Captain Vassilis Foundation –

Pylos, Messinia, Greece

Short Food Supply Chain in economic crisis: an alternative for small family farms ?

The case of Pylos and Trifilia municipalities in Messinia region, Greece.

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CAP : Common Agricultural Policy

EFARD : European Found for Agriculture and Rural Development

EU : European Union

GHG : Greenhouse Gaz

LEADER : Link between Actions of development of Rural Economy

NSSG : National Service of Statistics of Greece

PDO : Protection of Designated Origin

UAA : Useful Agricultural Area

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Introduction

In a context of global agricultural production, market liberalization, and the notion of «big is beautiful» on the modernization of farms and land concentration, it is interesting to look at small family farms. Within the European Union (EU) they represent 70% of loan farms (2007 - 10 million farms in the EU), with UAA (Useful Agricultural Area) of 14 million hectares, that is to say 8% of the UAA European and a size smaller than 5 hectares (17% of EU farms are less than 1ha). They retain the heritage that agrarian societies have produced in recent decades, that is to say, a rich cultural and traditional know-how linking man to nature. However, the obligations and economic policies don't allow anymore these farms to sustain over time or keep some rural culture. Currently the CAP (Common Agricultural Policy) 2014-2020 focuses on the terms of financial support for these agricultural farms.

It is also in this context that many health and environmental scandals took place. Backgrounds of the crisis of mad cow disease (Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease), or avian flu, farmers have seen their image degrade in a very short time. Impacts of intensive agriculture on the environment have not improved this picture, especially in Greece, where the EU has repeatedly reminded the rules (Appendix I) within the areas covered by the Birds and Habitats Directives.

In front of this situation, consumers undertake changes in their way of consumption, directing their choices to the biological and / or local market, rediscovering local products but also the taste. Even if currently this mode of consumption evokes only an « economic niche" with a big added-value, it can represent an alternative way for family farms in bad economic situation, and particularly in Greece, while participating in the reduction of the 'food miles' (BARCLAY v., 2012), and thus the emission of GHG (greenhouse gas), in focusing on sourcing locally. For example, sales in short food supply chain allow the producer to sell his products to the actual value of the work done.

The issue of short food supply chain has recently been brought by the European Commission for agriculture for the redesign of the objectives of the CAP

2014-2020. It is within the second pillar (help for rural development), that this issue will be exposed to improve the competitiveness of agricultural holdings. The European Union wishes to support producers and producer organizations in the conduct of this approach.

Messinia, in the South of the Peloponnese, is a rural territory where many kinds of agriculture are practiced. The olive tree in mountainous and semi mountainous area is near fruits and vegetables areas installed in plain and near urban centres. Urban centres have historically been developed on these coastal plains and make a land pressure on agricultural activity.

However, further pressure from urban sprawl on land, it might be possible to establish a «symbiotic relationship» between these two spaces. Indeed, the proximity with the production areas is a real asset both for city dwellers looking for fresh products and quality, but for the family farms in «bad debt» also (GALLIC Y and TURK Y, Greece: the evil of debt, may 6, 2012) and income.

In a research project conducted on 5 months carried out and initiated by the “Captain Vassilis Foundation”, the study focuses on small vegetable farms and the relationship with their territory in two municipalities of Messinia: Trifilia and Pylos. We will present first the agricultural characteristics of the municipalities and explain the main issue. In a part titled materials and methods, tools used are described. Meetings and interviews done allow to determine which population is able to get engaged in short food supply chain (SFSC) and to understand the reasons. The results linked to the hypothesis will be analyzed and then discussed.

Part 1. Characteristics of agricultural activity in Messenia : farms holdings and farmers

Plains areas express a wider variety of environment: the olive-growing parcels are near to those of fruits and vegetables farms thus drawing a green and varied landscape.

Even though these crops are synonymous with a certain agricultural economic «prosperity», they undergo many economic and socio-cultural pressures. Related to human activities, these pressures are carried out both on space and nature ('environment').

The region, traditionally agricultural, is also tourist, but impacting land use. For example, between 1999 and 2012, 1300 ha of arable land, at the north of the Gialova lagoon, were urbanized for tourism (luxury hotels and golf courses). In that case, the use of the water resource, for these tourist purposes, worries local communities who question on its management because it is one of the factors of the sustainability of farming and local biotopes[1].

Agriculture is not only an economic sector, it is an integral part of Greek culture. Cultivated for millennia, the land of Messenia has assets and wealth favorable to any type of land uses. Currently, various cultures such as the vine, figs, oranges, lemons, vegetables and livestock mingle, even if the predominant remains olive tree (Annex I).

The agricultural sector in Messenia has many particularities. The first is the importance of the olive tree in Greek culture. Almost all of the families grow their own olive trees for non-commercial purposes. The second lies in the place of the Messinian vegetables, nationally recognized for their quality: tomatoes, cucumbers, potatoes, watermelons, paprikas, peppers and onions. The majority of residents in rural space and some urban area, «cultivate their gardens»: figuratively because this allows the exchange of products with their neighbours and therefore **maintains a 'social' link**; and in the proper sense because **they produce food quality.**

[1] Question to the European Parliament (1999): «the integrated tourist complex (…) will seriously deplete groud water resources since sprinklers for the golf courses alone will require vast quantities of water in an area where there is already a shortage of ground water suitable for human consumption. In addition, they point out that the wetland biotope around the Divari Gialovas lagoon, situated between two of the hotel complexes under construction, forms part of the Natura 2000 project.

1. Farmer's profile

Table I. Distribution in agricultural employment by sex in Messinia (data: Eurostat 2007)

	2000	Increase 2000-2003 (%)	2003	Increase 2003-2005 (%)	2005	Increase 2005-2007 (%)	2007	Increase 2000-2007 (%)
Male	23 860	2,5	24 460	-5,1	23 220	4,6	24 280	1,8
Female	6 440	-0,8	6 390	21,6	7 770	-4,2	7 440	15,5
TOTAL	30 300	1,8	30 850	0,5	30 990	2,4	31 720	4,7

According to Eurostat, in 2007, farmers are at 76% men or 24 280 (table I). Between 2000 and 2007 the proportion of women in this sector has increased, with a growth rate of 15.5%, even if their number (7440) remains low.

Table II. Age of farmers in Messinia (data: Eurostat 2007)

	2000	Increase 2000-2003 (%)	2003	Increase 2003-2005 (%)	2005	Increase 2005-2007 (%)	2007	Increase 2000-2007 (%)
< 35 years old	1 770	-27,1	1 290	-10,9	1 150	9,6	1 260	**-28,8**
35 to 44	3 620	-2,2	3 540	-5,4	3 350	-4,5	3 200	**-11,6**
45 to 54	4 900	5,3	5 160	5,8	5 460	12,5	6 140	**25,3**
55 to 64	6 650	-5,7	6 270	-4	6 020	-1,7	5 920	**-11**
> 65	13 350	9,3	14 590	2,8	15 000	1,4	15 210	**13,9**
TOTAL	30 290	1,8	30 850	0,4	30 980	2,4	31 730	**4,8**

In 2001, 37 949 people were aged 65 years or more. Among them 35% were farmers (table II), or 13350 people. The number of farm operators in this age group has increased by 13.9% between 2000 and 2007.

Instead, for the same period, the share of farmers less than 44 years decreased by 11.6% as the ones of 35 years old (28.8%). The trend is the aging of farmers.

Table III. Increase rate of the working time between 2000 and 2007 (data: Eurostat 2007)

Working time	Rate of increase 2000-2007 (%)
< 25 %	17,5
From 25 to 50%	-2,6
From 50 to 75%	-15,5
From 75 to 100%	-25,0
100%	-16,2

Between 2000 and 2007 farmers disengaged from the agricultural activity, as shown in the rate of increase for working time less than 25% of a full-time (17.5%). In 2007, 62% of farmers work ¼ of the time within the farm (table VII and Fig. 6), suggesting that they have a complementary activity.

2. Agrarian characteristics

Table IV. Farms depending on size and the UAA (ha) in Messinia (data: Eurostat 2007)

Year Size	2000	Increase 2000-2003 (%)	2003	Increase 2003-2005 (%)	2005	Increase 2005-2007 (%)	2007	Increase 2000-2007 (%)
*< 5ha UAA	25 300 44 510	-0,2 2,8	25 260 45 750	0,9 -1,6	25 480 45 020	3 -0,2	26 250 44 920	**3,8** **0,9**
*5 to 10ha UAA	3 990 26 570	9 8,2	4 350 28 750	-4,8 -4,6	4 140 27 440	-2,2 -0,9	4 050 27 180	**1,5** **2,3**
*10 to 20ha UAA	910 11 540	14,3 14,8	1 040 13 250	8,7 6,3	1 130 14 090	-3,5 -0,9	1 090 13 960	**19,8** **21**
*20 to 30ha UAA	70 1 490		ND ND		ND ND		ND ND	
*30 to 50ha UAA	20 720		ND ND		ND ND		ND ND	
*> 50ha UAA	20 1 190		ND ND		ND ND		ND ND	

*Number of farms

All these cultures are done on small patches reinforcing the idea of a family production. Agricultural structures are organized around units fragmented in space with an average size of farm of 5.3 ha (GIDARAKOU and al., 2004; ANTHOPOULOU T. and KOUTSOU. S, 2009).

According to Eurostat, in 2007, the number of farms in Messinia amounted to 31 390, of which 83.6% had a size of less than 5 ha and accounted in total 44 920 UAA ha (table VIII). For the period 2000-2007 the number of less than 5 ha holdings increased by 3.8% while the UAA has increased by 0.9%. This type of farm has averaged 1.71 SAU ha in 2007 compared to 1.75 hectares in 2000.

On the contrary, over the same period, the UAA of holdings with a size between 5 and 10 hectares grew faster (2.3%) than the global number of farms (1.5%). This type of agricultural structure therefore tends to grow: averaged 6.65 ha/exploitation in 2000 against 6.71 ha/exploitation in 2007. In 2007, 12.9% of messenian farms belonged to this category.

Finally, in 2000, farms with a size between 20 and 50 ha accounted for only 0.3% of the total of farms and occupied 3.88% of the UAA.

Table V. Number of vegetable farms and areas (data Eurostat 2007)

		2000	2003	2005	2007
Fresh vegetable, melon, strawberry	Number of farms	1 620	1 950	2 330	1 620
	Area (ha)	780	NA	NA	NA

In 2007 according to Eurostat 1620 farms produced fresh vegetables (table V).

In 2005 according to El Stat, **the vineyard** occupies 7793 holdings for a surface cultivated on 5300 ha, or 5.5% of the total of crops. The cultivation of the wine is historically rooted in the Messenian history. It is one of the most important producing area of Greece. It was in 1989 that the know-how of winegrowers and winemakers has been recognized through the classification in PGI wines of Messinia.

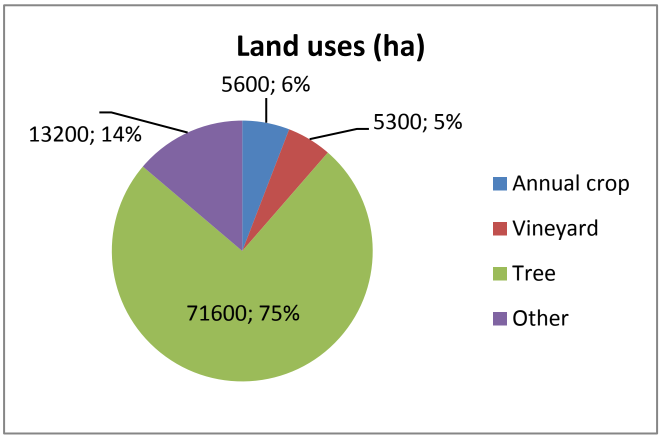

Figure 1. Land use (ha) in agriculture in Messinia (data: El stat agricultural census 2005)

Tree crops are the first occupation of the farms of the Department. In 2005, 30649 farmers were growing 71 600 ha in this type of culture. Olive growing is the main production of the Department, followed by the fig, lemon and orange.

The extra virgin olive oil comes from the variety 'koroneiki', classified in PDO 'Kalamata extra virgin olive oil' like the olives table «Kalamata Olives».

Citrus fruits were long grown on a large scale in the post-war years. Today a very small part of the arboreal land consists of lemon and orange trees.

The part '**other**' counts for hayfields or grazing, it means 9655 farmers on a surface of 13200 ha. Sheep, goats, cattle and pigs are bred extensively in Messinia.

Part 2. Problematic

1. The issues of small farms facing the desertification of rural areas

As demonstrated earlier, Messinia knows an aging of the agricultural population. The decrease in employment in this sector and **the increasingly small share of time spent on farming are the characteristics of a recent exodus. In addition, the decline in farm incomes has pushed farmers to turn to a complementary activity, often exercised in urban or peri-urban area**. The urban - rural space link has therefore evolved over recent years and is represented in terms of employment by pluriactivity of farmers. Many farmers do their work in rural areas while living and having a secondary activity, mostly in urban areas. This model can also be applied to agricultural households with at least one member of the couple is a non-agricultural employee.

2. Pluriactivity : a brake and an engine for small and new farms

2.1 Pluriactivity carried out by rural development policies

Pluriactivity within agricultural holdings is carried out by all the local, national and European partners. This concept has been gradually introduced from the mid-1980s (integrated rural development policy[2]) through the diversification of the activities promoted and financed by the second pillar of the CAP for the 2007-2013 programming period (EAFRD). The EU guidelines included in particular to push farmers to turn to agricultural and non-agricultural activities, complementary to the income related to production. For example, farmers were given the option of moving towards forms of **alternative tourism**, sale and processing of products of quality in particular through **short food supply chain**, or even to **maintain the rural heritage**.

These activities were main objectives maintaining agricultural activity and the population in rural areas as well as the control of the impact of agriculture on the nature and landscapes, while providing a certain quality of life.

[2] European Regulation : 797/85 – 1257/99. LEADER I (1989-1993) and LEADER II (1994-1999)

For the period 2007-2013, Greece, by transposition of European law, adopted a plan of rural development at the national level, declined at regional and local level.

On the area of study in Messinia, this plan comes in the same way as at the top level, meaning that for farmers pluriactivity is exposed in the axis 3, «improving the quality of life and diversification into non-agricultural activities". The local development agency (ANMESS), located in Kalamata, supports promoters in their efforts in partnership with the Ministry of rural development and food.

2.2 Consequences sometimes underestimated

Even if in texts pluriactivity is an engine for the sustainability of small and new farms, a study in Messinia (GIDARAKOU et al., 2004), on a sample of 78 pluriactive farmers, explains how pluriactivity can «harm» to the sustainability of local agriculture and especially for small family farms. The benefit of pluriactivity is diversification of income and improvement of the quality of life of farm households in order to 'fix' them in rural areas and enable them to continue their farming activities (register in time benefits associated with family farms on the nature and management of the landscape due to the extensive mode of production: CNRS, 2007).

However, the authors describe how pluriactivity influence the sustainability of agricultural holdings. To diversify their income, farmers must often **'migrate' to the city** or in peri-urban area, more conducive to a second economic activity ('Exploitation - pluriactivity - exodus' (GOUSSIOS D. 2011)). The decrease in the number of children enrolled in rural areas supports this study, since in 1982, on average, 59 children were enrolled in primary school in the rural villages, up from 19 in 2000. It is also shown that pluriactive farmers **are more prone to abandon agriculture for the benefit of the second activity (reconversion)**, when it represents more than 50% of the family income. In addition, **the legacy is lower in areas where the majority of the farmers are pluriactive**.

In Messinia, 13% of farmers live in urban areas and are pluriactive. 83% of the successors (when there is) of the 78 interviewed farmers want be pluriactive, against 13% currently, **and consider farming as a 'safe' activity more than a business.** Among them, 70% don't want either to buy or sell land. 50% of the successors want to stay in the village and 30% want to live in urban areas. Finally, it is also noted that through the succession there is a tendency to shift from a full-time to a part-time.

2.3 A current process in time of crisis

However, since 2009, and since the beginning of the economic crisis affecting the Greece, it is found a resurgence of the attractiveness of the agricultural sector. **Indeed, the reduction of jobs in the public sector, the unemployment in city, the decrease of the buying and consumption power encourage some people to return to live in rural areas**. Rural appears as an alternative to unemployment and the urban living environment. Mr Dimitris GOUSSIOS[3], distinguished in his article (GOUSSIOS D. 2011) three types of operators coming to settle in rural areas and perpetuate a certain agrarian culture:

• The urban entrepreneurs **recreating a family farming business**, mostly on territories to which they belonged and where heritage was then managed by a member of the family remained on the spot,

• **The family farms taken over by an educated and pluriactive son in the city**, and which has most often experience in small business management / trade,

• The groupings of dynamic farmers in the field of the high-value crops in exploiting the local heritage (history, natural and cultural heritage...).

For the majority of them, an alternative way of life, a quality of life but also and above all, social coverage and income are before any search (GOUSSIOS D., 2011).

In the context of our study in Messinia, a particular interest is credited to small farms (< 5 ha) that have diversified to activity trade, and particularly engaged in a process of short food distribution in the periurban area. Process for which quality and local products demand is greater than offer (KIZOS T, VAKOUFARIS H, 2011;) FOIVOS, POOLE N., 2007).

[3] Professor in rural development and management of rural areas, University of Thessaly

3. Short food supply chain, a sustainable approach for producer and consumer?

The European Commission has recently discussed and shown its interest short food supply chain for many reasons (environmental - social - economic). The Commissioner for agriculture Dacian Ciolos underlined the fact that there is no official definition to describe this type of food supply chain since each country of the European Union has its own constraints, advantages and factors of development. The proposed definition was my work of literature dealing with this topic and discussion with various actors.

3.1 Actors of supply chain

Food distribution channels rely on the concepts of producer, middleman and consumer.

The producer, in Messinia, usually owns a small farm. He produces on the basis of the «signals» sent by the industry (REZITI I., 2005). In order to compensate the low costs for the sale of their products, fresh vegetable producers (the Greece is the largest producer of tomatoes in Europe) fit into a productive approach. This approach «is a vicious circle» since it requires much more attention and investment (inputs) on the part of the producer, and workforce linked to this practice. Moreover the consequences on the environment at the local level make that reduce production capacity. For 85% of the European farmers, production is sold to a middleman.

The middleman is present all along the distribution chain (figure 2, next page), i.e. from the producer to the consumer. In general there are two middlemen (REZITI I., 2005). They come in many different «forms». It is the 'simple local agent' which is in charge to inform, to guide producers on the market trends but also to buy the products at the lowest prices. He is independent, he sells his stocks to four types of actors: wholesalers, the central purchasing, catering and food companies. However the local agent does not take a margin on products, since he is paid to the commission by the buyer depending on the quality, quantity and speed to provide these products.

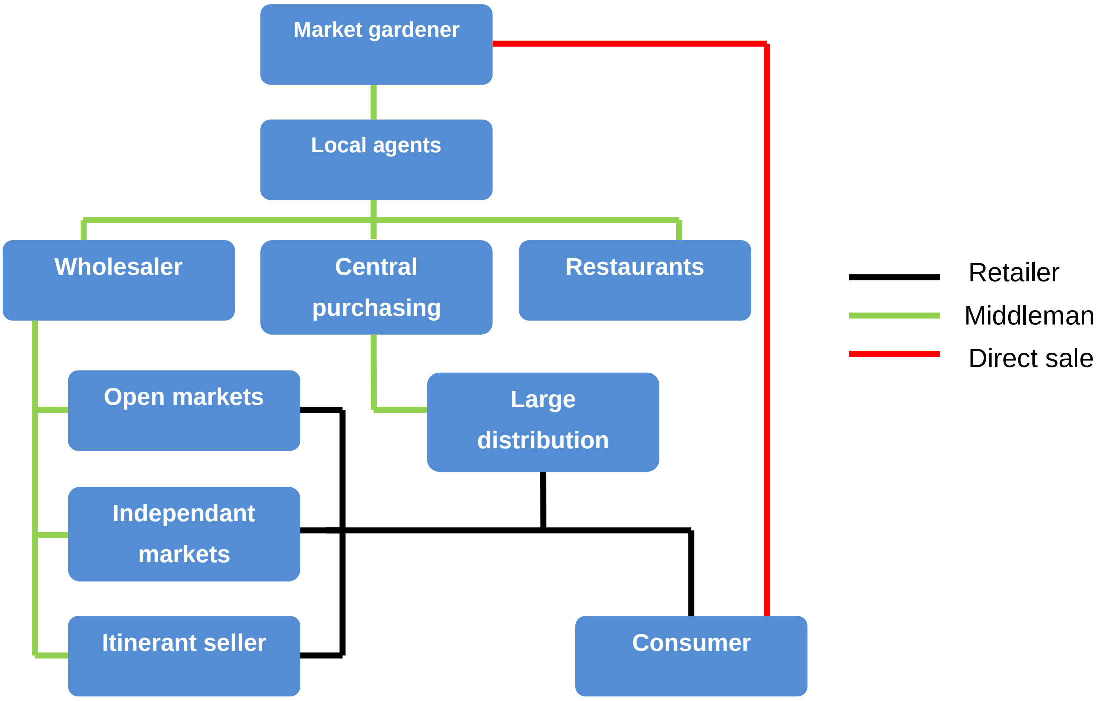

Figure 2. Food supply for fresh vegetables in Messinia.

Subsequently, wholesalers and central purchasing resell or distribute to another middleman, who elapse stocks locally, while negotiating a margin. Buyers are large groups of food distribution but also other actors and professionals conducting market (prices recorded on the markets are higher than in supermarkets) and the independent micro markets. These are the last links in the chain engaged in the retail sale, at a still higher price to consumers.

However along the distribution chain, the organoleptic qualities of fresh agricultural products degrade and their prices rise. REZITI and PANAGOPOULOS (2006) have updated how prices evolve along the distribution chain. The conclusion says that the prices transmission from the producer to the consumer is not asymmetric and proportional. I.e. when production costs rise, retail prices do not increase proportionally but much more. It is also found that for 2006, the consumption of food products prices (5%) have increased faster than other products (3.5%).

However, consumers are looking for quality local products (PAPAGEORGIOU., 2010). Indeed, the Greek consumer is ethnocentric, i.e. he perceives a health hazard with regard to imported products but also products of the large distribution (SHIMP and SHARMA, in 1987 PAPAGEORGIOU A., 2010). *«9 Out of 10 Greeks prefer to eat Greek products and 33% of them buy local because they trust the producers and its production techniques*. *So 34% of Greek consumers prefer local products for their qualities»* (DASKALOPOULOS, in 2008

PAPAGEORGIOU A., 2010). It should also be noted that Greeks are the first consumers of fruits and vegetables.

It is in this context that short food supply chains take their meaning.

3.2 Short food supply chain definition

«Supply chain» refers to the delivery of the product from the producer to the final consumer. The word «short» refers only to the notion of distance, but also to the number of middlemen. The different actors who worked on this issue agree that a supply chain is short when there is only one middleman in the distribution process. For example, a farmer selling its products directly to a supermarket, which will resell to consumers, is considered to be a form of SFSC.

There are different forms of SFSC, but the most common remains direct sales. It is done directly from the producer to the consumer or on the place of production, open air markets or, for the Greek case, using «kiosks» fitted on the roads or at festivals for the promotion of local culture. E-business is getting more and more developed in Greece[4], particularly under the leadership of the Ministry of rural development and food. And finally, can be considered as SFSC, the itinerant sellers when it is made by the producer himself.

The indirect sale involves a middleman in the process of distribution of the product (grocery store / butcher shop - supermarket, etc.).

4. The queries

What are the crisis effects on farmers? What about local populations? Are the latter turning towards supply local markets? Have they changed their patterns of food consumption in favour of local development and «territorial agriculture"[5]? Do the «new-rural», and their cultural background, have influenced the development of an alternative supply chain? If yes, how and why?

[4] Exemple of e-business : https://agrotis.info - http://www.dasoton.com/

[5] «Agriculture within a territory, guaranteeing a local production and consumption - that is geographically near one another - promoting energy savings but also the link between farmers and consumers. From definition of the 'Raccourci' collective: http://www.raccourci.org

Conversely, how is translated the resumption of agricultural holdings by urban populations, in terms of economic and ecological dynamism? How these “neo-rural” fit to the local population?

Will the development of SFSC in time of crisis be perceived as a risk? I.e. not be sure to sell all the production and by consequence not earning enough money. In order to alleviate this uncertainty linked to clientelism, are farmers or collectives of farmers, formally organized with consumers?

Do existing SFSC actually improve the living conditions of farmers? Or is it only a sideline, or even just a lifestyle choice? Does SFSC necessarily mean organic farming and / or family?

5. Hypothesis

In a dynamic of local development and relocation of production and farm incomes, territorial and environment-friendly agriculture is a tool to strengthen or build a social and economic link between the resident populations. The new generation of farmers, particularly from an urban environment, is sensitive to the quality of the products and the respect of the environment in part for reasons of education. They are moving towards agricultural activity by choice and not by obligation as previous generations. **We ask first hypothesized that short food supply chain initiatives are carried by a young population recently set up in agriculture and whose motivations are primarily economic.**

Productivity and profitability research in the agricultural sector have led farmers to standardize their cultures and their means of production. **The decline of traditional skills**, as well as a standardization of the cultivated varieties have been observed. It is found a decline of varieties and landraces in favor of others more productive, in fruits and vegetable as well as in breeding and olive growing. **We ask as a second hypothesis that young farmers, and particularly those installed in organic agriculture, are involved in the conservation of landraces and traditional agricultural practices**.

Part 3. Materials and methods

1. Context elements

As a first step it was necessary to immerse themselves in the Greek agricultural context but also of the different modes of commercialization of agricultural products.

To scan a widest possible data field on these sectors it was necessary to study general cases, i.e. the study of publications on agricultural culture in Greece, the different ways of support for agriculture by the CAP and the family land structures. Subsequently the subject is tightened on the dominant culture, i.e. the olive tree, and after to focus on vegetable production. Very few publications on this subject exist. However many articles from newspaper about the impact of the crisis on the agricultural sector were also used as data source.

Such as the study of the agricultural sector, the approach of food supply chain was made in its global nature in order to deepen the specific case of fresh vegetables. Short food supply chains have only been studied after the two first steps. For the Greek case very few returns of experiences, blogs or publications exist on this topic.

2. The interviews

11 formal meetings allowed supporting the topic. They were led through a conductive line (Annex II). Farmers have been identified via a census internet site[6]. Contact was established by mail and reminders by phone. Among the farmer contacted only 11 out 30 were willing to take part in the study.

The major topics covered are the following: the farmer, the holding, production and marketing. For a better understanding, some interviews were conducted with the help of a French-Greek translator.

The aim was to draw a portrait of farmers met, determine the different productions and understand the relationship between the type of product and the marketing circuit borrowed.

[6] www.agrodata.gr

Finally, we focused on the motivations of new farmers to (i) settle in rural areas, (ii) choose farming as a business, (iii) to register in processes of SFSC. It is also to identify the constraints and difficulties for the different kinds of farmers.

Part 4. Results

1. Interviews' analysis

Table VI: Farmers profile (Interviews)

	Municipality	Age	Origin	Recently set up	Production	Organic farming	SFSC
1	Trifilia	32	Urban	yes	Mixed	Yes	No
2	Pylos	79	Urban	yes	Mixed	No	Yes
3	Trifilia	34	Rural	no	Mixed	Yes	Yes
4	Trifilia	40	Rural	yes	Mixed	No	No
5	Pylos	59	Rural	no	Olive Tree	Yes	Yes
6	Pylos	45	Rural	yes	Mixed	Yes	No
7	Pylos	39	Urban	yes	Mixed	Yes	Yes
8	Pylos	33	Rural	no	Mixed	No	Yes
9	Pylos	79	Rural	no	Olive Tree	No	Yes
10	Pylos	51	Rural	no	Olive Tree	No	No
11	Pylos	75	Rural	no	Olive Tree	No	No

1.1 Which motivations for the "new-rural" farmers?

Mr Goussios, as explained in the issue, has identified 3 types of new farmers. This model is applied to farmers encountered in our study even if the number of interviews is not exhaustive:

• 1 urban contractor recreating a **family farming business**,

• 2 **family farms** taken back (or in the future) by an educated and pluriactive son in town,

• 1 group of dynamic farmers in the field of high added value crops while valuing local heritage (history, natural and cultural heritage...).

Mr Goussios insisted on the motivations of these new farmers leaving the urban space because of the crisis and their wishes to live in rural areas and settle in agriculture. These motivations, i.e. looking for a quality of life in rural areas and change of lifestyle, are also those that emerge during interviews carried out.

The study of GIDARAKOU and *al.* (2004) highlights the risks associated with pluriactivity: **the abandonment of agricultural activity in favour of the second activity**. Indeed, among the encountered farmers, 2 abandoned agriculture for the benefit of business activity. In addition, for all new farmers, owning land is perceived as something «**securing**».

Finally, as found as at the national level, e-business is also developing within Messinia.

1.1.1 Looking for a "quality of life" by settling in rural areas

Many reasons are recurrent in discussions with farmers newly installed in rural areas. They are in part related to "*quality of life"*.

The urban way of life doesn't give satisfaction both mentally and socially *"I do not like life in the big city it's really impersonal";* partly because of "*the stress provided by labour but also by living in urban areas*".

These same farmers **highlight the quality of the products found in the city**, "*we really love to eat, **it's hard to find good quality products**"*, and another adds "*products found in Athens do not smell! They have no taste!"*. The same farmer is indignant about: "*when you have money you can buy the best screen, the best car, your Rolex, the most beautiful House, but aside you eat the s*** **because you don't find quality products, nowhere***! ". However, this notion of quality of vegetables is also highlighted by a farmer who always lived in rural areas. "*Before, in the past, when vegetables came home, the House smelled all over vegetables! Not now"*. **This farmer underlines the abandonment of old varieties and traditional skills from an olfactory point of view.**

In addition, farmers **have strongly insisted on separation between working time and free time.** With the time spent *"behind the computer we could not relax after work"*, "*we had money, but we didn't live, we didn't have the time, we did nothing, just work"*. The separation of the working time is questioned in the agricultural activity, **there is no distinction between the time off work and working time**: "*before I was working to earn money without pleasure, with fixed hours [...], I'm still working to earn money but I take a lot of pleasure to be in my fields*", another says "*I can work when I want, eat when I want to [...], our meeting* *would not have been possible in my previous life, I would not have had the time, we are discussing, I know that I will work a little bit later this evening".*

1.1.2 Choose farming as business

A – The choice of agriculture

First **the value of the work is challenging** in different ways: *"I wanted to work with my hands, to really produce something",* "(in town) *we worked for someone we did not know*, *and for something we did not really liked*". Farmers encountered chose agriculture partly because they **already had land**, but also for reasons related to this activity "*You know, my **passion** is collecting wild herbs*, I know *16 of them which* have *a very good reputation"*. This **motivation** was found among **all the farmers** whose one pluriactive (70 years) and installed since 43 years in agriculture and having previously worked for the processing industry olives *"If I had another life, my **dream** would be to live on an island*, ***grow my vegetables,*** do *my home, collecting water* du*ring the winter time".*

Moreover, the choice of gardening as an agricultural activity is highlighted in terms of **self consumption**. So as they insisted on low-quality fruits and vegetables available in urban areas as one of the motivations from the beginning, the new farmers invoke as a choice criterion in their installation: thanks to that *"I know what I eat", "my products are good", "I grow all the vegetables for the restaurant in the summer and winter for my family"*.

Concluding with "*Hippocrates Believed food was the human's medicine. Today, food is the reason that people need medicine, quality food is the future of tomorrow".*

B – Nature: an element of motivation

Farmers have expressed their motivation to fit into an organic approach. **Preservation of natural heritage (local varieties and old breeds) is a repetitive element in the discussions**. For example, one says "***planting something new makes me crazy** [...] **I'm mad** of finding **varieties of the past in the villages"***. Others say the same about their production: ***"My pleasure is to plant new and old varieties"*** but also "*few people, at least in Messinia,* ***are still breeding Greek***

***breeds**, it is our pride!"*. Finally, some of them buy their seeds on the website Kokopelli[7].

Traditional know-how, now related to organic farming or extensive, **are related to the protection of nature, plants but also soil**. *"The fertilizer companies have invented nothing, **it's been over 20 years since I fed my garden and protect my soil with compost**, the better it is to know someone who works in a oil-works, with him you recover the remains of the olive and you spread it in your field, as with seaweeds or leftover grapes"* announces one of the farmer, by adding *"when you compare these trees with the ones of my brother in law who is in conventional farming, there is a big difference! At home everything is green and in a good shape!".*

The water management is also an issue on which encountered farmers insist. The choice of gardening is done in line with local conditions. That is to say, the olive tree doesn't need water to grow and yet the plains, abundant in water, are mainly dedicated to olive tree growing. Whatever their age, farmers underline the "***uselessness of watering the olive trees"*** and ***"planting in irrigated plain** as they do not need water [...], the aroma of the fruit is greater when they are not irrigated".* These also emphasize the fact that local people "***complain about the lack of water in the village; we have only 4-5 hours a day".***

The protection of nature is also done punctually. One of the farmers is taking care "*at this time of a nice baby owl"* and he also received a couple of turtles because *"they are victims of ploughing".*

<u>Organic viewed by greengrocer / retailers</u>

According to the two retailers set up since four years and more «***organic vegetables are too expensive*** (for consumers), *very few people come to buy, especially since the beginning of the crisis»*, and more *«only 13 farmers* (out of 1620 in 2007) *are certified organic growers in the department»*, ***«the majority of organic products comes from northern Greece or other countries».***

[7] http://kokopelli-semences.fr/ : French association which aims to share with everyone a lot of old vegetables varieties.

C – Economic crisis push them to change of way of life

In addition to this notion of *"quality of life"*, farmers met were unanimous: the crisis has pushed them to change lifestyle. A farmer was employed in the public service; he had no choice but to find another job: he could *"no longer pay the rent"* or even *"buy food"*. He chose to invest his savings in setting in the olive tree production and beekeeping. This reason is also mentioned by a couple of unemployed, who have decided to open a greengrocer shop in Pylos while starting a gardening business on the family land.

For a young farmer, reasons are the same; the terms ***"poor"***, "***unemployed***" or "***occasionally"*** were **introduced in first place in our conversation**. Moreover, he adds that "*life in Athens is too expensive, here I live with nothing, I buy my flour, I make my bread twice a week, I have my vegetables, I only buy oil for my car, and that's enough for now because I do not earn much money, but I started with nothing, except the land of my father".*

For the majority of farmers, **owning family land** and *"not having sold them"* **is considered as a** "***second chance"*** *("luckily we had"; "my family settled in Kyparissia"; "back on family land"*).

1.1.3 Choosing short food supply chain (SFSC), or not

The choice of a short chain is partly for all producers **on economic grounds**. They have recently installed or not, the choice of the short chain has imposed itself: **the pressure of the middlemen both on the purchase price and on the standardization of products and production time** is so important that they preferred (i) to overcome or (ii) do not fit into this system. As noted by one of them, *"farmers work for nothing, they are slaves".*

The corpus of quotation with regard to this issue is very expanded. A grower has been able to sum up, metaphorically, the situation with middlemen *"the producer wants a bunch of thing, he puts his work, his land, must purchase his seeds and all the material to produce, and then the middleman comes [...], excuse me I'll use an expression very rude...* ***it's like the pimp in brothels that takes advantage of women to enrich themselves, it is the same with the middlemen and producers***

***here"**, adding "*for example I am a middleman, you are a producer of milk, I tell you I buy your milk 15 cents per litre, it is nothing! [...], but you gonna sell it to me, because it is necessary that you sell your milk, you're not going to bathe in!"*. In this regard, he did not stop and continued: *"it is really necessary not to have this slavery of the producer, it is very bad",* concluding by "*for example they* [middlemen] *buy potatoes at 10 or 20 cents and they sell in markets 2 or 3€ per kilo. It's a kind of crook-profit".*

A couple of farmers being freed from middlemen 8 years ago makes the following answer: *"At first we sold to middlemen, wholesalers, and then we stopped, we were working for nothing [...] Now* ***it is less constraints****: no calibration, no need to pack, no need to employ people to provide timely, and we better earn our living".*

The choice for **new farmers** not to integrate long chain is made firstly for **economic reasons**, but also **by conviction and to direct their production in line with demand**, *"sell directly to consumers allows to* ***earn more money*** *than selling to a middleman [...] more as I told you earlier we left the city because it is impersonal, being on the open markets, or selling our products directly at home reconnects us with a* ***real social life****"*. They plan their production according to the needs: *"[...] and know what our* ***customers*** *want"*, "*for example I go to restaurants;* ***I hear what leaders want*** *as products for every kind of dish".*

There is not really a target customer. However the proposed products are more expensive than in conventional farming. The customer segment sought is restaurateur but also the townspeople. They are highlighted in the discussions.

Moreover, these new farmers want a recognition of the quality of their products by consumers, *"I sell my products only to people recognizing the value of my products. I do not provide wholesalers, supermarkets, grocery stores and retailers".*

1.2 Which difficulties ?

Newly installed farmers have expressed many difficulties either **during installation** or **integration with local communities** or related **to organizational problems**.

1.2.1 Risks perception

The **risk** is seen at various levels, both during the installation but **also when choosing to integrate short food supply chain**. The risk is understood, mastered, or at least made knowingly, "w*hen we decided to open the store* ***we knew it was a risk, especially in times of crisis****, but we had no choice*". The risk is shared and discussed in particular with **the family** "*when I made the choice to return home, my father told me, what are you doing, you're crazy! You're not going to live like that"*. In some cases fears were realized. For example one of them is installed in agriculture partly to practice tourism. After completing all the steps of installation for his farm, his case for an agrotourism unit was refused because of the economic crisis and the end of support for this type of project, "*I wanted to make agrotourism and finally I am a full-time farmer".*

Making the choice to settle in agriculture is synonymous with the **uncertainty of income associated with the production and sales practices**. The quality and quantity of agricultural products is limited by many factors. First of all **weather hazards** *"This year was a big problem with the* ***heat wave****, the hot shots have destroyed all the tomatoes".* This problem, common to all the market gardeners met, is perceived differently depending on **the age and experience**. For example, for one recently installed, it is a simple weather hazard, but for another, market gardener for 43 years, it is a question of **climate change** *"over the last few years I have to plant my peppers, tomatoes and eggplants in the shade! Climate is changing [...]* ***and in addition we irrigate everywhere, now the climate is much drier than before [...] it is the same for the olive harvest time****, my parents were harvested from September to November, now as it stopped raining and it's too hot, olives are harvested later from November to December ...".*

The amount of products on the market is also dependent of phenomena that directly affect production (pests and diseases) and the answers provided by the producer. The risk of losing all or part of the production, the **experience** is then highlighted *"the most important thing is experience, if I see a deficiency I know immediately what it is and what I have do it"*. For a gardener, **ecological beliefs** are such that he chose to do nothing "*I do not spray even with products allowed in organic agriculture by the European Union, I let it natural even if I lose my harvest"*, or **because they do not have the knowledge or the money** ***"sometimes I do not***

***know what the problem is, in any case I do not have enough money to invest in treatments"*.**

For farmers, **worry focuses on the sale of products,** "***when you sell on the market you do not have insurance to sell***, *it's not like when you sell to middlemen, with them you're sure sell everything, even before product!", "**The salary is not sure**, you're never sure people will stop home to buy your products".* The uncertainty of income *«**does not allow to see far into the future and to invest".***

1.2.2 Attempts of formal organizations and weak support of the competent organizations

The need for **collaboration between producers, better organization with customers and partnerships with institutional actors** are important elements that emerged from the interviews.

Recently installed farmers, but also those who are for longer farmers expressed a desire, often in vain, **to work with other producers**. Collaborations would **expand the range of products offered and thus reach a wider audience**, "*I do not produce meat, but for example, **if a stand is installed with a breeder**, people who come to buy my vegetables could very well buy meat at the same time, but here **the farmers do not trust each other"***. This lack of confidence is, according to them, **a limiting factor to development**: *"**to go higher requires cooperation, if not, at a certain level of development you stagnate"**, "Collaboration is something very important just because you can work with it and can move in the commercial way, not only local but also outside*"**.**

For example one of the farmer requires this trust of other producers *"me what I want is to establish a **sustainable partnership with producers**, some restaurants which ask me some **very specific products that I do not know cultivate**, so I'll see other producers, for example it is only 20kg for some variety but it is sure to find a buyer and a very high price, but the producers do not want to engage with me"*. All interviews emphasized **the individualistic behaviour** of producers.

Newly installed producers **with no or little knowledge of crop production**, also stressed the **lack of support from the authorities**, *"they* [the members of the

Chamber of Agriculture] do*es not care about us, I am only a small producer outside the system".* According to them, help is especially made for **industrial producers** as they employ people. Large producers have agronomists visits to advise them on which input they can use in case of problems, "*they [the industrial producers] employ people, they are very important [in the region], us we are only a* ***family economy***". Therefore small producers met **must learn by themselves and that costs money and time**, "*three months ago I went to a* ***paying internship*** *in Athens to learn organic farming",* or "*bring a* ***private agronomist*** *who shows me on the ground*".

Municipalities are also repeatedly **called into question** during the discussions. On the open-air markets sellers are in competition with each other. Industrial producers and retailers (who buy wholesale industrial producers and are not producers) are offering their products at low prices. **There are no dedicated growers markets**: *"Municipalities should not sell licenses to retailers, or then* ***organize other markets with only producers".***

1.2.3 A difficult integration to the local communities

New farmers from a urban area and recently installed in rural areas face the eyes of indigenous and elders. They express, in their own way, the gap between them in **the cultural field**; *"you see we are on the terrace of a cafe and there are only men, women are at home, often I am the only woman, oh no! There is also the waitress"*. **The elders do not understand their motivations**: "*These people* [in the cafe] *are the generation of our parents, our parents in their time seeking for a better quality of life, and it was possible only in urban areas, that is why they* [indigenous] *do not understand our choice to live here".*

In the agricultural sector, *"they* [farmers] *do not understand why you do not want to use pesticides, fertilizers* ...". Yet these new farmers not only want to learn farming techniques from the elders but also want to have access to an old seed bank; *"traditional expertise is lost because nobody wants to share it or at least in the inner circle. It is like the seeds, we know that some still exist, we see it in gardens, but they do not share".*

Furthermore, in the villages **it is very difficult to integrate a new way of thinking and practicing agriculture**: "*Farmers here are not open to the world".* A farmer raised a very personal point of view *"the Greek foreign complain, but as you see them here*, *drinking Tsipouro* [local alcohol], *they expect* [foreigners] *to give them work they* [the Greeks] *do not want to, less they make it better they go!".*

Part 5. Discussion

Given the small number of interviews (11), the results do not necessarily reflect the general trend of the two municipalities studied. However, the interviews were all very rich, that's why despite the small amount of farmers met, the analysis of the collected data allows us to envisage a quality discussion regarding the hypothesis made in the initial problem.

Also, TSIBOUKAS and SPATHIS (2000) state that "*to analyze the operation of holdings in Greece, must be taken into account before that statistics can not perfectly represent the agricultural reality. The concepts of farming and ownership of agricultural land are often confused, not only in the census but also sometimes at the level of national legislation or applied tax, etc. (Goussios and Tsiboukas, 1993). However, statistics can show trends in farm structures and those of their business operation*".

1. The age is not an element conditioning the installation of the farmers in SFSC

SFSC initiatives are not necessarily driven by a young newly installed agriculture population. But their motivations are all based primarily on an economic criterion. The first hypothesis is partially validated.

In total 11 people were interviewed formally (8 farmers - 1 greengrocer - one former farmer now greengrocer - one couple greengrocer future market gardener). Of these, five are set up for less than 5 years: 3 new farmers and two greengrocers.

Only two new farmers are SFSC while another wishes to for the upcoming years. A farmer has decided to stop his production to focus only on greengrocer activity in long circuit and the other take part in a long process circuit as well (international trade).

A total of 5 out 8 farmers sell in SFSC including two of them recently installed and from urban origin. It does not seem to be any trend between the age of farmers, their year of installation, their geographical origins and the fact to get into SFSC. And the opposite, farmers settled for longer and from rural areas are the most represented (3 of 5).

Selling in SFSC is practiced primarily for economic reasons related to income. Operators fit into this approach both to sell their products at production cost but also to limit production costs linked to middlemen.

2. The certification in organic favours installation in SFSC

We noticed that over the range of products offered by the farmer is diversified more it is likely to sell short circuit. Farmers in polyculture are the most represented in this process since only one of them (out of 5) is olive monoculture. However, two of the four farmers in polyculture are newly installed both in agriculture and in rural areas.

Just as polyculture, **organic agriculture is a factor influencing the integration in SFSC**. Indeed, among the five farmers selling in SFSC four are certified in organic agriculture including three organic polyculture (the last practices organic monoculture**). Organic farming and polyculture are interdependent in the process of SFSC.**

The type of farming (polyculture – monoculture ; conventional - organic) practiced seems to be a more relevant criteria to integrate SFSC than age, origin of the farmer and the year of his establishment in agriculture.

However these previous criteria highlight another issue: organic agriculture and more generally the **renewal of Greek agriculture.**

3 of the 5 new farmers grow organic: they are not farmers who converted from conventional production to organic production. **The new rurals are very dynamic in terms of nature conservation but also economically because they do not use traditional channels to sell their products (SFSC, international trade, E-Commerce).**

Before the economic crisis, the demand for organic products was increasing in Greece. Consumers were willing to pay for this type of product (WTP Willingness To

Pay: WTP). The lack of informed producers, **manipulated by local agents, wholesalers and retailers, didn't allow developing organic farming** (FOIVOS A., POOLE N., 2007). That is why today, in Messinia, **only 13 of 1620 market gardeners are involved in organic production.**

It is therefore possible to make the following remark: the new market gardeners from the urban areas have a better knowledge of the demand for organic products. They are not related to local agents or other middlemen and have not been influenced by them. Awareness of the consumer demand for organic products is one of the reasons that led them to settle in SFSC and be certified.

In addition, organic farmers in SFSC had all followed courses out of agriculture: tourism, economics and management. Thus supporting the words of one of the farmers saying that "*farmers here are not* [traditionally] *open to the world*".

The motivations are economic, they are choosing to sell in SFSC for a matter of income also taking advantage of the opportunity to market «niche» expanding: organic farming.

This result also applies to the field of olive growing. Indeed, the only olive grower installed in SFSC is certified organic. However, during the interviews it is not the only motivation that led them to move to organic farming and sell in SFSC. This remark would be interested to deepen in another study, because of the lake of some results in this report.

3. The olive growing, trend to long circuit

The olive monoculture does not fit to SFSC for several reasons. First, as explained in the results and the problems, the market is saturated. Saturated because each family produces its own olive oil for non-commercial purposes. The producer cannot either sell locally or nationally. The latter, to be sure of an income, sells either to an olive cooperative or a foreign exporter. This approach promotes very little the Messinian producer work because products are purchased at very low prices. Yet the Messinian producer offers **the best oil of the market**: "The *extra virgin olive oil has a Messinian acidity which varies between 0 and 0.8%, while the* *virgin category varies between 0.9 and 2% as olive oil from the olive variety Arbenquina* (Spanish variety)". The Messinian olive products are then sold under a foreign label (*e.g* Italian).

There is a real issue regarding the international promotion of Messinian olive products. These products are unknown to foreign consumers. **The lack of trust between producers is not limited only to market gardeners**, it is also present among olive growers, they "*want easy money and the certainty of income"*. These are not organized together (or very little) to promote their oils and really influence the international market.

The weak institutional support to new farmers and market gardeners practicing SFSC can also be identified in the olive oil production. Indeed, in a region where olive growing is the main production, the competent institutions should precede growers and promote products abroad. This market prospect is very difficult, even if one of the growers met does it. He left urban area and set up there less than 5 years ago. He is certified organic and exports all of its production, and that of his partners abroad: "*I said to our group we also have family relationships, that we can produce ourselves, so we put our oil in beautiful bottles so we will be able to export without any problems, and promote our own products abroad"*, thanks to Internet that allows to export at the individual level.

4. The conservation of nature and traditions carried by an organic farming

Young farmers, particularly those located in organic farming are the main actors in the conservation of local varieties as well as traditional agricultural practices. Hypothesis 2 is validated.

These ,both from urban area and diverse training, tend to a certain "ideal" of life, including the revaluation of the natural and cultural heritage territory.

We saw in interviews that interest in the nature of these farmers affects the way they grow. The desire to cultivate «natural» and respectfully has its origins in the search for quality products as pointed out by all organic farmers. **This allows them to stand out from the rest of the classic Messinian agriculture and provide a**

wider variety of products and tastes to consumers, but in small quantities. Moreover, this type of producer does not compete with the rest of the Messinian market gardeners (industrial) since the customer segment in question is not at all the same. The target consumers are looking for diversity and quality of products and not the quantity. These same customers then have access to local organic products and not to imported organic products.

The success is twofold: on the one hand consumers are satisfied and ask other typical products of the department; on the other hand producers are expanding their product lines by gradually introducing the old varieties. Moreover, as each farmer mentioned, each new variety is a discovery for everyone: for itself but also for the consumer. These varieties are used to «break» the routine of market gardener and upgrade traditional practices and cultures. **Nevertheless, these crops are not intended to be produced in large quantities, so the farmers can afford to sell in SFSC.** Finally, they are elements of promotion and enhancement of the quality of farmers work.

The interviews highlight the practices of new farmers facing the vision of indigenous and especially to older farmers who have always cultivated in the same way the same product. **In times of crisis «a penny saved is a penny» and even if the customer is not the same, the older can suppose that a new customer with these farmers is a client less for them.** Not reproducing the prevailing culture, that is to say in an industrial way, raises the social integration issue of these new farmers. **They are seen as «aliens» rather than farmers who want to revive and promote local culture.**

5. SFSC, durability factor of a territory ?

<u>Messinia is undergoing a rural exodus and abandonment of agricultural activity</u>. Farmers seek additional income turning into non-agricultural activities often performed in urban areas. Agricultural abandonment has resulted in the closure of many areas previously operated, the abandonment of agricultural practice (including pastoral) and the depopulation of rural villages.

The process of selling in SFSC can appear as one of the solutions to anchor these populations. Indeed offering farm households a **better income** such as a **better social value** of their work, they will not turn to a non-agricultural activity outside of rural areas. This type of pluriactivity remains linked to agriculture.

Selling in SFSC requires making the choice to focus the operations on polyculture. **The reduction of oil production in favour of other cultures, makes the farmers to be no longer dependent on market prices. Again the benefit is twofold: first farmers' income is not exclusively related to oil production and secondly it helps to expand the market of exclusive olive growers.**

Traditionally Messinia is a department of varied cultures. In plain, market gardening, fruit growing and viticulture were possible thanks to the abundance of water resources and soil fertility. In the mountain olive cultivation and livestock completed and diversified the productions. In plain, they were replaced by olive monoculture.

The interviews revealed the **inconsistency of olive cultivation in plains**. The olive does not need water, **the quality of the olive is better when the tree is planted in the mountains without water and on rocky ground**. However, when the olive tree is irrigated it produces much more. The difference between olives grows in plain and in mountain is significant: in plain tree is large with large fruit, in mountains the tree is stocky and fruits smaller, due to a less clement climate. Olive oil produced from olives grown in the mountain areas is "*more aromatic"*.

The literature studied and interviews highlight some not expected consequences of farmers' pluriactivity. They abandoned farming in favour of the more profitable side business: it is the case of two greengrocers met, although other reasons led them to abandon this activity.

6. Recommendations at the end of the study

The maintenance of local breeds and plant varieties is done by many actors: they are not necessarily farmers. However, the work of promotion and popularization of the past to the public is made in particular by those who sell them and make them living, that is to say the farmers. It was highlighted that new farmers are very active in this field for many reasons other than the attraction and excitement for the new. Those engage into a friendly agriculture and enhance their products on the local market and in SFSC. They fit into their scale a territorial agriculture, that is to say, the relocation of production and income. Generally **they maintain and even contribute to the rediscovery of local agrarian culture** consistent with the strengths and limitations of the territory.

Constraints / brakes have been identified for fully exercise their sustainable agricultural activities. They are common to market gardeners but also to olive growers. The new farmers highlighted the weak institutional support , both to help farming but also to promote their products. Meetings between the actors of production, institutional concerned (chambers of agriculture, municipalities) as well as consumers should be able to highlight the agriculture stakes in the territory to share them. Creating markets exclusively for producers can be a particular course of action. On the model of French AMAP[8] it would be possible to explore ways of formal contracts between producers and consumers to provide an income for producers and have a vision for his farm.

A comprehensive survey of producers engaged in SFSC but also in the preservation of local breeds and varieties is required. This survey could be carried out with the aim of organizing a formal network of producers. It would allow the sharing of techniques and best practices but also the exchange or sale of seeds. The foundation and its partners, including the technological institute of agriculture of Kalamata could, by providing «experts», organize training days dedicated to the production, sale, but also to the processing of products as well as the establishment of «competence networks».

[8] Maintenance of the peasant farming association: *«the principle is to create a direct link between farmers and consumers, who are committed to buy the production of it at a fair price and paying in advance*". www.reseau-amap.org

Conclusion

The link to the land maintained by Greek households is particular. For most of them the land is an integral part of the family patrimony. Not only because it represents a food security but also because it is a way to “honour” their ancestors who have cultivated it. This is why many families are owners of small plots, which are cultivated by a member of the family remained in rural areas.

Currently the Messenian agricultural sector knows two phenomena: a decline in the rate of recoveries of agricultural holdings and an increase in the average age of farmers (+13% aged over 65). However, the economic crisis faced by households pushed, and push, urban as well as rural to turn to new sources of revenue, especially young people. “Back to land” is perceived as an alternative and easily accessible solution because they are already private landowners. It is in this context that the study took place.

The aim of the study was to analyze the role of these new farmers in the implementation of alternative food distribution circuit. The initial problem was that on the one hand young and new farmers are at the initiative of SFSC and on the other hand that they practice the sale in SFSC for economic reasons. The second problem was that these farmers, certified in organic agriculture for sensitivity reasons to the quality of the products but also for educational reasons, participate in the preservation of breeds and landraces while valuing traditional know-how.

The study showed that the criteria 'young and new farmers' does not seem influence the development of SFSC but rather the development of organic agriculture. The criteria that influence the installation in SFSC are rather the type of production (polyculture - monoculture) and how to grow (organic - conventional).

Among farmers who practice sale in SFSC, economic reasons prevail among all the motivations. New farmers, ancient city-dwellers, fit both into a SFSC approach but also in organic farming because they are aware of the market niche that represents the latter in nearby towns. However, in some cases «SFSC» rhyme not necessarily with 'geographic proximity '. In long circuits, middlemen are a brake in the development of organic agriculture in Greece. That is why very few market gardeners produce organically. Middlemen do not send market signals necessary for conventional producers to reorient production toward organic production.

These new farmers influence, thanks to their knowledge of the markets and their cultural baggage, the development of alternative supply chain (e-commerce, international trade) and a new agriculture. The recovery of agricultural holdings by newly installed farmers is translated into a strong economic but also ecological dynamism. Indeed through their ways to cultivate and by the choice of the varieties produced, they participate in the promotion, conservation and transmission of local cultural and natural heritage. The majority of encountered farmers showed that the SFSC of marketing also involves friendly agriculture and this in a family framework.

Farmers within SFSC process are aware of the risk they take, especially in times of economic crisis. It is a risk because this type of sale does not provide certainty to sell all their products and thus the certainty of a decent income. New farmers, settling on the land of their ancestors, have in some cases made part of their difficulties in integrating into the local populations for several reasons. They realize the differences there may be between them. The aspirations for a better quality of life of the previous generations were necessarily by the exodus in urban areas. This is why this generation does not understand the interest of these families to return to rural areas. Two generations collide, but also two ways of thinking and to practice agriculture. Conventional producers don't conceive familial agriculture neither organic farming or seize the issue. They do not include the interest of sales in SFSC, especially regarding the time spent and the uncertainty of the gain.

New ways can be explored to encourage young people to recover the family farm or to settle in agriculture. A better economic valorisation of products but also the promotion of a new image of the farmer as «***agricultural entrepreneur***» would favour the emergence of a new agricultural dynamic. In opposition to the productivist years that saw decline "*values related to identity, health, quality of life and the protection of the environment"* (GOUSSIOS D., 2011), these can be handed over to the "taste of the day" via the SFSC. The uncertainty of income related to this type of sale can be regarded as a brake to the installation, this is why studies from the consumers' point of view on the theme of means of contractualisation "producer-consumer" can be considered.

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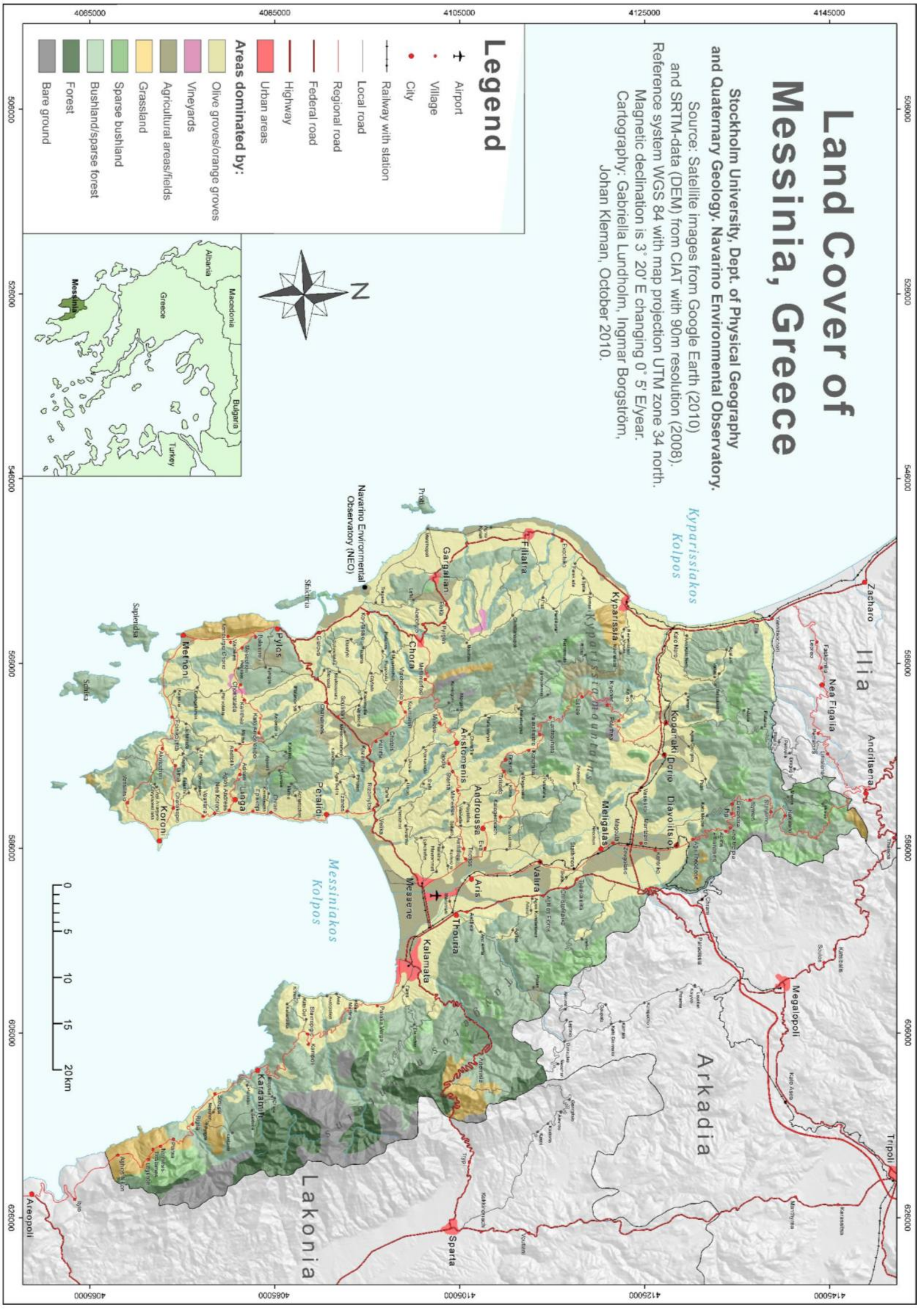
Annex

Annex I: Land Cover of Messinia, Greece



Annex II: Conductive line for interviews

Farmer

- Profile

  Age / gender

  Educational level / course

  Place of residence

  Family situation

- Agricultural activity

  Year of set up

  Recovery / social origin

  Pluriactivity / involvement of the spouse

  Time for agriculture / sales -> time off and time work ?

  Income

  Cooperative ?

  Motivations

Holdings

- The farm

  Size

  Cultivated area

  Materials (greenhouse, animals, water management, ...)

  Place of holding

- Economy

  Figure of affair

  Number of employees

  Investment / Financing

Production

  Beginning of the production (season)

- Strategic orientation

  Sowing / plants

Which product / which criteria to choose them

Organic or not

Production diversity

Number and type of varieties (ancient, local, industrial, ...)

- Quantity

Marketing

- Type of marketing

  Which supply chain (assets, inconvenience, motivation)

  Who sells (man / woman)

  To who (sale contract, market,...)

  Where ? How many time granted? Why?

- Cost of marketing
- Unsold (If yes, what do they do with (Transformation = diversitfication)

Others

- Projects, openings to new markets
- Difficulties, constraints

Résumé

Les municipalités rurales de Pylos et Trifilia, situées à l'ouest le département de Messénie, dans la région du Péloponnèse, en Grèce, présentent les caractéristiques d'un déclin de l'activité agricole familiale. Toutefois, depuis le début de la crise économique ces municipalités montrent un phénomène de regain d'attractivité pour ce secteur. En effet de nombreuses personnes ont quitté, et quittent la ville, pour venir s'installer en agriculture sur ces territoires. Ces nouveaux exploitants participent à la construction d'une nouvelle façon de concevoir l'agriculture et le lien campagne-ville.

Mots clés : Espace rural - Crise économique - Agriculture territoriale - Circuit court de distribution alimentaire - Race locale - Agriculture familiale

Abstract

The rural municipalities of Pylos and Trifilia, situated in the West side of the department of Messenia, into the region of Peloponnesus, in Greece, show some characteristics of decline of the familial agricultural activity. Nevertheless, since the beginning of the economical crisis, these municipalities show a phenomenon of incline of the attractiveness for this sector. Indeed many people left, and leave cities, to set up in agriculture on these territories. These new farmers contribute to the construction of a new way of thinking agriculture and the link between countryside and town.

Keywords: Rural area - Economical crisis - territorial farming - short food supply chain - local race - familial agriculture