Young adults, subjectivity, and desire of the Other in the context of the Greek economic crisis

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Dedication

It is with genuine gratitude and warm regard that I dedicate this work to my beloved Ioannis, who was my source of inspiration, wisdom and knowledge. He has been the source of my strength throughout this journey and the person who showed me the way for a different, meaningful life path. This thesis is dedicated to Him.

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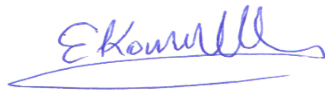
Declaration

I declare that this thesis, *Young adults, subjectivity, and desire of the Other in the context of the Greek economic crisis*, presented for the Degree of PhD in Psychoanalytic Studies has been composed entirely by myself, has been solely the result of my own work and has not been submitted for any other degree or professional qualification.

Submitted by Efsevia Eirini Koutantou



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Abstract

The Greek financial crisis of 2009 has shifted traditional family dynamics and may have impacted on subjectivity, especially in young adults. The research question of this study is: "How do young Greek adults articulate their subjectivity in relation to the desire of the (m)Other in the aftermath of the Greek economic crisis?" Unstructured interviews were used to explore experiences of 20 participants aged between 25 and 35 years old relating to growing up in Greek families in the aftermath of the financial crisis. Attention was also paid to how they respond to the impact of the crisis, and the extent to which their future expectations about family and society have changed. The Free Association Narrative Interview (FANI) method was used, which starts from one very broad question that gives free rein to narrative. In the second, more interactive part of the interview, open questions were asked to invite participants to develop specific stories, feelings, and ideas. The results point towards a strong identification with the (m)Other, and with specific socio-political discourses and ideologies about the family and the Greek nation. Strong discourses and phantasies about family have been present in Greece traditionally, but the financial crisis seems to have exacerbated the possibility for young adults to move towards separation and individuation from the (m)Other. Social change may emerge through a shift in both the symbolic and the libidinal character of identifications, in terms of affect and jouissance. Otherwise, the repetition of social acts will continue to reproduce structures of subordination and obedience.

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Introduction

This study aims to understand the psychic and social factors that inform the motivations, thoughts and actions of Greek young adults in the transitional era of the austerity crisis that began in 2009 and is ongoing. It seeks to discover how these factors are concerned with the re-invention of their subjectivity, and how young people cope with the complex psycho-social and ethical dilemmas that may arise from their decisions in relation to self-actualization. Moreover, the focus is on their representations and fantasies concerning their families in the frame of the current crisis, and their expectations about the future and the challenges it may bring.

The Greek family has been argued to be both a safe, protective environment for its members, and a conservative system which does not allow for autonomy and separation (Katakis, 2008; Papanikolaou, 2018). Factors that contribute to this configuration include the country's idiosyncratic conservative cultural and political system and its narrow sense of nation and national identity, formed from a cultural inheritance of particular family practices and from specific socio-historical circumstances. Such circumstances involve what is called a cultural dualism (Diamantouros, 1993); this includes the "underdog" mentality, which entails a traditional pre-democratic, nationalist culture with clientelistic networks of power and a liberal and reformist mentality. The underdog mentality is associated with collectivist culture, as identified in Greece, while the liberal and reformist mentality is associated with individualistic culture, which is more prevalent in Western European countries (Tziovas, 2003). This work will explore how the economic crisis has changed such dynamics and, concomitantly, family dynamics, as well as young people's expectations of the wider social environment. The following paragraph

provides an initial way of thinking psychosocially on this issue, viewing crises as both social and psychological phenomena.

A crisis takes place whenever activities concerned with important goals in the lives of individuals suddenly appear inadequate and in need of transformation; such crises may threaten the very core of self and collective identity (Giddens, 1990, 1991). However, crises can also be psychological phenomena (Erikson, 1968; Richards, 1989; Frosh, 1991), linked to personal and familial relationships, and pertaining to mental well-being. In an age of individualism, taking responsibility for personal fortune or misfortune is expected from individuals. This responsibility creates a social climate in which individuals do not position themselves as passive reflections of circumstance, but as active shapers of their own lives (Beck, 2002). Social problems then are directly turned into psychological dispositions; that is, into feelings of guilt, anxiety, conflict and neurosis. Individual distress is ascribed to individual trauma in such a way that social context is treated as merely being added to already existing psychological factors (Parker 2010, 2007). However, 'self-determination' cannot simply be the sum of one's goals: it is also the reverse side of the problems that all late modern social systems unload onto citizens by suddenly deeming them 'mature and responsible' (Beck, 2002).

The discussion above presents a brief snapshot of both sociological and psychoanalytic theories of the individual and culture. Sociological and psychological theories argue that culture is transmitted and internalized via socialization due to powerful forms of social inheritance and tradition (Parsons, 1951 cited in McCarthy & Edwards, 2011). On the other hand, the field of psychoanalysis views our lives as being influenced by established unconscious behavioral models that originate in early childhood (Ackerman, 1959; Freud, 1930/1999; Klein, 1928; Klein, 1948;

Winnicott, 1945; Winnicott, 1960). More specifically, according to Freudian theory, civilization acts as an oppressive barrier against individual desires and drives, giving rise to object relations theory where the individual establishes relations with an object (the mother) that is internalized, influencing subsequent relations with significant others (Klein, 1928; Klein, 1948). In addition to this, the influence of society plays a key role, (Bion, 1962) and individuals are organized around common beliefs and fantasy relations acting both consciously and unconsciously.

There is also a question as to how the social is embedded within the psychic in order for the subject to be formed. It is through discourse that meanings have value, and it is by means of discursive interpretations that people are formed as socially constructed subjects. Additionally, for psychoanalysis, anxiety and identity crises are viewed as inherent in the human condition, since they precipitate defenses against threats posed to the self, and they operate at an unconscious level. From a psycho-social perspective, it is a matter of the simultaneous working of psyche and society. The subject is 'psychic', because it is a product of a unique biography and unconscious, and social, because defensive activities affect and are affected by discourses; that is by systems of meanings that produce the social world (Hollway & Jefferson, 2008).

The above is relevant to this study initially when one tries to explore how the psychic is embedded within the social when discussing the experiences of the Greeks that I talked to. Traditionally, Greek people rely a lot on kinship systems, on religious cosmology and tradition itself as stabilizing networks for intimate relations and indicators of ontological security, at a conscious and unconscious level (Voulgaris, 2006). This dependence is basic for the confidence that people have in the continuity of their self-identity and subjectivity, and in their loyalty to their surrounding

environments. This trust in kinship systems should not be negatively positioned as 'pre-modern', or as a failure to adapt to new challenges. However, the self becomes a reflexive project caught up within the reflexivity of late modernity (Giddens, 1990, 1991).

Although Greece is considered to have been a more collectivist society up to now, it is actually a country "in the middle"; that is to say, it is perhaps struggling between the self it is leaving behind and the new subjectivity which one creates and 'becoming other'. Young people may be caught between de-territorialisation—a process of surpassing given constraints (gender, family, and religion, kinship bonds)—and controlled, striated spaces. De-territorialisation requires the freeing of space in favor of re-territorialisation. That is, the creation of oneself, and thus the generation of new possibilities of being—new ways of self-actualization (Deleuze and Guattari, 1972 cited in Livholts & Tamboukou, 2015).

The deep crisis that Greek society faces may have a direct relation with a basic dilemma; namely, that of "individual development versus collectivity", which are factors that coexist within, and divide persons. My purpose in making this suggestion is not to demonize collectivity in favor of individual development; nor is it to disclaim any possible advantages of a collective self in favor of a "steely mask", and to advocate simply incorporating every new trend of late modernity, in a vacuous pursuit of the "fashionable". Rather, I seek to re-evaluate both approaches for the sake of opening up possibilities of new beginnings and entry points for obtaining a new self-identity.

Given that ontological security is sustained through the development of secure environments and through routine itself, I wish to consider the impact on young people when routines become radically disrupted and their meaning brought into

question. Existential crises are likely to occur, and individuals might feel lost at fateful moments, when existential dilemmas are more extreme and pressing. For example, evidence suggests that rates of mental illness and suicide have increased in the contemporary Greek climate (Kondylis, 2013; Simou, 2014; Economou, 2013; Reiss, 2013; Drydakis, 2015), although one has to be cautious in interpreting this meaning.

The critical dilemmas that young adults in Athens are facing today are linked to existential dilemmas concerning unity and fragmentation, authority and radical uncertainty, personalized and commodified experience, and powerlessness and the appropriation of power. Thus, in light of these foci, in this thesis I ask: to what extent, and in which direction are young Greek men and women motivated by current broader socio-economic challenges? What are the meanings inherent in their kinship ties? How do they matter? Drawing on the above literature review, the question of this study is formulated as follows: "How do young Greek adults articulate their subjectivity in relation to the desire of the (m)Other in the aftermath of the Greek economic crisis?"

In particular, the research questions are summarized as follows:

1) What are the representations and fantasies in young Greek adults about their families of origin in the course of the current crisis?
2) How does the current economic crisis impact on young people's personal development and on their families?

I wish to explore the lives of a generation of Greek young adults living in a society in transition. Bringing a psycho-social perspective to bear on the subject, I will consider both the social and the psychic life, the conflicts and the drives, the anxieties and the fears, that exist unconsciously in this liminal generation. This will

enable me to say something original about subjectivity for these people. To this end, interviews have been undertaken to explore these psycho-social worlds, and contribute to further knowledge of the potential for using this method. Finally, by examining subjectivity and the ethical dilemmas resulting from contradictory social and psychic values and practices, the nature of this transitional space will be revealed, producing insights into the complexity of social and individual actions.

Family has been proved to be both a safety net and a suffocating environment. In psychosocial terms, this thesis explores whether young people in Greece can psychically survive the disaster of the economic crisis with a capacity to repair themselves, or whether they regress back to the familiar family, broadly construed. That is, I investigate whether they internally submit to this pre-given authority or if they trace their own path. One question in this regard is whether the participants' relations to the crisis can bring a shift in their relation to family and/or other signifiers that organise their discourse. Another concerns how the subject formation has been affected by the socio-economic changes, given that, in the course of the financial crisis, society has apparently failed to contain anxiety and offer social provision (Winnicott 1971). A theme that emerges in the course of these investigations is the issue of whether the big Other (symbolic structures) can contain them, and whether there is a repeated dominance of signifiers that represent the research subjects.

Outline of the chapters

The thesis is divided into six chapters, which are further divided into sections. The first of these is the literature review, which aims to build a multi-faceted picture of the circumstances of young people during the Greek austerity crisis and beyond. The chapter begins with a brief history of the Greek state that contextualizes the

origins of the financial crisis and its impact. Particular attention is paid to the Greek family and familial welfare in order to explain the turn to the family during the crisis, and the latter's central role as a welfare provider, even in the years before the crisis. This is followed by a consideration of values in the Greek family and society, both in the present and the past, with a focus on the position of women, gender relations, and the similarities to other Mediterranean countries. The chapter also discusses the economic crisis of 2008, with an eye to the political and economic dimensions of the crisis. It focuses particularly on the issues of unemployment and its effects on youth, drawing on recent research into the relationship between youth labour outcomes and reliance on familial cohabitation during the crisis. I then sketch a psychosocial reading of history and the Greek national identity up until the recent financial crisis, in which one can see how historical facts, or even whole periods, can influence an interpretation of current circumstances and events. I show that the negotiation of Greek identity, or the discourse on soul searching, is not new and it is not the advent of the crisis that caused such investigations. Rather, the issue became a major political movement, which culminated in the War of Independence against the Ottoman Empire (1821-1829), and continues to concern contemporary Greece.

The second chapter is the theoretical framework. This project involves representations and fantasies relating to family, both as a lived experience and a master signifier; it then continues with a discussion of individual relations and then expands to take in wider society. The first section of this chapter considers elements of family relations from the psychoanalytic perspectives of Melanie Klein and Jacques Lacan. Further, the role of the Lacanian idea of the (m)Other and the (m)Other's desire in the formation of subjectivity and the persistence of identity is discussed. Hereupon, the theoretical construction of the Name of the Father, as the

symbolic law, and the Oedipus complex are explored. Psychoanalytic concepts are taken up in turn, including identification, in particular, and what drives acts of identification, separation, individuation and subjectivity. This is followed by a discussion of the decline of symbolic faith within capitalism. The chapter concludes with a look at work as a basic factor in individuation, and as important for the determination of identity.

The third chapter sets out the methodological framework for the study. It presents the particular combination of psychoanalytic schools used in this study and the methods used in data collection and analysis, as well as the sampling strategy. A short section is devoted to ethics, and another to the dynamics of the research encounter. Finally, the process of data analysis is discussed.

The actual data analysis is spread across the fourth and fifth chapters. Both are divided into different themes, according to issues discussed by the research participants. The fourth chapter includes research data on the families of the participants. More specific, it discusses Greek family and its particularities, the passionate attachments with the mother and the paternal metaphor—how participants are related with their fathers and the paternal metaphor more general. The chapter also discusses the existence of a new generation of sheltered, spoiled, and repressed young adults, mentioning the way they have been nurtured. The fifth chapter discusses the ideological structure of the financial crisis, and work focusing on young people. More specific, it discusses the material loss, the shaking up of identity and violation of working rights during the economic crisis. Also, there is discussion of the crisis and the representations of work with a focus on the different aspects of how work and loss of work are experienced. It additionally discusses whether there is a belief among them that Greeks' misfortune is the Other's fault or whether the enemy

is ‘within us’, meaning in Greece and Greeks themselves. It ends with a discussion on the transformations to family dynamics resulting from disturbed working patterns. The final chapter includes conclusions and the discussion of the thesis, its contribution and limitations.

1. Chapter One: Literature Review

Between 2008-2018, Greece faced a serious financial crisis, the social, political and psychic effects of which are still evident, despite the fact that the economy is said to have improved. The crisis was particularly difficult for young people both in professional and personal terms (Kretsos, 2014). Soaring unemployment meant that they were unable to create 'a life of their own' (Beck, 2000, p. 164) as is usually expected.

Crises can be linked to psychic phenomena, such as guilt, anxiety, depression or conflict, depending on how events are inscribed in the lives of different individuals (Beck, 2000). In psychosocial terms, 'subjectivity can be approached in relation to the effects of the social "without succumbing to the reductionism of social determinism", and, at the same time, "without removing subjectivity from its social and historical contexts" (Layton, 2008, p. 60). Self-determination is not merely an individual goal; it may well be the reverse, when all partial systems are being offloaded onto the citizens by suddenly deeming them "mature and responsible" (Beck, 2000, p. 167).

My aim in this chapter is not to provide an exhaustive account of the impact of the 2008 crisis on the collective Greek psyche but to consider its effects on young individuals' identities and family values. The austerity crisis of 2008 was an economic phenomenon the huge psycho-social effects of which can only be appreciated when considered in the context of Greek history, dominant narratives and counter-narratives of Greekness, socio-political and individual values preceding the crisis and, of course, the sheer impact of the impoverishment on millions.

The crisis of 2008 did not happen in a psycho-social and political vacuum. It occurred at a time when Greece was certainly Europhile and was frantically

searching for a ‘modern’ identity, which encompassed individualism and social values. Debates were not limited to academic and intellectual circles but represented a wider ‘soul searching’ marked by a desire to redefine the Greeks’ relationship to the country’s glorious/catastrophic past.

Debates on the family in particular, as Avdela (2002), Papanikolaou (2018), Gazi (2011) and others show, were concerned with gender roles, sexuality, individuality and the extent to which family and nation were enmeshed with one another. It would be fair to say that the crisis of 2008 temporarily superseded all these debates but eventually also gave them new impetus, at times mixed with a sense of loss and mourning, at times welcomed as a traumatic yet potentially fresh start in Greece’s full transition to European modernity.

This chapter draws broad historical and cultural lines necessary for a psycho-social appraisal of the effects of the crisis on young people. The chapter offers context for understanding the latter but does not to pronounce conclusive accounts of the Greek ‘psyche’ as if it was a unified or homogeneous thing.

Below, I start by offering a brief history of the Greek state and nation, followed by a brief history of Greek family values and family dynamics. Then, I am introducing quantitative evidence of the impact of the economic crisis, especially on young people. As the aim of this chapter is to set the parameters for a psycho-social examination of identity and family values, I then introduce two further important discursive-cultural components; first, a succinct overview of the ‘soul searching debates’ preceding the crisis I referred to above, mainly focusing on attempts to move away from ‘the past’ and to separate individual, familial and national identity which, were traditionally intertwined (Pollis, 1992; Tsoukalas, 1999); and second, the rise

of discourses of loss and mourning which characterized the early years after 2008, and which often echoed earlier historical losses, attempting to assimilate the economic disaster into a long history of national misfortunes. As I have indicated above, my aim is not to offer a complete picture of the Greek psyche but to highlight the most important discourses and dialectical tensions which underline the language of my participants and which allow us to approach the 2008 crisis at an individual and a collective level.

1.1. A brief history of the Greek state

History shapes civic and family life in particular ways. An overview of the history of the Greek state, from its creation after the demise of the Ottoman Empire to the recent austerity crisis, allows us to identify a unifying theme, namely, Greece's struggle to transition from a pre-modern to the modern state. This transition involved two very distinct components, on the one hand, an attempt to shake off the structures of clientelism and patronage, and on the other, an effort to represent Greece's history as an uninterrupted continuity from antiquity onwards.

It is widely accepted that the period of Ottoman rule (1453-1821) fundamentally shaped Greek society (Svoronos, 1999). In terms of socio-political development, it can be argued that Turkish rule "isolated Greece from the great historical movements such as the Renaissance, the French and Industrial revolutions, [and] the Enlightenment that influenced Western Europe" (Mouzelis, 1978). Thus clientelism, typical of pre-modern states, persisted throughout the years of the war of Independence (1821-1860) and found its way into the government structures of the newly established state. When Greece gained its independence, there were politicians

who, accustomed to Ottoman rule, were more interested in maintaining their privileges rather in achieving political change.

The first attempts at democratizing the Greek state began some years after independence with the Prime Ministers, Ioannis Kapodistrias, and, some years later, Charilaos Trikoupis. Both struggled to create a state free from the traditional influence of kin and village relations, and both were prevented from succeeding in their reforms by people who did not wish to forgo their privileges (Sklias & Maris, 2013). The next prime minster who tried to reform the state was Eleftherios Venizelos (1864 – 1936) (Mouzelis, 1978; Gallant, 2000). During his governance (1910 – 1936), Greek politics acquired a class-based character, which was reinforced by the influx of refugees fleeing genocide in Asia Minor (1914-1922). Velizelos was a popular democratic leader, well-liked by the Greeks. However, his premiership coincided with an ill-advised war against Turkey, fuelled by the so called 'Megali Idea' (Grand Idea) to 'restore' Greece as a hegemonic power in the region. After a devastating defeat in Asia Minor, Greece not only had to deal with the influx millions of refugees, but had to re-evaluate its relationship with the West and to review the political culture which prevented it from modernizing (Hatzivassiliou, 2010). After Venizelos, and as we will see below, clientelism and patronage subsided but never really went away. Instead of that, they became ensconced in the 'Greek identity', an ambivalent way of negotiating Greece's position between the East and the West.

It could be argued that the debate of 'Greek identity' is as old as modern Greek state itself (Koliopoulos & Veremis, 2010; Clogg, 1992), especially since the first century was marked by internal political upheavals, a world war and a disastrous imperialist campaigned which ended in humiliation.

Before the Independence, no particular 'Greek' national consciousness existed, but, afterwards, one can observe two different 'identities' or trends: one which emphasized Westernization, the other focusing on 'oriental' characteristics, claiming that its roots went back to the Orthodox Byzantine Empire (Gallant, 2001). The Orthodox Church and traditions were and are still highly valued in the latter, being understood as guardians of national identity and presented in the school curricula as such. On the other hand, there was the intelligentsia and the bourgeoisie, who supported the idea of national consciousness, closer relations with Europe and, most important, a more western way of life (Mouzelis, 1978; Gallant, 2001). The two identities were eventually reconciled in official narratives of Greek history by the suggestion that there is an unbroken history of the Greek nation, which can be divided into three phases—the Classical, the Byzantine and the Modern.

Contemporary Greek history seems to be as turbulent as the period after the Independence and the creation of the independent Greek state. The main events that shaped contemporary Greek history include the Metaxas dictatorship (1936-1941), the Second World War and German occupation (1939-1945), the Civil War (1946-1949), the military junta (1967-1974), and the restoration of democracy in 1974. Even a cursory look at the above lists suggests that Greece often appears to be lurching from disaster to disaster. More important, the past lingers into the present. For example, although the Grand Idea of the early twentieth century eventually receded with the passage of time and the assimilation of the Greek-speaking refugees in the country, the commemoration of the event by state education and popular culture and the talk of 'lost homelands' never completely disappeared. They became consolidated into a narrative of collective trauma. The present does not exist on its own; it is a process, a continuity that can be understood as a repetition of certain

signifiers or cultural modes or as an inheritance of generational and parental desires (Frosh 2013, p. 41). In the Greek case, the often irrational power of such narratives becomes apparent at times of crisis. Two very different instances illustrate the point; the fact that the Golden Dawn incorporated irredentist ideals in its manifesto (Tsoutsoumpis, 2018), and the collective outcry when a group of educational reformers attempted to alter the prevalent narrative around the Asia Minor disaster for a new set of history textbooks (Bilginer, 2013).

Indeed, the 20th century as a whole seem as too turbulent a time for Greece at all levels, making it more difficult for the country to organize rationally and independently (Chalari, 2012). A detailed examination of the historical events before 1974 falls outside the scope of the present thesis but an example may illustrate the point: the ideology of the so-called ‘dictatorship of the Colonels’ (1967-1974) was an idealization of Greek history in a xenophobic and totalitarian way. Greece became isolated from Europe again, and the regime suppressed all freedoms. Its collapse lead to a period of rapid socioeconomic development and progressive inclusion in the European ‘family’ (Kokosalakis & Psimmenos, 2003). However, while democracy was restored rapidly after the fall of the junta, it was not done in a systematic or comprehensive fashion (Sotiropoulos, 2004). The Greek republic, in which the current political system has its roots (Pappas, 2013), was, until quite recently, dominated by the antagonism between the two major political parties, the centre-right New Democracy, and the centre-left PASOK (‘The Panhellenic Socialist Movement’).

Up until the late 90s, Greek politics continued to be characterised by patronage, clientelistic networks and organized interests (Samatas, 1993; Pappas & Assimakopoulou, 2012; Sotiropoulos, 1995). For example, the re-organisation of the

public sector and institutions (universities, hospitals, etc) were PASOK's attempt to create a modern state but were instituted with electoral advantage in mind. Political parties were able to control all aspects of public life, as well as the large private media corporations, which were dependent on the state for their license and advertisement profits (Lyrintzis, 2011; Mavrogordatos, 1997). The role of clientelism is better appreciated if we consider the fact that, until recently, the majority of Greeks sought employment in the public sector, thereby demonstrating that the 'collective psyche', so to speak, supported and reinforced the system of patronage as a mutual relationship predicated on exchange of favours. Indeed, some researchers have argued that such collective attitudes have continued uninterrupted from the Ottoman times (Malakos, 2013) influencing the operation of the Greek state until today (Mouzelis, 2012). For others, their problematic persistence has contributed to the slow progress in the rational organization of the state (Tsoukalas, 2008).

Behavioural patterns like these can easily lead us to think that Greeks act individualistically rather than collectively, investing in the interests of themselves and their own small groups, and not in the collective good (Voulgaris, 2006a). This kind of intergenerationally transmitted political-cultural attitude has been considered as the reason for a lack of solidarity and robust civil society. The latter has been posited as one of the reasons for the failure to establish a modern Greek state (Mouzelis & Pagoulatos, 2003). On top of that, one could argue that it was extremely difficult for the Greeks to fully absorb the values of the West, as the country was, indeed, influenced for so many centuries by non-European lifestyle and values.

1.2. The Greek Family

1.2.1. Greek family values, now and then

According to Foucault, state and family both discipline individuals, producing consensus through symbolic violence. Family is a place for exercising and reproducing social power relations, as well as gender relations (Duschinsky & Rocha, 2012). It is therefore worth exploring the 'Greek family' as a micro-level unit of analysis, investigating it in terms of values and structure so as to highlight the origins and roots of this institution and the influence it wields in the socio-cultural life of Greece.

Older and contemporary sociologists, psychologists and ethnographers have seen Greece as a conservative society built around national and religious homogeneity, with strong values of kinship and family, tradition, religion, peer groups, and relatives (Dragonas, 1983; Katakis, 2012; Triandis, 2001).

In attempting to understand the evolution of the Greek family, it is important to briefly consider urbanization after the second half of the 19th century (Cassia, and Bada, 1992; du Boulay & Friedl, 1970). The internal mass movement of populations from rural Greece to Athens saw the emergence of a new form of kinship characterised by the transfer of rural values to an urban space marked by the division between the public and the private space, with women being confined into the latter (Bakalaki, 1997).

At that time, motherhood was transformed into a "collective social service and patriotic duty" (Avdela, & Psarra, 2005, p. 74). Excluded from public life, women-mothers were also assumed to act as guardians of spiritual life, resembling Virgin

Mary as the figure who connects the human world with the divine (Gallant, 2001; Loizos & Papataxiarchis, 1991). The submission of women to household and religion made them 'safely' obedient and docile. As such, they were assumed to be less good, wise, strong, etc. than men, and it was through them that the family's honour could be jeopardized (du Boulay, 1983). Only the role of 'wife' and 'mother' gave them some value and the symbolic role of the representative on earth of the Mother of God, this being one characteristic of the archetypical Holy Family pattern in Greece (du Boulay 1983). Women, also played a symbolic moral role, being closer to nature yet viewed as sinful due to their descent from Eve. This symbolic handicap could only be redeemed through motherhood, because their 'sin' was thereby transformed by "living for others" (Paxson, 1968).

Until quite recently, marriage for both men and women was seen as being of supreme value both for the continuation of the self through the reproduction of kinship ties, and as an event with economic and political implications(Gallant, 2001; Gavalas, 2008). Although dowries have been abolished by law, and the place of women has changed hugely in modern Greece, just two generations ago, women were regarded as "reproducers, nurturers and educators of the national body" (Anagnostopoulos, 2014, p. 85, citing Avdella & Psarra 2005:68; cf. Varikas, 1993). The post-marital residence was virilocal or patrilocal. Until comparatively recently, especially in rural Greece, the family consisted of several generations living in the same house and the social world of Greece's predominantly communities were shaped by gendered roles (Anagnostopoulos, 2014). This often meant that domestic life reproduced a profound hostility and tension between mothers-in-law and daughters-in-law, as observed in ethnographic accounts of relations in virilocal

communities. It amounted to a confrontation between tradition and modernity, or even a struggle between the living and the dead (Gordon, 2008).

Gender relations begun to change with the influx of women into the labour market in the postwar period. However, this shift was not yet sufficient for the development of a new gender contract, because of the persistence of traditional economic structures within the family (Kyriazis, 1998). For a large number of Greek women, paid employment was perceived to be more a means to improve the economic status of the family rather than to establish greater personal autonomy (Kyriazis, 1998; Cavounidis, 1983). Changing economic structures, and the movement of village women to Athens, changed gender roles further and increased women's paid employment, although not in a straightforward manner, as more social freedom came with a greater emphasis on household duties (Buck Sutton, 1986). However, in recent decades the rise in women's education has meant that women have been able to compete for higher paid positions, and work has finally become a goal in itself. After the restoration of democracy in 1974 in particular, the desire for political involvement and the discourse of women's emancipation informed parties of the Left as well as women's formal organizations inspired by feminist ideas.

The nature of contemporary family in Greece is similar to other Mediterranean countries; there has been a decreased number of children per woman, but there are smaller percentages of single parenthood and divorce in comparison with Anglo-American trends; moreover, extended families with more than one generation cohabiting continue to be more frequent. Alipranti's research in 1995, noted that women in contemporary Greece wished to be educated and to find a job before starting a family (Alipranti, 1995). Yet, young people have continued to delay departing from the family to start independent lives. For girls, such departure and

independence are connected with the creation of a new family, rather than individual independent living (Maratou-Alipranti, 2010).

Some of the changes in family dynamics in Greece also result from modernization and individuation. Sociologists speaking from Anglo-American positions argue that modern families are to be analyzed in terms of partnership and negotiation (Beck, 2000; Beck Gernsheim, 2002; Giddens, 1990). In symbolic terms, family in Greece is still a place of stability and security. This is reinforced by the fact that social politics do little to encourage young people to be independent from their families. The state places the management of financial and other problems directly onto individuals, with welfare state support being almost non-existent (Kogkidou, 2001). For example, until recently, there has been no parental paid leave, no state or subsidized child-care provision, no child support packages, or family benefits; there are no income and non-income related tax allowances, and health and education costs are largely borne by the family. Through its inaction, Greek family policy reproduces the ideological assumption that the family is the main provider of welfare in society. This situation has historically been defined as Greek 'familialism' (Tsoukalas, 1987; Papadopoulos, 1998).

Unsurprisingly, recent research into family values in Greece has shown that connections with the extended family persist (Georgas et al., 2006). The fundamental values connected to children's obligations towards relatives are still valid among the younger generation. The traditional way of cohabiting or neighboring with parents has been maintained, even in urban areas such as Athens (Georgas et al., 2006), which shows that psychological functions have not changed so much over the last three generations. The nuclear family now takes precedence over the extended one, but, at a functional level, the bonds are those of the extended family (Georgas et al.,

2006). It can be argued, therefore, that, at times of crisis, old values adapt slightly according to social circumstances but do not themselves face a crisis; rather, they evolve (Mousourou, 1999), or, as Gazi (2012) puts it, due to the significant changes that neoliberalism has brought, people have devised new ways of maintaining and upholding traditional, patriarchal values.

One more piece needs to be added to the family puzzle, namely the ethno-religious nature of the Greek Orthodox Church which is connected with identity and nation and, because of this, still has unchallenged power. Although religion today may be on the decline (Dragonas, 2013), the church continues to resist the westernization of Greek culture and identity. Moreover, at an unconscious level, religion acts as a 'basic assumption group' (Bion, 1948) with an (un)conscious performance organized around an imaginary unified entity with common attitudes, beliefs, rituals and traditions. This is transmitted, not as an ideology that one chooses to follow, but as a lived experience.

What can be derived from these sections on family is that motivations and behaviors on the one hand and values, relations with individuals, society and the state are mediated by the family. Mechanisms of communication and identification from parents to children and from material practices in society influence perceptions of individuals similarly (Frosh, 2013, p. 131) as an 'archaic heritage' that passes automatically between generations (Freud, 1939). The role of the unconscious, located in the intensity and maintenance of the primordial attachment ties, offers a first, tentative suggestion of a processes at work:. it would be valid to say that Greeks have never quite abandoned the libidinal constellation of the family; they still invest in it psychically. They internalize it, and identify with it as an ideal, as part of their own ego (Koutantou, 2017, citing Freud, 1917).

Family as a value is transmitted through generations unmediated by experience, and cannot be explained by direct communication or influence by education (Frosh, 2013, p. 132 – 134). Attachment bonds, on the one hand, and values, traditions and social discourses, on the other, are mediated by familial relations and transactions. As we shall see in subsequent chapters, familial attachment bonds can serve as a medium through which 'wider historical traumas' become personal suffering for subsequent generations as an unconscious form of 'haunting' that acts silently upon them (Frosh, 2013). Below, we turn to the role and position of young people in the family, especially their welfare at a time of crisis.

1.2.2. Family, welfare and the employment of young people

Family has always been an important factor in the welfare of Greek youth (Kretsos, 2014; Papadopoulos, 1998), and, as with other Southern European countries, it has long been a feature of the Greek economy (Bettio & Plantenga 2004; Bettio & Villa, 1998*, 1*999; Bagavos 2001; Karamesini 2008; Teperoglou et al., 1999). Family serves as the main provider of care and protection and a basic institution for the reproduction of the country's political economy (Papadopoulos, 2009). It acts as "an owner, an employer, a member within the clientelistic system and a claimant of social security rights" (Papadopoulos, 2009, p. 5). However, since the mid-1990s, Greece's familial welfare capitalism underwent an era of modernization (Papadopoulos, 2009, p. 18), and one can observe that some changes took place, particularly in terms of values.

Young people in Greece are principally socialized within the nuclear family, giving little time to volunteering or civic engagement (Chtouris et al., 2006). Until recently, young Greeks left the parental home at an average age of 29 (Eurofound,

2014) a trend that persisted during the years of crisis. As a result, independence is deferred to an indefinite future, and the transition to adulthood is postponed (Chtouris, 2006; Kretsos, 2014; Koutantou, 2017). Until quite recently, young people in Southern European countries left the parental home when they got married, and married after obtaining a stable job (Karamessini, 2008). Lack of employment has not traditionally been the only reason for young people in Southern Europe to stay in their parental homes. For many of them, this practice was "a strategy which enabled them to experience an easier life and have higher levels of consumption, to save money and to develop strategies in education and experiment with various choices" (Karamessini, 2008, p. 65). However, although this practice may allow more time for a person to develop, to make decisions, or to receive more training, it also reduces the possibility of acquiring skills necessary for work and life. Finally, as a result of this strategy young people know that, in case of failure, there is almost always a parental environment to provide support. This knowledge can be both positive and negative with an example of the latter being an inability of young people to face life and its challenges by relying on their own agency.

Tsekeris' research (2017) depicts the problem of the 'Boomerang generation', a term that describes people who return to their family home after losing their jobs or finishing education. Although it is easy to observe the fact that, in the case of the 2008 crisis, a major disruption has affected in their life trajectories, many of them seem to maintain a traditional, inherited way of living and thinking, which includes an easy and stable life under 'state protection' (Tsekeris, 2017). It seems that familialism, in its greater sense, is a dominant discourse in Greece (see: Lyberaki, Tinios, 2014; Papadopoulos. & Roumpakis. 1998; Chtouris et al., 2006; Dendrinos, 2014; Georgas, 1989, 1997; Iacovou, 2010; Kaftantzoglou, 1988; Kafetsios, 2006;

Kataki, 2012). In earlier research by the same author, it was demonstrated that 93% of young people “completely agreed with the statement that parents and children need to stay attached to each other, as much as possible” (Tsekeris, 2015b, p. 19).

However, Kesisoglou et al. (2016) reveal the other side of the coin, depicting young people working in precarious conditions, who speak about the possibility of emigration as an attempt to build a life of their own, relying on their own effort, regardless of the difficult circumstances-one could say both that this is and is not the case for Greece (Kesisoglou et al., 2016). For instance, the family, as a basic welfare provider in Greece, for many years before and even during the crisis, has been expected to provide for young people until the ‘appropriate job’ is found (Dendrinos, 2014; Iacovou, 2010). For the majority of Greeks, this ‘appropriate job’ was a permanent position in the public sector, secured for life. Moreover, social networks provide help in finding a job such as family businesses funded by parents and relatives (Kretsos, 2014). Another example is the case of university students, who, according to Dendrinos (2014), are reluctant to combine studies with work, demonstrating low interest in precarious jobs or volunteering, and preferring to rely on family. These students, however, lose out on work experience and soft skills gained ‘on the job’; they also fail to see different kinds of jobs as a necessary step towards their desired one.

According to Kalogeraki (2009), it is still reasonable to argue that Greek culture and family life are collectivist, and that young people subscribe to this arrangement. The self is experienced as a part of a collective, an in-group rather than as an autonomous individual, as both sociological (Dragonas 1983; Doumanis 1983; Kafetsios 2006; Katakis, 2012) and psychological research has shown (Triandis 1988, 1989*,* 2001).

Before the crisis, and as Greece put little emphasis on vocational training, the industries complained that the system fails to produce candidates suitable for the types of jobs that are available. Some claimed that candidates are very well educated but lacked soft skills. Indeed, there was a mismatch between education and the jobs market; on the other hand, however, it was also true that there was a mismatch between personal preferences for a career and the reality of available opportunities (Malkoutzis, 2011).

In the 2008 crisis, as Lahad et al. (2018), demonstrated, family and social connections became the most reported support resource (Lahad et al., 2018, p. 350), rather than government or other services, or abstract institutions (see also Botsiou & Klapsis, 2011). With declining trust in the public sector, the basic needs for security have been transferred back to families. This is sometimes depicted in a percentage of people moving back to rural areas to survive the crisis (Remoundou et al., 2015). In the sense that one's value base lies in recognition of inter-dependence rather than independence. Outside families, identities are formulated through relations with local communities or other groups, such as religion, political parties, syndicates, anarchic or extremist movements, and many more. All these groups can renew the primary collectivity-the family (Katakis, 1998). There is evidence that in Greece, people are mostly interested in their own 'collectivity'-family and clan-rather than in wider society, which is depicted in low civic engagement and low volunteerism. (Chtouris et al., 2006).

1.3. The economic crisis of 2008

1.3.1. Political and economic considerations

There are many scholars who attribute the crisis of 2008 to economic factors specific to Greece, such as a high public deficit and foreign debt, irrational spending and borrowing, and a minimal basis for competition. Others take a more 'European' perspective. Thus, the Greek crisis is seen as "a result of growing trade imbalances within the Eurozone […] and the position of the South European countries within it" (Hatzimichalis, 2017; Lapavitsas, 2017; Karaliotas, 2008; Theocharis & Deth, 2015). The Greek crisis, and the crisis in Southern Europe more generally, was a result of a systemic crisis that affected Europe's entire political project (Featherstone & Karaliotas, 2019).

For others the crisis can be seen as a symptom of the country's 'sickness', which comes down to a lack of productivity, corruption and longstanding clientelism, and a huge but ineffective state (Tsakalotos, 2010). These factors are certainly part of the problem, and numerical indicators cannot fully capture the social implication of the situation that emerged in Greece (Sklias & Maris, 2013). Other damaging factors include the country's tendency to populism, statism, parliamentary instability, and the formation of syndicates and interest groups that have, over the years, led to a deleterious model of development that has affected the way that Greek people think and act (Sklias & Maris, 2013; Mitsopoulos and Pelagidis 2009b)

The crisis has also been linked to the way bureaucracy, public life, recruitment in the wider public sector, and the large private media environment have been controlled by the two major political parties that emerged after 1974, in the wake of the dictatorship (Mitsopoulos & Pelagidis, 2009b; Lyrintzis, 2011; Samatas,

1993; Pappas & Assimakopoulou, 2012; Sotiropoulos, 1995; Sklias & Maris, 2013). Mouzelis (2012) argues that certain values of the Greek intergenerationally transmitted psyche derive from more than four hundred years of occupation by the Ottoman Empire (see also Chalari, 2014). Contemporary commentary inside Greece thus has a tendency to blame the country itself for its situation, arguing that, despite joining the EU, Greece was in fact isolated from Europe and democracy, and never fully developed a democratic system, despite having one on paper (Kokosalakis & Psimmenos, 2003; Clogg, 2003).

A full discussion of Greek socio-economic history in the second half of the 20th century and it the first two decades of the 21st is outside the remit of the present thesis. However, Greece's accession to the European Union, the demise of PASOK and the rise of SYRIZA to power does merit a specific mention.

In 1981, Greece joined the European Union, and thereafter received generous European funding, both for public infrastructure, and for a range of new jobs. However, during this time, the public deficit continued to rise, which, one could argue, might be evidence of the inefficiency of administration or the implementation of the entailed changes. Even when Greece became a full EU member, the political system in Greece remained unstable, due to a need to hold elections every time a political party sought to reproduce its dominance without implementing any viable and long-term reform for the country (Sklias and Maris, 2013). On the other hand, Agnantopoulos and Lambiri (2015) argue, Greece was on a neoliberal trajectory long before the crisis, and it was its adherence to this process, and not the failure to do so, that caused the country's problems. They suggest that the interaction between processes of neoliberalisation and an inherited regulatory framework produced a distinct path to Greek neo-liberal state, which has been marked by variegated

capitalism, the debt crisis, and SYRIZA's counter-neoliberal challenge (Agnantopoulos & Lambiri, 2015; Geoforum, 63).

When Greece adopted the Euro in 2001, it became even easier to borrow from European funds. A great example of such borrowing was the decision to hold the Olympic games in 2004, which increased the country's deficit considerably (Baltas, 2013). Indicatively, Greek government debt doubled between 2001 and 2009, rising from €151,9 billion to €299,7 billion. At the same time, however, there was no adjustment process in the Eurozone, and no distinction between the sovereign debt of the core countries of EU and the debt of countries of the periphery, including Greece. This meant that there was no mechanism to adjust money and credit growth (Gibson, Palivos, Tavlas, 2013).

1.3.2. The austerity crisis in numbers

Greece was one of the first countries in the EU to be engulfed by the 2008 sovereign debt crisis. In 2009, the newly elected PASOK government, led by George Papandreou, revealed that the country had underestimated its deficits for years. All successive governments then turned to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for bailout packages so that the country could meet its external obligations (Zettelmeyer et al., 2013). In 2010-2011 the government received two bailout packages from the EU and the IMF totalling €240bn. In 2013-2014, youth unemployment reached almost 60% and the government collapsed (BBC 2019).

Frustration and disillusionment with the two mainstream political parties, New Democracy (ND) and PASOK, which had been dealing with lenders and bailout packages, led voters to support the radical-left Coalition SYRIZA, which promised to bring a solution to the socioeconomic crisis (Bistis 2016). After the Greek

parliament failed to elect a new president of the republic in December 2014, this gave victory to SYRIZA in January 2015 (Bistis, 2016). Alexis Tsipras, the leader of the party, formed a government with the Independent Greeks (ANEL), a right wing nationalist political party. Yanis Varoufakis, newly installed finance minister, was responsible for negotiating with the international lenders, but reaching a conclusion was not an easy task. The Greek part wanted to "cancel the memoranda of austerity" (Bistis, 2016, p. 43) and to discontinue the financial obligations that the previous governments had created towards its lenders. However, the lenders were not willing to accept the Greek proposition, and in the meantime, signs of recovery in late 2014 had given rise to a serious economic decline, which made things worse for the Greek party, had difficulty finding a position its members could agree on. Greece ended negotiations unilaterally in June 2015, and Tsipras announced a referendum on the bailout plan offered by the lenders (Bistis, 2016). At this point the country was close to collapse; lenders were looking for plans for a Greek Exit from the European Union (commonly referred to as 'Grexit'), while Greek opposition parties demanded a return to negotiated plans to secure an agreement that would keep the country in the Eurozone. A new agreement was subsequently signed by a new Finance Minister, Euclid Tsakalotos, for a third bailout package. (Bistis, 2016; Henning, 2017).

The impact of the crisis in Greece was enormous. Unemployment rose to 25%. At the same time, the ranks of the so-called 'working poor' increased by 43%. Austerity also had a serious impact on health inequalities, with an increase in depression and suicide rates (Alexiou et al., 2011; Matsaganis, 2013).

Following 2008, industrial production collapsed and hundreds of small businesses closed. Since then insurance privileges, social benefits, and labour rights have declined (Venieris, 2013; Leventi & Matsaganis, 2013; Woestman, 2010;

Matsaganis, 2013) and living conditions have deteriorated, with worsening nutrition and poor access to health services (Vaiou, 2016). Among groups experiencing below-average poverty rates were freelancers, the self-employed and university graduates, although people with higher education levels maintained a lower risk of poverty, as compared to those with lower educational accomplishments (Leventi & Matsaganis, 2016).

In the meantime, public sector salaries were frozen at 2009 levels. In 2012, the unemployment insurance benefit was reduced by 22% (from €454 pcm to €360) and benefits for families with many children were abolished, as did tax credits for rent, education expenses, mortgage interest, and private insurance contributions (Leventi & Matsaganis, 2016, p. 22-23). New levies were introduced, with a levy of 10% on pension income of between €1400 and €1700 per month. All pensioners under 55 with pensions exceeding €1200 were subjected to 20% taxation (Leventi & Matsaganis, 2016), while people aged above 55 with pensions exceeding €1200 were subject to 20% taxation. It might be argued that it is fair to impose higher taxation on pensioners below the age of 55, as some received an earlier pension with fewer years of employment, while acknowledging that a tax rate of 40% may be too high. A tax burden that may be harder for people to meet is the 3% imposed on pensions of between €300 and €350 per month, and the 10% imposed on pensions exceeding €650. Many other taxes have been implemented since this time. Last but not least, a new tax was introduced in 2011 for all owners of commercial or residential property in Greece. Given the large number of Greeks who own property, this amounts to a charge on the most secure source of income for Greeks, driving them to pay 'rent for their own homes' (Leventi & Matsaganis 2016).

Many adjustment measures implemented between 2010 and 2013 are now considered a spasmodic reaction to the emergency circumstances of the crisis, rather than carefully designed programmes (Baltas, 2013). As a result, Greece went into a deeper recession, with a 23% loss in GDP by 2012 (as compared to its 2008 level); new measures were subsequently added, again, sporadically. Last but not least, we should also mention that the Greek banking system was under surveillance; in the summer of 2015, a liquidity crisis took place, leading to bank closures and capital controls (Ashta & Sinapi, 2017).

It is perhaps redundant to add that the economic crisis was followed by a full blown social and political crisis which saw the rise of radical left and center left groups, as well as popular protest movements led by groups as varied as the Greek Indignados, anti-globalization activists, unemployed youth, University students, and the Greek equivalent of the 'Occupy' movement (Douzinas, 2011; Tsaliki, 2012). At the same time, there was also a rise in fascist extremism, crystallised in the election of Golden Dawn to Parliament in June 2012. This has been characterised by Panagiotou (2013) as a symptom of the deterioration of social structures and of widening inequality.

1.3.3. Crisis, unemployment and youth

There are 1.1 million people in Greece who are under 25, and 1.5 million that are aged between 25 and 34. Many of them are well-educated and politically engaged. Together, they constitute one of the populations hit hardest by the crisis (EUROSTAT, 2012), as early-career opportunities became rare, leading to a deterioration in employment prospects. It should be noted, however, that, in Greece,

young people have traditionally faced high levels of unemployment (Karamessini, 2008).

Data from September 2011 (Malkoutzis, 2011) show that 40% of Greeks under 25 were out of work, while those that were employed found it difficult to survive on their wages. Youth unemployment stood at above 20% for the past decade, and six out of ten young Greeks said that they were willing to emigrate to look for work in another EU country. Many of those who have already left are university graduates, and many of those who had emigrated for studies are now staying abroad. 83.4% of Greeks aged between 20 and 24 have at least an upper secondary school education, while 58.3% between 25 and 34 speak at least one foreign language, which is higher than the EU average of 39% (Malkoutzis, 2011). 51% of PhD holders left Greece between 2009 and 2011, and the number is increasing year by the year.

Labour market regulation for young people has also been discouraging, with cuts of 22% to the minimum wage for workers above 25, and 32% for workers below 25 (Leventi & Matsaganis, 2016; Baltas, 2013). The gross minimum wage for young people under 25 without work experience in 2011 was €592 per month (€497 net); this wage is now €510.95 per month (€432.75 net), and for young people over 25 without work experience or specialization, the gross monthly wage is €586.08 (€492 net). With such a salary, it is difficult for young people to live on their own, as the rent for a small apartment averages €250-300 per month. A wave of youth has returned to the parental home also relying on parents for childcare (Malkoutzis, 2011).

Workers in Greece have also had to contend with deregulation at the work place. Among other effects, this led to an increase in part time and temporary employment, pseudo-self-employment contracts, undeclared work, and employment in sectors

with a high possibility of bankruptcy or dismissal. On the other hand, there are some subsidised job placements, which may assist people for some time. Ominously, 337,733 young people aged 15-29 lost their jobs in 2012 (Kretsos, 2014b).

To these numbers, we could also add the phenomenon of 'brain drain', which has increased during the crisis. In a survey conducted by Theodoropoulos et al. (2014) with a sample of 400 scientists, 49.75% express frustration, with 45.5% agreeing that one needs to leave Greece to get on, 57.75 % saying they would leave if they were offered the opportunity, and 82% expressing the belief that the economic crises forces scientists to emigrate. On the other hand, 45.75% confess that the main reason for not leaving Greece is their emotional ties with the country, family, friends, and lifestyle, and some say that they cannot even afford the process of emigration (Theodoropoulos et al., 2014).

As said earlier (see also Koutantou, 2017), family was always important for the Greeks, and familial interdependence was already the norm before the crisis. The latter only reinforced this tendency. Christopoulou & Pantalidou (2018b) examined the relationship between labour outcomes for young people and parental cohabitation during the crisis and found that the parental home was experienced as a refuge for jobless youth or those who were poorly paid while in insecure jobs. They also found that young women had an additional reason to cohabit, insofar as parents needed care from themselves. This gendered pattern persists as women maintain the role of the primary carer for older people, and influences living arrangements, which corrrespond to economic forces. On the other hand, young Greeks who were in their late adolescence during the crisis, had no option but to remain in the parental home for longer (Christopoulou & Pantalidou, 2018a, p. 18).

Figgou (2019) examined the agency of young people in Greece and the ways in which they have been directed regarding job seeking and job loss during the crisis. The explanation offered by participants for their employment problems, for the loss of jobs, or for deteriorations in employment conditions was the crisis. There was no negotiation of responsibility for individual and collective actors, such us the employers and/or the company. It is remarkable that, although they assigned their employment problems to the crisis, they viewed themselves as actors, able to take action, and especially in discussing effective job-seeking strategies. However, their success in job hunting was not related to effort on their part, but rather to willingness to work under hazardous conditions and low working standards in order to be competitive. When participants were asked to account for their plans to look for a job in another country, unemployment was related to institutional flaws in the Greek labour market and society (Figgou, 2020).

Other recent research has discussed and interpreted the experience of young Greek people during the crisis in terms of reflexivity, the capacity for self-criticism, and society (Chalari, 2012; Tsekeris, 2015a; Tsekeris, 2015b; Chalari, 2016; Kesisoglou et al., 2016). More specifically, Kesisoglou et al. (2016) address how young people working in precarious conditions in Greece speak about the possibility of emigrating, and how they construct their agency and identity (Kesisoglou, et. al, 2016). The research participants in this study viewed themselves as entrepreneurs within their own biographies and employment trajectories.

Kesisoglou et al. (2016) also report that young Greeks begin to see precarious jobs as a necessary step on their biographical and professional trajectories leading to their desired job, and as an inherent trait of the Greek job market as well. What is more, they view precariousness in the job market as the only alternative to

unemployment. They position themselves as effortful subjects with freedom and the potential to choose and form their lives and professional trajectories by embracing what precarious jobs have to offer to them in order to build a track record during a challenging period.

In the context of late modernity, it is often argued that people have to construct their own biography (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 2009; Giddens, 1990, 1991), and be engaged in new forms of agency and subjectivity (Bansel & Walkerdine, 2010). However, we should also be careful not to ignore how a country's context shapes cultural values, the transition to adulthood, and young people's maturation processes. With regards to the Greek case, evidence has shown that inherited systems and transmitted values are important matters of consideration (Avdela, 2002; Campbell, 1964; Friedl, 1962; Gallant, 2001; Gallant and Honor, 2000; Loizos and Papataxiarchis, 1991; Paxson, 1968).

A broad range of contemporary research has now suggested that, during the austerity crisis, young people in Greece faced a systematic frustration of their dreams and desires, with many reporting that they feel that they are suspended in mid-air (Chalari, 2015; Matsaganis, 2013; Tsekeris et al., 2015a; Tsekeris et al., 2015b; Tsekeris, 2017; Ashplant, 2015; Malkoutzis, 2011). Other researchers comment on the effect of the crisis and unemployment on mental health (Kondilis et al., 2013; Drydakis, 2015), reporting increasing rates of depression (Madianos et al., 2013; Madians et al. 2011; Economou et al. 2013) and suicide (Kentikelenis et al.. 2011; Fountoulakis et al., 2014). As this last research shows, people may find it difficult to process, absorb and make sense of the messages they receive from society ('beta elements' according to Bion, 1961). Beta elements are the raw experience, the primitive mental states -bodily feelings and emotional states - which may generate

anxiety. One could hypothesize that societies and individuals may be capable of metabolizing these messages differently. The question is, how.

From the above findings, one may discern two tendencies: on the one hand, that the interdependence of adult children and parents has become more intense during the economic crisis. On the other hand, and especially when it comes to labor, that there is a capacity for reflexivity and agency among young people, an effort to overcome the constraints and financial difficulties and a desire to boldly address the frustration of their dreams and desires. Taken together, these two tendencies indicate that the economic crisis of 2008 mobilised, dislodged and shifted the dynamics of the Greek family in ways that merit further careful exploration. Necessity forced many young people to return to or not to leave the parental home but the symbolic power of the mighty Greek family was also being assailed, with parents unable to save their businesses or live up to the image of the plentiful provider. The space that opened up, simultaneously private and public, provided enough scope for the participants of the present research to reflect on the fact that belonging to a family is, after all, not a natural but a sociohistorical condition (Papanikolaou, 2018). In that sense, it could be argued that the crisis of 2008 inaugurated a period of reflection and questioning of institutions that, until then, were mostly accepted as permanently powerful, benevolent and stable. As we shall see in subsequent chapters, this was a rather painful process, akin to separating oneself from an omnipotent parent whilst coming to terms with uncertainty, vulnerability and, more often than not, harsh reality. Unsurprisingly, this examination also touched upon core Greek values and at times became entwined with reflections about national identity, European identity and an individual’s position in global capitalism. More poignantly, of course, it resonated with the fate of the country and the heavy price everyone was paying for

the years of profligacy and prosperity that preceded the crisis, by the return of disaster and catastrophe, as might be the case.

1.4. Greek identity revisited: a psychosocial account

In this section, I am making an attempt to advance a psychosocial explanation of the public discourses on Greek identity and subjectivity before and during the crisis. For contemporary psychosocial studies, the focus is on conceptualising and researching a type of subject that is both social and psychological. For Frosh and Baraitser (2008) "research is not a process of uncovering 'truths' about people but rather exposes the ways in which subjects are positioned by the theoretical structures used to understand them" (Jefferson 2008, p. 368).

Debates around Greek national identity are predated the crisis. They are almost a permanent fixture of Greekness, revealing a tension between patriotic/nation-focused discourses and the opposite. Thus, for example, in the period after the collapse of the 'Great Idea' (1922) (Tsoukalas, 1982) the Greek nationalistic discourse was structured around the assumption that there is a homogenous, unified history starting from pre-Homeric times, advancing through Classical Greece, the Hellenistic period, Byzantium, and reaching contemporary Greece. This formations persisted and eventually found their way in the official discourses of the state: the nation is bound together by history, language and Orthodox Christianity, and is presented as superior to any other nation since Greece is the cradle of all the Western values and great civilizations (Chrysoloras, 2004, p. 17 cited in Chalari & Georgas, 2016; Koumandaraki 2008). National identity is constructed by emphasizing genealogy, culture and language, customs, religions and ethnic rituals (Chalari &

Georgas, 2016). Religious instruction in particular is important, and extends far beyond the religious education curriculum (Zambeta, 2010).

Needless to add, these views are not espoused by all Greeks. Malakos (2013) argues that the recent crisis was not the cause of the recent difficulties but rather the outcome of a long term sociocultural malaise. For Malakos (2013) the Greeks have not learned to think critically about themselves and others, have not gone through the loss and mourning, typical of adolescence or through a process that would lead to differentiation of the capacities for copying with the external world, the social world and the world of inner subjectivity. In other words, something has hinder the processes of developing an integrated and independent 'personality'. Additionally, Malakos argues that the predominant pattern of Greek thought is one that mimics others' desires disclosing nothing new to the world apart from an arrogance and a yearning for lost glories (Axelos cited in Malakos, 2013). Such perceptions add to nationalistic discourses, xenophobia and racist attitudes, which continue to dominate. Even after the entrance into the EU, Greece maintains an ambivalent stance towards her westernised image; many Greeks believe that the new order undermines the role of national culture and identity and assume that the EU is a threat against the imaginary collective identity. The same attitude was sustained by Greeks during 1990s and 2000s towards economic immigrants, mostly from Eastern European countries, who were arriving to Greece and were employed in construction, tourism and agriculture; these immigrants were never integrated in Greece, socially, politically or culturally but were exploited and ignored (Adamczyk, 2016; Baldwin-Edwards, M, 2004; Kadzadej & Hoxha, 2016; Gropas & Triandafyllidou, 2005; Triandafyllidou, 2010; Hatziprokopiou, 2005).

Regarding the public sphere, Malakos (2013) maintains that representative democracy is mistaken for a kind of democracy where people rule without rules and mistake privileges for rights (see also Ramfos, 2012). The Greek public sphere is characterised as extremely weak and the political sphere continues to operate under the illusion of a genuine liberal democratic consensus. In reality, however, it is extremely polarised: Greece is faced by an unreformed leftist activism that has beset socio-political forces to the left on the political spectrum from 1974 until today, and which denounces and opposes any kind of reform (Malakos, 2013).

At the other end of the spectrum, the Orthodox Church continuous to presents herself as the guarantor of national identity, a 'trustee of Hellenism', especially in moments of national crisis (Zoumboulakis, 2013), claiming to be able to address the spiritual and emotional needs of local communities (Molokotos-Liederman, 2016). It also sees itself as the last defence to the threat of homogenisation by the European integration, globalisation and westernisation (Chalari & Georgas, 2016). At the same time, the Greek education system is an institution that cultivates Greek national identity through specific state endorsed textbooks (Coulby, 2000; Avdela, 1998, 2000; Coulby & Jones; Massialas & Flouris, 1994 in Chalari & Georgas, 2016) and still presents an ethnocentric national history, proposing a single national identity, where other nationalities or religions are treated with suspicion and are seen as enemies to the imagined national homogeneity and unity (Stratoudaki, 2008; Chalari & Georgas, 2016). The ideological construction of the Greek identity through education (Zervas, 2017) may have given rise to a dangerous new form of nationalism, the Golden Dawn (Chalari, M. 2016) as well as racist and xenophobic attitudes exacerbated by unemployment and the decline of the quality of life.

What can be derived from the above is that a sense of loss and the continuous search for an identity can be seen as constant ways of positioning for Greeks exacerbated during the crisis. To explore this psychosocially, I will draw on the work of contemporary Greek public intellectuals, in an attempt to articulate how they perceive the momentous changes and intensive soul searching to which the crisis gave rise. This is accurately summed up by the writing of four very different intellectuals, Loudovikos, Karabelias, Ramfos and Giannaras, and their attempt to re-interpret the past and re-assess history. Loudovikos (2006) uses a psycho-cultural argument rooted in psychoanalysis, and argues that Greek Identity is based on loss: the imaginary 'plenitude' existing in the past was stolen from the Greeks by a 'bad Other'. People thus try to explain why this plenitude has been lost, and so the concept of identity is compromised by a tendency to return to the 'ideal' of past pleasure. Loudovikos (2006) further argues that Greece suffers from feelings of guilt and self-criticism, with the problem having been created by 'us, the Greeks', and not by 'the foreigners'. Karabelias argues that the Greek past revolves around the conflict between the Greeks and 'the foreigners', which today continues as a fight against 'imperialism'. He also claims that Greeks need to re-assess history and reconnect as a community in order to survive, to sustain historical continuity and to transcend today's decadence - impoverishment, proletarianization, etc., - otherwise they will face disappearance. Karabelias suggests better education, a re-appreciation of history, decentralization and productive reorganisation. Ramfos (2010) provides a historical perspective, claiming that Greece tried to copy the democratization of institutions from the West without democratizing the intergenerationally transmitted collective psyche. Therefore, citizens still remain vaguely attached to 'the country', rather than to the responsibilities and obligations of civic engagement and life. He

also offers a psycho-cultural argument, suggesting that, in relation to civic society, Greeks have not formulated a psychically mature national or civic identity. Finally, Giannaras (2006) highlights the importance of both democracy and religion and tradition for public life, and notes that modern Greece has always had the ideal model of the ancient democratic polis in mind, which is part individualistic and part collective; however, religious structures are not always compatible with democratic individuality-especially, he argues, when the emphasis is on guilt and punishment, rather than on love.

The four views discussed above highlight an attempt to address a common phenomenon, namely, that even before the crisis a revision of Greece's relationship to the past, the present, the future and the world was long overdue. All four highlight the fantasy of a glorious past, a strong ambivalence towards 'them', Europeans and the West, and a continuous state of ambivalence and conflict, alongside disappointment and a feeling that 'nothing works'. In short, there is a sense of stagnation in every direction.

During the crisis, discourses around Greek identity solidified into a discourse of loss, subtended, as it was inevitable, by the loss of employment, of security, and of a way of life, which can shake a subject's sense of identity (Voutyras, 2016). As Knight (2012) shows, the economic crisis provoked poignant narratives of identification with previous periods of crisis, such as the return of the Germans to 'finish' Greece's occupation of the Nazis. History was happening again and people 'relived' past events and traumas.

According to Freud's Mourning and Melancholia (1917/1999d), loss is about 'what' has been lost in the beloved, something that signifies a libidinal attachment. Ideals in which people invest, play the role of guarantors of our identity are

fantasmatically invested, and this is why they are sustained. In this sense, loss is the loss of an attachment to guarantors of our identity (Voutyras, 2016, p. 228; Glynos, 2014). In other words, in the Greek case it can be claimed that unrecognized forms of loss from the past compose the condition under which the nation is formed; the culture is haunted by a lost object which has become incorporated and therefore, kept alive (Frosh 2013, p. 55). Unrequited loss gives rise to melancholia. The latter requires an attachment to a traumatic historical past (Baraitser 2012: 224 – 5 cited in Frosh 2013, p. 54); an unmourned past which continues to operate. One refuses to detach from identification with the lost object, sustaining the attachment bond with the past. Zizek argues that mourning is a betrayal to the lost object so the melancholic link to the lost ethnic object allows a nation to claim that they remain faithful to their ethnic roots while fully participating in the global capitalist game (Zizek 2000, p. 659). It is what the Greek intellectuals introduced above claim to be happening: the past plenitude, the glory has been stolen from us by the 'bad Other' and this absence haunts subsequent generations until it is restored. The Greek identity is organised around this lost object and fixes the subject in the past.

By the same token, and concerning the recent crisis, there is now evidence that two major ideological responses were advanced: the melancholic way, which seeks to contain loss through self-blame, and *ressentiment*, which seeks to contain loss by attributing its causes to the others (Glynos & Voutyras, 2016), especially to an authoritarian external other (Knight 2013). Some academics claim that national identity and memory were politicized and became important parts of the political discourse during the crisis. On the contrary, in Spain and Ireland, for example, austerity reforms did not result in a nationalist inflection of political discourse to the same degree. In Greece, the crisis was presented as an evil which would be overcome

by a united Greece. Mainstream Greek media reinforced the melancholic climate of guilt and shame, emphasizing patriotism and self-blame (Glynos & Voutyras, 2016). In this melancholic context, it is possible that loss may not be properly mourned. In Kleinian terms, Greece may be in a collective depressive state; we could argue psychoanalytically that Greece chose the route of ‘splitting’, and did not develop a mature identity, so it did not experience productive guilt. Mourning, on the other hand, and in Lacanian terms, is a way of traversing the fantasy and renegotiating symbolic investments, becoming open thereby to transformative potential.

The above explanation offered by Glynos and Voutyras, broad brush as it may be, chimes with evidence offered by other Greek researchers. As Tsekeris notes (2015), most members of the Greek middle class, the core of the Greek economic and cultural basis of the state, are now experiencing extensive social suffering, resulting from the demise of the imaginary ideal of economic growth (progressive and cumulative economic development), of occupational stability (working in the third sector, preferably the public one, ensuring permanency, economic success and recognition), the imaginary of being the boss (everyone being capable of being an entrepreneur, and thus avoiding being a worker subject to exploitation), and the imaginary of representative democracy (people’s sovereignty being exercised through elected politicians and political institutional bodies, such as Parliament).

It is evident that the 2008 crisis signalled a loss of a way of life, deterritorialising the sense of identity almost completely. One could argue that the ideal that has been lost is the fantasy of a series of ideals upon which people relied until now. This abrupt change created a nostalgic mood, a longing for something that

has been lost. But as long as Greece remains in denial its fate will remain the same. Greece needs to address its nationalistic, traditionalist and conservative self and opt for a new opening into the world, leaving the repetition of past (Malakos 2018, p. 201 – 202). What is also necessary is to redefine its position in Europe and overcome its haunting. A public and official recognition of loss is the first precondition for mourning (Glynos 2014, p. 142 – 144 cited in Voutyras 2016, p. 230).

On this basis, what remains repressed from the past and has never been dealt with is what comes back to haunt us; as a traumatic remainder, it is always present in its materiality, and exists in reality because it has never been symbolized, worked through and resolved (Frosh 2013, p. 24). In Freudian words, it is the uncanny, linked with the idea of recurrence as the return of the repressed, the compulsion to repeat as a daemonic return (Freud, 1919; Frosh 2013, p. 27). What haunts us is what has been left unrecognized and has not been dealt adequately. Haunting has social origins and this is very important in a collective level or when referring to a nation. The sociality of haunting resides in how each person is constituted by the incorporation of external figures, from infancy to later life, to all those who pass on their desires on to us (Frosh 2013, p. 45). And this is a kind of trauma which leads to haunting. It is through unconscious transmission of disavowed familial dynamics that one generation affects another generation's unconscious (Schwab 2014: 4). Whole cultures are driven this dynamic (Schwab 2014, p. 124). Thus, the psychic is a space in which unconscious personal and social elements come together to haunt us and make us feel not in control of ourselves. Trauma is transmitted intergenerationally and there are external factors to ensure that memories are not lost. Such factors are material objects, relational practices, traditions, rituals, gender discrimination, racialisation, religion etc – all are modes of remembrance (ibid, p. 167 – 168). This way, one might begin

to explain how history in Greece has influenced present generations, social milieu and politics.

In this chapter I have presented a shot history of the Greek state and institutions, along with the socio-political composition of the Greek family and the effects of the 2008 crisis on the population. As I argued at the beginning, my aim was not to describe a clearly defined set of strictly causal forces but to bring to the fore dialectic tensions between powerful institutions (the economy, the state and family), discourses, counter-discourses and unconscious formations. These helped me to delineate some important characteristics of the psychic responses to the crisis and its powerful affinities with the past. And yet my project does not concern the past. It concerns the future. Exploring the return of many young Greeks to 'the family', enforced by sheer necessity, offers a unique opportunity to observe the negotiation of identities in the making, especially the subtle psycho-social negotiations of symbolic and imaginary elements which allow one to position oneself towards one's own desire and the Other. It would be fair to say that this is not just about individuals and families, or individuals and the state.

Greece is and will remain in debt for a very long time. Debt lies at the very core of the neoliberal project. Far from being an economic mechanism alone, debt is a technique through which subjectivities are shaped. According to Lazzarato (2012), the materialisation of the indebted man is only complete when individuals are not expected to reimburse in actual money but rather in conduct, attitudes, ways of behaving, plans, and subjective commitments. conforming oneself to the criteria dictated by the market. Debt entails life discipline, a permanent negotiation on the self and a specific form of subjectivity: that of the indebted man" (Lazzarato, 2012,

p. 104). This prospect infuses discourses of values and individuality with new and pressing realities which had so far remained out of sight. In such an environment, some painful questions need to be asked: where do young people ‘go’ next? How do they emplace themselves in the nexus of familial, labour and political values? What is their experience of the crisis? How do they construct the ‘self’ at a time of crisis?

2. Chapter Two: Theoretical Framework

This project considers the role of family and its importance for the subjectivity of young people at a time of jobs scarcity and deep crisis of socio-political institutions. Given the importance of the family in the European south and its de facto entanglement with other powerful institutions, in this chapter I will try to introduce theoretical concepts that will allows us to explore both imaginary and symbolic investments in the figures of the mother and the father and, beyond that, subjective responses to abstract institutions, such as the state, the role of labor and, more generally, the introduction of the individual into an 'economy' that is not only monetary but also libidinal and symbolic.

In this thesis, I draw on both Kleinian and Lacanian elements and concepts. Kleinian theory contributes to the discussion of the internal world and the attachment between the infant and the mother which seems to prevail in the Greek family. Lacanian theory provides the useful concept of the symbolic Other and the role of the F(O)ther as the one who mediates the relationship of the mother – infant dyad.

Lacan and Klein are not juxtaposed to one another but are used for their respective strengths. Kleinian theory allows us to focus on narratives of self-other relations and what makes them insensitive or resistant to cultural or external influences. For Klein, for instance, conflict is always intrapsychic and unconscious, experienced toward internal parental objects.

For Lacan the unconscious is a social unconscious, constructed through the internalisation of language and culture into which the child is born (Keylor 2003, p. 215). The infant initially recognizes itself in the mother's gaze and soon proceeds to a formation of an ego via the process of identification in the mirror stage. Imaginary

identifications throughout life can be considered as ‘false’ creations but these are counter-balanced by symbolic ones which introduce the individual to the contingency and openness of the Other, as well as to the vagaries of the Other’s desire. In essence, therefore, a subject can never ‘return’ to the mother once separated by language and culture. Yet, the way in which a subject positions itself in its own language reveals the quality of its relationship to the ‘mother’ and to symbolic values, as well the imaginary or symbolic character of its responses to the calls or challenges emanating from the Other. Taking Klein and Lacan together offers a more complete interpretation of both the intrapsychic and the social influences that impact the formation of subjectivity.

Below, I start by discussing the role of the mother in Klein and Lacan, before turning to the role of separation and the formation of imaginary and symbolic identifications. After that, I examine two important formations relevant to the crisis. The first is faith in/to the Other under capitalism with particular emphasis on the phenomenon of haunting; the second is the value of labour for the subject’s emplacement in the nexus of symbolic relations especially since work is a fundamental factor in the autonomy of individuals.

2.1. Elements of maternal relations in a Kleinian and Lacanian psychoanalytic framework

Freud’s theory shows that mental structures are produced in accordance with what is socially acceptable (Freud, 1930/1999). One such mental structure is the ego, which is constituted by the circumstances of the real world through a process of internalisation (Freud, 1923/1999h), functioning to ensure that inherited and

acquired characteristics do not contradict one another. Even particular psychic contents, he argues, such as symbolism, have their source in hereditary transmission (Freud, 1939, p. 240, cited in Klein, 1952, p. 57; Blass, 2012).

In Kleinian object relations theory, attention turned from the intra-psychic dynamics of the drives to interpersonal interaction. The infant is inherently oriented to forming attachment bonds; the relationship with the object influences the structure of the self and is internalised, resulting in both conscious and unconscious representations of the self-object. Because the infant projects life and death instincts onto objects, the latter are experienced as part objects, which take on a good or threatening hue accordingly. In the course of infant development, part objects are gradually transformed into whole objects, and the primal persecutory images of infancy are transformed into good images (Klein, 1952). Importantly, the way in which the infant resolves its desires in the course of its development will result in different levels of understanding of the principle of reality, and this condition continues into adult life. What is involved from the start is a reciprocal process in which external objects are introjected by the infant and then projected back to the outside. These internalised objects function as a reference point for the subject, as the individual tends to interpret present relationships on the basis of internalised representations of its primal relationships.

An important concept in Kleinian theory is that of object constancy, which plays a key role in individuation. This is achieved during the depressive position, and is related to the extent to which a separation between Ego and non-Ego occurs, a process which may be continued as a fantasmatic alternation throughout life. This is a condition that challenges the boundaries between self and the other or, in Gordon's

words (2008), the ‘haunting’ other. It turns upon endurancing the frustration of desire, which is a key element of the move into depressive position. (Klein, 1946). However, an individual distances her/himself from the external object to the extent that the former is under the influence of an internalised object (Klein, 1952). For Winnicott, this phase is achieved through the use of a transitional object.

The good and the bad object, according to Segal (1973), are universal images because they constitute introjected fantasy elements even in the psychic life of adults. The relation to part-objects is the locus from which it is possible to acquire powers of language and symbolisation (Du Gay et al., 2000). Other representatives of this school, however, such as Winnicott and Fairbairn, give greater importance to the relationship with the real object.

Klein takes Freud’s structural thinking very seriously (Klein, 1948/1958), acknowledging the significance of Freud’s idea that parts of the self-the id, the ego, and the superego-are inseparable and constitute the foundation of mental functioning. Klein further addresses the importance of the integration of Freud’s structural model into his concept of life and death instincts, based on his idea that the instincts have a meaningful psychological nature that requires the involvement of the ego (Klein, 1933/1946; Blass, 2012). On this model, the ego tries, from birth, to master the anxiety generated by the struggle between the instincts (Freud, 1920/1999f), by means of introjection and projection (Klein, 1933/1946). As a result of this integration, the ego’s strength is considered a function that derives from the activity of these two instincts (Klein 1952, 1946): where the life instinct dominates, the ego will be strong; where the death instinct dominates, the ego will be weak (Klein, 1948/1958; Blass, 2012).

The 'bridge between classical theory and object relations theory' is Klein's work (Frosh, 1999), which is closer to Freud's and emphasizes the way that the early complexities of inner life encounter an equally complex external environment, with the quality of early relationships being of particular importance. In Klein's view, relationships always exist, and the drive is always a desire for something. Phantasy is central to psychological functioning, and shapes ego development; it is inherent from the beginning of life, and constitutes the phylogenetic inheritance of the child. The basic element of phantasy activity is the object. Freud claims that the ego consists in internalized object relations, and Klein takes this idea further, claiming that the ego is established on fantasies about these internalized objects (Klein, 1948/1958), and that anxiety, is rooted in the vicissitudes of fantasies about internal object relations (Buren, 1993). Klein also claims that the integration of fantasies into the ego is an ongoing process, the success of which leads towards psychic well-being. Correspondingly, phantasies that are not integrated with ego are responsible for distortion or pathologies.

Klein argues for two states of mind between which people alternate throughout their lives: the paranoid-schizoid position and the depressive position. In the paranoid-schizoid position, the infant projects its own aggressive drives, fear of annihilation, and paranoid anxiety. The latter anxiety entails a breaking down of the object into good and bad parts, according to the mother's responsiveness to the infant's needs. This splitting is a defence mechanism which occurs because the infant needs to avoid and control the destructiveness of the object. The infant introjects the representation of the good part of the object, and projects the representation of the persecuting bad object into the external environment. These then form the basis of the good and bad image of the self respectively. The internalised bad object is the

persecutory part of the ego, while the internalised good object is the element of the ego ideal. This process, which Klein calls 'projective identification' (Klein, 1946), is a primal defence mechanism, whereby the subject projects elements of its own Ego into an object, because it needs to be purged of unwanted parts of the self that generate unbearable pain. It is easier for such a subject to feel that the aggressive elements belong to the object, rather than to itself. Projective identification is also a way for the subject to control the object. During the depressive position, on the other hand, the infant comes to perceive the object as a whole and to recognise its separate existence from itself. In this position, the infant is also afraid that its destructiveness will destroy the object. During the paranoid-schizoid position, the infant experiences a sense of omnipotence, while, in the depressive position, it encounters the reality principle of the external world, which the ego has to accept and then mourn the fact that some of its desires cannot be satisfied, justifying this position as the basis for the development of subjectivity.

The models discussed so far concern the passage from individual development to a relation with the object, and subsequently a relation with the broader social milieu. In what follows, psychoanalytic theories of groups are briefly presented in preparation for some of the themes that are discussed in the data analysis chapter.

According to Freud (1921/1999g), the psychic function of individuals seems to regress to an earlier form when they are brought together in groups; this includes suspension of intellectual functions, such as the critical faculty, and emotional contagion. Between group members and their leader, a libidinal attachment is developed whereby the leader is experienced as an ideal libidinal object with whom the members are identified. As such, the leader is introjected as the Ego's Ideal, and

comes to influence the Ego and Superego functions of every member. In Bionian terms (Bion, 1962), the group function includes a conscious and an unconscious organisational level, in which one can recognise a group mentality that describes common emotions and desires driving the behaviour of members. One of the basic needs around which the group culture is organised is the need the members have for dependence from the leader who is assumed to be omnipotent and omniscient. The group develops irrational expectations of full satisfaction of its needs from a good source (Klein's good object). Secondly, the basic assumption of fight or flight organizes the behavior around the paranoid belief that there is an enemy inside or outside the group, which members must fight or flee.

Anzieu and Kaes (cited in Tsambarli, 2011) have developed the main theoretical frame for the French school's view of the family. Kaes suggests 'group psychic organ' to describe fantasy relations among group members that function collectively. Anzieu understands the group as a coherent shell that contains every member's individual psyche, with the main function of the group being the parental one, in which individuals regress. This shell resembles an Ego, with an external surface turned out to the external environment and an internal one turned in to the intra-psychic members' reality. For Anzieu (cited in Tsambarli, 2011), every human group is a result of projections of the intra-psychic condition (Ego/leader-Superego/prohibitive rules-Id/unconscious desires). The behavior of the group is analogous to the intra-psychic structure used as a shell. Like Bion, Anzieu assumes that in a group, relations are organized around the pole of technique and the pole of fantasy. The first pole involves the activities of the conscious part of the group, and the second is the group's fantasy activities. Similarly, the fantasy activity is organized on two levels, that of structure, and that of organization. At the structural

level, the group psychic organ exists and its function is actualized in four unconscious ways: 1) the group illusion*, 2*) the parental image-shape; 3) the body figure; and 4) the group's function as a dream. The group illusion describes a defensive group fusion around which the members' relationships are organized based upon the group's fusion of the libidinal drives, which are invested in the group object, and aggression aimed at another object. The group illusion exists when members are gathered around the personal fantasy of the leader and the members have their own fantasies which are produced from the leader's illusions. (Tsambarli, 2011, pp. 100-112).

A basic idea utilized in this thesis, is the concept of the m(O)ther. For Lacan, the mother's presence and care for the infant certifies her love and respectively, the mother's absence is experienced as traumatic rejection, as loss of her love. Freud has shown how the child symbolizes in playing the mother's presence and absence; this primary symbolization are the child's first steps into the symbolic order. One important image here is that of the devouring mother. For Lacan, and as explored in this thesis, the child has to detach her/himself from the imaginary relation to the mother in order to enter the social world (Evans 2006, p. 120 – 121).

Following from the statement above, the ideal role of the traditional mother is rather clear: she is the provider of infinite love and support, a caring, selfless person who has the best interests of children at heart. The patriarchal south emphasises such 'feminine' values, always chiming with marriage, sacrificial altruism, the prioritisation of motherhood, etc. The long attachment this produces can be beneficial, but it can also affect a child's sense of identity and independence, fostering a mother-child interdependence and a question around the m(O)ther's desire. The relation with the maternal is this second case tends towards a unity in

which the child is the one that sacrifices its subjectivity to the mother, in an attempt to unite itself with her wholeness. Thus, the child receives jouissance fantasmatically, obtaining a sense of being by submitting to the (m)Other's desire. This desire dominates the subject, forcing it to desire what the (m)Other desires, and to desire it in the same way (Fink, 1995). When the infant ceases to be the endpoint of the (m)Other's desire, then the child can escape the grip (Lacan & Alain-Miller, 1998/2017, p. 191). In terms of a culture, we may say, somewhat paradoxically, that this condition holds a community together, albeit in a fantasmatic way.

Some examples of submitting to the (m)Other's desire are as follows: in societies in which sex antagonism is strong, the status of women is low and penis envy intense, and woman's emotional satisfaction to be delivered by the mother-son relationship (Slater, 1992, based on Freud, 1933, pp. 171-2). Under these conditions, the son is likely to be treated as a cure for the mother's narcissistic wounds, rather than as a subject in himself (Slater, 1992), which in turn creates a narcissistic personality structure in him. Another consequence of a strong identification with an ambivalent mother is the double bind, which brings into being 'madness' which indicates the tendency for narcissistic disorders to be emotionally contagious, especially between parents and children (Baternson, 1956). With regards to the mother-daughter bond, reciprocal concern for emotional needs can be demonstrated, as a result of which separation anxieties may cause mutual fears of abandonment; this can be more severe when the child has been unconsciously taught to evaluate separation as abandonment, priming an inability for separate functioning. What can be particularly dangerous is the non-existence of a symbolic separation between mother and child, which means that the child has become the mOther's phallus; that is, the object of the mother's desire (Lacan, 2007).

2.2. Identifications-separation-moments of subjectivity

The analytic chapters will also discuss identifications beyond the maternal. In early Freud, identification means the adoption by the subject of characteristics and qualities belonging to another subject. In later Freud, the concept meant "the operation itself whereby the human subject is constituted" (Laplanche & Pontalis, 1967/2018, p. 206), with the ego and the superego being constituted out of a series of identifications (Evans, 2006). Lacan also contributes to the theorisation of the concept, distinguishing between imaginary and symbolic identification. He defines identification as "the transformation that takes place in the subject when he assumes an image" (Lacan, 1977, p. 2). Imaginary identifications are developed in the mirror stage, when the infant views its image in the mirror and identifies with it, while at the same time experiencing its body as fragmented. This process depends upon a rivalry that develops between the infant and its image due to the wholeness of the image threatening the subject with fragmentation and giving rise to aggressivity. The infant identifies with the image in order to resolve this aggressive tension (Evans, 2006, p. 118). This identification gives rise to the ideal ego, as a source of imaginary projection (Lacan, 1999/2015, p. 414). Thus, Lacan's 'Mirror stage' (Lacan, 1938/2002a) represents a fundamental aspect of the structuration of subjectivity, with Lacan later defining it as a permanent structure of subjectivity. This stage represents the infant's introduction to the imaginary order, in which it becomes alienated from itself, bringing about the formation of the ego via identification with its own specular image. Symbolic identification, which comes after imaginary identification, occurs in the third phase of the Oedipus complex, in which the child identifies with the father, giving rise to the ego-ideal.

For the later Lacan, the ego-ideal is the internalised law that governs the subject's position in the symbolic order. Symbolic identification then is an identification with the signifier (Evans, 2006, p. 83). The Oedipus complex for Freud entails the subject's desire for one parent and rivalry with the other; he argues that all psychopathologic structures originate in a malfunction of this complex. For Lacan, on the other hand, it is the subject's desire of the mother that is key, while the father is always the rival, regardless of the gender of the child (Evans, 2006, p. 131). According to this reading, the complex marks the transition from the Imaginary to the Symbolic-from culture to civilization-and the imposition of the symbolic law, the internalisation of which creates the superego, a symbolic structure that regulates the subject's desire (Lacan, 1958/2006; Homer, 2005). This transition from the Imaginary/dual to the Symbolic/triadic is the function of the paternal metaphor (Lacan & Alain-Miller, 1994/2020), which denote the metaphorical character of the Oedipus complex, imposing the law and controlling desire in the Oedipus complex. The paternal metaphor introduces a symbolic space between the mother and the child, whereby the child is able to identify itself as being separate from the mother. The signifier that breaks the mother-child relationship and introduces the child into the Symbolic order of desire and lack is the 'Name of the Father'. The latter refers to the symbolic law that the child perceives to be the location of the mother's desire. The child attempts to seduce the mother by becoming the object of her desire, which is the imaginary phallus, and represents what the child thinks one should have in order to be the object of the mother's desire. So, the completion of the Oedipus complex involves giving up the illusion of being the imaginary phallus for the mother, and not being identified with it. On this basis, castration is the recognition of lack, the process whereby the child realises that it lacks the phallus, which belongs instead to the

father. Lacan also points out elsewhere that the forms of the dominant neuroses are very dependent on family circumstances. Contemporary neurosis is defined as the product of a father whose 'presence' is always inferior, absent, or merely decorative (Lacan, 1938/2002a). This phenomenon is starkly illustrated in the data analysis chapter.

In Lacan identification does not merely represent a socially available object that subjects identify with (Stavrakakis 2000, p. 22); rather, it represents what the (m)Other/(f)Other desires. One can therefore speak about the society's 'ego ideals', which are based on the ego's unconscious coordinates" (Lacan, 1960/2006e, p. 567); that is, the signifiers that form the basis of a subject's articulation of identity (Vanheule, 2011, pp. 4-7). The signifiers one adopts to achieve recognition are those supported by the system of language, so we identify with those that constitute our ego ideal or, with 'what the community values most' (Brock, 2015, p. 71). In few words, what happens to our sense of identity depends to a large degree on what happens to the master signifiers that represent us. Master signifiers are identity bearing words, in which subjects invest their identities, and which can function as objects of desire. Common collective master signifiers explored in the analysis chapters include "religion", "motherland", the "crisis" and, in political discourse, terms such as "the Left", "the Right", "freedom", "identity", the "Greek patterns of thought" or even the "patriot" and the "traitor". Such signifiers give a sense of significance when we manage to ally ourselves with them or oppose ourselves to them in relation to the desire of the Other (Lacan & Alain-Miller, 1964/1973, p. 257) satisfying our narcissistic Symbolic-order desires (Bracher, 1993); we can thus speak of identification. Repetition of master signifiers elicits the Other's recognition, love

and containment which entails the desire to identify with the Symbolic Other (Brock, 2015, p. 71).

In this symbiotic relation between subjectivity and the social world, affect and jouissance are key elements. However, both subjectivity and symbolic representations of society are constitutively lacking, and this is how the politico-hegemonic struggle is made possible. As the Symbolic cannot fully determine subjectivity (Žižek, 1989; Glynos, 2001), the subject tries to fill this lack with particular contents, such as the empty signifiers of labour, success, and political ideologies. Such signifiers carry a content that promise fullness and the return of lost enjoyment (Lacan, 2002b, p. 10-13).

In the same line of thought, ideologies have to be supported by a fantasy scenario, investing them with some supreme value at the level of enjoyment. Ideology is then taken as a promise that following this scenario will return the lost enjoyment (Lacan, 2002b, p. 10-13). They require both libidinal investment and symbolic articulation to sustain themselves (Stavrakakis 2007). According to Žižek (1989, pp. 45), "ideology is not a dreamlike illusion that we build to escape reality. It is a fantasy-construction which serves as a support for our reality itself". By recourse to phantasy, subjects can fill a lack, just as the sublime object fills what is missing in the master signifier (Butler, 2005, p. 57; Brock, 2015, p. 127).

As Glynos and Voutyras argue (2016), one of the main functions of an ideological phantasy is to explain failure and loss. There is no mourning, in the sense that it seems there is no sign of transformation from 'desire for recognition to recognition of desire, characterised by opening up the loss to a process of exploration' (Glynos & Voutyras, 2016, p. 4; Stavrakakis, 2007, p. 163-169). Mourning could signal the loosening of an overinvested affective attachment (Freud,

1918), which is the source of *jouissance*, and pain as *jouissance* makes disinvestment difficult. Likewise, processes of social change require the same route to be followed. New identifications and new forms of resistance can only emerge through a shift in both the symbolic and the libidinal character of attachments (Stavrakakis 2008; Alcorn 2002, p. 117 cited in Stavrakakis 2008, p. 1050). Fantasies can sustain relations of domination and exploitation, which reproduce structures of subordination and obedience (Stavrakakis, 2007, 2016) in which *jouissance* is what sustains them—here we have the payment that the servant receives for serving the master. *Jouissance* also explains the stability and force of national identifications within modernity (Stavrakakis & Chrysoloras, 2006), due to the psychic investment that exists between people and nation.

What drives acts of identification, and what sustains desire are affective bonds and the imagined *jouissance* of fullness, which is promised in fantasy (*objet petit a*) and is linked to the hatred of Others (Stavrakakis, 1999). In the field of fantasy, the *objet petit a* is a last attempt to fill this lack in the Other, created by the loss of *jouissance* (Stavrakakis, 1999). The Other seems to be the one who steals jouissance from the subjects. In the case of a state, this can be used politically to create the perception of the Other as an enemy who steals jouissance from the state/ government/ citizens and create a false national identity; an identity of the victim which may then produce nationalistic consciousness or even extremist groups.

In the case of a governing structure and a nation too, what sustains attachment and identification consists of discourse that has both libidinal and linguistic components. Language and the discursive alone cannot explain attachment to particular objects of identification unless there is a libidinal investment. Affect and attachment in social discourse is not far from the desire of the mother as it is firstly

acceptable to her. Similarly, the durability and weakness of the libidinal investment in national identity versus European identity, according to Stavrakakis (2000), means difference in cathexis. There is no durable nation and national identity without the effective manipulation of libidinal investment and jouissance (Stavrakakis 2007, p. 205). This claim can explain why the post-structuralist models that reduce subjectivity to a mere linguistic structure are not sufficient. It is a matter of both symbolic power and affect. Thus, the disinvestment of social constructions is beyond rational thought or action. It is a matter of withdrawing from representations; it is the act of mourning (Alcorn 2002, p. 117). Similarly, ideologies perform psychic functions (Koeningsberg, 1989), allowing fundamental desires, fantasies, anxieties, and conflicts to be projected into reality, and this is why they are sustained; they also require both libidinal investment and symbolic power to be sustained (Stavrakakis 2007). Identification entails the dimension of passion – of affective investment which presupposes the mobilisation of libido (Freud 1905/1990a). Lacan speaks of *jouissance*, focusing on the affective side of identification (Stavrakakis & Chrysoloras, 2006).

In Gordon's words (2008), it is a matter of 'haunting', and holds that it characterizes the whole determining and dominant social structure, 'history' or society, as it is always a struggle between the living and the ghostly. It is a form of the occupation of psychic space, of a cultural introjection (Smadja, 2011). To be haunted means to make choices still informed by the past, by what is already known through available identities. It is to make choices within those determinations that make the present waver, to be tied to historical and social effects (Roseneil, 2006). These historical effects pass through and between subjects by means of emotion, and structure individual minds. If people are 'contaminated' by this kind of cultural

inheritance or introjection, then how free are they to progress both on an individual and collective level? For Gordon (2008), this freedom cannot occur or be exercised without 'something' one has to try for oneself. In fact, one could argue that the problem is not the act of transmission, but the fact that a set of beliefs, followed by more groups of ideas (themselves irrational and dogmatic), are transmitted without being challenged. As such, the worst-case scenario is that the capacity to think is 'deactivated' in favour of doctrine. This concern is validated by Freud's arguments about the group mind and its capacity for exercising a decisive influence over the mental life of the individual, deactivating the capacity for rational thought (Freud, 1921/1999g). Haunting is the pattern of internal submission to the Other, which possesses psychic space without being filtered and mediated through consciousness (Black, 2006, p. 621).

Along with wider discussion of the Oedipus complex, identification with the maternal and beyond, haunting and possession of the psychic space, separation and individuation are also discussed. In Freudian terms (1923/1999h), separation means that a person is rid of internal inhabitants, so as to be able to function at a satisfactory level (although Freud speaks of the Ego function). In "Mourning and Melancholia", Freud (1917/1999d) speaks of the mourning of the lost object. In the absence of this process, the subject continues seeking it and, blames itself or others for the loss, while actually remaining idle. In this case, libido is withdrawn into the ego, instead of being invested in another 'love object,' with the result that the subject 'regresses to narcissism' (Freud, 1917/1999d, p. 4). One could also ask whether there are indicators of strong superegoic activity (Freud, 1933/1999k) as the strict Superego may itself act as a kind of 'haunting'. In Gordon's words (2008), one should ask

whether the person is under the dominance of tradition, possessed, or 'haunted' by traces of past relationships, or whether one tries to differentiate oneself.

In Bionian terms (1961, 1968), groups-whether based on religious, national, or other fantasies-consist in a common imaginary intra-psychic space, in which common attitudes and phantasies, both conscious and unconscious can be activated. On this basis, separation occurs when a link between the individual condition and the group condition exists while, at the same time, there is a sufficient level of independence of the former. People need to be loved so they integrate into groups, but by doing so, they resort to defence mechanisms brought about by a collective regression (Bion, 1961, 1968; see also Stierling, 1973). This leads to the coexistence of the group condition with the individual one. In Winnicottian terms (Winnicott, 1965), differentiation is the process that takes a subject from a state of dependence to one of independence, and is a matter of maturity, which consists in both emotional growth and socialization.

Lacan claims that the type of separation (or lack thereof) that an infant undergoes determines the type of fundamental fantasy it will develop concerning its place or position with respect to the Other's desire. Separation should be regarded as a psychical event rather than an empirical occurrence. It is the subjective experience of psychical separation that induces the structuring effect that will impart a lasting shape to subjectivity. "Separation occurs when an alienated subject encounters the Name of the Father as a unique signifier that refers to some aspects of the mOther's desire that extends beyond the subject" (Fink, 1995, p. 63). 'The logical point of separation is that a child is prevented by the Name of the Father from becoming the mOther's phallus, the object that the child imagines to be her loss/ lack/ desire, the object that could complete her' (Fink, 1995).

At this point of separation, there is a possibility of the emergence of subjectivity, which entails three constitutive moments that can be summarized as follows: alienation, whereby the Other dominates the subject and takes its place; separation, wherein the *objet a*, as the Other's desire, comes to the fore and dominates the subject; and traversal of the fantasy, where the subject subjectifies the cause of its existence and is characterised by a kind of pure desiring without an object (Fink, 1995). More specifically, in alienation, the child needs to submit to the Other and to become a subject of language, allowing the signifier to represent it in words as the result of a forced choice. This constitutes a place in which there is no subject, but rather a possibility of being, even though the subject is lacking. The second operation, "separation, involves the alienated subject's confrontation with the Other, not as language but as desire" (Fink, 1995, p. 50). In this case, the physical presence of the child is due to the parents' desire for something. Thus, the subject is caused by the Other's desire, and the child needs to deal with the mOther's desire. Separation gives rise to being, but implies a situation in which subject and Other are excluded, so the subject needs to come from the outside, from something other than the subject and the Other (Fink, 1995). In separation, we start from a divided parent and the subject attempts to fill both the mOther's and its own lack of being with itself. In the traversal of fantasy, the subject assumes a new position regarding the Other as language and as desire. It is the move by the alienated subject to become its own cause, and comes to be a subject in place of the cause. The Other cause of desire is thus internalised (Fink, 1995).

The subject is therefore ontologically fragmented around a split, and attempts to cover its lack by means of continual identificatory acts, so as to re-establish an identity. Identification is prolonged in available social ideologies, roles, etc. A full

identity cannot be established however; *jouissance* is irretrievably lost, and the subject becomes a subject of desire. The prohibition of *jouissance* is what permits the emergence of desire, which in turn is structured around the search for lost *jouissance*. Subjectivity is then understood in terms of a lack of *jouissance*. Social roles, socio-political ideologies, consumer choices, etc. are fantasmatically supported by the imaginary promise of fullness and of recapturing lost *jouissance*. What is more, desire is sustained by the subject's experiences, which are linked to the *jouissance* of the body, which itself is central in sustaining faith in socio-political discourses and ideologies. Take, for instance, religious rituals, or national celebrations related to the defeat of a national enemy. The promise of a full enjoyment is linked to the *objet petit a*, the object which is the cause of desire and that forms the subject's fantasy (Glynos, & Stavrakakis, 2008).

Let us sum up the Kleinian and Lacanian elements discussed up to this point.

Both Klein and Lacan share the premise that the relationship with the mother forms the matrix of the primary psychological experience of self and other. The need to sustain this imago and to remain the object of the mother's desire structures the self and experience in what Lacan calls the Imaginary (Keylor, 2003). Both Klein and Lacan believe that what allows the infant to create a subjectivity and experience itself as separate from its mother is a mastery of symbols that it can employ as a defence against the painful affects of deep grief, loss, anxiety, and fear of destructiveness, and for the construction of meaning. This capacity for symbolisation permits entry to the triadic whole object relation, in place of the dyadic confusion of part objects. The use of symbols here makes intrapsychic differentiation possible (Keylor, 2003, p. 214). In Freud, there are two different theories of symbol

formation: one is founded on the resemblance of images, the object representation while the other is founded on linking of images through linguistic concepts, the word representation. The Kleinian notion of the symbolic is built upon the former theory and the Lacanian in the latter" (Mintchev, 2015).

What Lacan adds to the picture of part objects and their attendant fantasies is that "part objects are signifiers for the primordial object (*objet petit a*) and that they are organised into sensual and perceptual networks of meaning and relations on which more mature interpretations and signifying chains are based" (Buren, 1993; Ragland-Sullivan, 1987). Object relations in the imaginary order are dyadic, which is also the case in the paranoid schizoid position.

2.3. Symbolic faith in capitalist times

At this point it would be useful to discuss subjectivity and its relation to the desire of the Other from the perspective of discourse theory. For Lacan, discourse is to be understood primarily as a formal system existing before any spoken word, which determines the concrete speech act. The theoretical background of the Oedipus complex should be extended from the individual to social relations; that is, to relations between the subject and the Other and between the subject and the object in a capitalist culture (Vanheule, 2016).

To start with, one should speak about the Name of the Father, the agent of symbolic Law (Lacan & Alain-Miller, 1981/1993) which introduces a certain lack that permits the subject to enter the symbolic as a desiring subject at the level of language. The lacking subject comes to realize its dependence on identifications with

objects derived from the socio-symbolic order. According to Lacan, there is no subject that is not already a social subject, and subjectivity itself is grounded upon the lack that stands at the root of the human condition. Social reality is thus the place in which the essentially lacking subject sees its absent fullness. It is this situation that establishes and orients desire. This takes place despite the fact that the big Other is itself centred around lack.

Capitalist culture has an effect on subject formation, since signifiers originate in the symbolic order and influence the subject. Following Lacan's claim that desire is always the desire of the Other, in a capitalist culture, the subject's question is concerned with what should be desired, which is a question of the conditions under which the subject can be desired by the Other (Lacan, 1958/2006b; Vanheule, 2016). Desire is formed by the desire of the other in the mother-infant dyad; the individual's desire finds its meaning in the desire of the other, because the first object of desire is to be recognised by the Other (Lacan, 1953/2007b).

One consequence of capitalism is that it puts into question our faith in relations based upon traditional authorities, and politicizes traditional subject positions linked to sex, race, age, status, nation, etc. (Glynos, 2011, p. 81). According to Žižek (1998), we live in a Risk society that comes after Nature and Tradition, and toys the non-existence of the big Other. We can no longer rely either on Nature, as the permanent foundation and resource of our activity, or on Tradition as the substantial form of customs that predetermine our lives. There is no global mechanism regulating our interactions, which is what the properly postmodern nonexistence of the big Other means. People who are still determined by traditional paradigms seek another agency to take on the position of the Subject Supposed to Know and to guarantee their choices, such as ethical committees, the government, other authorities, conspiracy

theories or the invisible Master (Žižek, 1998, p. 341-342). There is a decline in paternal authority and the traditional structures that regulate libidinal life, or a decline in our faith in the symbolic Other (Glynos, 2011), which in turn generates new anxieties instead of creating new possibilities for the self. Reflexivity is thus universalised and leads to the disintegration of the big Other. Žižek continues that the inability of the risk society to take on the consequences of global reflexivization is evident in how the family is treated. In reflexive modernity, children are treated as responsible and autonomous with greater freedom of choice than in traditional western societies. Parenthood then turns into a reflexive choice. Institutions functioning as an antidote to families, now function as replacements to family functions, allowing individuals to prolong family dependence and never to be forced to grow up.

To give an example from the field of family and civil society in Greece, one could suggest that there is not so much differentiation between the traditional and reflexive modernity concerning family functions, as there has always been a public professional life and a public milieu imitating the familial one. Subjects were always treated as members of wider families (institutions, organisations, etc.), and not as responsible and mature individuals. Paternal authority has, however, been facing a decline, and there is a co-existence of traditional, modern, and post-modern elements of social life. So, we may ask whether or not symbolic faith in capitalist times has been threatened in the course of the Greek crisis. Moreover, what is the place of the family in this process? How, and to what extent can the family address capitalism generally, and especially during the crisis? This is a topic investigated in this research and a large part of the analysis is devoted to it, so it is worth examining this relation first of all in theoretical terms.

Thus, according to Žižek, the problem would be the decline of the paternal authority as such, but also the new forms of dependency that arise from the dissipation of this symbolic authority or trust in the symbolic Other (Žižek, 1998). Traditional hierarchies may no longer be sustained; new social relations among free individuals are created, based on trust, where the 'passionate attachment' becomes the secret transgressive source of libidinal satisfaction, even though the Master-Slave image seems to persist in different forms. As Žižek also says, "regulatory power mechanisms remain operative only in so far as they are secretly sustained by the very element they endeavour to repress" (Žižek, 1998, p. 345).

Capitalism leaves space for freedom, creating new possibilities of becoming and opportunities for choosing new identities (Žižek, 1998, p. 82); this means continual doubt of the symbolic authority as such. As there is no longer a concrete concept of the contemporary subjectivity, and all the dimensions of people's identity become a matter of an ever-greater range of choices, anxiety rises as well. From a psychoanalytic point of view, this increase in anxiety coincides with the undervaluation of our faith in the big Other, whereby various "small big Others" are posited as substitutes (Žižek, 1998, p. 83), from whence people expect to derive some kind of solutions (Žižek, 1998, 82-84).

The most appropriate type of subjectivity for capitalism and neo-liberalism is, of course, competitive individualism, which suits a prioritisation of profit. Žižek identifies a link between "Marxist surplus value, the Lacanian *objet petit a* as surplus enjoyment and the paradox of the superego" (Žižek, 1998, p. 87). The main objection to the discourse of the capitalist is its failure to satisfy desire, because the more one has, the more one desires to have in an endless attempt to sustain one's unsatisfied desire. The subject of desire persists as a never fully satisfied subject (Žižek, 1998,

p. 87). Due to the decline of symbolic authority and the prohibitions of the big Other, the subject now has social permission to acquire the object of its desire. As such, the social subject comes closer to realizing the real cause of its desire. This proximity to desire and fulfilment arouses anxiety, as the subject can no longer be sustained as a subject of desire. Clinging to this kind of subjectivity means making the big Other exist, with other versions; a big Other that exists in the Real. Some of the attempts to make that possible include complaining to the Other and blaming the Other for allowing others to steal our *jouissance* and way of life (e.g. national enemies, politicians, foreigners, etc.) (Žižek, 1998, p. 90). What should be mentioned here is the logic of the subject that blames the Other for its failure and omnipotence, as if the Other is responsible for its failure to exist. The more narcissistic the structure of the subject, the more it puts the blame on the big Other and asserts its dependence upon it. This is the 'culture of complaint', in which, according to Žižek, the basic characteristic is a call addressed to the big Other to intervene and put things right (Žižek, 1998, p. 361).

Based on the above, one could argue that contemporary socio-political symptoms are a direct result of the kind of subjectivity that the logic of capitalism promotes. And what capitalism promotes is the subject of desire, misperceived as a liberated conscious ego (Žižek, 1998, p. 96). Thus, the disintegration discussed above has not led societies to a promised land of free choices that might have been constitutive of an identity, a way of life, and experiences. For Žižek, what we cannot accept as subjects of desire is that the Other does not exist, and this is the reason that we have recourse to fantasies of the Other who steals our enjoyment (Žižek, 1998, p. 97).

What needs to be mentioned at this point is the psychic continuity that exists between generations and within families, at a micro and macro level, from the individual to society. These are patterns of repetition of memories transmitted from one period and generation to another, as a form of 'haunting' (Gordon, 2008), unconscious identification, etc. One can speak of a reciprocal process between past and present, with people being affected even when they have no direct communication with one another or no experience of a past event. It is the "repetitive instances when home becomes unfamiliar, when your bearings on the world lose direction, when the over-and-done-with comes alive, when what's been in your blind spot comes into view" (Gordon, 2008, p. xvi; Frosh, 2013, p. 2).

Haunting is the power that a 'ghost' has over people; we can call it desire, inclination or motivation. It cannot be reduced merely to an individual's conscious biography, loss, or trauma, or to the return of our loved ones, to the Freudian familiar stranger or the 'uncanny' (Freud, 1919/1999e). It signifies the condition that makes biography historically possible and imaginable. It characterizes the whole dominant and determining social structure, or what we call 'history' or 'society', the impacts, and losses of which are felt in everyday life, and especially when they are over (wars, etc.) (Gordon, 2008). As such, to be haunted means to make choices still informed by the past, by tradition, by what is already known through available identities (Roseneil, 2004); it is to be tied to historical and social effects (Gordon, 2008).

Processes that link "an institution with an individual, a social structure and a subject, history and biography" (Gordon, 2008, p. 19) may motivate an exploration to the historical impacts passing through and between people (ethno-religious identities, traditions, attitudes, culture, etc.), which structure mind and influence the subject during their process of differentiation. However, without a history of healthy

separations from the losses of the past, the work of mourning for current losses seems more difficult (Volkan, 2015). For psychic damage or violence done historically, a work of reparation is necessary in order for future generations not to be more vulnerable to new cycles of the same mistakes (Schwab, 2010).

Following Frosh, who draws on Freud to argue that identity and haunting go together, we may have to see all identity construction as a mode of traumatic possession. Haunting is then the norm, and not the pathological exception (Frosh, 2013). And if this is the case, then we may have to see cultural inheritance and history as 'pathological hauntings', as the present is always saturated with the past, each generation being filled by the previous one. 'Freedom' from this inheritance and change, to use Gordon's words (Gordon, 2008, p. 203), is "going beyond what you already know. Change cannot occur without the encounter, without the something you have to try for yourself. There is no guaranteed outcome for the encounter; much is uncertain and the results may be limited. But if you think you can fight and eliminate the systems' complicated nastiness without it, you will not get very far because it will return to haunt you".

By using the concept of 'haunting', my intention is not to speak about the unspeakable hidden 'ghost' of the past that Gordon has in mind. Rather, I am using the frame of hauntings mostly to describe dynamics, and to explain how familial values and the construction of identity are transmitted. It is on this basis that we may have to see all identity construction, both individual and collective, as a mode of traumatic possession. Thus, I am viewing the familial relations examined in this research as a form of continuity and haunting. Within this framework, the question of what freedom from this inheritance constitutes for the research participants and

the wider society that they represent, as well as similar societies in the European south, is a topic of investigation.

In this sense, one could link Gordon's haunting with Castoriadis' (1973) claim that the imaginary is the basic element of human creativity, which constitutes history as such. Castoriadis argues that social-historical institutionalisation is a result of the human *prattein*, which in turn is based on fantasy as the basis for every human creation. Social-historical reality, therefore, as an undifferentiated whole, is a magma of social imaginary meanings. For Castoriadis, human creativity is not defined by rational processes but is an imaginary, undefined creation that is not subject to reason and causality.

2.4. Why work matters

Another idea relevant to this thesis is the importance of work and the different meanings that it carries for each research participant. Beginning with Freud, work is presented as the economics of the libido, a form of sublimation (although mostly used for artistic and intellectual work), which displaces large amounts of narcissistic, aggressive libidinal components (Freud, 1930/1999j, p. 80). On his analysis, part of sexual energy is sublimated to more socially acceptable activities. In the same line of thought, for Menninger (1942) work represents a fight against something, an attack upon the environment as an effort to master a situation or material, and to produce something, putting destructive energy to a constructive use. However, if work is only done by external or internal compulsion, it cannot be a complete sublimation, and is therefore connected "with the absence of sufficient eroticization to give some degree of conscious satisfaction in the work itself," or else it is a compulsion to undertake boring tasks (Menninger, 1942). In such a case, we cannot

say that "satisfaction is combined with sufficient erotization to give conscious satisfaction in the work itself […] as a way in which the erotic instinct can actually neutralise the destructive elements in the work sublimation" (Menninger, 1942, p. 174). So, I will use 'work' to denote a sublimation in the sense that "the destructive instinct may be modified by the sublimating effects of the erotic instinct into the constructive activity of work" (Menninger, 1942).

We should also briefly note the changes that have taken place in work from pre-capitalist to capitalist times. In pre-capitalist times, slaves acted under their Master's orders, but with the coming of modernity, it is knowledge that becomes the agent, occupying the place of mastery itself. It is with knowledge that work that has meaning is produced. This meaning is the meaning of truth (Žižek, 2014, p. 41; Lacan 2007, p. 51) and surplus *jouissance* is turned into surplus value. There is something in the status of work that is identical to the status of enjoyment. Any leftish project "to subvert capitalism from the workers' perspective, is destined to fail since valorised work is an integral ingredient of capitalist ideology" (Žižek, 2014, p. 45). The left fails to tackle "the idea that any social link is inseparable from an entropic libidinal surplus that embodies its ontological inconsistency" (Žižek 2014, p. 45). The organisation of work in Marxist socialism, according to Lacan, is based on the same principle of valorisation that fuels capitalism (Žižek, 2014). Capital's ability to make the worker produce excessively needs to be connected with the psychoanalytic ontology of surplus as entropic libido, finding an homology between surplus value and surplus *jouissance* (Lacan, 2002b; Lacan & Alain-Miller, 1991/2007). However, Lacan's surplus *jouissance* not only refers to unpaid labour time, but to the quality of work as such.

In this thesis the role of work is discussed as a meaning-making activity that fulfils and gives a sense of purpose. Work is explored as “a symbolic practice where its bodily and mental practices are signifying practices which carry and produce meanings” (Dashtipour, 2014, p. 115). What is further investigated is what happens when symbolic resources are inadequate or damaged. How do subjects sublimate their excess energy or how do they overcome the affective suffering involved in work (Dashtipour, 2014) in cases of unemployment or inactivity?

Similarly, work is explored in its transformative potential, which may generate new subjective powers and a capacity to produce forms. Work may not address the lack in the Other (Arnaud & Vanheule, 2007), as the identification process (Lacan, 1977) is never completely successful, and subjects are never fully determined by discourse or by the social (Stavrakakis, 2008). However, subjects acknowledging this lack, can give up the search for recognition, break free from the need to invest in a self-image associated with work and emancipate themselves from imaginary identifications (Stavrakakis, 2008).

Another way to regard work as a route to freedom is its function or ability to ‘touch on the real’, in the sense that the real entails affect is in a dialectical relationship with the symbolic, and is very specific to each individual’s traumatic history; yet it remains a universal feature of humanity at the same time. It is a question of the confrontation with work beyond symbolization. Work can be “a production of life” (Dejours, 2007; Deranty, 2010, p. 173), and can demonstrate its transformative potential, in the sense that overcoming affective suffering is an emancipatory experience. Along the same lines, work may be seen as production—as creativity—and human creativity is the only way to recapture lost *jouissance*. This is in sharp distinction to the regression of subjects who feel trapped between

childhood and adulthood. However, it may only take place through symbolisation, which is already lacking (meaning that creativity entails an alienating dimension) (Stavrakakis, 2007). Either as a means for survival or as a transformative potential, work can act as a transitional space between the maternal and the external world and what may happen when symbolic structures are damaged or underdeveloped and job positions decrease; what happens to this transitional space.

3. Chapter Three: Methodology

3.1. Introduction

This research aims to explore the constitution of subjectivity in young people in Greece in relation to the desire of the Other during the crisis. It uses concepts drawn from Kleinian and Lacanian psychoanalysis. Kleinian psychoanalysis, and object relations theory more generally, refer to relational dynamics and unconscious processes that shape subjectivity. Lacan refers to discourse and power relations, including the family as a signifier. Thus, family is examined at both the micro and macro levels, with subsequent influences expressed in the here and now through the narratives of the respondents; such influences came to bear both after socialisation in the family. The Greek crisis is subjected to this framework so as to explore whether challenging social times in a conservative country like Greece might act as a force for younger people to reinvent themselves, surpassing given constraints. That is, whether a social crisis might lead them to 'transcend' familiar trajectories in favour of a transformation, understood as the generation of new possibilities of being. What it is that drives the individual to make a specific 'choices'? And why choices in one direction rather than another? What has the crisis led these young people to do with their lives? This chapter is about methods and methodology, and it explains the approach that has been taken for the data analysis. It begins with a brief introduction to psychosocial studies in general, and psychosocial methodology in particular, which is employed in this research. Afterwards, the methods, sampling strategy and data analysis are extensively explained.

3.2. Methodological framework

Psychosocial studies are concerned with questions of subjectivity and how people account for what happens to them consciously and unconsciously (Frosh, 2007). The discipline has served as an opportunity for psychoanalysis to re-enter the social sciences (Frosh & Baraitser, 2008), although this was not uncontroversial, especially with regards to Kleinian and object relations psychoanalytic frameworks, because of their individualizing, essentializing, and reductive tendencies (see Parker 2007). On the other hand, structuralist, post-structuralist, and discursive approaches argue for focusing on interpretive practices (Billig, 1997). In this research, I look both at discursive practices and psychic life, insofar as both construct human subjectivity.

A psychosocial approach wishes to reveal "who we are" in relation with others (Parker, 2010). According to Parker (2010), there have been at least three psychosocial turns in research. One has been via discourse analysis, which is influenced by feminism, Marxism, post-structuralist theory, and psychoanalysis (Parker 2010; Henriques et al., 1984). Another is through the impact of the British Tavistock tradition of social research into human relations, whereby versions of psychoanalysis were applied to organizations outside the clinic (Parker, 2010; Walkerdine, 2008). A third turn may be located in the increasing psychologization of contemporary culture, which focuses the desire to explain anxieties on individual experiences and trauma (Parker, 2007).

Taking a psychosocial approach, I used long narrative interviews. I focused on both the social context and the psychic reality of the research participants. In doing so, I focused on two principal dimensions: personal biographies consisting of early conscious and unconscious experiences, including past relationships, and socio-

cultural forces as constitutive of subjectivity. In this way, I was able to consider subjectivity as it is structured both through the inner life of each individual and in accordance with cultural forces. Object relations theory offers a more grounded psychoanalytic approach of the most personal, inner life, with the Lacanian approach speaking of "the enculturation of what seems most personal-the inner life of each separate individual" (Frosh et al., 2003, p. 41). For Lacan, the unconscious is social, and is constructed through the internalisation of culture. Famously, according to Lacan, it is structured like a language, being a "world of words that creates the world of things" (Lacan, 1953/2007d, p. 65). In short, for Lacan, the subject "is structured in and by discursive relations which are institutionalised in culture and manifested in linguistic practice and through this are productive of human consciousness" (Frosh et al., 2003, p. 41).

This section briefly explains differences between Kleinian and Lacanian approaches and their advantages and disadvantages. It explains how a conclusion has been reached by means of a combination of the approaches, which illustrate different aspects of the research data.

Kleinian interpretive approaches seek to make sense of subjective narratives, creating a coherent story and exploring investments in specific subject positions, which are usually problematic ones. Through this striving for coherence and sense making, fragmented material is 'repaired' (Frosh & Saville Young, 2010).

During the earliest stages of this research, in my attempt to investigate questions of subjectivity, my main method was to apply basic Kleinian principles (splitting, anxiety, the paranoid-schizoid positions, defences, attachment theory) to explore the childhoods of interviewees in relation to the constitution of their subjectivity. Had I relied solely on this psychoanalytic approach, I would have

focused on anxieties and defences as belonging to individuals and the impact of personal biography on discursive positions (Frosh, 2007). But this would have led to individualization and essentialization and would have failed to theorise the impact of social conditions and forces.

Bringing object relations and Lacanian theories into dialogue allowed me to illuminate different aspects of the data. For instance, anxiety and defence, structured through relations with others, may be traced back to one's unique biography (Hollway & Jefferson, 2000, 2008). The same is true when discussing the paranoid-schizoid and depressive positions. Loss and mourning, on the other hand, can be extended to discursive and social processes. Mourning, as the loosening of an over-invested affective attachment (e.g., to a national phantasy), or the inability to mourn, can give rise to defences like denial. When speaking of a governing structure, this may take the form of a society's failure to contain anxiety (Bion, 1962) and to offer social provision (Winnicott, 1971; Layton, 2010). This way of thinking enables the researcher to work on different layers and to identify different patterns of experience and unconscious mechanisms. At the basis of my methodology, is the claim that subjectivity is produced and reproduced through both primal attachments with important others, and the influence of discourse. To capture these dimensions, I developed an integrative approach that combines Kleinian concepts with Lacanian psychoanalysis.

For Lacan, the unconscious is structured like a language. We are born into language and are saturated with it before we begin to speak (Lacan, 1977). Subjects are grounded in or determined by the Other, which has a causal role in the constitution of subjectivity. As such, the subject comes from the other in the first instance, determined by the other's desire within us, borne from one generation to

the next, and one can also argue that we rely on others to make sense of unspoken elements of our own subjectivities (Frosh, 2002). Subjectivity is always socially mediated, and is therefore structured in and by discursive relations, which in themselves are inherently cultural (Midgey, 2006). In short it is founded on the social link (Malone, 2010).

Lacan argues that the unconscious itself is an effect of language (Frosh et al., 2003, p. 40). The subject, struggling to find a place in the symbolic order, identifies itself with discursive positions according to different levels of psychic maturity that s/he has reached. But these investments are not necessarily found in the articulation of discourses themselves. They can also be hidden in unspoken experiences, embedded in subjectivity (Frosh et al., 2003, p. 42). Such positions respond to the question 'who am I?' Without their reply, the subject runs the risk of narcissism and psychosis, renouncing the Symbolic and foreclosing the word of the father (Frosh et al., 2003). Viewing data from this perspective can be an appropriate way to research subjectivity. One of its limitations, however, is that discourse and language can never include subjectivity as a whole. There is always the feeling that something cannot be said completely, even if we have successfully assumed a position in language. This is because language itself produces gaps: as we speak and engage the Symbolic, we engage in a process of exclusion (Frosh, 2007), and there will always be elements of subjectivity that will not be revealed. Subjectivity is limited then to the use of discourse, in which words are unable to fully represent lived experience (Frosh, 2001). But in any case, the unconscious is an effect of language even if identity cannot be fully totalised by the Symbolic; for what it fails to order will emerge within the imaginary as a disorder (Frosh et al., 2003 drawing on Butler 1997a, p. 97). In Lacanian psychoanalysis, we never fully acquire a final position, and the subject

cannot be fully known. In language, we want to convey what we need, but we cannot always say what we mean (Roger, 2013).

To conclude, Object relations and Lacanian psychoanalysis suggest that the self is shaped either through primal relations or through the symbolic structure of language. They thereby respectively acknowledge that social processes can constitute psychical processes (Georgaca, 2005) that pre-exist discourse in the first place (Hoggett et al., 2010). Lacan's social constitution of subjectivity (Georgaca, 2005) finds its counterpart in the approach of object relations, since objects are sociocultural 'products' as well. Desire, an intimate and personal driving force of subjectivity, is symbolically articulated, and finds representation in discourse (Walkerdine's analysis, 1987, cited in Georgaca, 2005).

The psycho-social elements that are germane to my analysis include: socio-political discourse (generally construed) and the positioning of the subject in their own speech (psychoanalytically construed), focusing on both personal and relational dynamics (object relations) and on the discourse available in the Symbolic (Frosh & Saville Young, 2011). To speak about family, subjectivity and the crisis, I make use of the Kleinian paranoid-schizoid and depressive positions. I also deploy the Lacanian concepts of maternal attachment and the wider conceptualization of the Oedipus complex, issues around separation and individuation, and the Lacanian account of the constitution of subjectivity. Other Lacanian concepts that enrich my analysis include *jouissance*, fantasy and desire, and the Name of the Father.

3.3. Methods

The qualitative interview is the most popular method of data collection within Psychosocial Studies. It entails questions concerning the experience of events and

relationships, and makes visible the various ways in which participants make sense of the world, both consciously and unconsciously.

In this research, I utilise long biographical narrative interviews. In doing so, I use elements from the Biographical Narrative Interview Method (BNIM) and an interactive approach inspired by the Free Association Narrative Interview Method (FANI) (Hollway & Jefferson 2000, 2008, 2013). BNIM explores lived experiences, and sheds light on power dynamics and unconscious processes. Moreover, it reveals the sociological understanding of individuals understood as acting units within the sociohistorical structures of a society. From the BNIM, I borrow the Single Narrative Interview Question (SQUIN) (Wengraf, 2001) which employs one very carefully constructed question, and focuses on eliciting an initial narration of an individual's life story. By this means, the method aims to evoke facts, memories from childhood experiences up to the present moment, without interruption by the interviewer. In short, it generates a story and motivates the subject to speak. The SQUIN that I used was: "Can you tell me about your experience of growing up as in Greece? Start wherever you like. I will not interrupt; I will just take some notes for afterwards''. In this part of the interview, subjects were called upon to say everything that comes to mind as a response to the SQUIN, which leads to a kind of narrative structured mostly according to an unconscious logic (Hollway & Jefferson, 2000). This in turn allows for the derivation of material for a second sub-session. The answers derived from the SQUIN form the first part of my interviews-the initial narrative of each of my research participants-and provides the material used for the second, more interactive part of the interviews.

In the second part of the interviews, I made use of a more interactive approach, as set out by Hollway and Jefferson's method (2000, 2008, 2013), who

adopt techniques commonly employed in the clinical psychoanalytic setting and apply them in research interviews. As such, they pay close attention to the emotions, thoughts, and motivations of their interviewees, at the same time taking into account unconscious processes and dynamics into account. Using this method, I asked questions that were as open as possible, letting the interviewees develop their stories, feelings, and ideas as much as possible (2000). This second part of the interview was an invitation to ask more specific questions derived from the first, and it involved the relationship between interviewer and interviewee and the meaning created between them (2000). On Hollway and Jefferson's analysis, the research participants' initial reality necessarily cannot be neutral; in a Kleinian sense, mental representations of lived events do always exist. The questions were generated from themes developed in the first part of the interview and related to them in order to clarify and develop events and experiences that need further exploration. As such, clarification and further narrative questions were formulated on the spot (Hollway & Jefferson, 2000). For this reason, the agenda was designed to be open to development and change, depending on the research participants' experience and the material produced in the first part of the interview process.

As well as FANI and BNIM, there are principles that I adopted to facilitate the production and development of stories and the research participants' meaning frames. The first was to use open-ended questions that do not restrict answers to 'yes' or 'no', but which can act as an invitation to narrative. This allowed me to elicit stories, while taking into account the fact that people's storytelling ability varies (some people may feel their lives are not so interesting to justify a story). It was up to the narrator to decide which points and events were to be emphasized, how they were to be communicated, and what information should be shared. The second

principle was to avoid 'why' questions, which bring with them the risk of focusing on rational reasoning to the exclusion of subjectivity. The third principle was to follow up using respondents' ordering and phrasing, which involves attentive listening and note taking during the first part of the interview. The research participants' wordings are used so as to respect their meaning frames, and follow up questions were formulated to be as open as possible so as to elicit further stories (Hollway & Jefferson, 2008).

A goal when using this method was to invite research participants to freely associate about how they have grown up in Greece, and then to ask follow up questions "following their associations where these happened to take the interview, on the grounds that these would be more unconsciously revealing than the meanings we introduce" (Hollway & Jefferson, 2008). As explained above, I asked questions derived from the initial narratives in the first part of the interview. What is more, I also used clarifying questions and encouraging phrases to facilitate discussion and to help them elaborate and analyse their themes more thoroughly. Below is a description of the data collection phase.

When designing the research protocol, I prepared sets of indicative questions and themes for the second part of the interview so as to have an agenda; however, these questions were adapted and transformed according to the actual content that was derived from each subject's narrative during the first part of the interview (the answer to the SQUIN).

The indicative questions for the second part of the interviews can be summarised as below:

1. Family life and/or relationships with parents (experiences, events, feelings):

    aa) Can you tell me your experience of growing up in your family?

ab) Follow up in terms of details, or periods, or specific examples, using encouraging phrases or clarifying questions

ba) How do you feel about your family of origin now?

bb) Follow up in terms of details, or periods, or specific examples, using encouraging phrases or clarifying questions

2. Family and traditional/ nationalistic values:

aa) Did your experience and memories about family and social values, traditions, kinship, ways of defining oneself through personal values and choices, as well as through perceived social interconnectedness and bonds evolved/changed during youth?

ab) Follow up in terms of details, or periods, or specific examples, using encouraging phrases or clarifying questions

ba) Can you say how you feel when you hear the words "Fatherland, Religion, Family"? (Relevant experiences or examples, etc. from your own life so far).

bb) Follow up in terms of details, or periods, or specific examples, using encouraging phrases or clarifying questions

3. Greece, crisis, and life trajectory:

aa) How have you planned your life during the challenging social circumstances in Greece?

ab) Follow up in terms of details, or periods, or specific examples, using encouraging phrases or clarifying questions

ba) How do you experience the current socio-economic changes in Greece?

bb) Follow up in terms of details, or periods, or specific examples, using encouraging phrases or clarifying questions

Third part-Last question:

Do you think that we discussed all relevant topics in relation to growing up in contemporary Greece, family, and your own plans for the future during these challenging times?

The (a) questions (1aa, 2aa, 3aa) were derived from the initial narrative produced in the first part of the interview, and the (b) questions (1ab, 1bb, 2ab, 2bb, 3ab, 3bb) were used to assist the research participants' memory, inviting them to develop more stories, examples, feelings or experiences about the (a) questions. Also, the (b) questions included any clarifying questions and/or encouraging phrases or positive responses to facilitate the narration of the story and to make it more vivid, such as "I understand", "I see", "What happened next?" or "Can you tell me more about this specific event/experience?" The questions did not always elicit different stories, but the different frames of the questions meant that people could elaborate different associations to the same memory. Any association was encouraged (Hollway & Jefferson, 2008).

At the end of this second sub-session, the third part included the final question: "Do you think that we discussed all relevant topics in relation to growing up in contemporary Greece, family, and your own future during these challenging times?'' or "Are there any other things that you remember happening?" or ''Do you remember/recall anything else?" In this section, the research participants were called to recollect anything that they felt was important enough to mention, or they summarised what they had already spoken about up to then.

A few clarifications are due at this point. I used long biographical interviews instead of any other methods because I wanted the participants to speak about their life experiences and narrate their stories themselves. For the same reason, I opted to represent their lives and 'personalities; in some detail, wishing to emphasise the human and individual dimension of the crisis. Powerful though they are, numbers and statistics always obscure the lived experience. I wish to maintain that in my thesis.

Narrative as research is positioned as constructed by and constructive of the socio-historical and cultural context, so from this perspective narrative research is interested in the personal and the wider social realities that are constructed through talk (Saville Young and Frosh in Stamenova and Hinshelwood, 2018). The forms of narratives that I have employed were not constrained by an interview technique in structured questioning; rather, they were based on free association.

I also wanted to explore the extent to which personal stories intertwine with social contexts; to explore subjects' representations on families and how this is related to the current financial crisis and the subsequent socio-political shift. The BNIM is oriented to the exploration of life histories, lived experiences and personal meanings in their socio-historical contexts and see subjectivity as situated historically (Wengraf, 2009); this enables me to focus on both the individual and the social circumstances that form subjectivity; to both the personal meanings and biography and the wider socio-historical and cultural contexts and processes, formed both consciously and unconsciously (Roseneil 2012). The BNIM section of the interview that I made use of was based upon a single question designed to elicit narrative, where the interviewee was offered the floor to develop their story in their own way with no interruption. During the interviewees' initial narrative, I had the

chance to note down the topics discussed and certain signifiers for each topic of my interest and proceed in the second part of the interview after the interviewee had exhausted what they had to say. The second part consisted the questions raised by the interviewees' initial narrative in the first place. In this part, I used the FANI structure of questions into a quite different manner. After the interviewees had exhausted what they had to say, I used the FANI structure (see above 1a, 1b, 2a, 2b) for my second and more interactive part of the interview but I had an open agenda free to development and change.

I further tried to use open ended questions, elicit stories, avoid 'why' questions and use interviewees' phrasing but I did not use a set of pre-defined questions to ask about specific themes to elicit stories. Rather, I constructed the questions on the spot, based on the initial narration of each interviewee. This means that the questions may differ from one interview to another. This enables me to focus on each individual separately and explore the meaning they had tried to convey (or tried to hide), which was achieved by a unique set of questions for each interviewee. Thus, the focus was on the real subjective experiences of each individual. In terms of exploring subject positions, this choice allows subjects' psychic functions such as fantasies, desires, anxieties and conflicts to be projected into the environment and on the other hand, the overall impact of the socio-political environment to be depicted onto their subjectivities. One can explore subject positioning through narrative research and free association can enable subjects to reveal important personal meanings which can contribute to understand people's subjectivities in the context of events and social change they experience.

The stage of analysis that addressed the central questions on the formation of subjectivity involved working across the whole set of the cases and looking for

patterns and themes, first to analyse the narratives of individuals' representations on their families and then to analyse the overall impact of the crisis on the experiences of individual representations on families (Roseneil 2012, p. 3). In general, I followed the interviewees' representations of their experiences. Some of the narratives were focused more on the interviewees' experiences on their familial representations while others focused more on the wider impacts of the crisis on the family life or even the relation between socio-cultural change in Greece and global social change.

In general, my narrative method makes use of questions which involve understanding of people's subjectivities in the context they live in, acquire and live their experiences. In contrast with many other qualitative methods, which assume the subject as rational, producing coherent speech, the FANI uses the psychoanalytic principle of free association so as to reveal the unconscious connections through the links that people make when constructing their own narratives (Hollway & Jefferson 2008.). Psychoanalysis can direct attention to affective elements in the interview material and it can also work along 'the line of the Symbolic' (Parker cited in Stamenova & Hinshelwood, 2018).

The interview material and the analysis makes use of themes arrayed in biographies. What is gained by this integration is a bonding of what is said, how it is said and who is the person who says that. I used biographies because I am interested in personal meanings that the life histories can reveal as well as the shared meanings depicted in the dominant themes that are analysed. Lived experiences, the unfolding of life events and periods that marked the subjects' life as individuals are intertwined with the historical and socio-political contexts in which they are nurtured, producing a "historically situated subjectivity" (Wengraf 2009). The themes presented are actually produced by the meanings that these subjects share with each other through

their biography; the narration of their life. This approach strengthens the power of biographies in producing such meanings as it can demonstrate how different subjects can produce the same meanings for certain signifiers.

Having used themes solely would deprive the analysis from producing rich meanings. The themes solely do not include the personal and sociohistorical context in which they are produced; themes are naked from subjective experience and life histories. Further, using biographies and encouraging subjects to freely associate makes the expression of feelings easier and enrich the analysis and can offer more information on how events are experienced and how these made the subjects feel about them.

3.4. Selecting the participants

A total of twenty interviews were conducted using the snowball method (Image 1): six with male, and fourteen with female participants, one in-depth interview being conducted with each. The duration varied from half an hour to three hours. Most of the interviews took place in different quiet cafes, in an area that was most convenient to the participants. Interviews were recorded with an audio recorder and all of them have been transcribed verbatim.

My sample comprised participants who are mostly 25-35 years old (two of them are 37 years old), hold a University or college degree (some with Master's degrees), and reside in Athens. The reason for interviewing young Greek people from this age group was that this group normally had already finished their university studies and may have started to plan their working lives in Greece. This is not the 'Crisis Generation', meaning the first generation to be raised during the crisis and the first to form its unique identity during this challenging period of time (Chalari,

2018); this is because the ‘crisis generation’ may have not experienced any big change in its lifetime as it was raised during the crisis (Chalari, 2018). On the contrary, 25-35-year-olds constitute an older generation that reached adulthood before the crisis and has been affected by it, but is still young enough to be among the younger productive generations that are now starting to build their own lives. As previous research has shown (Dendrinos, 2014; Iacovou, 2010) there is an increased number of young Greek adults residing with parents, a factor that has long-term effect for youth employability as it postpones the transition to adulthood. Family has always been a feature of the Greek economy and has always been a welfare provider for young people (Kretsos, 2014; Papadopoulos, 1998). It is family that has provided financial support until well into adulthood, and it is family that has been helping young people to find jobs. It should be noted that the researcher is of the same origin and age group, and has shared in similar experiences as well; in short, the researcher can be viewed as an ‘insider’.

Finally, with regards to access strategy, I approached some initial contacts and asked them to suggest both male and female participants that would be willing to talk and who would fulfil the age and residence requirements. In doing so, I tried to get in touch with people from diverse educational, socio-cultural and professional backgrounds, as well as people living in different areas around Athens. I also tried to have more than two or three initial contacts so as to have different sources that could provide me with research participants. To a great extent, this goal was been achieved. Additionally, I tried to enrich the sample using as research participants people from my wider social network, while trying to be as objective and neutral as possible: mindful not to select friends or relatives, I drew these prospective research

participants were people whom I may have met in a seminar or a workshop, or they were friends of a former colleague.

The advantages of this method included gaining access to potential interviewees that might not have been accessible to me. The disadvantages include ‘community bias’, meaning that the first participants may have had a strong impact on the sample, and the inability to be completely sure that the sample was an adequate representation of the target population. However, I tried to resolve these issues by including participants from diverse socio-cultural, educational, and professional backgrounds, residing in different areas of Athens.

Figure 1: Sampling and access strategy

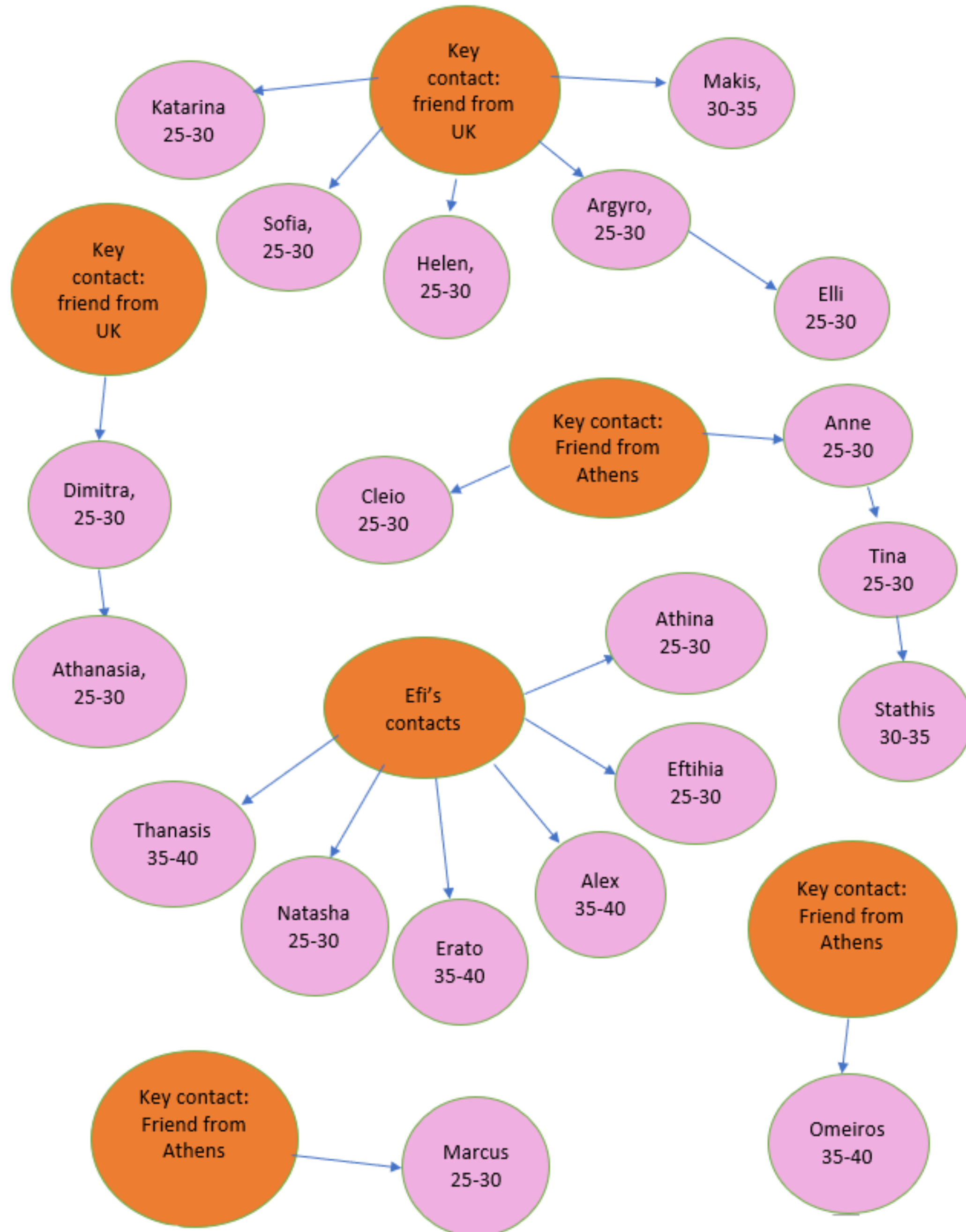
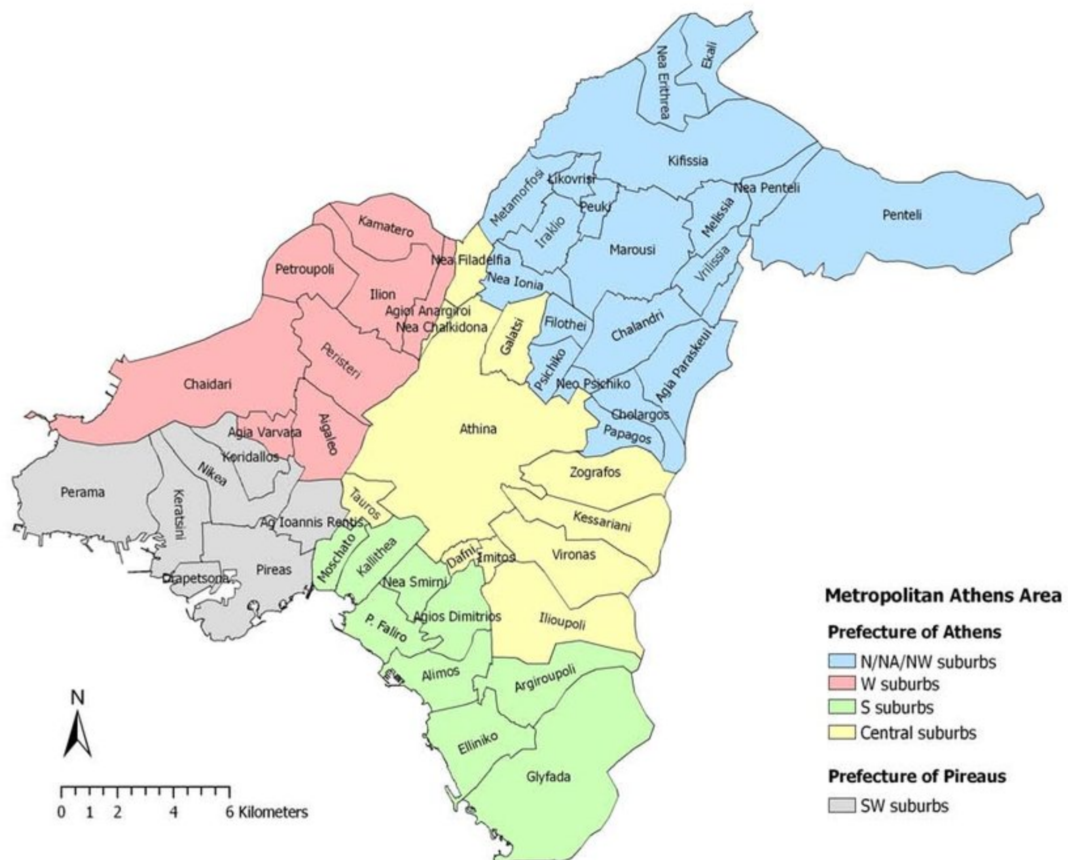


Table 1: Demographics

No.	Name	Age	Gender	Education	Place of Residence	Place of birth	Profession
1	Dimitra	27	F	Private college / (service providers of after Lyceum non-formal education)	South suburban Athens	Athens	Teacher
2	Athanasia	27	F	Private college	South suburban Athens	Athens	Teacher
3	Katarina	27	F	Private school (artistic)	West suburban Athens	Athens	Artist & private clerk
4	Sofia	29	F	Master degree	North suburban Athens	Island in Cyclades	Temporary jobs
5	Helen	26	F	Private school (artistic)	Athens centre	Athens	Family business
6	Argyro	29	F	Bachelor degree	North suburban Athens	Island in Cyclades	Temporary jobs
7	Makis	30	M	Private school (artistic)	Centre of Athens	South suburban Athens	Artist and temporary jobs
8	Elli	26	F	Master degree	South suburban Athens	Thessaly region	Life Sciences
9	Cleio	28	F	Master degree	West suburban Athens	West suburban Athens	Educator

10	Anne	26	F	Bachelor degree	North suburban Athens	Island south Greece	Unemployed
11	Tina	27	F	Master degree	South Suburban Athens	Achaea, West Greece	Private sector employee
12	Stathis	32	M	Bachelor degree	Centre of Athens	South suburban Athens	Private sector employee
13	Thanasis	37	M	High school and some years in technical private school (artistic)	Centre of Athens	North suburban Athens	Artist
14	Natasha	26	F	Master degree	Centre of Athens	Island south Greece	Private sector employee
15	Erato	36	F	Master degree	Centre of Athens	Island central Greece	Private sector employee
16	Alex	30	M	Private school (artistic)	Centre of Athens	Athens	Self-employed
17	Eftihia	28	F	Master degree	North suburban Athens	Town in Central Macedonia	Unemployed
18	Athina	30	F	Private college	South suburban Athens	Athens	Private sector employee
19	Omeiros	36	M	2 Bachelor degrees	Centre of Athens	Athens	Unemployed
20	Marcus	30	M	Bachelor student	Centre of Athens	Village in Epirus	Private sector employee

Figure 2: Areas of residence in Athens



P. Faliro (south suburban):
1 participant

Nea Smyrni (south suburban):
2 participants

Petroupoli: (west suburban)
2 participants

Aghia Paraskevi (north suburban):
2 participants

Zografos (around central Athens):
2 participants

Vyronas (around central Athens):
1 participant

Centre of Athens, various areas:
5 participants

Kifissia (north suburban):
1 participant

Chalandri (north suburban):
1 participant

Glyfada (south suburban):
1 participant

Ilion (west suburban):
2 participant

3.5. Dynamics of the research encounter and reflexive comments

The relationship between interviewer and research participant is dynamic. At the beginning of a meeting, a warm handshake, a smile, and eye contact were the first steps towards establishing a friendly relationship. Generally, in my role as interviewer, I employed an attentive listening posture, a degree of eye contact, and non-verbal sounds, which indicated that I was listening. I allowed for long pauses so that participants could think through or recall material they were trying to access. I explained my purpose to them, created the right setting for them to feel comfortable to speak, I was responsive and flexible, and, finally, I thanked them all for participating and for sharing personal information. According to Atkinson (1998), these steps are important in establishing a rapport with the research participant and creating a warm and friendly environment.

In each interview, I tried to start a conversation so as to get to know each other better. Since many of the interviewees were introduced to me by common friends or other familiar people, there were many cases where I found that we had common interests or hobbies and plans for the future. This proved a useful basis from which to build a rapport as an ice breaker about things we had in common. For example, I shared a similar artistic background with some of the participants, so we were able to share experiences and thoughts about the future of the artistic professions in Greece. In this way and others, a friendly atmosphere was achieved. In cases, I had not much in common with the research participant, I asked about their profession and let them talk about it. After having established a rapport, many felt very comfortable and told me that they were willing to tell me everything about their life and to answer my questions freely.

As Beedell (2009) has argued, “emotional engagement is both necessary and inescapable for the psychosocial researcher and can be both burdensome and beneficial” (Beedell, 2009, p. 103 cites Finlay & Gough, 2003, p. 3). My attitude towards building trust with research participants is endorsed by Beedell’s argument that researchers need to be present, reactive, and actively responsive (Beedell, 2009). This enables respondents to share personal information about their lives, their feelings, and their experiences. This led me to realise that interviews naturally moved from a biographical narrative to a discussion of events and feelings, which contributed to a more dynamic and productive relationship (Beedell, 2009). I was willing to help respondents reduce any anxieties that were present or implied from the start, as some found the procedure quite emotionally demanding, but was careful not to venture beyond the boundaries of the research relationship. I would conclude by echoing Beedell’s argument that a researcher needs to be “conscious of their own strengths and weaknesses, imbued with courage and stamina, [and] able to use the characteristics of «psychological equipment» (Beedell, 2009, p. 117). It is important that the participants should feel that the relationship is equal an equal one (Beedell, 2009). The affective dynamics were also influenced by what each person brings to the interview, some instances of which are not accessible to conscious thought and amount to non-discursive communications.

3.6. Data analysis, a psychosocial approach

Frosh & Saville Young (2011) and Frosh (2010) suggest a multi-level approach to data analysis. The first stage is to identify core narratives in the interviews (Emerson & Frosh, 2004; Hollway & Jefferson, 2005; Gough, 2004), which means reading responses at a variety of levels.

Qualitative data, collected as audio recordings, were transcribed as text files. Every single word, including paraliguistic items, such as laughter and pauses were transcribed. I used three dots […] to explain the pause; I also used brackets [ ] to show words that are missing or not mentioned but implied. The first stage of the process I employed was a thematic analysis, which took place in phases. This was undertaken to familiarize myself with the data, to search for themes, and to define and name them. The first phase involved repeated reading of the data in an active way, searching for meanings and patterns (Braum and Clarke (2006; Nowell, L. et al., 2017). Then, I started to identify basic ideas and themes in the data. On this basis, I was able to derive specific extracts that referred to these themes, and to categorise them (Nowell, 2017). "The theme captures and unifies the nature or basis of the experience into a meaningful whole" (Braun & Clarke's, 2006).

The themes were generated from the raw data themselves, without trying to fit them into a pre-existent frame. To give an example, with regard to my question, 'how do the participants speak about their family?', I searched for themes relevant to their family. One of the relevant themes generated was that of their dependent relationship with their mother. So, I sought extracts from their narratives that were representative of this relationship; I then did the same with all the themes recognised, and a set of themes was defined in this way. Finally, I considered how the themes fit into the whole story in relation to the research questions (Braun & Clarke, 2006) so as to form a unified narrative. In order to foreground these coherent patterns, I wrote an introduction for each.

After this stage, I utilised narrative analysis. Each theme was constituted by extracts from two, three, or four different participants. Thus, I constructed the biography of each participant, and a unifying narrative was built which linked

narratives from all the participants of the thematic group. By ‘narrative’, I understand the unfolding of an action, change, or difference (Todorov, 1990), additionally to the plain setting of the action and the presentation of the persons and the events.

Narrative analysis views stories as units of analysis and considers the way that people narrate their lives. This method helped me to understand the complexities of personal and social relations, and to take into account both the individual and the cultural resources that people use to construct their talk. This allowed me to make better connections between the psychological and the social. It also deals with the discursive structure of stories, focusing on the meanings that participants generate by themselves. I used the constructionist approach to narrative research, which views the social world as a procedure “in the making” (Squire, 2014), and is concerned with the ‘how’ of the creation of meaning through talk and interaction in relation to the cultural and individual positions available to the participants.

Certain aspects of the narratives were explored, taking into account the research questions and how the data related to them. Each particular part of a narrative was part of a life story narrated during the course of the interview. Narrative research engages with speech and text, and is both constructed by and constructive of sociohistorical context. As such, it is focused on the social and personal realities that are constructed through speech, and the ways in which these constructions change (Stamenova & Hinshelwood, 2019). In this case, the form of the narrative has not been constrained by structured questioning. “The way in which participants narrate their stories suggests a way towards ‘reading’ the speaker as more than what s/he consciously intends to say.” (Stamenova & Hinshelwood, 2019, p. 200).

I analysed the narratives through a consideration of the socio-cultural context in which the story was told and the ways in which the participants resist or engage

with dominant discourses. The notion of positioning is introduced into the narrative work at this point. It is used to explore how personal stories intertwine with the social contexts and with familiar discourses, prompting subjects to take up particular positions. Emphasis was placed on individual agency as psychoanalytically construed, with an eye to the dynamic unconscious. The unconscious is not produced solely within individuals, but within interpersonal and societal contexts (Stamenova & Hinshelwood, 2019). This is a point on which Lacan has a lot to say, and I have explored both social discourses and how speaking subjects position themselves in language.

To be more specific, I analysed the core narratives (identified using thematic analysis, as described above) through a psychoanalytic lens. These narratives included relationships with families, the perception of trajectories during the crisis, and how respondents think about work and the future. In doing so, I tried to understand subjectivity in relation to the desire of the Other by means of both object relations theory and Lacanian psychoanalysis.

I viewed the narratives of the respondents through the psychoanalytic lens of loss and mourning. On Klein's account, mourning contains the notion of ambivalence and, as a process, it re-awakens a fundamental turmoil experienced during infantile psychical development when navigating the depressive position. A consideration of a Lacanian account of mourning, on the other hand, introduces the idea of desire with mourning and loss as well as the formation and permutations of desire to be constitutive of subjectivity' (Fink, 2004, p. 59). Lacan argues that what is being mourned is the lack in the Other. It is always a lack of this kind that enables desire to arise (Lacan & Alain-Miller, 1991/2015), and lack is always to be understood as a lack of being (Lacan & Alain-Miller, 1954/1988). If desire is

entwined with the desire of the Other, then the mourning process would appear to signify the extent to which a person's own being and desire are related and constituted around an implied lack within the Other. Taking the Kleinian and Lacanian definitions together, I explored both the notion of ambivalence and the lack that generates desire and is constitutive of subjectivity. The rest of the data analysis was based on a psychoanalytic reading of the data, identifying the place of the (m)Other in the participants narrative, their position in relation to the desire of the Other, and the place that the Name of the Father has in their narratives. Moreover, I explored identification processes, starting from family, and expanding into a broader social context, including identifications with national discourses, social political ideals, and fantasies of fullness. Finally, the decline of the paternal law, which emerged in the analysis, was discussed too.

In the personal experiences that the participants discuss, one can see both the effects of social discourses and the struggles of the subjects as they seek to position themselves in relation to them (Frosh et al., 2003). A first step towards the narrative was to read the text for existing discourses and to identify the position the narrative takes in relation to them.

Crucial elements for this analysis were the categories of fantasy, desire and *jouissance*, the subject's attachment to certain signifiers, and the enjoyment that the subject derives from such attachments, even if they seem irrational. These concepts can explain why subjects sustain their attachments to certain discourses, and the 'drive behind identification acts' (Stavrakakis, 2008, p. 1050). It is emotion which is undervalued by postmodernists as an effect of discourse (Alcorn, 2002, p. 109) but in fact, attachments sustain because of their libidinal and affective character.

In this process, a special role is played by "what the community values most" (Brock, 2015, p. 71), its attachments. This is about the ideal ego of the community, its 'lost objects' and points of identification. The community seeks to identify with its specific socio-cultural and historical symbols, from which it derived an identity. What is more, this reiteration of affective identifications becomes the preferred mode of enjoyment for the community.

3.7. Ethics

The research participants were informed about what the research entails and were asked to formally consent to take part in it. Their consent was obtained in writing on the day of the interviews, with the consent forms being given to the participants in both English and Greek. Along with this, the research participants were provided with a Participation Information Sheet, which included an invitation to the study, the background of the project, information about the research, a description of the sample required, information about informed consent, and an explanation of the right to withdraw at any phase of the project. Moreover, the document provided information about data recording, anonymization, and how the data would be used. All research participants were treated with respect. The research produced fruitful results that could not be obtained by other means, and the degree of risk was less than the potential importance of the research. Research participants were made aware of their right to refuse participation if they so wished. Also, they were made aware of the purpose of recording and making notes, and to whom the data would be communicated.

The transcripts were anonymized so as to protect the confidentiality of the data (Banyard et al., 2011; BSA, 2021). For instance, direct identifiers, such as

names, were removed. Indirect identifiers, like occupations, were changed into more general variables. Pseudonyms were applied, and other identifiers underwent an anonymization process, with more generic descriptors being used to edit identifying information. Given the anonymization of all other identifiers, keeping the actual age and area of residence in Athens was deemed reasonable and to not risk compromising anonymity. Degree subjects were replaced with generic discipline descriptors, e.g., Social Sciences, art school, technical degrees, etc. Concerning relationship status, Transcripts have a pseudonym and a number, and a cover sheet with event details, such as place, date, interviewer and participant's name, and numbered pages. Application for ethical approval has been submitted to and approved by the University's Ethics Committee on 07/09/2018. I have followed the Data Protection Act 1998 (Data Protection Act 1998, 2021) and committed to treating personal data with high levels of security.

This chapter was about the methodological framework of the study and the specific methods employed. It also described the sampling strategy and the dynamics between the researcher and the research participants. It explained the psychosocial data analysis approach which has been used to analyse the data and it also a section on ethics. The next chapter is about the actual data analysis where the findings of the research are discussed.

4. Chapter 4: Greek family as a protective environment and an oppressive institute

4.1. Introduction

This chapter will start by locating the concept of the 'holy Greek family' as a lived experience and discourse, establishing what it means and how it is represented in Greek culture. This theme concerns the relationships between parents and children. What emerges from the data is an intense maternal attachment which can affect the child's sense of identity and reinforce interdependence. Moreover, it implies that the subject's desire is formed through the m(O)ther's desire, meaning that one desires what the mother desires, and in the same way (Fink, 1995).

Lived experience is transmitted intergenerationally, and is observable in predetermined choices. Thus, we find individuals saying "I have grown up like this", implying that this is how life should be lived. This chronic sequence and its repeatability are sustained as the historical, traditional, and cultural traits of a specific culture. It is established as 'collective values and customs', as 'what the community values most', which legitimately stands as official, dominant norms. It is also established in wider cultural imaginaries, such as the triptych 'Motherland, Religion, Family', introduced later in the chapter, as a signifier that forms the basis of the research subject's identity, adopted in the search for recognition (Brock 2015, p. 71); it is also established in paternalistic structures and mentalities, and the ways in which they have been historically developed and sustained. This section explores the way in which this concept has been experienced by the subjects, and how it has affected both themselves as individuals, and the wider Greek social environment. One can speak of identifications beyond the maternal; however, for Lacan, identification represents what the (m)Other/(f)Other desires. Moreover, the paternal metaphor—

the agent of the symbolic law—is presented as an absence and, more generally, what is observed is a decline in paternal authority.

Data shed light on the family environment as one that is experienced as a psychic space characterised by an eternal giving of financial and emotional support to children until well into adulthood. It speaks of unconscious practices on both sides that hinder maturation, deprive adult children of the capacity to lead their lives at all levels, and lead them to see family as a space of eternal refuge. At the same time, it is also made clear that this is a cultural phenomenon that is common as a wider socio-historical and cultural trait.

Afterwards, family gatherings and dinners, and rituals and traditions are investigated in their capacity to sustain further family, nation and religion as established norms. Finally, family businesses are explored as spaces that offer both a means of professional rehabilitation for youngsters, and a vivid manifestation of familial interdependence, as youngsters are subordinated to the control of the previous generation, leaving them little space to develop themselves. More specific concerning structure, I present the cases first; then, I add a brief discussion at the end of each shorter section and the more in-depth analysis comes in a later section.

4.2. The 'holy Greek family'

This chapter discusses one of the most prevalent themes encountered in my data in relation to discourses about family, that of the 'holy Greek family'. This is characterised by intense and conflicting family bonds and attachments, and a wider kinship network of support, as are revealed when subjects speak about family experiences of love and oppression, support, and overprotection.

As discussed in the literature review chapter, anthropological research demonstrates, the family is a socio-historical cornerstone of Greek identity and society. Since the 19th century, and especially during the 20th, family has been linked to nation, religion, and homeland (Gazi, 2011; Papanikolaou, 2018). In the early 19th century, marked by the first period of Greek Independence, religion was dominant as a defence against modernity, and as a way of protecting tradition and paternal values (Weiss, 2009; Gazi, 2011). From the second half of the 19th century, however, the aim became the modernisation of Greek society, albeit still within the bounds of tradition (Gazi, 2011). At this time, the promotion of Christian values was central to the successful reform of society, and there was an attempt to connect family with religion. However, by the end of 1894, this focus was displaced in favour of a biopolitical connection between family and motherland (Gazi, 2011).

The 'holy Greek family' is a common Greek expression (in Greek: Αγία ελληνική οικογένεια) and is understood to mean a bonded, loving family; it means the ideal institution, the fiduciary of the nation and religion (Gazi, 2011), consecrated to religious purposes. It refers to the conservative, traditional and patriarchal values of family that are transmitted to the next generation. It is a space that functions as a safety net, and as the only means of social inclusion and mutual support. However, what it has come to mean is manipulation and continuous oppression of children: the suffocating bonds, the pressure on children to get married, the appointment to the public sector, the weaning that never comes and the family that castrates its children. It is under such conditions that individuals are protected from life and are nurtured to be dependent and immature (Tovima, 2013). The concept plays the role of a master signifier (the master signifier is the one which refers to itself rather than to other signifiers, it is self-referential and it is a signifier that that the subject deeply identifies

with), it has been operating as one of society's ego ideals and it has taken on features similar to religious symbolism. That is to say, both family and religion include elements of containment, of safety, of identity that conceals repression, and of dependence upon an external image of perfection.

A number of anthropologists and other researchers have described the concept of family and wider kinship as a basic component of Greek social reality (Katakis, 1998; Gallant, 2001; Loizos & Papataxiarchis, 1991; Friedl, 1976; du Boulay, 1974; Paxson, 2004; Herzfeld, 1985; Campbell, 1964). It is upon this foundation that Greek society organises all aspects of political, social, and economic life (Papanikolaou, 2018). This model is deeply rooted in collective representations, and serves as the only security net for Greeks in the face of social changes (Katakis, 1998), such as the economic crisis.

Thus, the 'holy Greek family' is cited (Papanikolaou, 2018) as a national value or a symptom of a backward-looking society. However, as an idealised and phantasized image of security, it cannot hide its problematic and corrosive status as a locus of oppressive relations. As will be demonstrated, this image is now collapsing, but, at the same time, young people do not seem willing to abandon it entirely. The prominent maternal attachment is investigated and its coexisting dimensions of oppression, dependency and love are analysed. This is followed by a consideration of the detached or absent father, and discussion of the characteristics of the wider familial environment

4.2.1. The Mother: passionate attachments

The ideal role of the mother by traditional Greek standards is that of a caring person, who always provides support at all levels and loves children unconditionally.

This image is reinforced by the traditional role of women in the patriarchal South: the emphasis on marriage and motherhood, the central role of women in the household and in children upbringing, etc. These values find their counterparts in all aspects of social and economic life: in education, in culture, in the job market, in the public sphere, etc. Although these traditional values are challenged by modernity, they still continue to be an important part of the 'Greek way of life'; the modern is always built upon the traditional.

4.2.1.1. Athina - "The extreme and disastrous love of the mother"

Athina is a 30-year-old woman with a postgraduate qualification in Social and Health Sciences from a private Greek college. She left her parental home in her late teens, which she says was to avoid oppression, and supported herself financially through her studies. When she finished high school, she did not take the national examinations for admission to University because she was not sure what she wanted to do. Instead, she worked in a relative's family firm until her mid-twenties. Athina explains that her mother always emphasized her "sacrifice" for her children and, because of that, she expects to be looked after now that she is getting older. Her mother demands money from her, and Athina feels like she is 'being devoured'. Athina supports the analysis that the Greek mother's suffocating and hyper-protective behaviour is responsible for demanding children and adults, who have not been taught to face difficulties, and who narcissistically consider themselves as the best and fail to respect others. Athina explains,

> The stereotype about Greek mums is valid-Greek society is matriarchal, as mothers govern the household. Parents of my generation used to offer a lot to their children, as compared to their

> own deprived childhoods, but they did it quite sloppily; that is, they offered, and offered, and offered more to their children, making them believe that they could possess the world and that the world owed something to them. [Parents made their children believe] that they are better than others. Thus, their children behave in a self-centred and disrespectful way. The problem is that, when you reach maturity, you realise that no, nobody owes you anything, and that you have to try hard to achieve whatever you wish to achieve. The Greek family is such that the daughter in law is not good enough for the son, and in any case she [the mother] will never like any woman because she [the mother] is always the best, and knows how to cook the best stuffed tomatoes.

Ruling a household involves a fragile balance and a complex dynamic. The ‘traditional’ Greek mother is portrayed here as hard to please and unable to forgo her attachment with her son. Her power harks back to times of cohabitation of young couples with their in-laws, a practice largely abandoned, but used here to represent antagonism and rivalry to another woman, as well as a maternal claim of an undying secret access to the male child’s desire. At this point, one could refer to narcissism as linked to cultural patterns which intensify the mother-child relationship and especially the mother-son relationship (Slater, 1992).

Athina tries to contextualise her experience by describing it as a wider problem with the Greek family; namely, the dependent relationship and strong identification of children and young adults with their mother, and the impact that hardship, reality, and finally severing the bond may have on them.

> Growing up in a Greek family, makes you feel in a way that you are the best, and you grow up with this feeling that you can throw your garbage around-there is a disrespect towards the rest of the world. I think that this has to do with the extreme and disastrous love from the mother, who does not allow you to take a breath because you suppose that someone else will do the dirty jobs for you. When you realise that there is nobody to do that for you, you suffer from depression or melancholia.

Ill-prepared to deal with separation, the child descends into disappointment and depression. The word 'melancholia' reverberates with unending mourning for the lost object. Athina uses the words 'depression' and 'melancholia', which is quite a sophisticated analysis and terminology. In a few words, Athina detects the complex problem with the family and the suffocating relationships within it. According to Athina, young adults may lose hope when they realise that they have to undertake the responsibilities that come with adulthood and this disenchantment may result to depression or melancholia.

4.2.1.2. Anne - "I think that in Greece, most of us girls have a very bonded relationship with our mum"

Anna speaks about her mother in a different way. That is, she speaks as a daughter who is strongly identified with her mother, but she does not acknowledge this kind of identification as a problem in the way that Athina does. Indeed, Anna is completely merged with this experience and enjoys it.

Anne is in her mid-twenties, with a private college degree from Greece and postgraduate studies in both the South East and Western Europe. She returned to

Athens and her parental home in the suburban north. Anne claims she had a great childhood as a result of Greek beliefs, traditions, and values, and she argues that growing up in Greece is the best thing that can happen to anyone. Despite the economic crisis, she refused to leave the country to seek employment elsewhere. Anne is extremely attached to her mother:

> I have a very strong relationship with my mum-I am dependent on her-this is the truth. I ask her for everything; I ask for her opinion. I have in mind specific images from stuff we did together during holidays or in specific circumstances, which I do not want to lose. So, I think that, even if I move to another house, I will miss her, her cooking, all of this stuff. But anyway, I would like to live by myself, maybe somewhere close to her.

Anna speaks about her mother as a role model. She is immersed in the enjoyment of the maternal experience:

> I always considered my mother as a role model because she nourished the household in very difficult circumstances. She assisted us in growing up, both financially and emotionally […] I think that this made me more bonded with my mother. […] I assume she is my best friend and my role model. I ask her advice for everything I need; I trust her in everything [….]. So yes, I have a very close relationship with my mum. She is like my best friend.

In this account, mother and daughter appear to reciprocally cover each other's emotional needs. Separation anxiety cause fear of abandonment, which may become

more severe when the child has been brought up to consider separation as abandonment In this case, the daughter sees herself as unable to function independently. When probed to account for this dependence, Ann resorts to well-known strategies of generalisation, splitting and the projection of a lack of care to a non-specific other:

> I think that in Greece most girls have a very good relationship with their mum. Well, maybe it depends on the age difference [with their mother], but even then, they are closer to their families as compared to other Europeans.

4.2.1.3. Eftihia - "I have a dependent relationship with my mum"

Eftihia is a woman in her late twenties who comes from a rural family in northern Greece. She has a postgraduate qualification in Health and Social Sciences, is employed, and is currently living alone in Athens. From an early age, she wanted to continue with university study and was supported in these aspirations. She describes a more distant relationship with her distant father as compared to the dependent relationship she had maintained with her mother, even during her studies far away from home. In this case, the mother is described as 'the core of the family', and her death results in the loss of an ideal unity. Eftihia discusses how leaving the Northern Greek town of her birth for university studies in Athens resulted in strengthening the bond with her mother:

> She [mother] told me how difficult it was for her to part with me [….] one day I was the child under her protection, the one she fed, controlled, and kept secure, in inverted commas. Then, suddenly,

> that child was far away and only saw her once every two months, or only spoke to her on the phone.

Responding to the mother's anguish, Eftihia established a pattern of regular home visits, during which her mother became 'her best friend' and confidante, with a direct say in Eftihia's life generally, and love life in particular:

> My mum was the very best friend I had ever had. I discussed everything with her. Since adolescence we had developed a strong bond. I felt at ease to discuss everything with her, even issues that an adolescent girl would not feel comfortable to speak about […]. For example, I discussed my boyfriend with her. Many times, I'd prefer to go out with my mother rather than with a friend. I felt that my mother could understand me better […] Even now, I realise that I cannot find a replacement for my mother: there is no replacement […]. This does not mean that I do not feel absolute love [for others] but what I had with my mother was on another level, it was unconditional […]. I could speak of a dependent relationship with my mother.

The theme of the mother-best friend appears regularly in the discourse of the research participants. A strong object cathexis is maintained as the daughter succumbs to the mother's appeal or plea for love. Unable to separate from the mother, or to shoulder the guilt that such a move would entail, the young girl becomes the phallus of the mother, and eschews the consequences of separation. Even when geographically apart, the bond is not broken.

Both Klein and Lacan share the assumption that the relationship with the mother is very important and forms the milieu of the primary psychological experience of self and other. It is the need to sustain this imago and remain the object of both our own and our mother's desire that structures the self and experience in what is called 'the Imaginary' (Keylor, 2003). What one can see, in Lacanian terms, in both Eftihia's and Anne's is that they have become the mOther's phallus. That is to say, they have become the object of the mother's desire-the thing that could complete them.

4.2.1.4. Katarina - "My mother is despotic; she wants to dominate"

If the possibility of a university education justifies moving away from the parental home, as it did for Eftihia above, failure to do so seems to afford young adults little room to gain financial and emotional independence. Katerina comes from Athens and is a woman in her late twenties with an educational background in the arts. She gives an illuminating insight into the wider dynamics of the Greek family and the expectations of academic success. Katerina speaks of a happy childhood, despite a distant, emotionally detached and largely absent father, whom she nevertheless describes as 'the man of her life'. It was the latter's poor professional and financial decisions that, along with the economic crisis, led to the closure of the family business and drove her mother to seek jobs to support the family. Katarina's failure to secure a place at University disappointed her parents, who had spent a lot of money on private tuition for her. All the same, she describes herself as happy and content with her artistic job (although she is currently unemployed), and especially in working environments that remind her of her family; however, she feels ambivalence toward a mother she describes as 'despotic':

> My mother is a very dynamic person. She likes to dominate people within the family […]. She is despotic: that's the word! She tries to manipulate me and this annoys me. Her view of the world is different to mine. She doesn't trust people. She is right, or maybe it will be proven down the line that, indeed, she was right. But it is annoying for me that she tries to persuade me that it is her view that is the right one.

Despite being ambivalent about her mother's behaviour, Katarina justifies or excuses her controlling attitude on the grounds of life experience. Despite not seeing eye to eye, Katarina informs her mother of 'every single step' in her life, even calling her to tell her that she has arrived safely at work every morning: "I have grown up like that", she says, and "I had been working far away from home, and this annoys my mother". As shown, she makes no attempt to leave the protective cocoon and be critical towards family; what is more, she has tried to adjust her life according to the demands of the familial environment. Later in the interview she admits using evasion to maintain some sort of privacy:

> She gives her opinion to me [as to what to do]. Very often I say 'yes' to her and I let her think that I agree with her. This is not good for me however because she continues to dominate me. It is terrible! Ok, we are working on this. Now I usually shout at her. Do you understand?

Here, mother and daughter exist in a symbiotic relationship, playing a domination 'game' which does not carry the promise of separation or of an assertion of independence by the daughter. Katarina's assertion that she is 'working on it'

introduces a protracted sense of time, an eternal unchanging present, and the shouting that she adverts to is reminiscent of the behaviour of a teenager. It is not difficult to see that young people like Katerina either identify with the aggressive-wise mother, defer, or fail to grow up altogether.

4.2.1.5. Tina - "My mother wants to impose her desire on me, and this is what hurts me more"

Tina is a young woman in her late twenties in rural Greece, whose parents actively encouraged her to leave home, study abroad and remain there to enjoy the opportunities western European countries afford to their citizens. Tina admits she never felt at home abroad and eventually returned to Greece. Back in Athens, she has been trying to persuade her parents that she is doing well in her job and there is no reason for her to go abroad. The perceived failure to 'make it' abroad underlines her discourse. Tina talked a lot about independence during the first part of the interview, so when she was asked to talk more on that subject during the second part, she said: *"independence means to do whatever I want. To ask for advice from parents or friends, but to finally choose whatever I want. But I do not do that".* This is the point at which she talks about the controlling nature of her mother:

> [She] wants to dominate me, and if I don't do what she wants, then there is friction and quarrelling. I would have liked to be able to ask for her advice, and to choose whether I want to follow it or not. If I choose not to, then [whatever happens] would be my fault. But she says that, in order for me not to make the same mistakes as her, I need to so what she says. […]. My relationship with my mother is a difficult one. She is a good person, but she wants to dominate me. I

> cannot endure that, and this is a source of friction. Although she is a super person, she lacks in this unfortunately. And this hurts a lot.

Tina's account of her mother illustrates another common pattern arising from the interviews: namely the fact that 'mother knows best', and the difficulty of integrating warmth and domination, love and oppression. But more than this, Tina also illustrates the formidable emotional power of good intentions and the threat of failure that ultimately prevents a young woman from leaving her parental home, even when apparently encouraged to do so. However, what seems encouraging here is the fact that Tina can reconcile good and bad aspects of her mother. She acknowledges that this relationship is a dominating one, and is more critical and ambivalent towards her mother as compared to Katarina, above.

4.2.1.6. Erato - "I felt I killed my mother when I told her that I am a lesbian"

The influence of the parents, and the role of the mother inevitably extend to one's sexual life. Erato, is in her late thirties. She is originally from a town in central Greece, but has lived in Athens since her University studies. She talks about the fact that her parents never accepted that she was a lesbian. Erato explains that she never felt supported by her parents, who never praised her for her performance at school or her successes at work.

With regards to her homosexuality, she admits to having experienced open hostility from her parents, who care greatly about what the town would say, and guilt for having inflicted shame upon them:

> My parents […] said they did not want to hear any gossip about us; that would 'kill them,' they used to say. And my mum used threats

> like 'I will hang you upside down' or 'I will burn you alive'-just words, but you get the message.

Unable to handle her mother's and her family's disapproval of her sexuality, Erato projects her family onto society-the same society that would gossip and judge her and her parents. More importantly, the conflict with the family is internalised by the individual and carried on as unmet demand or trauma:

> If my family had been different, I would have been a different person and society would have been different. Society starts with the family, and things cannot change. Society has to think differently through the family. […] If your family is against you, it follows that you will fight yourself. […] I had some dependence issues with my mother, and my relationships with partners have not been so easy […] The fear of abandonment was evident. I was afraid that my partner would abandon me as I was afraid that my mother would abandon me, because I was not good enough. […] When you have a parent who is always unsatisfied, you will always feel inadequate.

The sense of disappointment and failure is underlined by an enormous sense of guilt. That is, by guilt for having inflicted on the mother the 'social death' she was always warning her daughters of:

> I felt that I killed my mother because my mother wants to be very good in everything, and feels that she did something wrong with my upbringing […]. So, she feels she was a good mother with me, as compared to her other children. I always wanted my mother's

> approval so I could approve of myself and then other people would approve of me as well.

The symbolic death of mothers as a result of the attitudes, choices and inclinations of their children is not an unusual pattern in Greek culture (see, for example, ‘For the love of women’). Neither, indeed, is the manipulation of young people through shame and an invocation of the public gaze. The parent’s conservative views are projected on to an undefined omniscient and alter Other, who delights in the humiliation of ‘the family’, that indivisible unity that is never questioned by the child.

The examples discussed in this section are not unique to the young women interviewed for this research. Undoubtedly, there are young people who have successfully managed to negotiate separation from their mother, with or without her consent. However the fact remains that many oscillate between maternal omnipotence and a desire to free themselves from it, or, to put it bluntly, a desire to stay in the family womb whilst yearning for independence. What one notices is that these young people are often very aware of the adverse effects of remaining attached to the mother or growing up with a false sense of omnipotence and entitlement. As Athina observes, “parents offered a lot to their children but they did it quite sloppily […], making them believe that they can possess the world and that the world owes something to them”.

Ultimately, parental pseudo-security leaves children ill-prepared for the ‘real’ world. Thus this security often lies at the origin of their return to the family, when, hurt by the harsh realities of (un)employment or of stiff competition, they feel they need to turn to their parents for solace. Very often, young people are left with a choice

between two ways of coping with the emotional conflict of dependence-independence. On the one hand, they may succumb to the maternal desire for a complete surrender to her wishes, technically becoming the phallus of the mother. On the other, they may descend into eternal guilt and suffering, and into an infantile dependent position, as a result of having displeased the mother. Most choose to live with ambivalence. The only option that does not seem to exist is that of affecting a neat separation from the desire of the mother. We could say that, for a good percentage of young Greeks, the dogma of financial capitalism, TINA (‘there is no alternative’), really inhabits the *oikos*. There is no alternative (TINA) was a slogan used by Margaret Thatcher, the Conservative British Prime Minister, who claimed that the market economy is the only system that works. Angela Merkel has also used the term in relation to her responses to the European sovereign-debt crisis in 2010 (Wikipedia, 2021).

4.2.2. The paternal metaphor

The figure of the mother as central to the Greek family is often complemented by a father who appears to be less involved in the children’s lives. Barbaliou (2017) argues that this is a traditional and perhaps stable representation of ‘the Greek man’ as present in his absence and silence-as a soldier in the battlefield, a sailor at sea or an immigrant abroad.

Three migratory movements have occurred in the course of contemporary Greek history. The first was during the Ottoman Empire, when men immigrated to Europe to escape from Turkish rule. The second started after Greek Independence (1830), and continued for many decades due to the challenging financial circumstances in Greece, which forced many people to emigrate to find jobs. In the

twenty-five years spanning the Greek-Turkish War, the Balkan Wars, and the first world war, approximately 450,000 Greeks were forced to emigrate to the West. Then, after the World War II, Greeks emigrated again due to the poverty and insecurity of that period. Between 1950 and 1960, a further one million Greeks immigrated to Australia, Canada and were approximately 1.000.000 between 1950 and 1960 (Chasiotis, 1993. Episkopisi tis Istorias tis NeoEllinikis Diasporas. Thessalloniki: Vanias). Moreover, by 1970, approximately 630,000 Greeks had immigrated to Germany to find jobs (Barbaliou, 2017, pp. 39-52). Finally, sailing represented another way in which men were absented from Greek society, sailing having been an alternative means to survival during a period of agrarian infertility.

During this absence of men, women tried to cope alone, making efforts to remedy this lack and undertaking the responsibilities of their husbands, as well as their own. Thus, as well as childrearing, they supported the household through hard manual jobs, such as tilling the land or animal husbandry, and assigned the role of guardian to their sons. A basic result of this was that young boys grew up without their father. As such, men's construction of individual, family and masculine identity was affected (Barbaliou, 2016, 2017: 127-128). In this regard, one can speak of a transgenerational trauma. That is, of a trauma which occurs due to momentous events, such as wars, persecutions, displacements of populations, or natural disasters, and which has a serious impact on the intimates, as well as subsequent_generations, to whom it is transmitted unconsciously (Pomini 2011).

Radical modernisation followed the fall of junta in 1974. The average Greek family tried to adapt to the changes this brought, focusing more on their children's education and aiming for their socioeconomic advancement. Although it is very common for both parents to work, women continue to absorb the burden of

childrearing. Again, the participation of fathers was quite restricted. Work, the new cause of the father's absence, became the core of the Greek man's social identity, which, beyond survival, is also a source of self-confidence and respect from the social network. In this regard, work is a means to create one's own path (Barbaliou, 2017, pp. 131 – 143; Kli, 2008).

It is hard to assess the diachronic impact of this absence, but the participants of this research shed light on different aspects of the paternal role in the present, showing a great awareness of its effects on their lives.

4.2.2.1. Sofia - "I thought it was normal... that my dad was absent"

Sofia is in her very early thirties and has a postgraduate qualification in a paramedical profession. She spent her youth on an island, before the family moved to Athens. Her father was absent for months due to his work. Sofia attended university in north Greece, but returned to Athens before completing her studies. After a period of uncertainty, in which she considered withdrawing from her course, Sophia finished her degree. A 'transient phase' then began, during which she did not know what to do next. At this time, her parents put pressure on her to 'do something with her life'. She thus moved to the UK for an internship, but then returned to Athens, again in a 'transient phase', unsure what to do next. Sophia feels trapped in an oppressive relationship with her parents because working in temporary jobs does not give her the financial independence required to live by herself. She speaks about her father's absence, making interesting associations between childhood and her university years:

> I used to assume that this [absence] did not influence me […]. Ok, it is impossible that it did not influence me at all, but I was living on

> [an island] and circumstances were the same for most families […]. So, I assumed this was very normal [...]. I thought that it did not influence me because it was normal. Recently I started psychotherapy; well, I am not sure, but I think I have a fear of being abandoned.

Sofia addresses paternal absence in terms of reminiscence and enjoyment. The absent parent inhabits the objects of the household and possibly defines the daughter's object choices in later life:

> Every time that he returned, I was getting to know him from the beginning... this man in the house… quite a stranger. I remember that I was generally waiting for him to come back, but I cannot remember if that was throughout the six months or during the week that my mother told me that dad was coming back.

Sofia describes her father's absence in vivid terms which reveal a strong libidinal attachment with him:

> I remember that I missed him when he was leaving [...]. It is something that I still live […]. Before he left, he was always speaking on the phone to arrange things. […]. He used a very strong after shave, which smelled very nice [...] When I was a young child, I would sniff objects, like the phone receiver and they smelled like him […] Well, I don't smell the telephone anymore, but it reminds me of that time; I don't know what this means but this memory is

> very intense. If I meet a man and I like his fragrance, maybe I will fall in love with him, I don't know (laughs).

Sofia connects her feeling of abandonment with a very real sense of her father's fragrance, which connects the sensual world with feelings, creating *jouissance*. That is, it creates a feeling of abandonment and the sense of the fragrance which has partly formed her sensual world.

4.2.2.2. Katarina - "I have the Electra syndrome"

Katarina, whom we have introduced in the previous section, describes a distant father, to whom she was nevertheless very attached:

> My father was always more distanced. […] when I was growing up, I had friends who asked me whether my parents were divorced! [..] During those years, I thought that I was fond of my mother because we were spending time together, but then, when I grew up, I realised that my dad was the man of my life. Nobody will be like my dad. Despite our quarrels, I am in fond of him.

Katerina explains that she stood by her father during a long illness, and even used her own money to bail out his business when he ran into financial difficulties due to poor financial decisions. When asked to elaborate on paternal absence, Katerina refers to more recent times, a period during which they established a closer relation. Despite the improvement in their relationship, the absence in childhood cannot be addressed:

> Well, he was working while my mum was not. Maybe that was the reason [he was absent]. But he is not like that [i.e., absent] as a

> person. It is only in recent years that he seems to be attentive to me and this is because he was forced to stay home due to his illness […]. I missed my father at an emotional level sometimes, to be honest. I mean, nowadays I see how fathers are with their children […]. I missed that and I still miss it. One could say: "it's a bit late for that". Surely, it is not a 'repressed thing' [i.e., it's not a big deal], it is just that I missed it as a child; the intense presence of the father in my life. […] And I understand it because, as I have grown up, I have realised that I am fond of him anyway.

Later, she adds:

> I feel my father is like a baby and I satisfy his demands […]. It is like the opposite of the Oedipus complex: the Electra syndrome. Yes, that is it. It is the Electra syndrome. I can label myself: I am Electra!

It would be fair to say that Katerina has not managed to deal with the paternal figure in any other way than by resorting to a simulated protracted childhood. She admits a strong identification with her father that possibly separation and individuation difficult for her. That is, to a time of compensation for absence through the intensification of the bond, and, in a sense, making the most of the financial crisis as affording a lack of options for going away. Now father and daughter are 'confined' in the parental home. What is noticeable in many of the interviews is how little mother and father are represented as a 'couple' or a collaborating team. In most cases, they stand for different domains at best, and as separate and antagonistic entities at worst.

4.2.2.3. Argyro - "I had not had any boundaries, ever"

Argyro is in her late twenties and has been working in low paid jobs to earn a basic income. She lives in the same block of flats as her parents. Recounting the frequent absence of her father due to work, she stresses that she is fond of him. She claims she has been experiencing "functional independence and emotional dependence", despite the fact that her parents still assist her financially and she regularly eats at her parent's home. She feels insecure and anxious about her future as she has always been working in temporary jobs. Recently, she earned her bachelor's degree, and admits that nothing stops her "from doing something other than a student's part-time job". She thinks that moving abroad for work could afford her emotional independence, especially from her father:

> It is better for me to leave, to get used to that […]. I have a dependent relationship with my parents, especially with my father, I think. […] I know that if I don't leave and establish a life abroad by myself, without having to handle this way of living, upstairs [her own flat] and downstairs [her parents' flat], I will not be able to handle any situation that may occur… [I experience] too much anxiety about this, you can't imagine.[1]

Argyro's desire to physically 'go away' is not an unusual pattern among participants. Leaving Greece, putting geographical distance between oneself and

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[1] Argyro's parents live upstairs and she lives downstairs in the same block of family apartments. Here she suggests that she has not a separate life by herself as she lives in the space between family life and independence.

one's parents, is often seen as the easiest and least confrontational way of gaining some form of independence.

Despite the fact that working abroad looks like an easy way to deal with familial interdependence, Argyro does not seem willing to take the step. She endlessly defers the decision to a more convenient moment, and looks for short term jobs that would allow her to return to Greece:

> […] and this is the reason that I am looking for an internship [in the UK,] so as to have a time limit [for staying].

Argyro is aware that she is not 'chasing life opportunities', as she puts it, and is deferring decision she would have liked to have taken. When asked whether she has anything to add to the issues raised in the interview, she offers a free association on the theme of usefulness of boundaries:

> Pressure is good, boundaries are good, it is good to know that you have an obligation over time, to not wholly be at peace.

It is not clear what kind of boundaries Argyro has in mind but one can surmise that these might refer to family relations and a desire for a disciplined life as a child, under the symbolic law that she lacked. That is that they may express a desire for more self-reliance and self-responsibility. When probed more on the theme of boundaries, Argyro speaks about lax university regulations which allow students to say in higher education for as long as they like and, indirectly, to not be disciplined enough in terms of time-keeping. This comment, one could argue, offers an indirect insight into her procrastination when it comes to leaving the immediate environment of her family.

4.2.2.4. Erato - “My father was just decorative”

Erato, who was also introduced in the previous section, illustrates the theme about the father from a slightly different perspective by speaking of a ‘decorative’ father:

> My father was decorative because he was low profile person and did not want to clash with my mother, and because our family was not patriarchal; it was mostly matriarchal. My mum played the biggest role in the family, even though she was not the breadwinner. My father assumed a subordinate role and was never intrusive. He would say [with regards to family issues]: “Why do you ask me? You know better”. It was the mother who ‘did the harm’, not the father.

The father is represented either as having abdicated his power to the dominant female (i.e., as being castrated) or as being seen by the daughter as an older sibling. We could surmise that in such cases the role of the father depends upon being validated by a mother who assumes the child to be her own possession. Clinicians argue that, in such cases, the child’s fantasy of narcissistic union hinders the internalisation of a triangular framework (Kirshner, 1992). If loosely applied to culture, this outcome reveals a family structure in which a phallic mother is undertaking multiple roles in an omnipotent way.

The figure of the father is important for the psycho-social development of the child, not only in the fundamental aspects of the Oedipus complex, but also as an attachment figure in his own right (Abelin, 1971). In this respect he should be the facilitator of separation and individuation (Mahler, 1968), an internalised other (Fairbairn, 1968), tempering the ambivalence generated by the mother-child bond (Winnicott, 1964), and operating as an originator of triadic psychic capacities

(Abelin, 1971, 1975; Jones, 2007). All the young Greek women who participated in this research indicate that, present or absent, the father remains an important figure in their lives. Very often, the love *of* the father or love *for* the father is perceived as an exclusive choice, or as in competition with the love for the mother. The reason for this remains unclear, but given the unquestionable importance attached by the interviewees to family bonds, one could surmise that the valuation of one parent over the other, and the ongoing negotiation of strong feelings towards both provide a good strategy for obtaining and managing the required emotional and psychic 'distance' that growing up entails, whilst still living under the same roof. It would not be an exaggeration to say that, in the Greek case, the 'normative' Name of the Father, as an abstraction of the separation necessary for entry into the network of symbolic relations, is negotiated over a long period of time rather than 'resolved' in pivotal moments. The young Greek women in this research exhibit considerable clarity about their emotional attachments to their parents, and often admit that they fail to deal with the best way. This could be construed as insufficient separation. But one could also propose that unwillingness to pursue an elusive independence is another way of enjoying the security of the family whilst paying lip service to autonomy. Thus an 'ego-ideal' is maintained while always remaining partially unattainable.

It might also be the case that, in a familial culture which is characterised by traditional gender division, girls will continue to resort to a paternal identification as a reaction to castration (Benjamin, 1991), and to a mother primarily and still confined to the domestic sphere. The intellectualised consciousness of the domesticated mother, and ambivalence towards her, is tempered by a paternal figure split into 'daddy' and 'father', which indicates awareness of their difference as a minimum.

It would be difficult and, in fact, unhelpful to suggest that *all* Greek young people are more attached to their parents than young people in other cultures. What is more important, and what merits further attention, is the way these young people speak about the cultural construction of the family as an indispensable and, to a large extent, 'untouchable' institution which defines national identity. The motto 'motherland-religion-family' invests the latter with the mythical power of a taboo. As a result, many Greeks reflect on family dynamics and proffer opinions about errors in the upbringing of children, as if from the objective perspective of an outsider. Delving further into this heightened consciousness of the impact of the traditional aspects of the Greek family on raising children will help further determine the precise scope and complexity of family relations.

4.2.3. A new generation of sheltered, spoiled or repressed young Greeks?

A common discourse in Greece turns on the parental obligation to provide *the best* for one's children. The initial grounds of this duty can be located in the trans-generational transmission of financial hardship-the 2008 crisis is by no means unique in Greek history-as well as the culturally transmitted trauma of famine during WW2, and the mass economic migration of Greek families to countries like Germany and Australia in the 1950-1960. More recently, however, the rise of per capita income and a period of considerable prosperity prior to 2008 has seen the traditional aspirations of Greek families to secure their children's futures by leaving property to them. As a result, the crisis of 2008 seemed to have caught many families unaware-not to say unprepared-for adversities they thought they would never encounter. This is reflected in several of the participants' narratives, and it is, to a certain extent, to be expected. What is more interesting, however, is that family values are scrutinised

and families are blamed for a lack of prescience and for not having prepared the younger generation for hardship. The economic crisis of 2008 has curtailed many young people's plans to leave the family home. This, in turn, seems to have exacerbated pre-existing tensions about freedom and self-determination.

4.2.3.1. Sofia - "I think we are spoiled"

With regard to the issue of living with one's parents as an adult, Sofia says:

> I think that I am very restricted by the fact that I have to live with my parents because I cannot afford to live alone. […] And this is a very important factor which influences the way we work and the way we grow up. It is so common to live with one's parents, and it is too difficult (financially) for a young person to live alone. In Greece we are all used to that.

Despite finding this arrangement restrictive, Sofia admits that she has made an agreement with her parents that, when she finds a good job, they will either buy her an apartment or pay her rent for her. At the same time, she feels like an adolescent, fully controlled by her parents, as she is not allowed to do what she likes. For example, when it comes to travel:

> Even now, when I go out, they ask me 'where are you going, what time are you coming back'? This suffocates you-it is very restrictive-I don't know if this is only my problem […] Whatever I do, I have to report it to them. 'Where are you going?' 'Why did you wake up early today?' 'Why are you going to the gym?'

When invited to think about families further, she comments:

> People abroad don’t have this mentality; they want their children to leave home because this is the way people develop. They are not like ‘please do not leave, don’t go to another city, another country. Be careful, don’t forget to take your coat, did you have lunch’?

The failure to establish independence from parents is often spoken as a ‘Greek’ malady. In such cases, the idealisation of an undefined western European “abroad” is often evoked as the avatar of a desired liberal upbringing. But, in line with ambivalence towards parents, this imaginary independence is not gained but bestowed.

When invited to express her final thoughts at the end of the interview, Sophia refers to being spoiled by her parents, who are overprotective and excessively giving. Again, projection of imaginary norms to the undefined European other allows the interviewee to eschew self-examination and her own responsibility in attaining any of the goals she sees as ideal:

> Look, the only difference with Greece as compared to ‘abroad’ is that Greek parents offer a lot to their children. My parents did the same. They were extraordinarily giving, but I think that they have made me... I have many needs, [I want] to have my car… I could not have this one if my parents hadn’t given me so much, I would have had to buy a more modest one ... I would have to work as a waitress, but I don’t want to work as a waitress. I want to get a job relevant to what I have studied. I think that we are quite spoiled.

One can see here an eternal complaint about fusion within the maternal, in a situation that Sofia agreed to be part of, but unconsciously seems to fight against. It

may seem quite weird how material goods such as a nice car can be more important than autonomy and independence but this is the reality for many young people, who exchange their freedom with material goods. Family 'saves' children by castrating them. The family gives the solution to a problem which she has created and this is very oppressing. In this case, Sofia seems to put responsibility for being spoiled life onto her parents but decides also to be spoiled. Sofia's willingness withers and all this conflict becomes an aggression towards her parents, who are accused that she was left unprepared for life. Quite the same story is narrated by Argyro below.

4.2.3.2. Argyro - "What is negative about the Greek family is that there is no harsh treatment at all"

Argyro tells a similar story. "I was not ready for independence at 18. Someone should have pushed me to study". At the same time, she recognizes that being pampered by her parents prevented her from making the most of opportunities:

> What is negative about the Greek family is that there is no harsh treatment at all… […] Until my late teens, I was told "do whatever you like… we are always behind you". I can see that this is the case for 90% of my friends. [What happened is] that, as children, we were spoiled, we did not take any responsibilities, and this is still the case in fact. People who have managed to do that [i.e., to take responsibility] are very few, and have managed to do that only recently. I would have liked to have grown up with an internal obligation, with boundaries. My generation has grown up very reassured and relaxed.

Several interviewees expressed a positive view of family and placed their own existence in a continuum of familial care and reciprocal support. In these narratives, the well-being of the family is upheld as one's number one priority and as the irreplaceable context of being. Argyro here actually implies that the inactivity towards life that characterises her generation comes from a parental reassurance of support, which, on the other hand, seems to have impeded their separation and individuation process as adult persons.

4.2.3.3. Eftihia - "It is the past of this family-and it is not only the past, it is present and future for the family, but I mostly feel it as the past-which keeps me behind"

During the second part of the interview, when Eftihia is asked to speak more about what she is now experiencing, she says that, although her family initially prevented her from doing what she desired, she was free to choose whatever she wanted. Even now, she experiences her family as a space from which she cannot imagine herself apart:

> The past of this family is not just past, it is present and future as well. I mostly feel that the past keeps me behind. This is a strange realisation, since I place family above all […] If anything happens to my family, I will drop everything to run to them.

In the same interview, Eftihia describes the family as a haven of security and emotional containment; in contrast, perhaps, to the daily struggles of earning an income and living on one's own:

> I have my independent life and my house, but when I need a place to hide, I always return to my parental home. It is a place in which I can feel the child in me still exists. I am a child again, I have no responsibilities for anything, bills, for instance. […]. Everything is warmer there and I am in a different mood. […] [It is a place where] my father or mother will say, 'I will do that for you, I will help you with that'. Do you understand? […] Sometimes I feel… especially now that I am experiencing a strange situation [financially], where I don't know what to do and everything is so on a knife's edge, I feel that I would like to live like a child again.

Again, Eftihia's account of the parental home as a childhood haven is not rare among Greeks. Returning home from time to time helps maintain a sense of continuity and provides a stable point of reference, which is particularly invaluable at times of crisis and uncertainty.

Some people find it quite difficult to think themselves apart from a wider body. Circumstances and attachments keep them locked in past experiences; in spaces where traces of others' lives are still alive, where human mind and emotion are tied to familiar senses and feelings. In this extract, there is a fusion between past, present and future, between experiences and dreams. Indeed, the imaginary milieu haunts a great part of Eftihia's life, colouring her dreams, her present, and her future plans. In any case, her identification with the maternal becomes stronger, revealing an undisrupted symbiotic relationship in which any desire for separation is repressed.

4.2.3.4. Anne - "I value family a lot because I have grown up like that. I think it is an intense part of our civilization, which makes us distinct"

Very often, the validation of the family is raised into a culturally unique feature. Anne, believes that traditions and values are as part of the Greek civilization, adding that Greece offers a better quality of life:

> Maybe it is because I grew up in a family that has been supportive- I speak from a place of security; I have not faced any difficulties in life by myself, so maybe this is why I think that Greece offers a good quality of life.

Anna admits to having been sheltered from facing adulthood. Recently, she returned to her parental home after completing her studies. Feeling comfortable with this, she claims that she is looking for a job that can support her life alone; however, as she is convinced that she cannot secure the 700 euros per month that she sees as the minimum for her needs, she does not feel compelled to work at all.

It is not uncommon in Greek culture to see young people both financially reliant on their families, and enjoying the option of not having to work since they are unable to earn the sum they feel they deserve. Very often, this is espoused as a cultural ideal which the Other lacks:

> Greece values family a lot and assumes it is very important. I agree with that. In other European countries, parents 'dismiss' children from home early-in inverted commas-which may be good, but, in general, strong bonds do not exist […] Their relationships with their families are weaker, which may be good because they are more independent. But it does not mean that I am not independent because

> I maintain relations with my family […] I value family a lot because I was raised that way; I have grown up like that. I think that it is a part of our civilization-very important-it makes us distinct, this value that we assign to human relations.

Anne likes being identified with the traditional part of the Greek nation and civilization, viewing herself mostly inside a "we" rather than as an "I". That is, as if she were an extension of her family and nation, thereby giving the impression of belonging to a wider wholeness. There is also a distinction between "we, the Greeks" vs. "abroad". She is critical towards globalization and technology, believing that they erode Greek values and threaten Greek identity, which she believes to be in danger, and in relation to which she casts herself as a savior:

> Especially with younger generations and technology, I assume that sometime all the traditions and customs will be eradicated even if me and the older generations try to maintain them (Anne, 26).

In Kleinian terms, the representation of the objects is experienced partially. Functioning as an internalised good object, values are the element of the ego ideal, while representations of the persecutory object are projected into the environment. Toward the end of the interview Anna reveals that her parents initially did not want to support her PhD studies because they thought she was 'hiding behind her books', but that they have now changed their position. Anna admits that she found it difficult to grow up:

> I always had an issue: I was afraid to grow up, my parents are right about that. I never wanted to grow up. I think I felt safer as a child.

Anne does not feel old enough to grow up and support an adult life. However, this should not be seen solely as an outcome of her familial relationships. As discussed earlier, such approaches come as a result of pre-capitalist structures, labour relationships, and educational structures that have formed such societies historically and socio-culturally.

4.2.3.5. Natasha - "Greek family, the ambivalence of love and oppression"

Natasha provides one of the most representative narratives with respect to the role of the 'holy Greek family' discourse as a master signifier. She is in her mid-twenties, has postgraduate qualifications in humanities, and works in the private sector. She comes from a south Greek island and moved to Athens to study, where she has remained for roughly a decade. Natasha comes from a working-class family with limited spending power, and her mother did not work during her early childhood. However, she was not deprived of an education. Although she claims that her family is neither stereotypical nor oppressive, she mentions that her parents grew up in rural parts of the island, and are saturated with gender stereotypes regarding the 'right' upbringing for boys and girls. Most of the narratives that she has come across via her social network, however, suggest that families are quite like that generally:

> Well, the 'holy Greek family' is the idealised one; it is the family which is correct in all respects: which loves children, which tries to reproduce its present and future… hmm… it is hyper-protective, it wants to perpetuate the species for ever, but all of this hides oppression. The 'holy' is mostly sarcastic rather than representative of the situation. That's it. We try to idealise situations for many

> reasons-for so many reasons. Also, the characteristic of this Greek family, which is gorgeous, and great, and does everything perfectly, is that... we sacrifice other things. We sacrifice our freedom and our desires.

As a general observation, Natasha speaks of the idealised and persecutory family which generates ambivalent feelings; a family which needs to be intergenerationally transmitted-as a value and a discourse-so as to secure her survival and propagation. The price for this is the sacrifice of a separate subjectivity and the subordination of personal goals to collective ones. It requires submissive individuals, always available to serve this ideal.

Natasha continues:

> Over-protectiveness may imply love, but it may also suffocate. Ultimately, I feel that the children of the Greek family do have not much freedom. Mother says: "grow up and do whatever you like", but this may be paternalistic, and will not allow you to be free. And it makes you feel guilty in any case where you don't do what mum and dad say. 'I am not the good child they would like me to be, I have brought shame on them', I have heard this from several people. Thus, one has to convince one's parents about what makes one happy, and this requires bravery […] The Greek family is a very weird subject, because it demonstrates the ambivalence of love and oppression; these two go together, and the boundaries between them are fluid. We don't know where love begins and oppression ends and, many times, oppression is justified in the name of love.

What Natasha assigns to Greek families is the need to reproduce an illusionary 'perfect image', and a paternalistic attitude towards young people, making them feel guilty when they are not fulfilling parental desires; this further captivates their minds, their actions, and their lives. One has to fight a lot to gain a life path of one's own, as the tradition's influence is so intense within the culture that it seems there is no exit from pre-determined life choices.

On the other hand, Natasha feels completely dis-identified with this model, declaring that her family is not like that, while her wider social network follows this image. Nevertheless, being dis-identified suggests that an identification has already taken place at some point and was later disavowed (Butler, 1993).

> What can be derived from the above is that the Greek household has been providing security in difficult times and children have acted as the welfare state for parents. Due to the crisis, children are forced to return to the parental home-many of them have not left at all from there-deprived from opportunities to live independently. The research participants above acknowledge that they are spoiled. But they also choose to be spoiled claiming that this is the way they have been nurtured, assigning the responsibility for this to their parents. This is a reciprocal relationship of support and oppression, saving and castration.

As noted above, it is not my intention to pathologize individuals or families, but rather to explore how the family is represented in the participants' speech, and, more importantly, how they position themselves towards family. I should perhaps say, in a Lacanian fashion, that 'there is no such thing as a Greek family', in the sense that

the latter is an imaginary construct supported by myths, desires and power relations. Accounts like “I have grown up like that” (Anne, Eftihia, Argyro, Sofia), “I will transmit the same values to my own child” (Anne, Eftihia), “This is usual and common sense for Greece” (Sofia, Argyro, Athina) illustrate this phenomenon. These accounts can explain why certain cultural traits or ‘discourses’ gain so much acceptance. However, the extent to which a random selection of people more or less paints the same picture of familiar care combined with a danger of ‘suffocation’ merits further analysis.

Family appears to offer emotional security, material support, spatial containment, and, in many cases, recourse to childhood, which can be consoling and healing. However, parental desire may be experienced as overwhelming and limiting. Would it be an exaggeration to say that this is the price of not growing up? Participants in this research seem very aware of the inherent difficulties of living with and away from the parental sphere, but none of them recounts what they have done to achieve the independence they speak of. Accounts such as: “I cannot afford to live alone” (Argyro and Katarina), “I have not found the right job for me yet” (Anne, Sofia and Homer), “This is usual for Greece” (Sofia and Cleio) demonstrate these attitudes. On the contrary, independence, as we saw above, is something to be bestowed, and is left to the same parents that repress and pamper in equal measure.

If this is the case, the question that needs to be explored further is as follows: where does the child’s discontent come from and what does it really represent? The young Greeks in this research proved to be extremely good at describing subtle mechanisms of attachment and dependence, but not the origins of their dissatisfaction.

It could be argued that ambivalence represents the Greek way of growing up, which could be understood as a variation of the basic Kleinian mechanism. The paranoid-schizoid position is characterized by an intolerance of ambivalence resorting to splitting, projection, idealization. The depressive position is characterized by a tolerance for ambivalence resorting to a sense of loss, mourning. Depending on how ambivalence is dealt with, it could lead to paranoid or depressive defences. At this point, I should note that depressive defence mechanisms are being triggered by the crisis.

Thus, family becomes both the idealised and the persecutory object, with the result being the generation of ambivalence. I am referring to the way in which these positions are manifested in adult life, since their infantile precursors are quite different. (E.g., the infantile paranoid schizoid position is prior to the individuation of self and familial others and is characterised by splitting and aggressive intro-and projective displacements of partial objects as processes of defence). Drawing on this observation, we could argue that the critique is addressed not so much to 'the parents', who are often seen as caught up in the same mechanisms, but towards 'holiness' itself. That is to say, to the very inaccessibility of a cultural imperative that is now undergoing fundamental revision.

To put it differently, if the 'holy Greek family' implies an overvaluation of an institution that makes the subject dependent and submissive to an authority or object containing traces of the earliest oedipal attachments (Freud, 1905/1999a), strong ambivalence toward that institution indicates that a different, alternative way of doing things can now be imagined. It could therefore be argued that the discontent with family is a symptom of the younger generation, which is inevitably in close contact with both other cultures and the harsh realities of living in an intensively

neoliberalised economy. The ambivalence to the undefined European other, and the blame of parents for not preparing their children for the job market is directly related to that. In that sense, we could say that what the participants actually say is the following: the Greek family is too nice for the competitive market economy; too benign for a dog-eat-dog survivalist culture; too protective of the 'value' of the child and her economic potential, which is never confirmed by her exchange value in the job market. Indeed, it is very often the case that the family becomes a safety zone and a site for a regression to childhood precisely when the young Greeks begin to experience the shocks of unemployment, de-valuation of labour, a lack of opportunities, etc.

From a relational point of view, internal family dynamics appear fractured, split, and divided. In societies with traditional gender divisions, the mother's centrality to the child and adolescent's life is reinforced by specific socio-political and economic formations. Moreover, it is exacerbated by transgenerational hauntings (Frosh, 2013), which are also very common in traditional or conservative societies. In such cases, "the success of triangulation partially depends on the extent to which the mother has loosened her attachments to her own parental objects and avoid transferring them onto the representation baby" (Braunschweig & Fain, p. 1230, in Kirshner, 1992, p. 1123); I would further argue though that this succession depends on both parents; loosening of attachments to their own parental objects. Throughout this section, we have highlighted an implicit but systematic appeal to parents to grant independence, and this merits further attention. Perhaps the child is driven to think and act as the partner for the mother, and the child's ego ideal remains attached to that model (Kirshner, 1992). The mother may use the child to fulfil a fantasy of

completeness hindering the child's desire to search for the third, refusing the symbolic phallus.

This explanation probably chimes with individual experiences to some extent, but it does not address the cultural aspect of what is implied; namely, that a fast-changing socio-economic landscape exposes the fragility of maternal omnipotence, of the phallic tendencies of the child (which are no match for the real world), and the diminished power of the well-meaning family to continue pitching itself against the 'whole world'. Perhaps this is what the European Other has done, and for which they are duly envied.

4.2.4. Motherland, Religion, Family: a complex intersection

This section draws specifically on the participants' views on the institution of family and its role in determining Greek identity. Greece, along with other Mediterranean countries, is historically seen as a highly collective society (Kafetsios, 2006). This is characterised by the subordination of personal goals to those of the community (Kalogeraki, 2009; Triandis, 1988, 1989, 2001), strong shared norms and values, and extended kinship systems. Such values are central to preserving communal relationships (Dragona, 1983; Doumanis, 1983) where the self is considered as an extension of the family. In Greece, these values are accurately represented by the slogan "Motherland, Religion, Family", which resonates especially with the post-civil war ideologies of anti-Communism and Orthodox Christianity. More broadly, it has its roots in the 1930s, and reflects the conservativism that characterised Greece during the 20th century (Gazi, 2011). Through the decades, the slogan has also been used by Christian groups in their fight against emergent movements, such as feminism and socialism, and by dictators as a

synonym for patriotism, at a time when basic freedoms and rights were denied (Gazi, 2011). The community can act as a legitimate and signifier of authority filtering new ideologies or values through the lens of symbolically powerful slogans, which more or less, crystallize ‘what the community values more’, along with customs, rituals, and relevant cultural traits. In this section, I will shed some light on this discourse that has served as a compass for many generations. This will serve as an example of how past traces can be transmitted through generations and find a space, as instances of a greedy desire to dominate the mind. This section is close to the ‘holy Greek family’ theme, but is presented and discussed separately to show the connection between family and discourses that connect the micro familial environment to the macro societal level.

In many ways, the currency of this slogan, reflects the attitude of Greek youth to a historical past of which they may not be fully aware, and a dissemination of values which have still to be tested against the advent of a fully-fledged individualism and capitalism.

4.2.4.1. Anne - “This is what unites and feeds us as country”

From the first lines of her initial narrative, Anne speaks about motherland, and values and traditions that are maintained in Greece and constitute its difference from the rest of Europe. She argues that tradition is a means of resisting globalisation, and an element that *“unites and empowers us as a country”* and *“makes us distinct”*.

Anne deplores the decline of religion and the fact that people are driven away from the church because of scandals. She sees religion as both part of an inherited system of values, and as a system of order. Anne describes how she fasted forty days

for Lent, and how proud she felt for accomplishing that. What is impressive though is the fact that:

> I can't even imagine myself not going to the Resurrection.[1] I can't even imagine not fasting for at least one week, even if I have doubts about whether God exists or not. I refuse to let those doubts develop. I want to believe in something; I like it and I assume that religion and faith in something higher unites us and keeps us in tune as a society.

This reflection on religion shows that Anne is not willing to challenge her beliefs. Indeed, she does not even imagine entertaining doubts about her faith. Nor are these suppressed doubts simply those that might drive her to reject her beliefs entirely; rather, even those that could challenge the irrational and dogmatic way in which these beliefs are transmitted are repudiated. One could also comment that this attitude might be a pretext for individuals and groups to conform to group ideals, which further alienate them in the discourse of the Other. These might include political discourses or social 'trends' that disempower one's own capacity to critically think and evaluate new ideas.

Anne needs to "believe in something higher, something that unites us" and adds:

> If laws did not exist, anarchy would prevail. If religion did not exist, anarchy would prevail. So, we need to believe in something higher

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[1] The Easter celebration.

> as a society. It is not only Greek society; every society needs to follow something higher, ideally higher than us. […]. I highly value motherland (laughs), religion and family. And I think that this is what unites and feeds us as country.

To the extent that these values provide a context of belonging deemed important at a time of crisis, Anna prefers to focus on the unifying role of institutions. She is not unaware of their shortcomings, but she rationalises them with a reference to an inherited and 'subconscious' (deeply embedded) way of life, and a wisdom that cannot be challenged:

> In times past, the church had greater power than the state […]. The church restrained biological needs by means of religious prohibitions which, I know, were aimed at manipulating people and controlling them. Religion has managed to control people on the one hand, but, on the other, I think that it was the church which initially organised societies and laws and political systems […] I do not approve of the church's control, but I think it has offered us many values that inform the way we think about and respect other people […] The role of religion is huge, even if we don't understand this, because it is something with which we grew up subconsciously, and which is not imposed on us.

Anne is identified with this model and what she says here is that human biological needs need to be controlled by the church, and that societies need external prohibitions to be moral/ethical. Individual capacities for criticism and thinking are deactivated in favour of an external factor which would force people to be ethical.

Human thought is then manipulated by organised systems of beliefs, and the human need to believe in something higher is downgraded to a need to be governed by an alien figure or spirit. What can also be seen here is a need to believe in a powerful father figure in order to free oneself from personal responsibility for one's own guilt.

4.2.4.2. Natasha - "All three components are circles, all are families"

Natasha assumes a more 'neutral' position in which family, religion and motherland are represented as concentric layers of social organisation. She says:

> The nuclear family is in the centre; religion and church represent a bigger circle of people, and this is the wider circle; in the outer circle we place motherland but we perceive all three concepts as a form of family [...] Many years will have to pass before this idea disintegrates and disappears from Greek society. […] We are all members of a family, we all believe in a religion, and we all belong to a nation.

Natasha is not unaware of how Golden Dawn[1] and other nationalists have exploited the slogan, but adds:

> Maybe it is not necessarily connected with far-right people. Maybe there are other people who adopt this idea but keep a low profile at least.

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[1] A recently proscribed far right national socialist political party.

Natasha appears distanced from these three institutions; however, she acknowledges that they provide a sense of belonging for most people, and that they are a kind of family.

4.2.4.3. Eftihia - "It is a lived experience in our society"

Others, like Eftihia, subscribe to the slogan, but 'not in a fanatical way' (phrasing that once again hints at the slogan's nationalist connotations). Religion is seen as a source of strength at times of personal difficulty. This was the case for Eftihia during her mother's illness, despite doubts or 'some lack of faith'. However, her faith collapsed when she did not receive what she had asked for from God:

> Many things collapsed inside me concerning religion. I came through a phase in which I did not believe in God anymore, I did not go to church anymore; I used to go, but since I lost my mother, I was in denial. God did not help me... God acted like that but… you know... this is a religious part: ask for help and you will be heard... if you are a good Christian, you will get what you deserve, and I felt that I was not offered anything by God, and I stopped praying since then [...] I feel that my faith is ebbing away, but this does not mean that I do not believe; I just don't believe to the level that I did.

What is evident here is a transactional relationship between God and people. Favours are asked of God and satisfied if one is a good Christian. But if the desire is not satisfied, then people feel they have the right to be angry with God. This is similar to the child–parent relationship. If religious belief remains unchallenged in Anne's case, in Eftihia's case, God is seen as a good or bad parent who offers or withdraws goods.

On the subject of motherland, Eftihia speaks of its high value, which is seen as ingrained in ‘our way of growing up’. Migration and the financial crisis are considered to have undermined the stability of the three, alongside public institutions:

> It is easy to find people who disrespect politicians because of the country’s economy: the economy is in an awful state because of the politicians. It is not our fault that we voted for such politicians who made such imprudent use of money. […] We have a tendency to stay in our motherland, because it is ‘blessed’, and we love it, and nowhere is like Greece. I know people who have returned from abroad, who say that the Greek way of living does not exist anywhere else. […]. It is weird because we criticize what is happening nowadays and we glorify the past. Most people, when talking about motherland, mean the glorious past of our country, the personalities, the history, the good times.

The attempt to idealise Greece is evident. Past and present are split from one another, as are the salient idealised institutions from current leaders who embody or represent them. By the same token, patriotic ideals can be supported by a further split between Greece and the rest of the world, and between ordinary people and incompetent politicians. It could be argued that Eftihia communicates an inability to bear depressive guilt and the psychic reality of loss which, in turn, gives rise to defences. It has bene argued (Voutyras & Glynons, 2016) that Greeks found it hard to mourn the passing of an idealised past and the lives considered above lend themselves to such an explanation.

4.2.4.4. Omeiros - "This was a triptych adopted by dictatorship, so the words lost their meaning"

A quite different narrative is offered by Omeiros, a young man in his late thirties, living in Athens, with both a University and an artistic background in Greece and abroad. Omeiros has grown up in a beloved extended family in a nice neighbourhood in Athens, where he has had a lot of friends around him and had experienced a happy childhood.

Omeiros attempts to interpret the importance of family and religion with reference to European history and capitalism. As the financial crisis resulted in his family's bankruptcy, Omeiros' account is colored with mourning and raw emotion. His attempt to create a global explanation drawing on theoretical socio-economic arguments, combined with tender memories and personal experience, offers a unique insight into an educated man's attempt to make sense of unique and distressing events. Below we offer an extensive account of his views.

Omeiros speaks of how consumerism is instilled in people, of art and literature that he liked as a child, and the general state of 'blessedness', which was an illusion. His father taught him that the real economy and industry had been abandoned, and that factories gradually closed as people moved towards a services economy. Since the 1980's, globalization has had an impact on the Greek economy since it has led to a focus on importing instead of producing. Omeiros finds the root cause of contemporary problems in the establishment of the Greek state in the 19th century, and the influence of Bavarian principles which were socio-culturally different from Greek ones. Omeiros also thinks that contemporary Greeks imitate and adopt cultures and institutions from abroad without examining whether they can match the Greek mentality. The Greek problem is one of identity because there is no

vision of evolving the 'traditional' Greek way. People have been trying to adopt a different self, a Western European one, but this is unachievable because there are inherent differences. Responsibility for the abandonment of the Greek way is blamed on the ruling class and those in charge of culture or economy. In the context of the crisis, Omeiros sees it as inevitable that families had to come to the rescue of many young people:

> Family is fundamental and has actually saved [individuals] on many occasions. One can imagine how many people would have been homeless, as they were unemployed. If one did not have one's own house, and if one's family did not want to take one in, then people would be living in the streets-no other choice. Thus, family has assisted a lot. On the other hand, familism and nepotism do exist, which is a problem. This is a problem of meritocracy actually.

Omeiros assigns a saviour role to the family, with the individual being viewed as absolutely dependent on family for safety and refuge. Even in sociological terms, individual agency is not recognised as powerful enough to bring any changes. The individual is thus a passive being, cleared from their capacity for responsibility.

Omeiros speaks of a 'culture of egotism', a 'selfie period' and an individual-centred mindset, which prevents people from caring about others. This description refers to high earners and people who benefitted from Greece's decades of prosperity. At the other end of the spectrum, Omeiros places the churches, which, at the height of the financial crisis, played an instrumental role in organising support in local communities:

> I used to be sceptical towards religiosity, but not towards the church […]. There are many neighbourhoods [in Athens] that are awful in architectural terms, but may have a beautiful church. It is affecting both in spiritual and in material terms. And the way priests and ordinary women in churches fight to give encouragement to other people is remarkable […] But nobody will talk about them, despite the fact that they are making such an effort; people who are real heroes do exist […] We need heroes. And the word 'hero' is Greek.

Omeiros assumes that these virtues resonate with an anthropocentric and socially-centred Greek culture, as opposed to the individualistic attitude of the West. Interestingly, for Omeiros, the juxtaposition of East and West is not only material but aesthetic:

> A gothic church fills you with fear and awe. Fear. This is why they have been decorated with small monsters, sculptures. Like Notre Damme in Paris. This is a big difference between west-European civilization and ours. If you enter a Greek church and see the dome and all the windows, you are flooded with light. In Greece, we have been taught to live with light, not with fear. I think that this Renaissance Light is the only one that can save Europe and the West from decadence. But we need heroes. I think that Dostoyevsky wrote: "Beauty will save the world". The revolution of beauty. And I have seen beauty. It is flooded with light [Omeiros is crying].

One could discern in Omeiros' words a desire to escape the present by means of a melancholic return to a lost glorious past. In melancholia, the loss is withdrawn

from consciousness. Kaplan (1987) calls it pathological nostalgia. This kind of nostalgia can be understood as an attempt to regulate a loss of self-esteem and feelings of narcissistic injury (Kaplan, 1987), and can produce distorted versions of life's conflicts.

It is worth adding at this point that Omeiros's views are typical of the ongoing debate about Greekness in intellectual circles, and attempts to advance an anthropocentric model that could carry resonances of both antiquity and Christianity. Taking place during the time of the financial crisis, this debate became emblematic of soul-searching and a desire to move away from apportioning blame to global institutions, like the IMF and the EU, for Greece's economic state. Omeiros says:

> In Greece, you may be an atheist, but you are an orthodox atheist. […] There are differences in the way a Greek person understands the orthodox church […]. Beyond the aesthetic, architectural, poetic connections with the historical past-the Greco-Roman world from which it emerged-it [the church] is also inscribed in an anthropocentric world; this is what Giannaras [a Greek philosopher] claims about communion […] and [this communing] looks forward to the salvation of society as a whole, rather than the individual. It is the way this kind of society views sin: sin is a mistake, while in the West it is censurable. In the Greek language sin means 'to fail'.

When asked to comment on 'Motherland, Religion, and Family' more specifically, Omeiros acknowledges the nationalist roots of the slogan, but tries to offer a reinterpretation of the principles in light of the role of the family during the financial crisis and the potential of local culture to resist globalisation-an indirect

attack on what many Greeks perceived as an external intervention in the country's affairs:

> The demonization of family [is not right] because, as we realised, family has assisted during the crisis; and […] motherland means paternal earth. If you are rootless, if you haven't got the sense of tradition, if you do not have a sense of belonging, of residing, you can't move; well, man has the need to belong somewhere, not to be hanging in the air. It is like a tree: you can't have a tree that has no roots. You have the sense of uprooting, and man has the need to belong somewhere […] Globalisation is not comfortable with rooted people; the global capitalist system desires a globalised proletariat, people with no roots, people who work with less and less money so that the economy keeps on moving.

The sense of family and belonging is very important for Omeiros. This is legitimate but he also feels that he cannot move without residing somewhere, without the sense of tradition and of motherland. Having said that, it seems that he deprives himself from new possibilities of being, new ways of self-actualization for himself as he has always looking backwards and feels nostalgia for the past. Of course, family and tradition, kinship and religion should not be demonized per se. However, when they become ball and chain, this sense of rooting can restrain and oppress individuals. This seems to be the case for Omeiros as well. What is more, he tries to legitimize his opinion by speaking about globalisation and the capitalist system, as regulators of rootless people, implying that uprooted people are more vulnerable to become proletariat, working more for less. By that, he denies the possibility of creating a

subjectivity by himself; instead, he implies that the sense of the self is pre-given or constructed only by the environment, the motherland, the family and the tradition in which one participates.

4.2.4.5. Marcus - "I had a national consciousness; I imagined doing something heroic in my life"

Marcus is a young man in his early thirties, who grew up in small towns. He describes a constant move from one town to another as a child, each signifying a period of absence of one parent due to job responsibilities. This came to an end when he moved to Athens as a University student. Consequently, he experienced many changes, with different schools, friends, people, and places, and a need to fight "to be integrated in school and to exist there". Marcus describes the importance of religion for small communities:

> Religion was part of my life in the first place. I thought it was so natural to attend church on Sundays. We attended church almost every Sunday, but I think it was never forced upon me. I chose whatever I wanted to follow […] I was an altar boy; my uncle was a chorister. [Church] was a social space for me, I liked to hear the hymns, I started to believe in God, to pray […] I had adjusted many parts of my life in compliance with Christianity. For instance, I was a person who didn't like to see other children face inequalities in school, I didn't like to see them bullied and I wanted to defend them. […] I had adopted some creeds, such as to love our fellow creatures, to respect the weak, etc. […] I was thinking that this would be

> appreciated somewhere and I felt good that I did the right thing. […]
> I had adopted the feeling of justice.

Although identifying himself as 'not super faithful', Marcus abides by the ethical code of Christianity, adding that faith helped him through hard time during his studies and military service. 'Fatherland, Religion, Family', has been a lived experience for him, though not an extreme one:

> I had a national consciousness, let's say, which was [located] mostly in imagining doing something heroic in my life. I mostly identified with heroes in a mythological way [...] [At some point], I would say, I adopted patriotic elements and traditions because I viewed them as a continuity with the past. This was the "motherland" part.

Marcus points out that he comes from a rightwing, conservative village, which suggests a symbolic element to this slogan. He admits having been suffused with this imaginary of a heroic past, national identity, and pride, and having identified himself with this desired image. Even if these ideals are lost, it is the phantasy of them in which people are phantasmatically invested.

It seems that Marcus had found the identity, space to exist, and place of communion, that Omeiros was looking for. Religious practices served as a way to communicate with other people and socialize. One could identify a parallel with Bion's group dynamics here, where the working group coexists with the basic assumptions group. The group meets to do something, undertakes some activities, and exists in order to be sustained by a leader, which can be a person or an idea on which it depends for nourishment and protection. The group also meets to fight or flee something (Bion, 1952).

Inclusion or imaginary participation in such a group is often challenged by the demands of modern life. Marcos recalls that in Athens many of the small-town ways of life practically disappeared:

> There was an interest, a community [back home] […] I noticed this difference with the Athenians. Athenians feel these issues [family relations and religion] as 'must do' issues.

A way of life disappears. The imaginary bond of patriotic values turns into a mechanistic code of obligations and practices. It lacks soul, and, in that sense, loses the 'mythical' potency it might have had for a once nice and dutiful child.

Beginning with the relation to God and religion, the narratives presented above reveal a relationship of exchange, in which people ask for help and receive it. In this regard, it is a relationship that parallels the parent-child relationship. God is also experienced as both the good, and bad object depending on circumstances. Loving feelings are projected onto the loved object, but if the desire is not satisfied, then God becomes a frustrating and persecutory object (Klein, 1932, 1935). What is more, we should mention the tendency to internalise internal attributes, such as country, nation, and tradition, and to demonise the external, as that which belongs to the other. There is thus an imaginary collective threat that originates from the foreigner, as the different and differentiated other.

What is also notable in this section is the phenomenon of dogmatism. As noted elsewhere, this does not necessarily refer to the philosophical question of the existence of God, but more often to the unchallenged way of accepting and transmitting ideas and ideologies from one generation to the next. According to Freud (1927/1999i), civilization has little to fear from educated people, but we should take

into account that there is a great mass of uneducated people who may proceed to unacceptable actions without the existence of religion. Freud also argues that dogmatic adherence to religion contributes to the weakness of an individual's intellectual ability, because it forecloses the possibilities of inquiry. On the other hand, religion is an unconscious need for wish fulfilment, and is related to the child's egoistic need for protection. "It stems from the relation to the mother in the oceanic experience and to the father in the relationship to the God that protects" (Kovel, 1990, p. 72). In any case, "religion is harmful when it encourages a person to split off and disown aspects of the self," but is "beneficial when it helps one find a way of accepting oneself and integrating even the most frightening and threatening aspects into a larger, more cohesive self" (Anderson, 2007, p. 128).

For many of the participants above, this slogan has a lot to do with the way they interpret the modern, globalised world and the sense of uprooting it entails. Late modernity forces us to develop greater trust in abstract, expert systems, and less in human objects. (Giddens, 1990, 1991). It thereby separates the traditional from the modern. Trust is no longer taken for granted simply on the basis of local, intimate relations, but has to be won, and this demands an opening of the self to the other through a mutual process of self-disclosure. The construction of the self thus becomes a reflexive project located within the reflexivity of late modernity. This is at odds with the value system in Greece, a country which is not a late modern society in the Anglo-American sense (Voulgaris, 2006). Instead, people rely more on kinship systems and local community, and a continuing affinity with religious cosmology and tradition itself as a stabilizing network. This dependence is basic for the confidence that people may have in the continuity of their self-identity and subjectivity. Ontological security is sustained through the development of secure

environments of day-to-day-life, and through routine itself. This was an ideal for many of the participants; an ideal, which they feel they will lose due to globalization and increased trust in abstract systems. Mourning this ideal, they mourn their own places within it. They feel that routines have become radically disrupted, and their meaning brought into question. Existential crises are likely to occur, and they can feel lost in fateful moments, when existential dilemmas are more extreme and pressing (Giddens, 1991).

It can be argued (Hagglund, 1982) that religion represents the desire to return to a paradise in which one was not deprived of anything. It is also a form of wishful thinking, where people seek help from an external agent who will assist in resolving their inner conflicts. "The Holy Trinity" is the centre of religion in most of the religious systems, so in one's religious experiences, one must resolve one's relation to these three: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. That is, the child must resolve the maternal relationship, the paternal relationship, and its relationship with itself (Hagglund, 1982). For many of the research participants above, religious conceptions have much to do with emotions, instincts and inner tensions that are relieved by them. The child needs to find ways to alleviate its inner tensions through channels that the family assumes as acceptable, gaining approval, love, and support in turn. All this becomes a part of the child's ego, superego, and ego ideal and parents have become part of this psychic structure (Jones, 1939).

This section argues that such socio-cultural phenomena need libidinal attachment to be sustained (Stavrakakis, 2008) and disseminated. There is a *jouissance* derived from the reiteration and transmission of rituals and customs related to religious periods, as obsessive actions and behaviours indicate. In certain circumstances, an obsessional reiteration could potentially be a sign of specific

pathologies. One can further investigate the interaction between pathology and religion which can also be seen in a historical and cultural perspective (Westerink, 2020, p. 609).

4.2.5. The wider Greek family: reflections on enjoyment and responsibility

One of the aims of this research is to explore young people's views on the role and importance of the wider family. That is, on the nexus of blood relations and inter-generational dynamics that form part of their everyday experience. Grandparents, aunts and uncles, nephews and nieces, relatives by marriage, and *koumbaroi* (links established through christening someone's child or being best man or woman at a wedding) regularly figure as 'family connections' in Greek discourse. Traditionally, they represent relations of alliance and allegiance. For example, while not practised as extensively today as it was in the past, many Greek politicians have promoted their careers through such christenings and weddings. Religious festivals, such as Christmas and Easter, are usually times when big families come together. This is often marked by the mass exodus of the inhabitants of Athens towards the towns and villages of their origin.

Many young Greeks now see the role of the extended family as somewhat ceremonial, marking a transition from the pre-industrial ideal of the organic unit to a more individual way of relating with their families. Natasha says:

> On dad's side, my dad's dad had five siblings, dad's mum had nine siblings. And each one of them had four children. And their children had two or three children, too. I don't know how many cousins I have. On mum's side: mum's dad had seven siblings and mum's

> mum had eight siblings. Each one of them had four or five children as well and each child has two or three children in return […].

Very often, children just conform to their parents' wishes that they 'be there', indicating that it is an older generation that is keener to maintain these links:

> The basic thing that I remember is that, you know, we had to spend holidays together, that's it. That we had to do things together, even if we did not like it … ok, it is not that we do not love each other, but just that we are different as characters. And many times we ended up sitting at the same table, just eating, just doing it as a process and then leaving.

Athina speaks of the extended Greek family along similar lines, describing it as 'hypocritical', and referring to annual meetings as mere lip service to unity:

> I would say that, in a sense, family is hypocritical because one is regularly obliged to attend family events at Easter or Christmas, but ultimately, the rest of the year nobody calls anybody to see whether they are dead or alive.

These views, not uncommon amongst Greeks, could be seen as reflecting a growing trend of a lack of investment in, and 'loyalty' to the extended family, poignantly highlighted by the claim that 'no one calls to see if you are dead or alive'. What is notable in these narratives is the absence of any positive appreciation of what these gatherings may accomplish. For instance, the negotiation of temporality through repetition, and the symbolic marking of time by the group. Also absent is an appreciation of the fact that these events are not necessarily bound to care, love and

intimacy. It seems that some young Greeks find it hard to identify with their parents' family ideals, or at least their parents' misconstrued adherence to such ideals. The fact that they cannot say no to such gathering also points to a conflict between obligation and enjoyment, which is not unique to the Greek family.

For others, of course, family gatherings are part of "Greekness"-the latter being defined against an imaginary other found lacking in terms of values and coherence. Anna says:

> Christmas and Easter customs are very important in Greece, as compared to other countries. In Greece, we are united by such values and traditions. I think that they empower us as a country.

If Natasha and Athina express a desire for a more individualistic sense of self and a nexus of meaningful relations based on choice, rather than pre-existing relations, Anna speaks on behalf of those who position and define themselves squarely within the collectivity. Since these two ways of being exist side by side, we could say that, at the moment, they represent a tendency to polarisation and ambivalence, pretty much in line with an attitude to parents. What is perhaps missing from both accounts is a synthesis of sorts.

Further tension come to light when the interviewees are invited to speak about their *position* in their family (as opposed to their relationship to their parents). Here they offer a rather harsh assessment of the family environment.

Elli is in her late twenties and has grown up in an extended family with grandparents in rural central Greece. She has a BA in the health sciences and a masters' degree from an East European University. She is in a long-term relationship that will probably lead to marriage, and is now trying to 'settle her life and her

profession'. Elli refers to her grandparents as an important presence in her life, and describes them as her ''second parents''. She remembers:

> My grandfather was 'the anchor' of the household, and my father was working in his business. My father was then in his thirties, but he did not own the business. My grandfather was the boss. My grandfather had a partner with whom my father did not want to continue doing business […] Ultimately, when grandfather passed away, my father was left in debt because of poor management by my grandfather and spending money for others.

A substantial part of Elli's narrative is taken up by her grandfather's domination, and one could not help but surmise that her own father appears as a 'child' within it. That is, as a dependent, unable to assert his own independence against this parental figure. An oblique insight into the impact of his working in the family business is offered by Athina:

> I would say that, for my own generation, anyone who chooses to work with their parents... it is like they fall by the wayside and are castrated by their fathers, who do not want to lose their thrones, their control, and their business. They do not give space to a young person to carry the business forward, to change its scope, to regenerate it.... The castration of the sons in a family is a great issue in Greece, I think. Additionally, [another great issue] is that children leave the parental home so late.

Athina speaks from her own experience but, curiously, identifies the masculine problem as the bigger one. The reason is unclear, and one can only assume that this is because 'castration' is hard to conceptualise from a female point of view. Perhaps the masculine identification is the only way for Athina to represent her experience, or an oblique way of making a comment about intergenerational dynamics in general, drawing on the psychoanalytic myth, which also prioritises the masculine.

A little later in the interview, Athina discusses how she sought employment from a rich relative who helped her for a long time, but who eventually did not renew her contract. Coming to terms with the end of family favour indeed appears as a moment of castration *and liberation*: a coming to terms with the fact that the 'Other' neither commands nor is responsible for one's existence. Athina deals with this loss of support by recognising an emerging split between financial and family interests, *which is the exact opposite of previous generations*. It could be argued that many young people find this departure from family ways as unavoidable in the context of capitalism, if not perfectly reasonable:

> Maybe the fact that he [her relative-employer] was a billionaire made him not want to waste one more salary on me.... Why blame him, instead of accepting the fact that he did not want to assist me anymore? No one owes me. My mother [did not take it very well] and started complaining to my father: "Your brother does not help our children!" But she chose to forget that my aunt had been supporting me for so many years […] All families have an aunt, a neighbour, a cousin, someone, and we have grown up with the belief

> that it is ok, other people will support us because they have money or resources. This is not necessarily the case.

Extending Athina's comments to wider society, it would be possible to say that her generation is tasked with overcoming the traditional libidinal composition of family (although such a feat is not always easy to achieve). In that sense, departing from the claim that "the other owes me," and the belief that family will provide, can be then seen as a departure from the 'regression to/of narcissism' and merger with an inward-looking protected environment. This regression, in which people could never abandon the loved object (Freud, 1917/1999d), could lead to an abandonment of social responsibility (Koutantou, 2017). However, the fact that Greece espouses, or tries to do so, free market capitalism entails that the cracks and rifts to the traditional family relations most likely come from the financial field rather than the emotional one. The gradual separation from the family, and the advancement towards an individualism supported by market trends and economic decisions is by no means uniform, general, or easy.

Yet, in some cases, the crisis of 2008 and the abrupt closure of many family businesses resulted in a 'catastrophe' which, for some, also led to a forced separation from the family fortunes. Omeiros was the son of a well-known and very successful businessman, and used to enjoy wealth, privilege, and family reputation. Market competition and cheap imports began to undermine his father's business. Social status, pride and symbolic power generated by his father's professionalism was now lost, along with the business. The financial crisis and the father's sudden death left Omeiros with a huge challenge:

> I was the man of the family, so I had to shoulder the burden. I tried as much as I could. At the same time, I tried to balance this challenge with studies, art, and books. I tried to follow my dreams, because, on the one hand, I could see that a whole world was collapsing and, on the other, disaster and creation coexist.

Omeiros felt he had lost paternal protection and status because of the debts created by the crisis. The loss was obvious, and the paternal power was enough to eclipse the son's: he has been trying to overcome the father since then. The business was eventually lost, but, Omeiros comments:

> Creativity is a painful process, yet it can bring happiness. On the one hand, you see chaos, and on the other you think: 'I created this'. Even during difficult circumstances, I insisted on my dreams. I am happy to a certain extent because I achieved that. It is an ambivalent state of ruin and a new world.

In conclusion, what this section discusses is, first of all, a discontent with family gatherings that indicates that the 'mythical' family is declining. That is to say, young people seem more interested in relationships they have chosen, or at least the more meaningful ones. Secondly, one can see the decline of family businesses, which cannot compete with free market capitalism. The ambiguous outcome of this defeat demonstrates that splitting and separation may be hard, but can bring freedom, even if it is forced upon one. Family business is the most common form of Greek economic activity. Its institutional logic is pre-modern and can be depicted as founded upon familism, with a focus on the central role of the nuclear extended family and its friendship networks as the dominant locus of trust and moral duty (Liagouras, 2018,

2019). In this social model, the separation of the traditional from the modern, which forces us to develop trust in abstract systems, in expert systems, and in non-human objects in a Giddensian sense (1990, 1991), is rather under-developed in Greece.

However, ambivalence still remains in relation to the desire of the (m)Other and submission to authority. It seems too difficult for the youngest to articulate a subjectivity of their own, as familial authority does not want to lose control. One can see an awareness of 'castrations' as well: in psychoanalytic terms, many of the research participants, practically describe the Laius complex; that is, "a wish from the part of the authority figure to symbolically murder or diminish a subordinate" (Levy, 2011, p. 222). It is submission to an authority-the paternal figure-which implies the desire of paternal figures to dominate the lives of youngsters by withholding chances for them to develop and hindering their independence. This attitude is reinforced by a maternal desire to keep youngsters in the imaginary realm, as manifested in the attempt to hinder them from departing from the parental home. On the other hand, it can also happen that the youngest articulate a need and a demand for eternal love and nurturing, so this may be a reciprocal procedure and, with socio-cultural reinforcement, may make it difficult for the youngest to be recognised as separate entities.

What one could further note however, is that the Oedipus and Laius complexes can entail awareness of the illusion of perfect love between child and parent, and the struggle between generations. A positive outcome of this eternal process can be the relinquishment "of psychic ties of excessive love or excessive hatred in order to develop a capacity for new choices in the future, less over-shadowed by old Oedipal and post-Oedipal currents" free from both complexes (Levy, 2011, p. 226). One could speak of a reciprocal process of assigning

responsibilities to one another for lives and choices, which would in fact pertain to issues of both individual and social responsibility. “In the case of a governing structure, the society’s failure in containment of anxiety […] and social provision […], which may represent the provisions of the parental environment, generates losses to people as they are less protected from the social environment; these losses are coming to terms people’s own limitations that can signify a failure” (Koutantou, 2017, p. 14). As seen so far, the problem concerning the Greek parental environment is not the absence of the qualities of ‘holding’ and ‘containment’, but rather the over-holding and over-protecting familial environment.

5. Chapter 5: Young people's imaginaries on financial crisis and work

5.1. Introduction

The present chapter focuses on the financial crisis that engulfed Greece in 2009. During this time, people experienced losses on two levels. On the one hand, they contended with material losses, such as falling incomes, growing debt, and increasingly exploitative working conditions. On the other, they suffered psychical repercussions, as is demonstrated by a huge rise in reported cases of depression and suicide. In this chapter, I will argue that, alongside its financial toll, the crisis of 2009, raised questions about the function of work as part of one's identity, as a transitional space between the maternal and the social environment and challenged ideological formations concerning exploitation, the perception of one's worth in terms of earnings and qualifications, identity formation through work, and, of course, the role of the family in times of crisis.

This chapter begins with a discussion of material loss. It then goes on to consider the representations of work that have been unmasked in the course of the crisis, where 'work' is simultaneously defined as livelihood, as an emancipatory experience of creativity, and as transformative potential. Attention then turns to the shift that the economic crisis effected in both imaginary and ideological constructions about remuneration and success, including constructions such as the so-called 'leftish mentality'. Next, there is an analysis of the divisive logic that has dominated a section of society, driving it to search for an enemy as the source of the evils within the population, and dividing people into different ideological groups; such ideologies seem to perform psychic functions (Koenigsberg 1989), allowing conflicts, desires,

and fantasies to be projected into reality (Stavrakakis 2007). Finally, there is a discussion of the shifts in the familial landscape caused by the crisis.

5.2. Material loss, the shaking up of identity, and the violation of working rights

This section focuses on the research participants' experiences of the crisis in relation to material losses; namely financial losses, including debt, unemployment, cuts in salaries, exploitation, age and gender discrimination at work, and so on. Most of these conditions, and especially youth unemployment, pre-existed 2008, but the crisis worsened them. For example, the role of the family as a basic provider of wealth was particularly exacerbated (Kretsos, 2014a, 2014b). By material loss, I initially refer to any damage or destruction caused to property or financial status. However, age and gender discrimination, and financial exploitation in the workplace, which are also considered in this chapter, exceed the limits of any material loss and touch on the issue of deteriorating working rights.

5.2.1.1. Cleio – "My parents took the bait, spending more than they could afford"

One of the most representative examples of material loss is given by Cleio, who is in her late twenties and has postgraduate qualifications in the social sciences. Cleio speaks from the start about the beginning of the crisis, which transpired while she was starting her university life, and left her worrying about whether she could even move to the city of her university. As a child, she had had all of the financial comforts that she was to be deprived of as an adult. Her parents divorced during her late adolescence but, as she says, the crisis played a greater role in her family. After 2010, it was almost impossible for her parents to fully support her university living expenses. So, since then, Cleio has worked in the tourist sector every summer for

approximately a decade, thereby halving the contribution required from her parents. It is noteworthy that she argues that in order to avoid having to work during her postgraduate study, she had to raise money for some years beforehand. Today, she feels that these two years out of the job market, living with minimal financial resources, had a heavy negative influence on other areas of her life. Thinking about this phase, she said:

> I think that the most serious impact is insecurity. From a very early age, I knew that for everything I wished, thought, aimed, or dreamed of achieving, I had to prepare circumstances in such a way so as to build everything from scratch. I had always had my parents' emotional and ethical support but the financial issue has always been an issue that held me back. Either you make an attempt or you are contaminated by this insecurity. And this is still the case for me now.

Cleio returns to this specific issue of insecurity in the second part of the interview, recounting that, in her early adulthood, she normally expected to be financially supported by her parents throughout her studies, taking their support for granted:

> I had always had this financial difficulty which de facto, whatever the ethical and emotional support, is something that cannot be replaced. It is not money as such, but the security that I feel when a person has made provisions and can help me now that I am nearly 30 and trying to get a decent home. It is mostly the sense that someone has your back […]

She describes her financial circumstances as follows:

> My parents are civil servants who had been living this 'Greek dream'-something like a 'dream'. For sure, there were periods in their life where they were spending more than they could afford. They desired a better future; I can fully understand their reasons, and 'forgive' them for not anticipating that things would turn upside down. My parents have two houses, and now one of them is about to be repossessed because of debt […]. I think I have learnt a lot of lessons from this and, for sure, it's difficult to know that I always need to manage finances in such a way as to ensure that I will not go over budget. However, I know that this helps me to be a better administrator at the end of the day. Financial issues are not above human relations, but they influence other sectors of life.

Cleio adds that her parents come from poor Athenian families, and that, even though they had been far from conservative in their youth in the 60s, they were 'deceived' by the marketing strategies and tendencies of the 80s and 90s. That is, they fell prey to a period characterised by a false sense of prosperity, when Greeks were encouraged to take out mortgages instead of paying rent. Cleio's parents desired and acquired ever more material goods, without being able to repay their debts to the banks. She says: "that was the time when loans were handed out as easily as buying cigarettes from the kiosk. Banks were pre-paying salaries; people were able to pay their mortgage". Such attitudes, Cleio believes, were the reason that her parents could no longer provide for her when she reached adulthood. Ultimately, Cleio seems to imply here that this is the reason that she could not receive the support that she deserved. What is presented here, then, is a sense of entitlement, of thinking that one

'deserves' certain things (prosperity, financial support from parents, etc.); it might even be viewed as a degree of arrogance, but, in any event, it is an interesting disposition. When she became an adult, there were moments when Cleio's parents told her that they could not support her to the same degree anymore. Here, her parents are beyond reproach, since, on reaching adulthood, a person is responsible for their own life, as Cleio acknowledges. However:

> Due to the different image we have in our Mediterranean Greece, and perhaps because of expectations from our parents-I am saying that the way we had been brought up until then, was more or less around this expectation.

From her narrative so far, one can see that Cleio has done a great job with regards to the way she handles challenges in her life; however, the social milieu in which she has been nurtured has been built on the expectations she describes; namely, on the expectation of the support that one is expected to deserve from family or society.

5.2.1.2. Alex – "I could not accept that in order to gain anything in my life, I had to fight so much"

Alex is a young man in his early thirties with an artistic background. He grew up mostly with his grandmother, who provided everything for him; his parents having been divorced since he was a young child. Alex feels he has been left alone, with no support since the death of his grandmother, and especially after the crisis started. He has been through a lot of different jobs and apartments; he studied arts and tried to make a go of it in this profession, but circumstances became difficult during the crisis; he now has a different profession, and he notes that, once again, he has to

create a working network on his own, without the parental support that is usual in Greece.

He was already in his early twenties when his grandmother passed away, and had a difficult time:

> From the moment grandma died, difficulties started because I had been used to a different way of life, I was quite pampered. As I had not had my parents to support me, I had to 'swim' by myself. I always earned some money to supplement my income. [….] The big problems started with the crisis. It was very difficult to find a job and I did not have my grandmother anymore. I didn't have my parents' support anyway; I did hope they would help me out but this never happened.

Immediately afterwards, Alex makes a further connection between the specific socio-political environment in Greece and family in a very psychosocial way:

> Look, you may find yourself in a difficult country, this has always been a difficult country, and especially after the crisis, as it is difficult to find a job, etc. Or maybe you find yourself in a difficult country, but in an easy family. If you find yourself within a 'difficult' family and a 'difficult' country, then circumstances are challenging. I was in a 'difficult' family, while I had friends who had an 'anchor'-financial, psychological, whatever. I did not have such an anchor in my family. I could not accept that, and it was eating away at me: why should I experience so many difficulties and challenges in order to gain anything I desired? I never gained

> anything easily. […] I just wanted to gain something without having to fight so much.

Here, Alex imagines reliance on family as a safety net, based on the experiences of his friends, and, at the same time, he speaks about challenging circumstances that have always been the case in Greece and only became more severe during the crisis. The coexistence of these two may signify a difficult trajectory for a young person, according to Alex.

The basic underlying idea found in Alex's narrative is the complaint that he has been left alone with no parental support when confronting life's difficulties. So he has reached the conclusion that the only solution is to fight; that is, to build his life alone, from scratch, since there is no familial network to assist him or to help with employment. Alex had not been used to this state of affairs, which marked a big change in his life, as he affirms. A feeling of being unfairly treated, and of not getting what he deserves is evident in his narrative and forms its core: he is a sufferer; a victim who must make himself without any support. A somewhat persecutory anxiety motivates him, driving him to prove that he can 'fight' with enemies and achieve things, despite his hard circumstances. He also experiences the impact of the financial crisis in terms of the absence of his family.

Continuing on the theme of the crisis, Alex suggests:

> The argument which is always used is 'the crisis'. But this is not the explanation for everything. Yes, we have experienced a crisis, but I think that the real problem has not reached us yet. […] There are many enterprises, and companies, and big income centres that exploit the crisis, from the simplest employer and his fucking

> enterprise, to the big company and the businessman with a high socio-political and professional status: they all exploit everyone. It is an exploitation which starts with the rich and ends with the poor: because the poor cannot exploit, they are exploited. […] So, the reason is not simply the crisis, this is just the motivation and the alibi, so that some people can earn more money. Many companies are able to pay people, but they do not want to. This is the reason that all of this takes place. […] Crisis has been developed so that the country is diminished and sold out [to the foreign big centres]; and this is because it was a fertile country […].

Here, one can see a different, rather Marxist interpretation of the crisis, where, in the name of the crisis, which is a creation of the big centres, the poorest are being exploited by the richest. In this case, the enemy is placed outside of the country and posited as having created the crisis so as to destroy Greece's rich resources. In a Kleinian sense, one can see an idealisation of Greece and the projection of the bad object into an external agent.

5.2.1.3. Dimitra – "The few job opportunities left, aim to exploit employees"

Dimitra is a young woman in her mid-twenties who has studied at a private college, and has been working throughout her studies to support herself and cover her fees. With regards to the crisis, Dimitra highlights exploitation as one of the key characteristics of the job market:

> There are not so many job opportunities anymore, and those that can be found aim to exploit employees in most cases […]. When you are interviewed for a job, people first ask your age, because the salary

> is different if you are over 25.[1] They also ask if you are married or plan to be, whether you want to have a child soon or not. If you say yes, you won't get the job, because you should be paid more. [….] I knew these things from experience, so my answer was always 'I am not ready yet [for marriage or a child], I will do that later', so, in this way, I had a chance to get the job. I know of a girl who got a job and then became pregnant; when she returned to the job after her pregnancy she discovered she had been replaced. The manager told her that they could not continue their collaboration anymore. In addition, there are many job advertisements which ask for people under 25 due to changes in the law. So, for sure, this does not help the development of Greece, because, if Greece destroys her jobs and her own children, I don't know to what extent she will be able to recover.

The above illustrates how economies and families can be inter-related. It highlights the impasse that youth under 25, and especially women may face, demonstrating how vulnerable they are in the job market. Labour relations and the law itself reproduce and support the 'traditional' family structures through economic

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[1] A worker is entitled to extra benefits to their salary depending on years of employment (there are triennial benefits, too), marital status, and their number of children. If an employee is married and also has children, they are entitled to specific monthly benefits. These laws are subject to governmental decisions, however. In the same vein, if an employee is less than 25 years old and has no family or children, their salary is lower, with no such benefits. Also, when a person is married with four children or more, they have priority in being appointed as a public employee, as compared to other candidates.

incentives so married people with children are entitled to some benefits and are also favored for jobs in the public sector among other candidates. Although this may be a benefit for public sector employees, and is a right offered by the public sector, circumstances are quite different for private sector employees, where it is easier for working rights to be violated, depending on the company and other factors. This kind of security is one of the reasons that makes people, even the youngest, seek employment in the public sector too, where they are more protected.

What can be derived from the above is that the structures, the state-father and law protects the traditional way of life while the individual is left alone and vulnerable. A way of life that does not contain a family is not promoted and not supported. It is also implied that an individual is only protected through the unity with the family but not as an individual alone.

5.2.1.4. Omeiros – "My father was respected […], but then the bank's attitude changed entirely"

Introduced in the previous chapter, Omeiros, who is in his mid-thirties, had similar experiences of financial loss when his family's business collapsed due to unpaid bank loans and other debts. When asked to elaborate on how the crisis impacted his life, he said that it came at the same time as the death of his father, who had owned the family business. The family tried to handle this "distressing situation [….] under much pressure from the banks and collection agencies":

> It was a difficult period, because debts had been created for one reason or another, including loans that my father had taken from the banks […]. The pressure was huge due to these loans. My father died in the morning, and I had to go and pay the bank on the same

> day. We were trying to handle situations-we still are-we received daily telephone calls from collection agencies and banks so we entered a nightmare period. […] After a certain point, we decided to close the business, despite the emotional bond […]. We were plagued to close it; unfortunately, bureaucracy and public structures were not so cooperative. And my father was in a social environment where he was respected, both here and abroad, by banks and industrialists… We were used to a very different attitude. My father had a very good name as a businessman because of prompt payments and his professionalism, but then the bank's attitude changed entirely. The same happened in the family space as well; masks fell and people showed their real faces […]. I realised that the social aspect was reversed as well […]. It was difficult. The bright period passed, and we moved into a difficult period.

Omeiros illustrates the challenging climate around the family firm, and the material conditions he had to face. It is important to point out that he was quite invested in the high economic status of his parents and the deference shown to them by bank staff and managers. One can note that the crisis also challenged some people's imaginary formations of social worth and importance. Omeiros additionally notes that his relatives were shown to be two-faced, keeping up a public profile of respectability and care while being driven by other incentives. So, his loss of social status amounted to a rough landing.

5.2.1.5. Katarina – "We may have to work in others' companies, but at least we can pay our debts on time"

Katarina, who was also introduced in the previous chapter, describes her circumstances during the outbreak of the crisis in similar terms. She initially experienced the crisis in the course of her late adolescence, when her family's shop was struggling and her father was hospitalised and subsequently was unable to return to work for a significant period of time. Her mother could not supervise their shop's employees adequately, with the result that they became undependable, with some stealing from the shop. Moreover, the crisis influenced the shop as well, and it was then when the family was forced to take on a business partner. Unfortunately, this partner financially exploited the family a great deal, leading to the shop becoming notorious. After many difficulties, the family decided to close the shop. Katarina admits that the crisis was not the sole reason for all of this, and notes that her father was careless with his business and did not pay debts on time.

Katarina highlights the collective effect of the crisis on her family using 'we' to signify herself and her family:

> […] We [herself and her mother] have to work in other jobs now, companies that other people own, but, at least, we are only concerned with our salaries and we have also managed to arrange our debts. We had our own shop, and we could not arrange to pay our expenses; we made arrangements with the banks and we were losing them: madness. However, now we pay everything by the deadline; sometimes, we discuss this with my parents and say that when we had our own shop, we could not pay anything […]. At

> least, with the current circumstances, we are covered by the money we are paid. At least, we are not anxious any more about paying the utility bills.

It is evident that the family faced radical changes concerning work, and it was a combination of factors, along with the crisis, which turned things upside down, and lead them to close their business. The crisis worsened pre-existing circumstances. What is also evident here is a radical change from the imaginary status of being the owner, the boss of a firm avoiding exploitation and low-paid work, to the status of a worker in someone else's company. This change in Greece is perceived as a failure, but what Katarina proposes to balance that shameful truth for her is the fact that her family is now better able to repay their debts than when they had to handle their own shop.

The examples in this section show that, although the crisis is financial, participants primarily discuss it in terms of identifications, family expectations, social standing and ideologically-driven formations. There are participants who also refer to gender and age exploitation in the workplace, violation of working rights and a sense, as young employees, of being vulnerable to the decisions of an employer. What one can see is the way in which labor legislation is interconnected with familial status, stacking the situation against young people and making them more and more vulnerable.

Other participants emphasize the loss of social status and the shaking up of their identity, resulting in widespread negative feelings of ontological insecurity, inferiority, uncertainty and anxiety (Tsekeris, 2015). Equally important is the fact

that they experience this comprehensive social suffering as resulting of the demise of certain imaginaries (e.g. being the boss or a successful entrepreneur, or avoiding low-paid work and exploitation) (see Tsekeris, 2015). We could say that the imaginary of progressive and linear economic growth and occupational stability, which ensured social recognition for their parents' generation is now completely shattered. This kind of instability in both professional and personal life, and the concomitant shaking of identity, is a normal phenomenon in a globalised world.

A decreasing sense of trust and safety in social institutions or the welfare state, and the experience of crisis can be a social trauma. In this section, it was not only families, but also the state that were identified as providing a false sense of abundance; the welfare state itself-both in the forms of familial and state provision-had been an agent that fostered a sense of mutual caretaking. After the economic crisis, the sense of vulnerability was more widely shared (Layton, 2010), and the sense of caretaking was shattered.

An attachment to collective identities, as is the case for most of the above research participants, has offered psychological comfort, but at the same time can operate as a defence against suffering the trauma of a sense of failure or the loss of care (Layton, 2010). Interdependent and interconnected, both social and familial safety nets, as welfare providers are diminished-in their material and imaginary dimensions, at least.

5.3. Representations of work

This section focuses on participants' representations of work. Work is defined here both as livelihood (accounting for financial support and lifestyle), and, in its ontological dimension, as an emancipatory experience. In this latter regard, it

is a question of the role of work in subjective construction; that is, of what working does psychically to subjects-how it affects them as individuals. More specifically, in this section I discuss three aspects of the representation of work as it is implied within the subjects and their positioning towards it. The first is the lack of work and the trap within which subjects feel they live as a result, and recount as the reason for their circumstances. The second is work as an emancipatory experience, understood in its creative dimension in the sense of *poiesis*[1] is the activity whereby a person brings something into being that did not exist before. The third represents a stance of ambivalence, whereby people think about trajectories they could potentially follow, ways to create appropriate circumstances for a pleasurable working life, and how such ambivalence has affected them. Finally, there is a discussion of how participants perceive the ways in which the historical past, including both cultural forces and society (which entail the family), may contribute to the above approaches that subjects adopt towards work. To discuss the subjects' relation to work, it will first be necessary to define the term 'work'. I will use Menninger's (1942) definition, in which work is a fight against the environment; an effort to master a situation and produce something. One can refer to the theoretical chapter for more details on the topic.

5.3.1. Lack of employment: a generation trapped between adulthood and childhood

The first section will focus on young people who feel trapped by their current circumstances, which makes it impossible both for them to have viable jobs and to

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[1] In philosophy, *poiesis:* from Ancient Greek: ποίησις.

create their own 'fate' by fulfilling their potential. The decline of job opportunities during the crisis affected young people disproportionately, not only financially but in their subjectivities as well. As a result of a lack of job security, it remains difficult for them to be acknowledged as adults and to live as separate individuals. Helen and Argyro are two representative examples in this regard, being stuck between childhood and adulthood due to a lack of employment.

5.3.1.1. Helen – "We live between adulthood and childhood"

Helen is in her late twenties and remembers her childhood as an eternal summer. She has an artistic background and feels desperate, as she cannot easily find a relevant job, and her profession cannot secure her a life. She did not take the national examinations for admission to University and study at the artistic conservatoire at the same time. This could ensure a better future for her as she claims. She puts the blame for this on her school and the education system more generally, which is hostile to talents other than rote memory. Moreover, her school failed to properly inform her about the avenues of University education that might have been appropriate for her. She also feels that she left high school completely uneducated.

Helen admits that her childhood was a one long summer and Easter break rolled into one, and holds this to be the experience of Greek children more generally. She argues that Greek families instil a utopian belief in their children that they live in the best country of the world, with the sun, its islands, its eternal entertainment, and partying being desired by all foreigners. She now realises that this utopia does not exist, and that, especially since the crisis started, the mood has changed and the country has begun to groan. Helen acknowledges that her artistic profession is

unstable at the best of times, but that present prospects are even worse. More importantly, she highlights how unprepared she was for hardship:

> Now I am worried about the way I am growing up here [in Greece]. I feel that I am not an adult yet, in the sense that I cannot afford to live by myself. I live with my mother, who provides the house, and I do not have to pay any bills. If I find a job, I will be able to contribute, say, to the super market bill. This is why I feel like a minor, in the sense that I cannot take my life in my own hands in the way that I would have liked to […]. Now, Greece does not seem a utopian place any more. And I don't agree with the way the education system works.

For Helen, work is not simply a means of making a living, but has an ontological dimension. She feels a need to express her subjectivity through work in a creative way. On the one hand, she feels worried that she is approaching her 30s and has no stable work or place of her own. On the other, she feels relieved that, despite her age, she is not trapped in an office job that she hates, "waking up at eight in the morning and cursing all day". However, it appears that she is trapped in a different way:

> I am permanently chasing a job, and there is a permanent anxiety about how I might be at 35 [years old]. Am I going to go around from one audition to another? What if I want to have a child in the future? How I am going to do that? [….] Our generation… I think, permanently lives between adulthood and childhood. It is not bad-I do not think it is bad to be assisted by one's parents. On the contrary,

> if this is an option, it is all well done. I am just trying to determine where one's autonomy begins and ends. I do not feel autonomous at all. I feel adrift.

Helen now worries about her future prospects without a degree or stable job. She places great value on her art, and sees herself as an artist, albeit with this being something out of reach at the moment. She combines the present crisis with inherent structures in the sector, and feels confronted with a profound dilemma: either to abandon her dream, or to persist in it, but without any prospects of actually having an artistic job. This latter would mean enduring the fact that she would live a suspended life without fulfilment, being reduced, instead, to merely imagining a never-lived ideal.

> I was very wedded to my profession, but I encountered closed doors and people saying to me that I would not succeed in it if I was not a diplomat, if had no money and social networks to support me. Even if you want to avoid it, the misery is perpetuated because you repeatedly face the same reactions, and especially from people who are called 'artists'. Nobody will enquire as to whether you are good at your work […]. I don't want to be in the same place with these artists […]. I'd rather never play at the National Theatre if I have to work like this. […]. Regardless of your desire to succeed, even by creating your own artwork, you always encounter the same obstacles: you need to have social networks in order to succeed, and you ultimately think: 'well ok, maybe it's better for me to quit, let's try another job' because you won't survive otherwise. You have to

> make compromises all the time... Well, it is probably fine to make compromises when you work at a job to make ends meet, such as being a waiter or a receptionist, but it is worse when it comes to your dream.

This quote can be read in two ways. The first might be that Helen's narrative is a positive response to the challenge of personal development, as she has come to define herself in relation to the whole. That is, she has come to place her own subjectivity within a larger social context. The fact that she does indeed realise that she may need social networks and contacts to succeed in her profession, may be a positive response and a recognition of what is happening in society. However, at the same time, it may be taken to be discouraging that one has either to compromise (to leverage social networks and contacts, to belong to certain cliques, etc. so as to find an artistic job) or has to quit and look for a more "useful" or "practical" job. That is, that one must compromise one's integrity, or resign oneself to the utilitarian function of work. One can also read here the way in which one's personal biography and circumstances can be submerged within the reality of the artistic profession (not restricted to this however), and how nepotism and exploitation can influence the paths of young people.

What can be derived from Helen's narrative is that she acknowledges that she has been brought up in an idealised way, declaring herself unprepared for such hard socioeconomic circumstances. She has realised that the image of utopia with which she had been nurtured does not exist. However, it seems that she has not accepted the reality that she claims she has to live in, as she refuses any kind of job that is not artistic, claiming that it amounts to a 'compromise' or defeat. Moreover, while there

is a continuous complaint here, there is no clear sense of how to carry on. Work is conceptualised in relation to a different world, the ideal world in which she has been nurtured, but which she now renounces. This is an ideal world with which she seems dis-identified, but with which she had identified herself in the past as a child.

Helen's ideal workplace would be one in which social networks, favours and connections would not matter so much. This is the situation she associates with working as an artist. Helen lacks connections of this kind, but at the same time she presents herself as not willing to be part of a dirty system of networks, dis-identifying herself from the murkiness of this world. Moreover, work is dissociated from pleasure. She regards working elsewhere as something unpleasant. This is an attitude that Oberndorf (1951) sees as a reluctance to undertake the responsibility inherent in maturity, and as protracting the infantile pleasure. One could also argue that Helen's thinking is governed mostly by the pleasure principle, as is evidenced by her finding no meaning in work, which is experienced as a compulsory task (Menninger, 1942). This attitude could be interpreted as linking play with infantile sexuality and work with adult sexuality, as is illustrated in Helen's view of her profession, which is a job, but is mostly seen as 'play'.

5.3.1.2. Argyro – "We should have been taught how to be responsible"

Argyro, who was introduced in the previous chapter, is a young woman in her late twenties, who lives in the upper floor apartment of her parental home. She was quite late in receiving her bachelor's degree, and has been working in temporary and 'student' jobs for the last few years, where she has been worrying about her future. She has recently realised that she likes academic research, but acknowledges that this is quite difficult to pursue in Greece due to low employability and high social

networking requirements. That is to say, she is aware of the nepotistic culture that is conditions the possibility of obtaining such jobs.

With regards to the crisis, responding to the last interview question, which asks whether there is anything she wants to add concerning any or all of the topics discussed, she says:

> I believe that the crisis has hit a generation that was not prepared for something like that; people who had grown up with no prospect of such a situation. On the contrary, and because there was prosperity when we were children, there was no preparation, even unconsciously, for anything like a response to that [crisis]. This is why most of us are so overwhelmed […]. Most of us grew up in a care free manner. I think that a sense of responsibility should have been cultivated... The fact that me and my sister liked to work was not at all the norm. I remember when we were 20 years old, most of my friends did not work: nobody worked. Because we were 20 years old, everyone was studying. We did not have the impression that we have to do something with our lives in the future. This made us alert later.

Argyro laments not having been taught to be responsible and alert, but who is really ‘responsible’ for such a lesson? What is implied is that there is a gap between fantasy and reality; that is, between the ideological structure of work and practicalities faced by her generation. Still the question of whose responsibility it is remains unanswered. What is assumed is a prolongation of infantile pleasure, whereby the ideal is materialised in relation to a different upbringing.

This gap is also Illustrated by Katarina, when asked how she imagines things will go on with her artistic profession:

> I feel embarrassed to push for a job in art industry […], to make use of my social network in order to find a relevant job. I cannot do that. I need someone else to do such things for me. […] I can't deal with practical issues, I can't. I can't!

The stories above demonstrate a life stance of infinite deferral: a life in waiting. Some of them have high expectations that leave them in limbo as they also lack, or seem to lack, practical skills. They both seem trapped in a way of life that seems to be more a matter of fate-of a forced choice-than to be a life of their own. They focus more on the resources they lack from childhood-matters both of education and edification-leaving them little opportunity to act upon their fate now. However, this is a situation that existed before the crisis, which has served rather to exacerbate the deficiencies that it sheds light on. The subjects above assign the reasons for their being trapped to the environment only, which might be fair; however, a different mode of subjectivity, or a personal effort to enhance their condition is scotomised for both of them. Although social circumstances are indeed challenging, their attitude can lead them to failure, as well. Success in work is connected with a superego ideal but there is also an unconscious will to fail. "Failure which in turn can unconsciously "permits them to regress in a more primitive stage of development, where they might please the mother with less, with a purely playful effort" (Oberndorf, 1951, p. 82). This means that they bear an unconscious wish to fail, such that their effort is not enough to succeed but enough to fail in such a way that the mother will be pleased with less. This may not be the avowed desire, but it

is the result. On the other hand, according to Green (1998), it is the negative at the base of psychic activity, the drives in excess, that is a prerequisite for any kind of psychic development. What is meant here is that drives in excess seeking satisfaction is an overload charge on the mind and it is because of the lack of the object that the mind is activated, which is a possibility that can motivate the subject (Green, 1998). On the other hand, for Freud, "drives in excess, the negative that is at the base of psychic activity is a prerequisite for any kind of psychic development" (Green, 1998, p. 660), but it is by the lack of the object that the mind is activated, which is a possibility that can motivate subjects. The above research participants lack their 'desired work', or even the motivation for this object; this lack, under the pressure of the drives seeking satisfaction, should normally motivate subjects to satiate it (Green, 1998), but this is evidently not happening in this case.

5.3.2. Work as an emancipatory experience and creation in the sense of *poiesis*: the creative dimension of '*prattein*'

This section develops an aspect of the participants' representation of and relation to work. It examines work as a symbolic practice, construing it both as a route to freedom, and as a creation-the production of a life. For Dejours "work is what is implied by the fact of working: gestures, know-how, the involvement of the body and the intelligence, the ability to analyse, interpret and react to situations. It is the power to feel and think and to invent. Work is not above all the wage relation or employment but 'working', which is to say, the way the personality is involved in confronting a task that is subject to material and social constraints" (Dejours, 2007, p. 72). In this sense, work may be seen as an emancipatory experience, as it entails confronting tasks at work beyond symbolisation. Viewed in this way, work is an act

on the environment that requires bodily effort and the deployment of subjectivity, in a subjective and affective process.

5.3.2.1. Elli – "I found myself through this job"

Elli, introduced in the previous chapter, is in her mid-twenties and works as a paramedic. She devotes a large part of her narrative to recounting stories from her grandfather, describing him as the leading figure of their household, being both a 'second parent' to her and the head of their family business. Elli then recounts the careless way in which he treated his health and diet, which resulted in his death. Elli feels that she has 'found herself' via the paramedical profession that she has chosen:

> I had seen a dietary model that led to health problems, and I would not like this to be continued. Consequently, I decided to follow this profession […]. I had realised that he [her grandfather] had health problems, and that he was careless [with his health] too, and that doctors advised him to be careful, and this is why [I followed this profession]. […]. Thus, my father has to be careful too. Every time I go back home, I always advise them on their diet. […] So yes, this is why I chose this profession.

In this case, work brings a situation whereby Elli gets in touch with the Lacanian real as something that resists symbolisation and produces *jouissance* (Dashtipour, 2014). By this, I mean the illness and risk of death faced by her grandfather due to his unhealthy diet. The real in work takes the form of concrete problems and circumstances that subjects are confronted with, and is related to the symbolic. Thus work, in its bodily and mental practices, should be understood as a symbolic practice (Dashtipour, 2014). The real is also the affective suffering

experienced by Elli at work, which has become for her a way of symbolizing the affective suffering associated with her grandfather's mistakes concerning his health. Work brings a situation wherein the subject is faced with the real as something that produces *jouissance* (Dashtipour, 2014). As Elli suggests, it is likely that, for her, helping other people with their diet signifies helping her own grandfather. This kind of work enables a different way of relating to her trauma. Her traumatic *jouissance* associated with her grandfather's death due to an unhealthy diet no longer exists in the same way.

5.3.2.2. Omeiros – "Creation is a very painful procedure, but it offers happiness and bliss"

Omeiros offers his own experience when talking about the crisis, and the anxiety and pressure that he faced during and after the closure of his family business in particular. During this time, Omeiros tried to counterbalance the disaster he had been experiencing with the art of creation. He invested a lot of his time in his studies-in art, theatre, poetry, books, literature-and published his first book in literature. In general, he tried to divert his attention from problems and invest it in creation, in enacting a practice (Komporozos-Athanasiou & Fotaki, 2014):

> The art of production is a very painful procedure, but it offers happiness and bliss. On the one hand, one sees the chaos ahead and on the other, one can say: 'I created this'. Even during difficult circumstances, I tried to insist on my childish dreams, which may seem silly, but I tried to chase them, and I am happy because I partially achieved them. I have been crossing mighty rivers and shit,

> but I think that, even within chaos, I tried to create something. It is this ambivalence between ruin and building something new.

Although, for Omeiros, such occupations are not a kind of ‘wage labour’ or ‘job’ in the usual sense, they do, however, represent creative activities. It seems that he acknowledges the boundaries between ‘fantasy’, an ideal world, and the ‘reality’, supporting it:

> The crisis either creates opportunities or presses someone to create opportunities by him or herself […]. The crisis is a procedure of either a gradual or an abrupt maturation. […] Beyond utopia […], one has to learn how to handle problems in a pragmatic way, realistically. Even if one is an idealist, one has also to be a pragmatist, otherwise one cannot get things done. One has to adjust, to handle problems and prioritize. Thus, this is also a revolution.

Omeiros acknowledges that creation is a painful process. Drawing on Castoriadis (cited in Komporozos-Athanasiou & Fotaki, 2014, p. 72), imagination, which is the logical and ontological condition of the real, is the psyche’s capacity to create forms, to produce new meanings from endless possible signification. And it is through imagination that social reality is made conceivable and representable (Castoriadis, 1973; Komporozos-Athanasiou & Fotaki, 2014). Omeiros invested in this ‘direct experience’, in his ‘object of practice’-artwork and literature. This ensured the creative dimension of *prattein* (enacting a practice) in the sense of *poiesis*. That is, it ensured an ontological genesis (Komporozos-Athanasiou & Fotaki, 2014) and represents a case in which creativity is the meaning giving process at play when the social and the psychical dimensions intersect, following Castoriadis’

theory of practice (cited in Komporozos-Athanasiou & Fotaki, 2014, p. 72). Work here became a way of *prattein*, and a means for creativity to emerge (Castoriadis, cited in Komporozos-Athanasiou & Fotaki, 2014, p. 72). It is a matter of "creativity as praxis" that connects the psychic and the social. His intellectual work represents a positing of new determinations, the emergence of new forms, or *eide* (Castoriadis, cited in Komporozos-Athanasiou & Fotaki, 2014, p. 72), and it is this type of praxis that Castoriadis calls "active activity" (Castoriadis, 1992, p. 28). Work is a mode of practice which has the potential to be a route to freedom and creative activity. Creativity is understood as a theory of practice (Castoriadis, cited in Komporozos-Athanasiou & Fotaki, 2014, p. 72), and as an inherent property of the psyche, which is intertwined with the social and becomes possible because of this (Komporozos-Athanasiou & Fotaki, 2014).

5.3.2.3. Erato – "There is nothing I am afraid of [in my job], as I found solutions even during the worst days"

Erato, as presented in the previous chapter, is a woman in her mid-thirties, whose fundamental struggle revolves around the fact that she is a lesbian. Having been nurtured in a family with a very oppressive mother, she feels that she was constantly dealing with unsatisfied parents, who demanded that she will be a role model. She admits that she was always afraid of being abandoned by her mother and partners for not being good enough. Her sexual orientation was never accepted by her mother, and Erato feels that society would be tolerant if family was tolerant, and recounts that she does not feel comfortable with herself, even after her early twenties because of her sexual orientation. Her father was detached and not involved in family affairs.

She recounts the way in which she overcame her mother's dominance when she revealed her that she is a lesbian. Characteristically, Erato says that "I felt I killed my mother that moment", in the sense that she had freed herself from her control.

With regards to employment, Erato started working from her early twenties, while studying at the same time. She has completed many certifications since then, and has secured advancements in her job positions so far. When asked to reflect on her trajectory generally, and particularly during the crisis, she says that she has been continuously trying to find a job she likes and to develop herself. She recounts that, when she was fired from her first job during the crisis in 2010, her only qualifications were "that job experience and a bachelor degree". She had been used to work overtime and to a high salary, and suddenly she could not find an equivalent job. She had already started psychotherapy one year before, and, after some months, she started suffering from depression while looking for a job:

> After two months [of job searching], I started suffering from depression. I then found an inferior job and I continued to suffer from depression with psychosomatic symptoms-diarrhoea-I lost too much weight; I was attending psychotherapy […]. I was doing well with my personal life, and then I had to face that dismissal [from the job] which took me back. I suffered from depression and I had to deal with my new job, which I disliked.

She then found another job on a one-year contract, after the end of which:

> I had to plan. I had no job, I did not have any substantial qualification. I had only a bachelor and work experience which nobody wanted to 'buy'. In 2009 we were already in deep crisis;

> thus, 2010 and 2011 were the worst years: there were two million unemployed people. So, I started to search and think about my next steps. I had recovered from depression […] and I started to think ahead for the future […]. I became proficient in English […], I applied for a masters where I had been rejected the first time […]. I had to think again about my future steps.

She then found a one week's contract job and decided to go for it:

> I went for one week and I stayed for two years because, I was good at my job and my contract was renewed. […] They still call me to offer me new projects.

Afterwards, Erato describes her working life, which developed from one position to another in different companies, until present day. She now has a permanent position in a company. Of which, she said:

> Although this may seem to be a rising trajectory, I have worked really hard for this progress. I was not unemployed for even one day during the crisis, which is not a matter of luck. This is because I have been chasing it. I don't give up. My psychotherapist has also assisted me a lot. Nobody would go for work for a one week contract. But I did, and I found an unbelievable chance, and I finally stayed there for two and a half years, and that's without going into the people I met there. […] I am positive [for the future] because there is nothing I am afraid of [on the job], as I found solutions even during the worst days.

For many years, Erato's parents' desire has been operating as the cause of her own desire. Thus, she was alienated in the desire of her family. Even when she appeared to be dis-identified with that environment as a young adult, her life continued to be constituted in opposition to the Other's desire (Fink, 1995). Tracing this back to her sexual orientation, she notes that, for example, during adolescence, her parents threateningly warned her not to develop a sexual affair with any boy, as this would mean that they would be discredited as a family. And she did not. Finally, now she feels freed from any restrictions, she tells anyone who criticizes her, that "if you can't accept me, just leave". Similarly, for many years, she did not derive pleasure from work due to endless attempts to satisfy her superego (Lantos 1952), which represented her unsatisfied parents: "when a child has unsatisfied parents, he or she always tries to satisfy them […]; I have never heard 'well done, you achieved this' from my parents". She finally has managed to free herself from guilty feelings connected with pleasure (Menninger, 1942, p. 182).

Following this rationale, it could be said that the instinctual vicissitudes of the parent–child relationship relate to pleasure from work (Menninger, 1942) in the first place. However, we should not ignore that subjectivity is structured in accordance with sociocultural forces and power relations, as an effect of language. Erato presents just one example of obeisance to an authority that emanates from the big Other and is presented as sustaining the symbolic order; it is symbolic power that structures our social reality (Stavrakakis, 2008).

5.3.3. A stance of ambivalence-work as a transformative potential

In this section, work is presented in its dimension of transformative potential, which can lead to the expansion of new subjective powers, as well as creating

opportunities for the enhancement of employability prospects. This 'subjective power' may seem incompatible with 'enhancing employability prospects', because the first refers mostly to subjectivity while the second refers to ego capacities. However, if work can be assumed to have a transformative potential, then confrontation with the reality of the task, the effort this entails, and the deployment of subjective capacity can lead to the expansion of subjectivity. Overcoming affective suffering, according to Dejours (Komporozos-Athanasiou & Fotaki, 2014, p. 113) is an emancipatory experience.

For this claim, I will use Dejours' definition of work: "work is what is implied, in human terms, by the fact of working: gestures, know-how, the involvement of the body and the intelligence, the ability to analyse, interpret, and react to situations. It is the power to feel, to think and to invent […], the way the personality is involved in confronting a task that is subject to constraints" (Dashtipour, 2014, p. 111).

There is a bourgeoning academic literature, cultural tradition and word-of-mouth discourse that emphasizes the clientelistic social structures that block the professional development of individuals in Greece (Marangudakis, 2019). It is these same structures that are the cause of migration abroad for many qualified or over-qualified Greeks, where they feel they will have more opportunities for personal and professional development. Below, are two cases of young women who desire to do a PhD to enhance their employability prospects on the one hand, and to potentially open new horizons in their profession and personal life and development, on the other.

5.3.3.1. Elli – "You are alone with other PhD students, trying to reach a conclusion; you are lost"

As presented above, Elli says that she felt independent for the first time when she went abroad for study, that period being the first time she had had a job. Elli thinks that she found herself in the course of her studies, and that she had the opportunity to study for a PhD some time ago. However, she claimed that lecturers who would be responsible for supervising her used to impede students with their research rather than assisting them, in the sense that they did not offer guidance, and exploited them by burdening them with their own tasks and projects. So, Elli was afraid that she would be:

> alone with other PhD students trying to do the job. You are lost […]. People went to their viva without the lecturers having bothered themselves to have a look at the PhD and offer feedback. […] So, you have to know everything by yourself. Tragic. Thus, I could not work well under such circumstances. You also have to face the financial issue: you are not paid well as a PhD student; you are paid 500 euros/month maximum […]. And then one thinks, is it worth it? […] At the same time, I could do something more valuable for me; in Greece, PhDs have no meaning-not in my sector at least […]. Unemployment in my profession is very high anyway, and an employee candidate will be evaluated as a bachelor graduate even if he or she has additional qualifications.

Elli here discusses actual conditions that impede her pursuit of a PhD in Greece, demonstrating the restrictive social circumstances concerning both human

resources and behaviours, and the financial or wider social resources of the country that may prevent individuals from reaching higher levels of development. Elli feels that an investment of time in her desired higher qualification will not be valued by others, whether in the public or private sector. Moreover, “it is very common that companies choose the candidate with less qualifications who would normally have fewer financial demands, or they may choose employees under 25 because the salary is lower”. Huge differences were found when comparing laboratories in Greece and abroad. Concerning laboratory experiments in Greece and abroad, she said:

> Lecturers abroad allowed us to perform an experiment and if we failed, we could try again. Here, in Greece, lecturers will ask for an experienced person to perform the experiment so as not to have losses [of laboratory materials]. The only thing you are allowed to do here is to watch; you just observe and take notes. So, ideally, I would go abroad for a PhD, where I could work and get paid for it. But I don’t do it because I want to stay in Greece... I think that if I go abroad, I will stay there.

Elli feels that her plans cannot be pursued in Greece because of a lack of infrastructure which could accommodate high quality research, and because of unsuccessful cooperation with people who should be there to support her. As analysed in the section about family businesses, the above extract is rooted in the same logic of not recognizing youth as mature and responsible enough to produce new knowledge, to create new determinations and forms, and to invest in ‘enacting a practice’. One more dimension that is worth mentioning again is the Laius complex, here expressed as a demand from academia, representing the authority, to submit the

youngest to their control by withholding choices for development and making young people's life difficult. Moreover, it is very well known that Greek academia has been problematic and dysfunctional since 1974, with nepotism, favouritism, political involvement, and lack of reforms combining to make a discouraging environment for youth to work and study in (Aggelopoulos & Astrinaki, 2011). This is a representative example of how societal behaviours are rooted in familial ideas, but it is also the Procrustean logic[1] of the Greek public system and its operation, demonstrating the reciprocal dimension of such restrictive practices, both in the familial and in the working environment. So, it is not only Elli's ambivalence, but also socio-political circumstance, that may enforce such hesitance. This reality of Greek academia made Elli think about doing a PhD abroad; on the other hand, since she has decided to live in Greece, it would be challenging for her to return after a PhD, as there is no way to use it in work. As she says, she will be valued the same with a bachelor's degree. This is common in disciplines in which the symbolic structures are underdeveloped, damaged, or even corrupted. One can observe that the restriction is a result of both psychic and social reality.

5.3.3.2. Eftihia – "I will look for study and work opportunities abroad"

Eftiha presents a quite different view of employment prospects linked to the representation of the country and her own future trajectory. She wishes to continue

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[1] Procrustes, in Greek mythology, had a stronghold on Korudallos in Athens; there he had a bed in which he invited every passer-by to spend the night and where he set to work on them with his smith's hammer, to stretch them to fit in. In later tellings, if the guest proved too tall, Procrustes would amputate the excess length; nobody ever fitted the bed exactly. Procrustes continued his reign of terror until he was captured by Theseus, travelling to Athens along the sacred way, who "fitted" Procrustes to his own bed.

her studies at a PhD level both for better employment prospects and for her own fulfilment. She acknowledges however that:

> The basic difficulty I am facing is that, unfortunately, there are not so many opportunities in our country, let alone the problem of the lack of funding […]; so, I am oriented to look for opportunities abroad […] in order to make my dreams come true; but unfortunately this may be far away from my country, because I have no opportunities to do this here […]. On the one hand, there are no opportunities but I wish to leave, not only for the PhD, but also for job opportunities later on as well […]. We may get out of the crisis but there are signs of a bad mood here, so I feel that I want a change, I want to leave, I want to free myself from all this depression, in inverted commas […]. I feel it like an affair that does not go well and I want to find a new one, which will make me feel better.

At this point, Eftihia acknowledges the restrictive structures, just as Elli did; but, in contrast to Elli, she decided to make an attempt for better prospects for herself. The work process itself is affective, and work is central in the affective life of the subject (Dejours, 2017). Both Elli and Eftihia have identified the conditions that would turn their experience of work into one of pleasure and freedom (Dejours, 2017). However, both acknowledge societal restrictions, such as a lack of meritocracy and funding, familism, and corruption. One can see in this case too that dependence on the Other, apart from with regards to the level of knowledge, is also a matter of the symbolic structure of power relations that the social order presupposes, although the promise of dealing with subjective lack is what reproduces

this lack, perpetuating the subject's desire for subjection (Stavrakakis, 2008). Eftihia feels a lack and desires to fill it. This relies on a libidinal support that binds her to the conditions of her symbolic subordination.

Eftihia experiences a tension and ambivalence, wishing both to stay in 'her' country and to leave, too. On the one hand, she needs to secure better prospects for herself in her discipline; on the other, she expresses a sense of ownership and belonging when speaking about 'my country'.

One of the critiques that one could address at this point is that work, in the sense that Elli and Eftihia present at this section, may include a fantasmatic imperative of *jouissance* that full enjoyment is possible and a form of power that may be exercised. However, if a lack of pleasurable work signifies a subjective lack, then this lack is what forces the subject to enter into a dynamic dialectic with the social world and the organized Other (Stavrakakis, 2008).

5.3.4. Wondering about the crisis: The enemy within or is it the Other's fault?

Past mistakes may influence individuals, groups, and societies for a long time. Historical background, power relations and political circumstances, wars and upheavals, certain mentalities, the country, the external or internal enemies and the governments: all of these may be the scapegoat for a society seeking to ascribe past mistakes and justify contemporary dysfunctionalities at a societal level. This section examines how the sociohistorical and political past, and group mentalities, including family and education systems, or even other countries, may have been assigned the role of scapegoat for current circumstances and dysfunctionalities. It explores how subjects have formed their perceptions about work throughout the years, and to

whom fault is ascribed for personal and social fortune or misfortune. The section will also show how individuals are willing to let themselves be alienated by fantasies and ideals that have shaped, not only their own imaginary, but also imaginary constructions of whole generations after, with regards to their work, careers, or even capitalism, etc.[1]

5.3.4.1. Athina – "Greek parents do not teach children to think critically"

Athina believes that it is common for kinship networks in Greece to support young people up until a late age, and especially if they conform with the beliefs and desires of their parents. But in cases where they differ with them, they are left alone. This is what happened to Athina when she chose a specific field of study that did not comply with her family's desires. From the perspective of symbolic structure, Athina also thinks that the education system does not teach young people how to act autonomously or develop their critical powers, which remain underdeveloped. As a result, young people are taught to view reality in an one-sided way. For Athina, this process makes young people feel guilty of non-compliance with their elders, producing a vicious circle of non-autonomous thought.

> I think that Greeks lack the ability to think critically, and this is an issue with education in general. It is missing from both school and University. We view everything one-sidedly; in the way we are taught to. It is very rare that you meet someone who says, 'you know this is my point of view, but you can search and form your own

[1] Metapolitefsi: the deep political change of constitutionalism, the return of democracy after the junta fall in 1974

> opinion, as you may have a different opinion'; you may feel great guilt that you have a different opinion and you don't agree with the other, who may be your father, whom you should agree with him. During college, I realised that; we had to conduct a research project about what is the most dominant for a child: their character or the environment? I had a great need to answer this question; I studied so many hours and I never answered it. Because the answer is neither one nor the other: it is both. We need to learn to view things in a multidimensional way; it is not about causal correlations. I assume that parents who offer everything to children, and do not teach them how to develop critical thought so that they can act decisively when they face difficulties, they do harm to them and leave them blind. One has to trust the child, but this can only occur when the child is taught what life is, and what may happen to them.

Athina defines and discusses a lack of critical thinking as a continuous source of problems in Greece, assigning its roots to both the family and education. This is what she had faced as child and young adult, as well as an absence of the support and education that she needed. She thinks that Greek families are too concerned with young people, but that the way that they manifest this is by imposing their own approach on them, without leaving them space to develop autonomous and individual thought. So, the issue with young people who are reluctant to take key decisions for their lives, and ultimately to form their own subjectivity, is assigned to the inadequacy of family and the wider symbolic structure, with school being particularly significant. For Athina then, it is the underdevelopment of critical

assessment, analysis, and reasoning process that gets in the way of young people re-inventing themselves, and that ultimately directs them to comply with and regress in the presence of authority. One could argue that what is at issue here is the failure of power structures to fully determine the subject and provide for them, as discussed above (Stavrakakis, 2008); or that the damaged symbolic structure (in this case the education system) is the reason for the underdevelopment of critical thinking. On the other, Athina demands to have been taught and be prepared for life in a certain way. This can be read as a demand from Athina to be fed in a certain way, which is also a sexual demand; that is, a demand for love (Lacan & Alain-Miller, 1991/2015, p. 201).

5.3.4.2. Omeiros – "We have identity problems because we are always trying to become something that we are not"

Omeiros, who was introduced in the previous chapter, sees the origins of the crisis in the abandonment of the real economy-the closure of industries and factories-which also means the loss of jobs.

After the 1980s, globalisation was imposed, and this influenced the Greek economy. Greece started to import everything: ideas, culture, politics, economics, products. This did not come about as a result of cultural coexistence and prior cultural exchange between civilizations, but as a forced hand. Omeiros thinks that the Greek problem is imitation of foreign cultures, while a renewal of Greek civilization should have taken place instead. He believes that this is the deeper cause of the economic crisis.

> There are problems which begin with the establishment of the contemporary Greek state and the fact that it was an imposed from abroad […]. It was founded by Bavarians, who had significant

> differences with us, even at a European level. Our political, social, and cultural tradition originates from the Greek cosmos, which is person-centred and socio-centred, while the Western European traditions are more individualised. The difference is that Greek tradition demonstrates solidarity, while the Western European one demonstrates individualism, and refers to an egocentric civilization […]. We have been passing through something different and foreign to us. I assume that this problem was created then and is valid today. This is why a lot of our negative and positive characteristics continue to exist.

There is a split here between them and us, where all bad characteristics are ascribed to 'others' and all good ones to 'us'. Plenitude was lost because it was sacrificed to the Other, the EU, who stole *jouissance* from us. It is evident that the 'problem' is ascribed to the Other, but this time to a foreign and external one. It seems that the 'bad' individualistic culture of Western Europe has corroded the 'good' Greek person-centred tradition, and the solidarity-based economy and sociocultural life, and that this has never been fully absorbed by Greeks. Similarly, a Greek 'ideal' of civilization has been alienated in the desire of the Other, never becoming the subject of its own desire.

Omeiros continues in the same vein:

> We have identity problems because we are always trying to become something that we are not. This is in contrast to our spirituality and our psychical world, and this is why we fail. So, as we realise that we are different [from other ideal Western European cultures], we

> assume that we have to reach this 'other' [ideal], but without managing to achieve it, because we cannot become Germans or Danish […]. For me, the greatest responsibility belongs to the ruling class, the intellectuals, and the politicians, all those who are occupied with culture, or even with the economy […]. What is problematic is that Western capitalism has developed towards hyper-capitalism, where capitalism is not something that unites people based on a higher idea, […]; on the contrary, it has the tendency to flatten everything-civilizations, nations, traditions-and to translate everything into numbers […], and this is a problem that the entire Western World faces, and so what we name 'crisis' acquires an existential character. Western society has become hugely decadent.

For Omeiros, attempts to imitate other cultures are schizophrenic. Greek subjects seem fragmented between an ideal that has been imposed but not absorbed, and a feeling of inadequacy that engulfs them. But even if this is granted, it means that Greeks are forever doomed to search for subjectivity elsewhere, in the foreign Other, who will nevertheless always remain unattainable. What is more, even if one achieves this ideal foreign subjectivity, it will never become one's own, as it will always be the Other, the one that differs from us, that Greeks will never reach. Subjectivity has therefore lost forever, because the Other will always be the Other, and the domestic does not exist anymore because it is corroded by the foreigner. Additionally, one can see the dangerous character that has been assigned to

globalisation, which is presented as a destructive juggernaut that corrodes and alienates everything.

What is more, here it is both the power of social discourses, and the agentic struggles that the subjects present when comporting themselves towards such discourses. This is especially so when the sociohistorical past is the same for people with the same culture and collective memory. It may be common that there will be a portion of individuals with the same persistence in such attachments. The discourse in which each subject will invest depends on their story, at once cultural and personal, and embedded in subjectivity (Frosh et al., 2003). What explains their persistence is libidinal attachment, which constitute their sense of identity (Stavrakakis, 2008, p. 1050 citing Alcorn 2002, p. 17). In order for subjects to disinvest, they need to withdraw from such representations, to reinvest *jouissance*; this is the work of mourning (Alcorn, 2002).

5.3.4.3. Thanasis – "The adventurist Greek mentality and the left wing-mentality as the origins of the Greek problem"

Thanasis states that the origins of the problematic Greek mentality is Greece's history and its geographical position. He argues that because the country is subjected to wars every 20 years, she has developed an adventurist mentality, which is a synonym for gyp. What is more, having an opinion about everything sometimes can be disastrous, according to Thanasis:

> As a culture, we have an opinion about everything, and this is because of Athenian democracy; we have an opinion on everything and this is a crime. There are other cultures that are similarly uneducated, but they are good listeners at least […] This was a

> terrifying advantage, but it was also a double-edged sword. The Greek does not know anything, but speaks about everything. So, we are so educated and well-read but we suffer anyway, how come!? We have an opinion about everything, but we are getting kicked around.

Later, when discussing contemporary Greece, he adds:

> I believe that critical thinking is more important than knowledge. There are many people who have knowledge but have no critical thinking, because they are confused by their existing knowledge. For example, when I studied directing, I had teachers who had a lot of theoretical knowledge on how a movie should be done; but they could not make a movie themselves as they did not have opinion or critical thinking, even as to where to put the camera. And they never achieved anything. So, sometimes critical thinking is more important than knowledge. But if you have no knowledge, then critical thinking is equally dangerous.

One can observe an analogy between Athina's and Thanasis' comments, the latter ascribing aspects of the Greek problem to a lack of critical thinking. They assume different origins for this lack, however. Athina feels that it is the fault of families and the education, whereas Thanasis states that it is due to ancient Athenian democracy, wars, and the past. He adds that Greeks have an opinion about everything, but no critical thinking or knowledge about anything. Both assertions can serve as a basis for psychosocial exploration. In both cases, the fault is ascribed to the Other, within the country; that is, to the family, the education system, the distant

past and even the ancient Athenian democracy, which offered the right to everyone to have an opinion. In any case, the Other fails to fully determine the subject, and the Greek subject is perceived in terms of lack and *jouissance*. This lack is ascribed to the history and culture of this country, which is responsible for every contemporary evil. Thus, one could argue that the Greek self is divided into a good and a bad one, with the latter being demonised and having all the destructive impulses and bad luck ascribed to it. It is remarkable, however, that this enemy within is different in each case, and one can assume that we can find as many 'Others' as there are individuals.

This lack motivates imaginary identifications of wholeness in a search for *jouissance*. Symbolic identification is also driven by the need for recognition and love from the Symbolic Other (Stavrakakis, 2008). Identification is a psychic mechanism, but it is also socio-political, being driven by the dynamics of recognition and the affective operation of *jouissance* (Stavrakakis, 2008).

What is more, Thanasis also comments on the left-wing mentality, which he argues that is a way that many generations of Greeks have been nurtured. Thanasis makes particular reference to the status of 'boss's pet', and people who make too many concessions to the boss' presumed 'worth' or 'value'. He does admire perfection, 'excellent people', people with merit, or overachievers:

> I have grown up with the belief that, if you desire to establish a career and attain success, you have to be the boss' sidekick; you become their pet, and this is how you succeed. I have grown up with this mentality, but reality is not like that. There is too much effort, too much sacrifice, too much struggle. I remember when we were finishing work-I was working as a waiter then-we were finishing a

> twelve-hour shift, having dinner together, and having a nice time. There were two individuals who, instead of sitting with the rest of us, were practicing making coffee for two or three hours. They were taking part in competitions, and now they have their own store serving coffee, and have worked really hard; they have also earned many prizes. […] People think that circumstances are easy […], but we are not all champions because you cannot create a cast-iron program. You want to get rest, to watch tv but it is not like that, you have to work a lot. But who is the person who is willing to strive so much for something? You need to be quite a monomaniac.

However, after many years of work experience, Thanasis takes a different stance. He now claims that "people who wish to succeed in their discipline have to work very hard". He recounts past years working as a waiter, when he had no certain plans, but aspired to be an artist. In the course of those years, he had colleagues who also planned to create lives for themselves, and practiced hard to achieve their goals.

One can also observe that Thanasis has not become one of the super-heroes that he admired in history and literature, but is instead the kind of ordinary person he once despised. Now he feels like a person who had identified with a 'misleading' ideology until the day he realised its fantasmatic origin, and believes that success is a matter of working hard (although he acknowledges that there are also people who cheat to succeed). Thanasis feels he has left himself behind, both as an artist and an author, he feels he is "drowning": "I feel I have done nothing out of the ordinary in my life". These thoughts have derived from a 'left wing mentality' with which he and his generation have grown up:

> I have grown up like every left-wing family that grows up with such a mentality, [believing] that people who progress or make money achieve this through cheating and dirty tricks. This may be valid, but not as much as some people may wish to suggest. Unimportant people, who will never achieve anything, because they do not want to strive for anything, will try to belittle others who strive. Why? Because this is what suits them. Otherwise, they would have psychological issues. Because if they knew how worthless they are, they would commit suicide. So, in order for them not to feel worthless, they diminish important people. This is a defence.

Thanasis here speaks about laziness as a life style choice, which he ascribes to the leftist ideology that nurtured generations of Greeks. This attitude has been presented as a concealed contempt towards successful people, who are assumed to have been 'bad' and the 'boss's pet' in order to become successful. This promotes the idea of unethical and corrupt individuals who cheat the pure and honest populace in order to climb the ladder of success. Thanasis does not deny that this may indeed be the case for some people, but he rejects the idea that all people who have succeeded in their life, achieved that in this way.

Additionally, Thanasis also speaks about psychic defences that 'unimportant' people must acquire in order to endure the success of others, diminishing their work and highlighting their deficiencies, in order to increase their own value. This is because 'unimportant' people, according to Thanasis, feel threatened by skilled people. Thanasis has also been a 'victim' of this attitude, expressing a psychosocial idea of a life 'haunting' as both embedded in culture, and as deeply personal. This

attitude, his words suggest, is transmitted and adopted as a dogma and imaginary identification through familial and political attachments to the youngest. It is presented as a forced choice that he has rejected as a result of his life and work experience, with the result that he is now trying to develop himself into a different person.

What is worth noting here is 'an ideology that considers society to be ultimately separated into two homogenous and antagonistic groups, the "pure people" vs "the corrupted elite" (Gerodimos, 2015, p. 609). Here we witness the revival of historical dichotomies; in Kleinian terms, it is a split between the good and the bad object. The two parts constitute an imagined community of those who share the same ideology and those who are opposed to it. This is achieved via the reproduction of political divisions, and is based on the idea that there is a 'national enemy'. The opposed camps aim to revive antithetical collective memories and to legitimise their present political activities through the historical authority of each political pillar (Boukala, 2014).

5.3.4.4. Marcus – "Crisis was a good chance for careerists and successful people to be destroyed"

Marcus, a young man in his early thirties, is the embodiment of what Thanasis ridicules, incarnating the left attitude as a socio-political attitude in contemporary Greece. Marcus comes from a right-wing village,[1] and was not politicized until he got involved in left-wing university politics. It should be noted at this point, however,

[1] A village in which people vote for right wing parties.

that he joined the Left because of a need to defend himself against what he had been taught as a child.

Marcus was always on the front line of protests and riots because he was “in favour of justice and working rights for all”. As he says: “I was stuck with the Left, because of the theory of solidarity and equality. I found myself in that, and I connected it with ideologies, with materialism, idealism etc.” He also felt that he would become alienated if he gained power. As he admits, he visited his university mostly for public relations, for anti-military gatherings; neither for attending modules nor for taking exams, and this was because other students cheated on exams, which seemed ridiculous to Marcus. During the crisis, he could not make ends meet with his job, but, as he says, most of the Greek population was in the same condition, so he was comfortable in his situation, and did not feel the need to do anything to change his circumstances.

When asked to speak more about how he experienced the crisis, he says that he sees the collapse of the financial system as due punishment for the middle classes and the ‘successful’ professionals who, unlike him, ‘had plans’.

> I considered crisis a good chance for the ideology of careerists and successful professionals to be destroyed. Hopefully, the crisis will destroy these people’s plans. I myself didn’t have so many plans. I can get by in my village as well… I don’t care. My thinking was ‘why not, let’s be simpler people, we should not think we are so important.’ On the other hand, I also thought that-you know-we are fucked now.

Marcus identifies with the left because of his ideological commitment to equality, justice, and working rights for all, which is a very refined way of thinking that turns on a denial of negative feelings towards others. Marcus speaks of a significant tension between being realistic, and blaming things on others, and admits revelling in the destruction of successful people. Yet his response is telling: crisis is an imaginary leveller, similar to death. This is a matter of grief and envy, which positions him as the opposite, the person on the left who has no plans, a stance that dominated the traditional left and alienated ways of relating to reality for whole generations. It is an ideology that actually "is" reality for many people, and which they follow.

One of the impressions derived from the narratives above in this chapter is that of victimization. For Athina, Greeks are the victims of their upbringing and the education system; for Thanasis, it is the distant historical past; and for Omeiros, the problem is one of identity, posed by a Greek desire to imitate an Other, which leads to submission. The victimized subject struggles to become a subject of desire, and not only the subject of the desire of the Other (Fink, 1995), although the realisation of the traumatic fact that the Other cannot fully determine the subject, is a moment that might allow freedom to emerge (Stavrakakis, 2008). These narratives speak to a more general approach towards work, that of an eternal enemy that does not allow extroversion, whereby Greeks fail to actualize themselves in work and to become subjects of their own discourse.

5.4. Disturbed working patterns-changing family dynamics

Although the family has been more thoroughly explored in the previous chapter, I return to it here since there is evidence that family, as a holding environment, has

been upset too, due to the disturbance of traditional working patterns caused by the crisis. For instance, the crisis shattered gender relations and changed family dynamics.

5.4.1.1. Natasha – "There are families who became stronger and others who did not survive"

Natasha, introduced earlier in the data analysis, claims that dynamics in her own family changed during the crisis as her father lost his job and her mother became the breadwinner. However, her family managed to survive the crisis and become stronger. Natasha also notes the wider, social dimension of the situation, acknowledging that:

> There are families who coil together and become stronger. I think my family is one of them. Then there are other families who did not manage to survive. […] People in most cases had problems anyway, and were hiding themselves behind the problems. I don't know if the role of the family really has changed, or if it is we who have started to view things differently due to the crisis. […] For instance, this image of the holy Greek family has started to collapse […]. It is a question of […] whether it was the crisis which turned things upside down, or if the crisis helped us to bring to the surface circumstances that were already existent in our families.

Natasha provides an ambivalent but balanced perspective on family dynamics that have gradually changed because of disturbed working patterns during the crisis. It seems that the crisis has either made familial relationships stronger, or exacerbated hidden flaws that people did not want to face. To this, we might add that the revealing

of unacknowledged aspects of families, and the experience of a crisis could prove to be a good chance to change ourselves:

> Maybe it is beneficial for the Greeks to face a crisis so as to change direction […] and to change ourselves […]. The economic crisis was an external fact. The way that each of us experiences it, and the way this is treated by each family is an internal issue […]. Actually, I don't know whether there is a change in the family institution, or simply just in the way we experience circumstances […]. I think that, during the last few years, […] the high number of divorces has made us aware of circumstances that pre-existed the crisis; we just didn't know about them. Nowadays, we are just more extroverted and speak more easily about such issues… […].

In line with Natasha's perspective, one could argue that the crisis is really life-changing, in the sense that, even when people are not willing to change, it may force them to face chronic deficiencies and mistaken attitudes. As a result, they may cease to live with idealised imaginaries of wholeness and perfection, and instead face the reality of ambivalence. This shaking up of traditional forms of working, of relating to one another, of bringing up children, and the simultaneous downfall of idealised patriarchal and authoritarian models, may allow young people to create, or at least search for, their own ways of existing and relating to each other. In the same line of thought, Natasha feels that divorces have increased because of the crisis, and that this is because young people were forced to follow parental desires to get married and make their own families, with the result that the crisis revealed deficiencies that

already existed. Both required a sense of personal responsibility that was absent; as Natasha argues, this is the reason for contemporary circumstances.

In a different mode, family dynamics are further disrupted by a shock to the gender stereotypes, which have been challenged by changing working patterns and conditions. Natasha argues that the crisis both assisted and restricted women, in the sense that some women became breadwinners, while others were forced to work in jobs that they were over qualified for, which did not help them develop.

5.4.1.2. Athina – "We tried to live the same life, but with less income"

What Natasha describes is echoed by Athina's case. Athina is a 30-year-old woman whose family tried to live the same life as they had before the crisis, but with less income, so as 'not to disturb the family balances'. Athina's is a vivid case, which depicts what Natasha identifies as one of the families in which "the crisis just revealed what has been occurring for many years":

> The problem was that we tried to live the same life with less income. And this was generating anxiety for my father. As a small businessman with a store, you never know how much money you will have in the till. You just have some figures in mind. You say to yourself, 'this month is not going well, will the next one be the same? And the one after that? Is this slump never going to end? Should I close my store or not, should I borrow money or not, will I lose everything or not?' Sometimes, my father was desperate with my mother's behaviour, who had no limits. And wanted to spend more and more money to obtain everything.

The period of the crisis proved to be crucial for Athina's father's profession. Their family dynamics were heavily disturbed, but they did not want to face up to the problem and take responsibility for past mistakes. The ideal image was therefore maintained at all costs, with the risk to worsening their economic situation.

To conclude, one could agree with Natasha in pointing to the ideal image of familial functions as an excuse for individuals looking to avoid taking personal responsibility, and instead ascribing misfortune to others, and especially familial others. Taking responsibility requires personal effort, which in turn presupposes a "psychic space" to reside in in order to flourish (Koutantou, 2017). One needs to bear depressive guilt, and accept the bad elements of the family as well, instead of idealising it and resorting to defences to avoid facing ambivalence. Drawing a parallel with society, manic defence makes it difficult to care about others and militates against social responsibility (Altman, 2005). Failing to tolerate the psychic reality of the loss of the idealised familial relationship and authority figures, as Natasha describes, gives licence to the defences, and an opportunity is opened up for withdrawal or resignation. However, while one has to acknowledge that care can be directed towards other people, one first needs to acknowledge that the other person has a separate subjectivity (Benjamin, 1988). Failing to acknowledge these differing subjectivities-failure to establish a consciousness of otherness-may drive a person towards symbiotic relationships, rather than intersubjective interaction (Koutantou, 2017).

This chapter discussed the ideological dimension of crisis and work in the context of the family. Depending on the willingness of subjects to take risks, work was shown to be crucial either in its absence, causing individuals to feel trapped

between adulthood and childhood, or in its emancipatory power and transformative potential. Consideration was also given to the loss of certain anchors of the family as a holding environment, and the challenging of socio-political ideals, fantasies, and patterns of thought that sustained ideologies and constituted a subjective reality. The concluding chapter that follows discusses whether, and to what extent, political and societal ideals are grounded in familial ideals. Can the participants' relations to the crisis bring about a shift in their relation to family and/or other signifiers that organise their discourse? Can the crisis affect attachments to the master signifiers that organise their subjectivity? How has subject formation has been affected by socio-economic changes? And, ultimately, if the crisis prohibits *jouissance*, or if people suffer a lack of a pleasurable work, can this allow for the emergence of desire? (A desire structured around lost *jouissance*?). If the answer is yes, which direction will it take? From a Lacanian perspective, subjectivity is conceived in terms of lack, where this lack can be understood as lack of *jouissance* (Glynos 2008).

6. Final Discussions and Conclusions

6.1. Discussion

In this thesis, I have conducted qualitative research into how Greek young adults articulated their subjectivity during the austerity crisis. I have looked into the meanings inherent in kinship ties and attachment bonds, and I have explored the representations and fantasies surrounding family that emerged among Greek young adults in the course of the crisis. Moreover, I have considered the ways in which the current economic crisis impacts on young people's personal development and on their families.

In the first analytic chapter, I gave a sense of how familial relations have been lived and experienced, and the ways in which these bonds are extended to wider social relations. The second analytic chapter discussed young people's imaginaries concerning the financial crisis and work. Light has been shed on the various losses experienced as a result of the crisis. Apart from material losses and the diminution of socioeconomic status throughout Greek society, what has also been demonstrated is the ideological perception of such losses. Moreover, I have discussed the discourses developed by the participants around the origins they ascribe to the Greek crisis.

Data collected for this thesis indicate that Greek families are characterised by a strong bond with a dominant maternal presence on the one hand, and the decline of the paternal metaphor on the other. What is implied is that the Greek family is both protective and oppressive, being an environment that is both idealized and devalued, and which subverts individual autonomy. Bonded relationships and overprotection, especially with the maternal, end up smothering a younger generation, who have a tendency to feel these ties as chains. What has further emerged from this research is

that overprotection and interdependence very often impede young people from taking control of their own lives. However, there is a tendency among them to criticize the lack of boundaries in their life, pointing to the inadequate preparation for what they were later to face as a reality. As several participants attested, they had been offered a lot, and this made them spoiled and assured that life should continue in this fashion, with the result that they have found it difficult to enter into adult life. On the other hand, they continue to experience the family home as an oppressive environment, feeling ambivalence towards it or even expressing their need to be adults. Nevertheless, none of them take action that might put an end to this state of affairs. Others view their family home as a refuge to which they can return whenever they approach a threshold in their lives, even if, symbolically, they had never abandoned it in the first place. Still others try to prove that they are different from what has marked them so far. The above seems to be a result of a general decline of the paternal metaphor and its symbolic power in the Greek context. This suggests that the introduction of the desiring subject into the symbolic is quite underdeveloped, and that the incestuous relationship with the maternal has not been lost.

It is not unusual for Greek children to grow up expecting the continuation of both the emotional and financial support of their family well into adulthood, and it is not unusual for parents to offer both. This long attachment may prove beneficial at times of collective difficulty, such as the 2008 crisis, but always comes at a cost, which pertains to the child's sense of identity and interdependence. An attachment of this kind is fostered through a mother-child interdependence which, it is safe to assume, predates the crisis of 2008. Thus, the traditional mother is not an embodiment of selfless devotion, but a living-desiring subject who conveys her desire and demands in various ways. Family is about what Eftihia vibrantly refers to

as a ‘feeding mother’; that is, a place to hide, a place where the childish part of herself still exists. It is about a never abandoned place inside oneself, which holds out a melancholic return to the lost object (Freud, 1917/1999d).

Many societal and political ideas in Greece are grounded in family ideals, as is evident from the data analysis. Family businesses stand between families and society and are a bearer of family interdependence based on the nuclear or extended family, friendship networks and kinship. Although they assist in offering employment opportunities for the youngest members, they can also be the locus of a castrating tendency from older members of the family towards younger ones. This tendency plays itself out in the form of an older generation not recognising members of a younger one as distinct, self-defined adults with an identity of their own, since there is always a parental authority at the helm. At the same time, responsibility always remains with the oldest members, while the younger members take it easy on themselves, showing a general unwillingness to enter into adult life. Some feel unable to imagine themselves outside of the circle of family belonging (for example Anne, Katarina, Eftihia).

Following the same line of thought, the theme ‘Motherland, Religion, Family’ illustrates the familial in a wider sense, and is representative of national consciousness at some points. The same fantasies of support and protection are desired and recognised by the Symbolic order, and especially by specific signifiers and socio-political Ego ideals of plenitude. These latter equate and merge family with nation and religion, and identify Greekness as a collective sense of identity. Consequently, rituals, customs and traditions, and family celebration gatherings on religious feast days enhance the power of such discourses in their relation to the

jouissance of the body. This *jouissance* is central in sustaining faith in socio-political discourses and ideologies (Glynos & Stavrakakis, 2008). Such traditions are

> A production of a particular manifest, collective, subjective effect produced in a number of people by a discourse […]. Subjects' identity, desire and *jouissance* are determined by the fate of signifiers, allowing us to infer, from manifest effects in the receiving subjects' actions, opinions or feelings, which specific configurations of images, signifiers and fantasies in the given discourse must have produced these manifest effects" (Bracher, 1993, p. 75).

Such collective identifications are evident in Anne's and Omeiros' associations of Greekness with family and nation. Even in cases of seeming dis-identification, the "radical refusal to identify with a given position suggests that at some level an identification has already taken place, that is disavowed" (Butler, 1993, p. 113). Natasha's negative and avoidant attitude to signifiers of family and society can be interpreted as an overt disidentification, beneath which an identification has taken place and continues to exist, although this may not be acknowledged by the subject consciously (Brock, 2015). Opposing identifications, marked as idealised love objects and scapegoats, can coexist as competing representations (Feldstein et al., 1996). The mirror of cultural relations both accepts and denies images according to dominant ideas and ideologies. Thus, certain sociohistorical representations are reflected while others are not (Feldstein et al., 1996). Patterns may be apparent, but the mechanisms taking up these positions may be totally individual. Natasha refers a lot to the Greek way or model, sometimes actively avoiding making the narrative personal. For instance, while she wonders whether her parents could have taught her

something different to what they already know, she speaks to the Other of her unconscious. The same is the case when she says that family in general needs to face a crisis in order to change direction.

One more dimension is evident from the data: that of the 'captivated mind' of groups and communities who dogmatically adhere to religious and national values and ideals. These may be understood to be driven by the loss of Ego boundaries and a lowering of the level of consciousness (Kovel, 1990), or, according to Freud (1923/1999h), the dissolution of the boundaries of the self and a merger with the Other, conceived as God. For Freud, religion allows one to hold on to infantile grandiosity, in the form of belief in an omnipotent father; that is, a God who will fill the lack both in the subject and in the Other. Freud also argues that religion impedes the passage towards the reality principle as it encourages illusion (Freud, 1914/1999c). This is clearly seen in Anne's narrative and is implied in Eftihia's. In Marcus and Omeiros' cases, religion is a lived experience of communion, followed by rituals and customs that reinforce its force and reproduction. Additionally, it is a covert psychic need, an attachment, a desire for parental authority (Moxon, 1921). Intense religious sentiment is ascribed to strong parental attachment. God is always the symbolic father, because the human father represents the first step in the enlargement of the child's horizon beyond its mother, into the world. For many of the participants above, the father is absent, but at least he seems present in religion.

The historical identification between the Greek Orthodox Church and national identity (Dragonas, 2013, p. 113) is maintained through the ritualization of practices that offer partial enjoyment (celebrations, festivals, rituals, gatherings, customs). For instance, Anne and Eftihia express their investment in nationalistic and religious practices as lived experiences within society as a continuity with the nation's glorious

historical past. The libidinal character of Marcus' attachment is further shown in his dream of doing 'something heroic' with his life. These are ideals in which the research participants are phantasmatically invested. Such social practices can ensure social reproduction, which is the social dimension of all identity construction (Laclau, 1999) and is a matter of the unique way that a community organises its enjoyment. On this basis, a nation exists only insofar as its partial enjoyment continues to be materialised in social practices, and is transmitted through national myths (Stavrakakis, 1999, 2007). In this case, what is important is how 'communion, pathos, honor, pleasure or contradiction are sought, tasted and enjoyed; this is their cultural uniqueness, enjoying life in ways 'aliens' do not understand'. What reinforces this in the case of Greece is the historical reason that, according to certain historians, Greece has not passed through the Enlightenment (Gaveas, 2016) the period of rationality and reason, where the aim was to control passion, libidinal bonds and to drain the *jouissance* of the body from political theory and practice (Stavrakakis, 2007, p. 205). This does not mean that attachment to the nation as a result of affect and enjoyment is a uniquely Greek phenomenon, but, rather, that the absence of passage through the Enlightenment is a further reason for passionate collective identification in specific nationalistic discourses. In any case, the effective manipulation of libidinal investment and jouissance (Stavrakakis 2007, p. 205) can certify the durability of the nation and national identity. This claim can explain why the post-structuralist models that reduce subjectivity to a mere linguistic structure are not sufficient and that it is a matter of both affective investment and symbolic power.

The second analytic chapter discussed material loss and the loss of socio-economic status resulting from the financial crisis. It also discussed gender and age

discrimination and exploitation in the workplace; factors that proved to be merely exacerbated during the crisis. What was further evident from the data was an ideological perception of these losses, which included the apportionment of blame to deceptive marketing strategies that developed between the 1980's and early 2000s, creating an imaginary formation of affluence, and generating a false sense of prosperity. People succumbed to this mirage, which made them willing to take out mortgages, leading to increased debts during the crisis, further shaking people's senses of identity.

It was also remarkable that many research participants (such as Omeiros, Katarina, Cleio) viewed the impact of the crisis and the shaking of their identity through the lens of their families, focusing on their social standing and ideologically driven formulations, as well as bankruptcy in their family businesses and so on. Due to these individuals viewing themselves as extension of their families, the failure of the latter's exaggerated promises to support them results in a lack of self-identity.

Likewise, there are individuals, such as Helen and Argyro, who seem trapped between childhood and adulthood, and ill prepared to face challenging circumstances such as the economic crisis. This can be seen in their demands that they should have been better prepared 'for life'. It is not clear who should have been responsible for this preparation, but the participants now experience 'a life in waiting', an infinite deferral in which no one seems to live the life they were promised, that they expected, or that they had desired. Moreover, almost none of them seems to be moving intentionally towards these deferred lifestyles.

Many participants may not satisfy their desires, but rather enjoy them for their own sake (Argyro, Sofia). As Glynos observes, "desire's very existence relies on its being forever dis-satisfied" (2001, p. 201); or in Žižek's words "I become a desiring

subject only in so far as I am deprived of what matters to me most" (Glynos, 2001, p. 201). It is a matter of remaining in a state of continuous anticipation, in the periphery of life, or waiting for an external 'something' to change, to make life better—to find a better job, to earn a better salary to leave the parental home. Let's take the case of Anne. Anne uses the recurrent phrase "in inverted commas", which is repeated many times in her narrative. If this phrase can be assumed to be a signifier of the unconscious, one could even argue that the way Anne lives her life is "in inverted commas", at the periphery of her life.

There is also a possibility that some of them act in a way that functions to satisfy the desire of the other, sacrificing their own enjoyment in favour of transferring it onto the imaginary other (Anne, Argyro, Sofia). This master-slave dialectic (Nobus, 2017, p. 3, drawing on Kojève) can be identified in the narratives, although it is not clearly articulated.

In any case, such unpreparedness to deal with separation and with the 'real' world shows a difficulty in incorporating the Law, which in turn makes it difficult to renounce the possibility of being the object of the mother's desire. This difficulty was intensified during the crisis, wherein individuals were called to face such frustration. This is not to blame individuals, however, as this condition is not new in the wider socio-political milieu in Greece, which, as shown above, maintains pre-modern socio-political and economic structures and values mixed with capitalist and post-capitalist elements. One representative example is a behaviour with complete disregard for rules and the law, which are seen as barriers to personal freedom. We speak of an emerging Greek individualistic self as a mixture of the modern and the traditional, of individualistic and collectivist components. Described as a 'free rider mentality', as an 'anarchic individualism', it is a state in which freedom is

synonymous with irresponsibility towards the law and others (Marangudakis, 2019, p. 43 cites Panagiotopoulou, 1997, p. 354). Resistance to authority and anarchic individualism should be taken as symbolic references for modern Greek symbolism. However, this is at odds with civic life and institutions. Such mentalities historically echo 'amoral familism' to describe backwardness in social structures (Marangudakis, 2019, p. 46). The reason that some cultures remain attached to amoral familism, according to Marangudakis (2019), is the relationship between the organisational and the symbolic domains. In terms of premodern values, the self becomes meaningful by becoming part of religious cosmological principles, and this moralises mundane actions (Marangudakis, 2019). This means that amoral familism is not amoral if seen through the lens of premodern values, and with reference to the domination of the pre-modern socio-political structures. For instance, religious symbolisation identifies family with the pure and the good, and guides social life. Resistance to authority and the law then entails the fact that many people exempt themselves from it, meaning that they accept the Law but then look for ways to curtail it in order to gain surplus *jouissance*. In Lacanian terms, it means that castration (i.e., a structural loss of *jouissance*) has taken place, but they look for ways to undo it retroactively, focusing on their personal interest rather than the collective and civic one. One could claim that the financial crisis, as an obstacle to satisfaction, has rendered this impossible as it signifies a situation of lack and disappointment, where people experience losses at different levels—debt, fewer jobs, lower salaries, exploitation—that may lead to crises of the self.

What also emerges from the second analytic chapter is that work plays a significant role in the self-determination of individuals not only as a means of survival. Individuals who lacked work were seen to feel a loss of being. Work is seen

as an emancipatory experience, in the sense that meaning is produced through the act of employing bodily and mental capacities in order to complete a work task (Dashtipour, 2014). However, when symbolic resources are harmed as it happens during the crisis, subjects find it difficult to sublimate their excess energy properly due to the lack of alternatives. Additionally, unemployment or inactivity can cause anxiety, because the individual is confronted with the real of time—with time as unstructured. Such attitudes can regress individuals to an infantile level, so that they feel unable to take up an adult position. At the same time, due to the inadequacy of social structures, some individuals feel that they are treated as juniors, and are not allowed to take the reins in their own lives. Consider, for example, Helen's inability to follow an artistic profession, Cleio's example with laboratory experiments, or Eftihia's and Elli's claims about the opportunities available for further educational and professional development. All of these imply that the symbolic order is flimsy and built upon this stance, which made them feel there is no space in the country for them to breathe. That is to say, there is an upper limit, a ceiling that one can reach in any sector; but what was even worse was the tendency of elders to make young people's lives difficult.

Along the same lines, work can be transformative and generate capacities to produce new forms as Omeiros seemed to exemplify, or as Elli and Erato wish to do. Erato seems to have achieved to derive confidence from achieving not only to survive but also to give up the search for recognition by her family. It is the deployment of her mental capacities, her knowledge and skills in work, and the way her personality has been involved in confronting a task that was subject to constraints (Dejours, 2007) that has empowered her. She thereby seems to have found freedom, practically defining work as 'doing', not as 'being'; that is, as an activity that deals with the real

(Dashtipour, 2014). Further, for Cleio work functions as a route to freedom, in the sense that work confronts her with her specific traumatic history and this way she seems to overcome affective suffering related to her history; in this sense, work is an emancipatory experience (Dejours, 2007). Additionally, in this sense work for Cleio (and for Omeiros as well) can be creative which is the only way to recapture the lost jouissance.

Although the above representations of work constitute an ideal for many of the participants, the reality is that the social structures that would sustain the 'transitional space' that the job market and work can generate between the maternal and the external world is damaged during the crisis; thus, the 'bad' mother returns with the splitting of the bad mother projected outside. This makes it difficult for individuals to sublimate their energy in creative activities of work. Many of the research participants feel deprived of their ideal representations of work because of the crisis. This is true; however, one should acknowledge both external and internal restrictions to fulfilling their potential. Where there are no internal boundaries, it is possible that external circumstances will pose such boundaries. Winnicott (1953) notes that "it is assumed […] that the task of reality-acceptance is never completed, that no human being is free from the strain of relating inner and outer reality and that relief from this strain is provided by an intermediate area of experience which is not challenged (arts, religion, etc.)" (Winnicott, 1953, p. 13). It is through the struggle with the disparity between the inner and outer realms of experience that the artist engages with what has been described as "potential space" " (Winnicott, 1971). Winnicott refers to the artist but one can expand his analysis to other spaces of creativity as well, as a means of referring to an intermediate area of experience that lies between fantasy and reality. Forms of potential space include the play space, the

area of creativity and the area of cultural experience, too. In the course of normal development, it becomes possible for adults to develop their own capacity to generate potential space (Brody, 2001, p. 371). Thus, the lack of this kind of potential space of creative work or even just work, which could mediate the participants' experience reinforces the tendency of young people to be the phallus of the mother, considering that the whole social life is informed by such ideals.

What also emerges from the second analytic chapter is a picture of imaginary identifications of political ideologies and the discourses based on them. What was addressed was the fact that many research participants located the origins of the "Greek problem" both in Greece *per se* (parents, education, the ancient Greek mentality) and in foreign forces, such as globalization. What is more, there was evidence of false ideas that people had invested in and that were subject to gradual change during the crisis. The most prominent ideas of this kind related to leftist attitudes about successful people with careers and money victimizing individuals, in line with a putative capitalist ideology. Whatever such political discourses may represent worldwide on a socioeconomic level, what was discussed in this chapter referred to how such ideas were perceived and influenced the Greek socio-symbolic system, especially after Metapolitefsi (1974 onwards). This is congruent with what Castoriadis (1987) argues: "every society creates its own world of social imaginary significations, which establishes certain types of affect that are in turn characteristic of this society" (Komporozos-Athanasiou & Fotaki, 2014, p. 70).

The above is concerned with the role of psychic investment, which is also a question in populist rhetoric, where populism, according to Laclau (2005), is to be defined as a discourse articulating unfulfilled demands. Exploring the Left Populist

Ideology presented in remarks made by Marcus and Thanasis, or even Helen, we find a narrative based on blame, victimhood, and revenge. First of all, there is a dichotomy: an imagined community with a coherent identity, an ideology of division between 'us' (a pure people, the victims, the defeated, the devalued, the oppressed, slaves, etc.) and 'them' (the corrupted elite who exploit us, politicians, trade unions, capitalists, Europe and the USA.). In this sense, the citizen is assumed to be passive, prostrated at the mercy of a higher force, in a perspective founded on the denial of self-responsibility that each individual bears as a member of a state. The state is thus presented as a tyrannical father who should care for his children, but instead oppresses them. Themes of dependence, oppression, and the denial of responsibility run through the narratives of the research participants. These are initially grounded in a leftist mentality, but they seem to spread out to form a general attitude towards life. Observation of this attitude can motivate an investigation into the role of the family in contemporary Greece too (Gerodimos, 2015). Attitudes opposed to those of the leftists and what they represent are assumed to constitute a threat, resembling a national enemy on the basis of a traumatic past of civil war and the post-civil war period, the dictatorship, and the hegemonic discourses of the two antithetical political poles (those of the right and the left). It seems there is a continuous attempt to relive collective memories of dichotomy, or even a melancholic attachment to Greece's divided past (Boukala, 2014).

Such an attitude seems to be adopted more clearly by Thanasis and Marcus, and implied by others. Thanasis argues that he has been nurtured with the impression that, in order to succeed in life, one needs to be corrupt and willing to do dirty jobs. This implies that 'pure' and ethical people like him could not succeed, as they are not corrupted. Marcus, similarly, still believes that the crisis is a good opportunity

for careerists to be destroyed. Both examples demonstrate a libidinal investment in a fantasy about work and success, and an experience of *jouissance* in sustaining that desire and an attachment that tells them how to desire. On the other hand, these specific hegemonic identifications have the symbolic power required to sustain themselves.

Both Thanasis and Marcus seem to have organised their life and *jouissance* around negativism and victimization, which functions as a way of organising their existence around loss and a masochistic insistence on sadness (Gavriilidis, 2007). It would therefore be a preference to remain in ethnic loneliness, just as one may profit from an illness, taking pleasure from it as a cultured pain (Žižek, 1989, p. 234). Their narratives show that they have not actively pursued their life trajectories for years. Specifically, Marcus has been reluctant to change his working life or even make it better as a defence against joy and happiness; if life becomes better, vulnerability, sadness, hate and a sense of unfairness, the motives of his existence and political thought, will be lost (Gavriilidis, 2007). Victimization starts from the moment that one is reconciled with one's wound, incorporates it, and narcissistically build's one's subjectivity upon it. Thanasis' remarks on political ideals and attitudes towards people who have worked hard are a sign of a fixation on nationalism, a culture of pain, and misfortune. In Lacanian terms, Thanasis wants to speak about 'the Thing'; that is, about his disillusionment and his nostalgia "for something he had never been"—circumstances before the loss.

In the same vein, Omeiros also demonstrates a cathexis of the patriotic epoch, maintaining this state of mind as a secondary gain, and thereby enjoying discourse as a symptom (Žižek, 1989). In this discourse, which is a defence against the

dominant one, the aim is the disappointment of the desires of others (Marcus), rather than the utilisation of the subject's own desire (Gavriilidis, 2007).

Omeiros argues that Greece's economic activity should be grounded on the production of goods. Heavy industry "has deep roots in the Greek communist tradition, whose primary purpose was the development of industry in Greece, because socialism is impossible without industry" (Gavriilidis, 2007, p. 64). Even if this claim is true, it nevertheless gives the impression that this economic model constitutes a submission of Greece to a foreign model, in which our *jouissance* is stolen by the foreign Other (Žižek, 1989). This is something that many participants seem to imply in one way or another (Elli, Omeiros, Alex). There is a "refusal to acknowledge that some individuals are attached to fantasies of omnipotence and fullness, so that when these fail to materialise, people can project the cause of this failure to others. Such fantasies assist the solidarity of the national community and identity" (Glynos & Stavrakakis, 2008, p. 8). Obedience to authority is reproduced at the level of fantasy, and this reproduction relies on an affective support transmitted via fantasy. However, things are much more convoluted when it comes to families: the same unit that offers security and comfort is indirectly blamed for not equipping young people for hard times.

The realisation of these fantasies is further inhibited by the fact that, beyond enjoyment, making a left critique of certain trends means "detach[ing] people from their actual problems" (Gavriilidis, 2007, p. 194). People on the left assume that the highest priority should be attention to unhappiness, as this proves the usefulness of the Left (Gavriilidis, 2007). This discourse is further reinforced by a tendency to assume that people on the left are saints who live as outsiders in a bid to change dominant social relations. Assumptions of this kind bear the mark of totemism, which

constitutes an ambivalent situation in which love and aggression coexist (Gavriilidis, 2007). In addition, people may feel guilt towards the left because of the past, as it is assumed to have been the political party of struggle, sacrifice, and war. There is thus a masochist commitment to sacrifice and suffering here that precedes the collapse of socialist totems and remains an object of nostalgic identification.

A final theme derived from the second analytic chapter was the shift in family dynamics due to the crisis. The basic finding here was that there has been a loss of the father's symbolic power as breadwinner, which has had important consequences for families and individuals. Additionally, women have been shown to have been both benefited and harmed as a result of shifting working dynamics. Some families have tried to live the same life and to maintain the same social status with less income, while some others have broken down because of financial problems. Participants argued that it is a matter of the image we entertain in this regard: is it ultimately an issue of changing family dynamics, or is it merely a change in our perspective? Participants also present the Greek family in a state of doubt and uncertainty—a situation that causes psychological disorders. Therefore, we must ask, is family a vicious circle from which one cannot escape or does it form the core of (social) attitudes that need to change?

As a general conclusion, derived from the analysis above, it may be said that the era in which the paternal signifier would guarantee the consistency of the Other of language and the social bond is over. As far as the field of politics is concerned, there is a profound lack of leadership in the western world, especially following the outbreak of the great recession of 2008. There is a denunciation of traditional

political systems and leaders as corrupted and an emergence of ideas proclaiming a violent rupture with the Other (Grammatopoulos, 2018). There is always the possibility however that, in order to fill the lack in the other, subjects resort to fantasy to gain enjoyment. This can reinforce religious symbolism or imaginary phantasies, including imaginaries of unification—images that are recognised by the social order, as stated above. In few words, if young people do not claim their own lives, they may return to the maternal (and other protective schemas, e.g., nationalism). Through this lens, one can also see clientelism, nepotism and certain 'anarchic individualist' mentalities, as discussed above, as symptoms of this situation, and I am referring again to the concept of surplus *jouissance*.

I am not suggesting that to be financially independent is to be more 'complete' and 'whole' as a person, whereas to be financially dependent on parents or to be part of their family business entails a loss, disappointment, lack of competence or perhaps of real adulthood. Neoliberalism has contributed to creating this ideal of productivity and independence as the marks of a good citizen. This has never been the goal in Greece, however: there has always been the vision of economic engagement as linked to the family. On the contrary, what is argued in this section is the fact that young people need to negotiate their way into the Symbolic, but in many cases, there is no recognition of them as 'adults'. Recognition from the other, in this sense, means to hold somebody to account for their responsibilities; where this is absent, the subject cannot be a subject of their own discourse. Being financially dependent, or even an assistant to one's parents, makes subjects even more submissive in the sense that the one who pays them owns them; these attitudes of course do not reinforce their recognition as separate by the other. What other kind of *jouissance* is available, since

individuals cannot get out of this regression and since there is ambivalence between the familial holding environment and independence?

Thus, there is a lack: of work, of creation, of an identity or even of desire. It seems that, for the research participants, attachments to master signifiers such as the family (or nation, religion, the crisis, or the motherland) which organize subjectivity are not adequately affected by the crisis. Can the crisis act as the paternal metaphor that will assist subjects in developing the desire to fill this lack? On the other hand, and in a wider frame, does the crisis create any opportunity for society to reveal and face any pre-existing dysfunction? What the research participants seem to reveal is a kind of ambivalence, with most of them revealing that the crisis has exacerbated pre-existing circumstances. Only a small percentage of the participants are willing to differentiate themselves from the big Other. What people seek is the repeated dominance of the signifiers that represent them. It is only by confronting the lack in its relation to the cause of desire that a change in the social order can be brought about (Bracher, 1993). Any real social change, however, must involve both changes in laws and public policy, and alterations in ideals, desires and ways that people derive *jouissance*. Moreover, this should happen in a large number of individuals (Bracher, 1993). The former constitutes the current crisis, and the already existent institutional and social boundaries in Greece, such as the dyskinesia of the public sector, clientelism, familism and nepotism, are obstacles that impede any real social change, and discourage individuals from claiming their own lives. On a cultural level, one could also add the 'Greek patterns of thought', which hinders or impedes society from social change, or even the identity problems mentioned above, which direct subjects to imitate other cultures. On a political level, the division between "the Left" and "the Right", and the respective 'patterns of thought' that are created and

followed, especially since Metapolitefsi, haunt people's free choice, making them feel trapped in specific patterns of thought and action according to the specific political tribe they belonged to. Such attitudes influence many sectors of their lives, e.g., their working attitudes, attitude towards the state and the public sphere in general.

On the other hand, regarding alterations in ideals, desires, and ways that people derive *jouissance*, I can conclude that there is a tendency for some participants to seek change but the means by which people derive *jouissance* cannot easily change. What is more, some of them need an external motivation to drive them to any kind of transformative path, since their internal incentives or desire seem inactive. I argue that, due to the promised fullness of the Symbolic, either there is no lack, and so no desire to fill it, or there is desire, but it is not directed to a meaningful aim. One could quote Lacan to argue that it is only through the discourse of the Analyst that the subject can produce their own master signifiers; that is, ideas and values less inimical to its fundamental fantasy and the desire embodied by that fantasy, meaning separation between the ego and ego ideal.

6.2. Conclusion

This thesis is an exploration of subjectivity in Greek young adults in the context of a specific moment in Greek history: the economic crisis of 2009. I have sought to explore primordial attachments and the role of the unconscious in the intensity and maintenance of family bonds on the one hand, and the broader discourses involving symbolic structures and family signifiers, on the other.

As demonstrated in the literature review, there is a profusion of literature available exploring the Greek crisis from an economic, sociological, and anthropological view. The experience of Greek youth is interpreted mostly on the basis of reflexivity, which refers to the individual's ability to become critical towards themselves and society. This research contributes to a more psychosocial reading of what the financial crisis means. It also explains Greek youth experience by focusing on both the intensity of the family attachment bonds and the socio-historical forces that have formed subjectivity. Both have produced psychic investments in individuals through affect and discourse within the culture to which they belong, so specific focus is given to such processes. Data demonstrates that the way in which the family is experienced and discussed by the participants involves the location of affective investments in discursive patterns, where affect, psychic functions and investments can be connected with master signifiers that structure discourse (Frosh & Saville, 2010). Thus, what this research adds to the literature is a more psychoanalytic investigation of the Greek family bonds and its effect on the individualisation of young adults during the crisis. That is to say, it raises the question of whether the Greek family is a support or an obstacle to the self-actualization of its children. Moreover, the thesis sheds light on how Greek young adults reflect on their families of origin and how they perceive the re-invention (if any) of their subjectivity during social transformations.

More generally, this research offers insights for further explorations on subjectivity formation and the desire of the Other during challenging times in other south European countries with which Greece shares cultural similarities. Therefore, it can contribute to a further understanding of the crisis in the countries of the Mediterranean and the ways in which populations responded to it psychosocially. As

such, it can serve as a point of departure for research on the rest of Europe and in other countries beyond it, and a basis for exploring individual or group responses to cultural forces that violently press societies into transformation and social change. Comparisons can be made of different cultural backgrounds as well, and further study might focus on the wider psychosocial and clinical phenomenon of the manifestations of the Oedipus complex within the familial structure subject to intracultural variations. Given that this phenomenon is different in different parts of the world, the emergence, development, and manifestation of the Oedipus complex may vary from culture to culture. Freud also had an interest in the family as a genetic transmission system in its environmental role in pathogenesis. Future researchers may be interested to embark on such research. This thesis can also assist mental health practitioners and family therapists in their practice with individuals and families, aiding a better understanding of the socio-cultural differences that emerge in subjects. Thus the thesis can contribute to making practical decisions in the consulting room when exploring cultural influences. Mental health researchers also stand to benefit: if the cases presented in this thesis are considered as part of a population, then each case presents a variation of the phenomenon of interest within a context (Gomm et al., 2000, p. 16), so working in cases is ideal for studying the variations under which a phenomenon occurs.

Methodologically, I made a combinatory use of both the BNIM and the FANI in the data collection, and both Kleinian and Lacanian psychoanalytic concepts in the data analysis as they can best reflect different aspects of the data. Using object relations psychoanalytic concepts solely would have restricted the analysis because of its individualising and reductive tendencies. On the other hand, using a discursive approach alone would have reduced subjectivity to a linguistic and discursive effect.

Of course, subjectivity entails aspects that are unspeakable and unsayable; however, using both approaches, I have looked both at discourses and psychic life, since, while they may not be exhaustive, they move towards explaining human subjectivity. New possibilities of combining different methodologies for data collection and analysis can invite researchers to be creative and explore different uses of methodological and theoretical tools for a research purpose.

More broadly, this research contributes to the literature on changing neoliberal societies, where traditional, modern, and post-modern elements of socio-political and cultural life coexist. There is a debate on the decline of paternal authority and symbolic faith in capitalist times, to which this research contributes. A large number of psychological impacts seem to follow from the social decline of the paternal imago, as Lacan argues (1938). Families in Greece seem to be patriarchal, but I could speak mostly of a misrepresented sense of the paternal metaphor. A traditional patriarchal structure does exist, but the paternal metaphor *per se* has been facing a decline. In a wider frame, this thesis can further contribute to the broader debate on social change for individuals and societies due to large social transformations.
Anthropological and psychoanalytic research could also benefit when exploring religious attachment and rituals, especially in terms of *jouissance* of the body in contemporary societies.

There are naturally some limitations of this research as well. The sample comes only from a specific Greek city, namely Athens. The research would have benefited from a more varied sample drawn from other parts of the country. A larger and more gender balanced sample would also have offered great insights; nevertheless the sample assembled for the thesis, when seen in the light of an in-depth qualitative method offers rich empirical findings. Additionally, one could argue that I may have

overrepresented traditional discourses against more contemporary ones concerning experiences of families. However, it is the research participants who have produced this material, and I have represented their experiences as they narrated them to me.

When I embarked on this research project, my view was that, although it started as a systemic and global situation, the crisis was also a fair result of the specific Greek mentality and that individual action could be an answer in overcoming its disastrous effects. Further, I held the belief that individuals themselves can create their trajectories of life regardless challenging times. Thus, my starting point in both theory and methodology was the individual. On this basis, object relations theory was an appropriate tool as it focuses on individual biography as an explanation of why individuals take up particular positions in relation to dominant discourses. My main argument was that the personal stories of individuals can reveal the impact of personal biography on discursive positions. For this reason, I wanted to utilize explanations based solely on individual processes, albeit with an awareness of the risk of pathologizing participants. However, as my purpose was also to embark on the exploration of sociocultural and historical forces at work in the crisis as well, I made a jump from experience to discourse, from individuals to social structures and social determinism, albeit with an awareness of the risk of reducing the individual to an effect of language. Trying to find a balance between two different theoretical and methodological approaches, I decided to use elements of both Kleinian and Lacanian psychoanalysis and let them speak to one another as they shed light on different aspects of the data. For Lacan, the unconscious is structured like a language; it is an Other side of discourse, and subjectivity is structured in and by discursive relations,

which are inherently cultural. Taking both dimensions enabled me to focus on both the social processes and the psycho-biographical dimension. Perhaps this shift signifies a shift in my own way of thinking about the social and the psychic which is similar to the shift from the paranoid to a more depressive and less omnipotent position.

7. References

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