in the literature as being intentional, or in other words 'as an alternative to the deterministic images of isomorphism where organizations reactively adopt practices and structures because of a desire to avoid uncertainty, sanction or a loss of legitimacy'. However, this study has shown how institutional entrepreneurs were elevated by normative threshold disagreement over the 'right' use of totalitarian state-driven credit availability to unconsciously question the patriarchal rule that was previously determining their shared understanding and behaviour (see Figure 1).

As Swedberg (2005) discusses, the concept of interest is typically associated with utility in economics, whilst in sociology it is equated with valuation and judgement. In the same fashion 'orthodox economic theory postulates that profit is the main motivational factor of entrepreneurs' (Zafirovski 1999, 332) and thus entrepreneurial action and interest are regarded as innate, individual and anti-social with institutions becoming their joint outcomes. By contrast, sociologists have effectively counter-argued that entrepreneurship is socially-conditioned with institutions being portrayed as pre-existing constraints of entrepreneurial behaviour (Zafirovski 1999). Accordingly, sociologists saw entrepreneurship as being the dependent variable and implicitly unable to impact institutions, whilst social context considerations determine its variance. As part of the latter tradition, this study's contribution lies in its illustration of how the nature of dissensus on the value of an activity can potentially enable entrepreneurship to become the mediating but also independent variable for a specific period of time and thus erode a social institution such as patriarchy. Lack of endurance, however, is the ultimate paradox of such

entrepreneurial existence – its strategic choices bring about institutional change. Institutional entrepreneurship is not a lifelong state of strategic agency.

Notes

1. According to Casson (1982, 24), judgemental decisions are instances where ‘different individuals, sharing the same objective, and acting under similar circumstances would act differently on account of different access to information or different interpretation of it’.
2. Four property groups were identified: upper range-sized landholdings (20–120 ha), middle range landholdings (8–19 ha), lower middle range landholdings (4–7 ha) and small landholdings (1–3 ha).
3. All real names were replaced with fictional, ghost names, for reasons of anonymity/confidentiality.
4. Term first used by Sahlins (1972) to characterise economies organised by domestic groups and kinship relations, in which production for use rather than exchange prevails and it is directed towards the household’s internal requirements.
5. The Greek Communist Party was legalized by the Act of 23 September 1974.
6. Land redistribution occurred in Zobas in 1966 and in Kotsari in 1972 as the state response to land fragmentation, a villager recalls: ‘before the land redistribution, I had 33 pieces in Kotsari, and I had to keep notes so I won’t forget to sow some of them. Today I only have one piece of land of 12.5 ha’.
7. As Stark (2009, 7) points out about the polysemic character of the term *worth*, ‘rather than the static fixtures of value and values, it focuses instead on ongoing processes of valuation’.
8. According to Leca and Naccache (2006, 632), ‘institutional logics are frameworks that incorporate the assumptions, beliefs, and rules through which individuals organize time and space, and which give meaning to their social reality’.

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