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ΠΡΑΞΗ:

**«ΘΑΛΗΣ-ΠΑΝΕΠΙΣΤΗΜΙΟ ΜΑΚΕΔΟΝΙΑΣ-**
**Το ανθρώπινο δυναμικό ως βασική συνιστώσα της αναπτυξιακής δυναμικής και διαφοροποίησης των περιοχών: Η περίπτωση της Ελλάδας»**

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ΚΑΤΗΓΟΡΙΑ ΠΡΑΞΗΣ:

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Δράση 4: Μελέτες περιπτώσεων τοπικών πρωτοβουλιών

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Συντάκτης : Σκορδίλη Σοφία

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ΣΚΟΡΔΙΛΗ ΣΟΦΙΑ

Θεσσαλονίκη, 30/11/2015



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**ΟΜΑΔΑ ΕΡΓΑΣΙΑΣ 4**

**Χαροκόπειο Πανεπιστήμιο**

Σκορδίλη Σοφία

# Δ4. Μελέτες περιπτώσεων τοπικών πρωτοβουλιών

***Παραδοτέο Π4.5.3: Πρώτη εκδοχή (1st draft) άρθρου προς υποβολή σε επιστημονικό περιοδικό***



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ΧΑΡΟΚΟΠΕΙΟ ΠΑΝΕΠΙΣΤΗΜΙΟ

**ΠΑΡΑΔΟΤΕΟ 4.5.3**

# Agrifood localization in crisis-hit Greece and beyond

**Sophia Skordili**

## First draft of paper to be submitted to an international journal

Η παρούσα έρευνα έχει συγχρηματοδοτηθεί από την Ευρωπαϊκή Ένωση(Ευρωπαϊκό Κοινωνικό Ταμείο – ΕΚΤ) και από εθνικούς πόρους μέσω του Επιχειρησιακού Προγράμματος «Εκπαίδευση και Δια Βίου Μάθηση» του Εθνικού Στρατηγικού Πλαισίου Αναφοράς (ΕΣΠΑ) – Ερευνητικό Χρηματοδοτούμενο Έργο: ΘΑΛΗΣ. Επένδυση στην κοινωνία της γνώσης μέσω του Ευρωπαϊκού Κοινωνικού Ταμείου.

## Agrifood localization in crisis-hit Greece and beyond

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### Introduction

Greece has a rich tradition and long standing specialization in agro-food sector. Its contribution has always been critical in the formation of key economic indicators and the smoothening of the acute regional disparities of the country.

During the last 30 years or so a small group of Transnational Corporations jointed by a few large domestic competitors, control every agrifood market of the country. Their dominance has been further enhanced during the prolonged recession. There is little doubt that the leading corporations have followed a path of high cost development with poor results for people, places and the economy. Powerful agrifood processors and retail chains are heavily criticised for their relentless squeeze on weaker actors of the supply chains, their failure to provide the public with affordable and nutrient food, their catastrophic effects on the environment and the local economies (Skordili 2013a; Skordili 2013b).

Traditional small agrifood firms are the main victims of the current crisis. However it is encouraging that in the midst of the recession there is remarkable mobility in small-scale agrifood processing and retailing. Day-in day-out, a diverse set of specialized small scale agro-food initiatives are emerging all over the country. From edible snails cultivation and standardization to premium olive oils and novel types of small-scale grocery retail outlets, a new generation of Greeks are turning to innovative practices in agrifood aspiring to a way out of poverty, inequality and social exclusion. These practices are mostly run by highly qualified relatively young men and women who work long hours and apply their skills and creativity in order to survive in a hostile business environment led by long-standing recession and social unrest, increasing market concentration in the agrifood sector, as well as, instability and limited access to the banking system.

These ventures have been very welcomed by governmental bodies, political parties and the mass media. It is widely believed that they can act as an antidote to the mounting socio-economic problems associated with the corporate-led food



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production and consumption, a valuable source for new employment opportunities, income and local development. Nevertheless we have a very vague idea about their actual characteristics and potential.

The paper aims to shed some light into these issues by a) documenting the extent and the spatial pattern of these new ventures and b) assessing their actual potential and embeddeedness to local areas.

The core questions are directed to the impact of the entrepreneur to business success and the linkages of new firms with the local areas. The analysis is not restricted to the study of qualifications and skills of the entrepreneurs. Using the institutional lens, equal emphasis is given to less obvious areas such as their ability to be creative, to cooperate and set in the local context (Biggeri & Ferrannini 2014). A set of additional questions are directed to complementary issues such as: the identification of main sources of entrepreneurship, the labour mobility, the degree of embeddeedness of the new firms to the surrounding areas and their impact to regional development.

The focus of research is on dynamic new, or recently restructured, agrifood processing firms. However we are not restricted to the study of processing sector alone since we adopt the methodology of supply chains.

The remaining paper is structured in four parts. The next part is a critical review of the main points of the rich theoretical debate currently underway on agrifood systems localization. The following two parts present the main findings of a recently implemented Research Project funded by the Greek Ministry of Education. The research has followed two consecutive stages. The aim of the first stage (part 3) is to define the extent, the broad profile and the spatial pattern of newly established (after1/1/2010) or recently restructured small-scale dynamic agrifood processing and retailing firms. The second stage (part 4) presents the main findings of extended field work research to a sample of 40 entrepreneurs of these ventures. The ultimate part synthesizes the findings and attempts to assess the potential of new agrifood initiatives in local development.



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## Agrifood systems localization

At global north there is a growing awareness that the conventional corporate-led agrifood system is malfunctioning. The criticism has become increasingly prevalent during several past decades The main claims revolve around its serious costs in terms of corporate power, food safety, nutritional value and sustainability (Lang and Heasman 2004; Fold & Pritchard 2005; Morgan et al. 2006; Burch and Lawrence 2007; Blay-Palmer 2008; Sage 2012; Clapp 2012, Kalfagianni 2014). The continuing financial, economic and political turmoil accentuates already existing environmental and social failures of the agro-food system thus creating an urgent need to identify innovative, effective and legitimate responses.

### The pros and cons of local food

In this context, agrifood localization initiatives, i.e. initiatives that rely on local production and processing practices for the provision of food, appear particularly promising. There is no doubt that there is a lot of room for local initiatives to provide a concrete response to widespread concerns about the profound troubles and limitations of the conventional industrialized agro-food system. They can bring some sort of equilibrium in a highly unbalanced and unequal conventional food system. They can give value to local resources and supply the market with long forgotten local varieties that do not fit into industrial production methods and conventions. They can provide a valuable source of income to small farmers, processors and retailers, that have been excluded from conventional food supply chains or work on severe price-squeeze conditions (Donald and Blay-Palmer 2006; Allen 2010; O'Neil 2014).

Too often it is taken for granted that small local firms are always associated with benign and desired outcomes. However these qualities are not given, neither guaranteed. Far for claiming that local scale is inherently bad, there is nothing inherent about the scale. Local-scale initiatives are equally likely to be just or unjust, sustainable or unsustainable, fair or unfair (Morgan and Sonnino 2010). Following the seminal work of Born and Prucell:

> Not matter what its scale, the outcomes produced by a food system are contextual: they depend on the actors and agentas that are empowered by the particular social relations in a given food system (Born and Prucell 2006:195-96).



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Mounting empirical research has shown that the contribution of local agrifood systems is not always positive in several basic aspects. Small farmers too often make extended use of intensive high-input agricultural practices with devastating effects to natural resources. In several instances small producers are making use of exploitative labour relations. While historical discrepancies in power due to wealth, linkages to political parties can lead to oligarchic decision making structures and lack of transparency (Allen 2011; DeLindl 2011; Wilson 2013).

### What constitutes local food?

The definition of the local food is not as obvious as it seems at first glance. There is not a precise definition of what constitutes local food (Heinrichs 2007).

Usually definitions of the local are restricted to spatial descriptions. However it is doubtful whether any definition of 'local food' could ever be based purely on physical proximity. According to the size of the served area the boundaries of the foodsheds vary considerably. The much publicized locavores movement has launched the 100 miles diet. These definitions should be revised when applied to metropolitan regions. In New York City, the "Healthy Food and Healthy Lives Act" introduced in 2008 defines as locally produced food that is acquired from the State of NY or from another State when travelling less than 400 miles. In the case of London food markets producers should be located within a 100-miles radius (Morgan and Sonnino 2010).

In some instances local denotes the provenance of food in certain scales. However the local origin of food does not always identifies with small and authentic. Locally made food can be the output of a big factory owned by a giant corporation (Morgan et al. 2006).

'Local' is often equated with a host of values relating to social, environmental and 'quality' criteria. Definitions should not be restricted to geographical understandings of products 'made' in the region. They should include more complex understandings based upon economic, social and cultural factors, such as: where the ingredients come from? where the value was added during its production? who it was made by? where the product was to be sold? what is the impact to local economy? what is the historical association with the region? (Seems 2010).



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## Short Food Supply Chains

The labels ‘Alternative Food Networks’, ‘Short Food Supply Chains’, ‘Quality food’, ‘Local Food’ are contested concepts. They are often used interchangeably since there are no concise definitions to describe the nuance differences among them. In short, they are qualitative different or even countercultural to corporate-led Conventional Food Networks. Indeed, they share their opposition to specific failures and harmful effects of the conventional, corporate-led agrifood system. However there is no doubt that they embrace a wide range of initiatives with highly varied product values, aims and practices (Venn et al. 2006)

According to a loose but accurate definition alternative agrifood network is loosely defined by what it is not rather than by what it is (Morgan 2010). Since conventional food sector is far from coherent it is expected that localised agrifood sector can take various forms as well.

Alternative versus conventional dualisms should be abandoned. Most producers adopt a hybridised approach to production, which is characterised by a tendency to ‘dip in and out’ of conventional and alternative modes at different times (Ilbery and Maye 2005).

In order to transcend the abovementioned ambiguities and perplexities that are associated with the narrative of the Alternative, we adopt the relevant and more specific concept of Short Food Supply Chains (SFSCs) introduced by Renting, Marsden and Banks (Renting et al. 2003).

SFSCs are the ‘short-circuit' of the long, anonymous supply chains characteristics of the industrial mode of food production and have the potential to resocialise and respatialise food. By constructing short and transparent chains consumers have knowledge on the origin and quality of foods. SFSCs are creating new linkages between producers and consumers. Equally significant, SFSCs are an important carrier for the `shortening' of relations between food production and locality, thereby potentially enhancing a reembedding of farming towards more environmentally sustainable modes of production (Marsden et al. 2000).

There is a great variety of SFSCs. We can distinguish three broad types of SFSCs as concerns their organisational structure and the specific mechanisms they entailed to extend relations in time and space. Needless to say that one business may be



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involved in more than one categories of the following three supply chains (Sage 2002; Sonnino and Marsden 2006; Sage 2012):

- *Face-to-face interaction*. Consumers are buying goods directly from the producer. Authenticity and trust are mediated through personal interaction.
- *Spatial Proximity.* Products are sold in the region (or place) of production, and consumers are made aware of the `local' nature of the product at the point of retail. Proximate SFSCs often include intermediary actors in the agrifood chain, whereby these take over the role of guaranteeing product authenticity. Producer-consumer networks may also be based on cultural proximity, as exemplified by the sale of regional specialities to emigrants.
- *Extended SFSCs*. Long distance products are sold to consumers outside the region of production who may have no personal experience of that locality. These global networks are still `short' food supply chains: it is not the distance over which a product is transported that is critical, but the fact that it is embedded with value-laden information when it reaches the consumer, for example, printed on packaging or communicated at the point of retail. Examples of these are well-known regional specialities like Champagne wine or Parmigiano Reggiano cheese, but also `fair trade' products like coffee and tea.

It is obvious that the longer the SFSC the more possible it is to involve conventional firms as well. The main point of critique to SFSC analysis focuses on the ignorance of upstream connections. The starting point is usually the primary producer while the provenance of seeds and fertilisers is not included in the analysis (Ilbery and Maye 2005).

## The extent and the spatial pattern of the new ventures

A systematic search on various secondary data sources beginning from 1/1/2010 revealed 150 dynamic new or recently restructured small firms operating in food processing and retailing.

Two interesting findings were revealed at the initial stage of research. First, many failed attempts and second, the much lower than anticipated number of incidents.



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Both are strong indications that the public debate on this issue is overly optimistic and light hearted.

Domestic and international media are reproducing suspiciously selective data from a small number of supposed 'success stories' and avoid any reference to failures. It seems to conflate the desired with the real. However systematic search has shown that a substantial proportion of highly anticipated ventures were forced to withdraw the market at the initial stage of their development. Food market shrinkage due to drastic cuts in available incomes of consumers and the instabilities of the wider business environment were named as the main causes of failure

However key informant interviews indicated the importance of additional sources of failure. The rate of failure is substantially higher in activities linked directly with primary agrifood production due to the underestimation of the difficulties and uncertainties of the agricultural sector. A notable example is the highly promoted cultivation of edible snails. Hundreds of new farmers, with little or no knowledge of the difficulties of the agricultural profession, realized the hard way that snails are extremely vulnerable to extreme weather conditions and infections. In processing and retailing activities lack of access to the banking system, as well as, long delays in payment installments of investment projects financed under the EU and state programs, were critical in firm's survival.

The second interesting finding has to do with the considerably lower than anticipated incidence of new dynamic ventures. A systematic search to various sources reveals no more than 150 processing and retailing firms that fulfill the eligibility criteria. The public debate makes reference to considerably higher figures. The same overestimation characterizes the relevant debate on counter-urbanisation. Results of a recent Survey financed by the Ministry of Agriculture showed that no less than 1,5 million urban residents were willing to move to rural areas and work as farmers (Demetra, 2012). It is widely believed that ex-urban residents can make a fresh start at the idyllic environment of greek rural areas away from the over-crowded and hard hit by crisis greek cities. However research results show considerable lower figures (Gkartzios 2011; Kasimis and Zographakis 2014).

The 150 entries to the data base construct a diversified group of initiatives with very different business orientation and strategies. The available secondary data on employment creation and the profile of the entrepreneur were very poor and can not



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lead to credible conclusions. Still there are some indications that the new initiatives are very small, in fact they are mostly micro and nano enterprises. Also, new independent retailers provide valuable employment opportunities for younger and middle aged urban residents, the groups with the higher unemployment rate.

However secondary data search were valuable source of information regarding the product specialization and the location pattern of the new dynamic agrifood firms.

### Product specialization

There is a remarkable shift of business specialization to higher value products. In food processing there is a clear trend to revitalization of traditional local products (wineries, spirits, sauces, cheese and dairy, dried meat), as well as to novel products for the domestic market. In retailing, there is a massive influx of "new wave" local food retail outlets. They offer a big variety of products carefully selected from small local producers all over the country.

However the most interesting finding is the organization of production along the lines of vertical integration even for very small firms. As shown on map1 several firms are active in primary production and processing, or processing and sales, while a small number of them is active in the three sectors of economic activity.

### Map 1 (to be added)

### Spatial pattern

As shown in map 1, new dynamic agrifood firms follow a clear spatial pattern. There is a profound concentration in adjacent areas to Athens and Thessaloniki metropolitan regions. Also, they have a strong presence in areas that combine tourist attraction with significant agrifood specialization (mainly in Crete and several other islands, as well as, in southern Peloponnese).

This is an interesting finding since recent empirical investigations show a relevant move, closer to key markets of Athens and Thessaloniki metropolitan conurbations, for the top 100 agrifood processors too. The relocation of big firms is evident even on traditional firms of primary manufacturing. This trend should be explained by the influx of low cost, raw and semi processed, fruit and vegetables (e.g. frozen



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concentrated orange juice from Brazil, or tomato from China) (Skordili 2009). It is indicative that a recent study by the Co-federation of Farmers has shown that only in 2011 alone the aggregate rate of national sufficiency for 41 key products of arable and livestock production has declined by 3% (PASEGES 2012). Hence, for a growing number of firms processing activity is confined to the final stages of production, while several products of their product range are imported as final goods. The bypass of places by agrifood corporations has led to the gradual eradication of longstanding local agro-food complexes and the loss of important indigenous varieties and knowledge.

Hence, the traditional over presentation of agro-food processors to certain rural areas of the country seems to be weakening in favour of major urban regions. As a result the acute regional disparities are expected to be widening.

## Fieldwork Research

The answer to the second group of questions, i.e. assessing the actual potential of new ventures and their embeddeedness to local areas, draws on 40 face-to-face interviews with entrepreneurs of selected small-scale dynamic agrifood firms. Research was conducted in the period between October 2014 and March 2015.

Due to the scarcity and omissions of available secondary data, the findings of the desk-top research were valuable in order to formulate the geographical area of research and the business sample. We came to a decision to focus our research in and around Athens Metropolitan Region which is the prime area of new ventures at national level. More specifically, research area includes continental areas (islands are excluded) within the two hours time-zone from the Athens metropolitan area. Map2 shows the boundaries of the research area and the geographical distribution of the sample.

### Map 2 (to be added)

It is a highly diversified area, in fact a miniature of the country, including the prime conurbation and market of Greece, traditional places of agrifood production (Argolida, Korinthia), areas of intensive agricultural production, significant tourist



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destinations, as well as, the main transport facilities and logistics infrastructure at national level. The boundaries of the area are roughly identical with the main agrifood provisioning area of the Athens metropolitan region. Hence the study of the potential of localized agrifood ventures in this area is useful for any future development of a Food Planning Study for Athens.

The results of 40 face-to-face in-depth semi-structured interviews with the entrepreneurs cover a wide range of issues. The following two chapters summarise the main findings into two broad groups: the first focus on the profile of the entrepreneurs while the second on the spatial organisation of supply chains.

### The profile of the entrepreneur

The profile of the entrepreneurs that took part in the field work research is not restricted to the study of their qualifications and skills of the entrepreneurs. Using the institutional lens, equal emphasis is given to less obvious areas such as their ability to cooperate and set in the local context (Bigeri and Ferrannini 2014).

*Identification of main sources of entrepreneurship*

Several agrifood sector activities are characterised by low barriers to entry since the needs for initial capital and know-how can be very low. Also food market due to the staple character of food has experienced moderate decline, compare to other sectors of the economy. Hence there is a notable interest for small business formation in the midst of the crisis. This is extremely important in an economy characterised by disinvestment and huge unemployment rate (more than 26%).

The sector has attracted people from several professional backgrounds. In fact, the research has shown that besides the traditional sources of entrepreneurship we can identify the following three additional sources triggered by the crisis. First, offspring who had initially chosen a different career path were forced (due to unemployment or instability caused by the crisis) to be involved in the family business later in life. Second, entrepreneurs who were forced to give-up their business in declining sectors (e.g. garments, construction) identified opportunities and started business to agro-food sector. Third, recently unemployed in several sectors of the service economy (advertising and marketing executives, journalists, architects, teachers, etc), started a small agrifood business.



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*High educational qualifications and skills*

The majority of the entrepreneurs that took part in fieldwork survey have high educational qualifications. They are holders of University degrees, often at postgraduate level. Also, they are fluent in English and computer skills. This is a radical change compare to the very low record of the typical owner of small firm a few decades ago (Labrianidis et al., 2004). However we found that a substantial number of them have a working experience only as employees hence they lack experience in basic entrepreneurial skills such as, decision making, management, business planning, et al.

*Origin - Residence*

A big part of the literature on countr-urbanization shares the view that the arrival of former urban residents to the country side is expected to complicate the correlation between business and place (Herslund 2011). However field work research has shown that this movement has been kept to low levels. A big share of the entrepreneurs had not any previous linkage with the wider area of location of the processing firm. In fact, a not insignificant number of them were Athenians. What is more interesting is the fact that they did not move their permanent residence from Athens and they use to operate their business from their Athens offices.

*Integration to local setting - synergies*

Finally, the inability of firms to integrate in the local economy and society was obvious in several aspects.

Despite of their small size they were unwilling to start cooperation and synergies with other firms even in the simplest business areas, such as common transport of goods to the same market. Recent Survey has shown the low level of social capital among farmers and orange juice processors. Processors were complaining about the low quality of the oranges due to the indifference and lack of professionalism of growers. They were also profoundly annoyed by the growers’ flexibility in changing factories during the same harvesting season on the basis of price. On the side of the growers there was an abiding sense of over-exploitation stemming from the low prices set by the local factories, which do not enable them to cover production costs (Skordili, 2009).



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Also entrepreneurs were distant from the local community and expressed a lot of complaints for the indifference of the local authorities to be supportive in economic activity in any way.

### Spatial organization of Supply Chains

These firms are considered, by definition, typical Short Agro-food Supply Chains, i.e. initiatives that rely on local raw materials and processing practices for the provision of food (Marsden et al. 2000). But this was not always the case.

The majority of the firms who took part in field work research have organized their supply chains on a vertical integration basis. This is in absolute alignment with the indications of the secondary data analysis. However field-work research revealed some interesting qualitative aspects.

Family businesses adopt a unique intergenerational division of labour. Different age groups of the family of the entrepreneur are responsible for different stages of production. Usually the parents, who are experienced farmers, have the responsibility of the agricultural production. While members of the next, better educated, generation are in charge of processing and sales.

Another interesting point is the expanding of agrifood business to service sector. The first movers in several novel sectors for the Greek market, like edible snails cultivation and standardisation, truffles hunting and processing, provide consulting services to potential new entrepreneurs. They organise training seminars, make several tests to evaluate the suitability of the available farms to start the cultivation and provide technical assistance to newer farmers.

All firms pay special attention to promotion, marketing and sales. Given the severe recession and increasing market concentration by major super market chains it's no wonder that access to market is the Achilles heal of the majority of the firms. New entrepreneurs were very active in establishing new market channels of direct sales. They aim to make use of several market channels, in order to minimize the risk. Usually more established conventional channels, like super market chains and wholesaling networks, coexist with newer and more alternative channels like, e-commerce, specialized stores of local products, tourist market, e.t.c.



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*Product development strategies*

In search for profit away from saturated and low paid markets there is a remarkable move from the typical product range of local SMEs (Labrianidis et al. 2004), mainly various types of pasta, jams, spoon sweets and cookies, to more sophisticated and value added products. We can identify two product development strategies:

- *Move to premium and luxury markets.* A not insignificant number of small firms are targeting to demanding niches of mainly export markets. They have launched premium and luxury products with the higher standards in composition, packaging and marketing. This trend is frequent in several well known Greek specialties. The most profound example is olive-oil whereas there are few other cases mostly in honey production, vinegars and wines. A common characteristic of these ventures is the orientation to promotion and sophisticated marketing techniques, while production process is put in second place. In several instances the product is produced by subcontractor and the firm is dedicated to the final stages of production. These firms are most often initiated by people with previous experience in creative professions such as Architects, Designers, Advertising Executives and Journalists.
- *Move to new product markets.* We may distinguish two product strategies. First, revitalized, long forgotten, traditional local products like carob rusks, cheese and cured meat specialties, rakomelo, e.t.c. In several aspects firms are making use of traditional production practices and local ingredients. Second, entirely novel products for the domestic market such as craft beers, edible snails, various types of mushrooms, dips, e.t.c. In this case the production process is an imitation of production practices applied in several European countries, mainly Italy, France and the Netherlands. Hence the linkages with the local area are minimal.

It should be expected that the production of premium products as well as the production of revitalised local products is based on the inclusive use of local inputs. However this is not always the case.

In fact the crisis has provoked a retreat of the local provenance of food in favour of the national origin. Indeed a closer look at their actual supply chains reveals that the



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use of imported raw materials is kept at low levels. The current crisis has enhanced the market patriotism of a big share of consumers. Hence there is an obvious turn to Greek products at the expense of the strong brands of big TNCs. A big part of the firms that took part in the fieldwork survey were making use of raw materials found in distant areas of the country. In our relevant questions entrepreneurs declared that the market asks for Greek and not local raw materials.

In the case of premium and luxury products the crucial issue is the construction of an interesting image of the product in order to gain value in the framework of symbolic consumption. Hence the focus is on the promotion and marketing than on production process. In fact in several instances the production process was implemented on subsontracting basis.

## Discussion

There is no doubt that there is a lot of room for local initiatives to provide a concrete response to widespread concerns about the profound troubles and limitations of the conventional agro-food and tourism sectors. Research revealed really promising signs. In several aspects these firms are far from residuals of the past and show promising prospects for a more sustainable and equitable future. They seem to be qualitative different in several grounds compare to the typical traditional small agro-food firms. They are mostly run by highly qualified relatively young men and women who work long hours and apply their skills to generate economic value by applying creative solutions. They contribute to the upgrade the image of Greek food and gastronomy. They offer a room for responsible entrepreneurship and provide employment and income to highly qualified men and women.

However research outcome did not match entirely with the highly optimistic picture constructed by the media. It seems that domestic and international media often reproduce suspiciously selective data from a small number of the supposed "success stories" conflating the desired with the real. The public debate on this matter gives great emphasis to the favourable conditions while the many obstacles and difficulties are overlooked.



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The research has identified several problems as well. New ventures share the problems of the old typical traditional small firms operating in agro-food sectors in certain less visible but important areas. The fieldwork survey revealed weak ties with of the firms with the local economies and societies. Despite their small size they were rather unable to form co-operations with other firms. The new entrepreneurs were highly qualified however they lacked basic business skills.

Hence their long-term viability and success is questioned unless they will be supported by appropriate state policies. In the case of Greece, agrifood localization should lead to a food system that is better aligned with goals of economic efficiency and equality, social justice and ecological integrity.

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ΕΠΙΧΕΙΡΗΣΙΑΚΟ ΠΡΟΓΡΑΜΜΑ ΕΚΠΑΙΔΕΥΣΗ ΚΑΙ ΔΙΑ ΒΙΟΥ ΜΑΘΗΣΗ επένδυση στην κοινωνία της γνώσης
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