Flexible Workforce: The Political Economy of the Greek Garment Industry in the Era of Neoliberalism

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Abstract

This thesis set out to explain the emergence of production units that favour harsh working conditions in the garment industry of Athens. A neo-Marxist political economic approach was used in order to trace the causes of this emergence over the last fifty years and explain the transitional period from Fordism to flexible regimes of accumulation. The hollowing out of the Welfare State in favour of Neoliberal policies has had several implications for the garment industry and the working conditions of migrant garment workers. A new hierarchical organizational structure has evolved and new strategies have been adopted by manufacturers and retailers. As a consequence, different forms of vulnerability now threaten garment workers. A total of 40 semi structured interviews were conducted with individuals representing various parts of the industry and the state. Last but not least, an attempt was made to illustrate the implications for middle income countries particularly those of Latin America.

Key words: working conditions, migrant workers, Neoliberalism, flexible accumulation, garment industry, neoliberal fashion

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List of Abbreviations

ATC	Agreement on Textiles and Clothing
BIWUG	Bangladeshi Immigrant Workers' Union of Greece
FYROM	Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HPC	Hellenic-Pakistan Community
ILO	International Labor Organization
IMF	International Monetary Fund
KWNS	Keynesian Welfare National State
LTA	Long Term Agreement
MFA	Multi-Fiber Arrangement
MIC	Middle Income Countries
NAFTA	North American Free Trade Agreement
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
TCF	Textile Clothing and Footwear
WB	World Bank
WTO	World Trade Organization
WWII	Second World War

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This thesis is dedicated to all the garment workers of Athens. Their life is an example of being modest and respectful, despite all the hardships and difficulties in making a living. Their cheerfulness, their dreams of a better world and their honesty will always be a source of inspiration for me.

1. Introduction

1.1. Research problem

1.1.1 Defining the problem

It was the beginning of last November when I came across an article with the title "*warehouses of cheap labour*" (TaNea 2012). This was not the first time when a leading newspaper decides to give a detailed account of the precarious working conditions prevailing in the garment industry of Athens (Rizospastis 2009; 2011). The reporter had carried out interviews with migrant garment workers and described the working conditions in these small contracting firms (Ta Nea 2012). They usually work in groups of 10 to 20 persons and in most of the cases are unpaid and uninsured (ibid). In his PhD research, Fouskas (2012: 62) illustrates these small companies as following:

> At Ionias Avenue [a main avenue in Athens], one can observe basement and ground-floor rooms with cardboard-covered windows during the winter and opened doors in the summer, stuffed with sewing machines and Bangladeshi immigrants working together in very small spaces.

To date there have been few studies describing the semi-formal garment industry of Athens and the working conditions faced by migrant workers (Fouskas 2010; Katsouras 2004). Apart from these two studies and few other reports published in the daily media, none, to the best of my knowledge, has ever focused on the working conditions and the reasons why these units of production are a reality in Greece. It has been shown that the informality of these firms lead to different forms of exploitation such as absence of health insurance, tiny wages as well as poor working conditions (ibid). Another characteristic of these production units is their spatial distribution. The majority is situated in the Central-Eastern part of Athens which is frequently described as "Bangledeshiana" due to the presence of many Bangladeshi migrant workers (Fouskas 2012: 62). Moreover, the majority of workers are mainly immigrants from Asian countries such as Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Pakistan and Syria (Fouskas 2010).

These issues raise two major concerns. Firstly, whether a problem situated in a developed country such as Greece can be related to the academic field of development, and how these new types of sweatshops have emerged in core capitalist countries. In this thesis, I argue that the answer to these questions might have telling interconnections and that the emergence of new ways of organising labour is a symptom of a *particular economic logic* that has prevailed in the garment industry over the last thirty years. But beyond all, this logic is part of the general transition in the regime of accumulation[1] and the ways in which the neoliberal paradigm functions nowadays.

Meanwhile, these changes take place within a new geographical division of labour and the reterritorialization of human exploitation. Unstandardized garments heavily tied to fashion volatilities have the tendency to be produced in a relevant proxy distance to the final markets, whereas standardized garments are being outsourced to low income countries (Bonacich & Appelbaum 2003). This spatial division of labour renders middle income countries (MIC), such as Argentina, Brazil, Mexico, with a growing middle class and consumption power, vulnerable to labour abuses. The ILO (2000: 112) global report on working conditions in the Textile, Clothing and Footwear (TCF) industry observes that:

> In the clothing industry (...) flexibility is achieved through recourse to more precarious employment contracts, to subcontracting and to home work rather than through better work organization (…) [I]t is reasonable to conclude that over the last 20 or 30 years there has been a general redistribution of TCF activities which has put **greater pressure on developing and transition countries to improve flexibility** [my emphasis].

This is not to say that a case study in Greece can be replicated in MIC of Latin America, though a better understanding of those particular changes occurred in the global garment industry and its implications for the national industries can show us the road ahead. The cases of Latin American countries which were following a state led industrialization for several years have many similarities to the demand-led

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[1] Capital accumulation is the process, under the capitalist mode of production, in which the profits made by capitalists are reinvested and in this way the total capital is increased (Abreu 2012). According to Jessop (2002) the process of capital accumulation and the further growth of capitalist profits is guided by a macroeconomic accumulation regime. A detailed account of the formation of the capitalist class is given in chapter 1.3.2. The accumulation regime is analysed in chapters 1.3.3 and 3.1.

growth in countries of Europe (Bertola & Ocampo 2012). Moreover, there is a growing body of literature arguing that the model followed by many Latin American countries can be considered as the "periphery Fordism"[2] (Dierckxsens 2000; Jessop 2002).

In this thesis, I argue that by shedding additional light on the particular changes occurred in the Greek political economy and the consequential gradual replacement of the old regime of accumulation in favour of a new flexible one, we can enhance our understanding of an emerging phenomenon in the global garment industry that is frequently described as the "new kind of labour regime and labour discipline" (Bonacich & Appelbaum 2000: 198).

It is thus the aim of this thesis to investigate the working conditions in the garment industry of Athens and then explain the reasons behind the emergence of these units of production. Finally, an attempt is made to generalise implications for middle income countries of Latin America.

It is now time to formulate the perspective of this thesis and clarify how different phenomena will be perceived throughout this paper.

1.1.2. The emergence of sweatshops

First of all, the resurgence of sweatshops reveals problems of social relations within the apparel industry (Montero 2011). A considerable amount of literature has been published describing the (re)emergence of sweatshops (Bender & Greenwald 2003; Bonacich & Appelbaum 2000; Green 1997; Montero 2011; Morokvasic 1986; Morokvasic et al. 1987; Ross 1997; Ross 2004).

One important observation is the peculiarities of the garment industry in comparison to other industries. Firstly, the total cost of garments is tied to a greater extent to the total labour cost and processes such as sewing, pressing and packing, are considered as the most labour intensive parts (Green 1997; ILO 2000). On the one

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[2] A detailed account of the Fordism and post Fordism regimes is given in chapters 1.3 and 3.1.

hand, there is the category of garments that is not prone to great fluctuations of fashion and thus is more standardized. This category is mainly sent to less developed countries where low wages and advanced machinery can reduce the cost per unit and ensure high economies of scales and thus high competitive advantages for western companies (ILO 2000; ILO 2008).

On the other hand, the garment industry, especially women's garments, has undergone major changes in response to rigidities following the crisis of 1970s and the emerged competition (Bonacich & Appelbaum 2003; Green 1997). The old pattern of four collections (autumn , winter, spring, summer) has given its place to a new one in which niche markets are targeted in a short period of time (ibid). These markets assume quick responses for both manufactures/retailers and (sub) contractors as well as advanced management of the supply chain (ILO 2000).

Behind the lifestyle and the shining images of fashion there is a consistent tendency to downsize the units of production and flexibilise rigidities tied to production processes characterised the Fordism era (Harvey 1989). Ross (1997: 15) points out that "the genuine sweatshop is symptomatic of a particularly economic logic, the manifestation of a specific organization of work".

A large and growing body of literature points out that the (re) emergence of sweatshops has its roots to a combination of factors, namely: the *extensive usage of the (sub) contracting system*, the *increasing competition of imported garments*, the *constant deterioration of working relations and union power* as well as the *availability of a large pool of legal and illegal immigrants* (see the above mentioned literature). By contracting out their production, manufactures externalize risks, thereby evading moral and legal responsibility, seasonal risks tied to high stocks and permanent personnel as well as high labour costs (Bonacich & Appelbaum 2000). Likewise, Bonacich and Appelbaum (200: 13) point out that "it is out of such a system of contracting out that the sweatshop is born".

Despite the fact that the term "sweatshop" had been first used to describe the adverse working conditions of small garment manufactures in London and New York during the second half of the 20th century, it was only after the 1980s that the term

was reintroduced and many scholars talked about the "return of the sweatshop" (Montero 2011: 3). However, many scholars argue that the sweatshops have never disappeared from the garment industry of developed countries (Bender & Greenwald 2003; Ross 2004).

For Montero (2011) the (sub) contracting system is a key strategic choice towards minimizing the costs and more importantly addressing volatilities pertaining to the high seasonality of demand. He argues that the (re)emergence is the symptom of a highly financialised economy and a process of downsizing the labour power of native and immigrant workers through the constant decline of the welfare state. Indeed, Bonacich and Appelbaum (2000: 8) summarise their findings arguing that "the reappearance of the sweatshop is a feature *of the new global flexible, capitalism* [my emphasis]". The latter is widely known as the socio-economic project of *neoliberalism*.

It is this particular system and the logic behind it that raises questions over the working conditions and the reappearance of sweatshops in developed and middle income countries.

1.2. Background

The Greek textile and garment industry have been always considered as one of the most important sectors in terms of production, employment and exports. For example, in 1977 the contribution (%) of the garment sector in the total manufacturing output and employment was 4,8 and 7,7 respectively, whereas the average percentages for the OECD countries were 2,4 and 4,9 (Lymperaki 1999: 225). However, globalisation and the emerging of developing countries as the new production leaders in the global apparel industry have led many companies to move their production to low-wage labour markets of Balkan countries (Albania, Bulgaria, FYROM, and Romania), and others to stop their activities. The rest have either changed their scope from export to import-oriented companies or followed a mixed strategic path, outsourcing key components of their business (sewing, pressing,

packing etc.) to small and medium contracting firms in Greece (ICAP 2007; 2011; Koutsou 2006). The figures below show the collapse of the Greek garment industry in terms of active manufactures and employees.

Figure 1.1.: Number of manufactures (>10 employees)
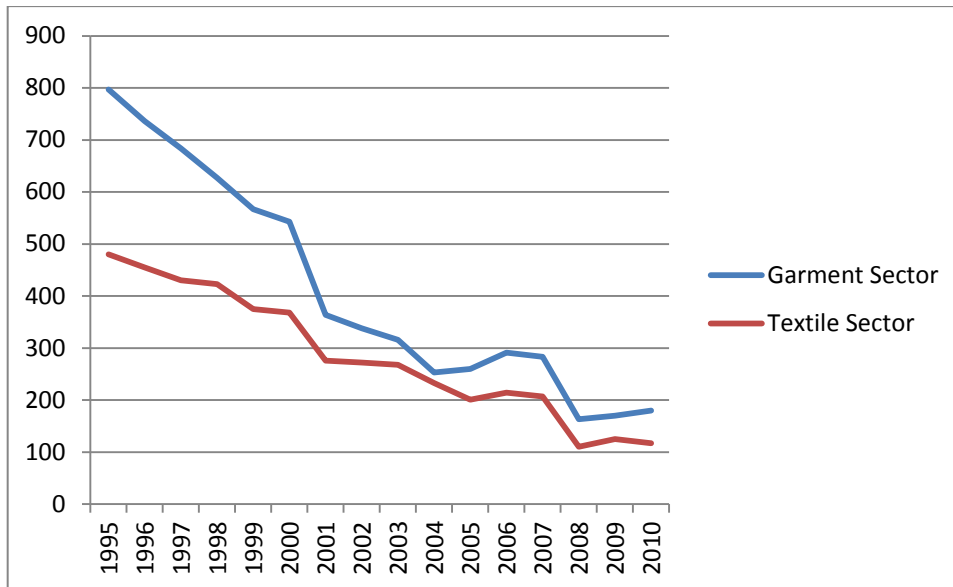
Source: *EL.STAT*.

Figure 1.2.: Employment (in manufactures with over 10 employees)
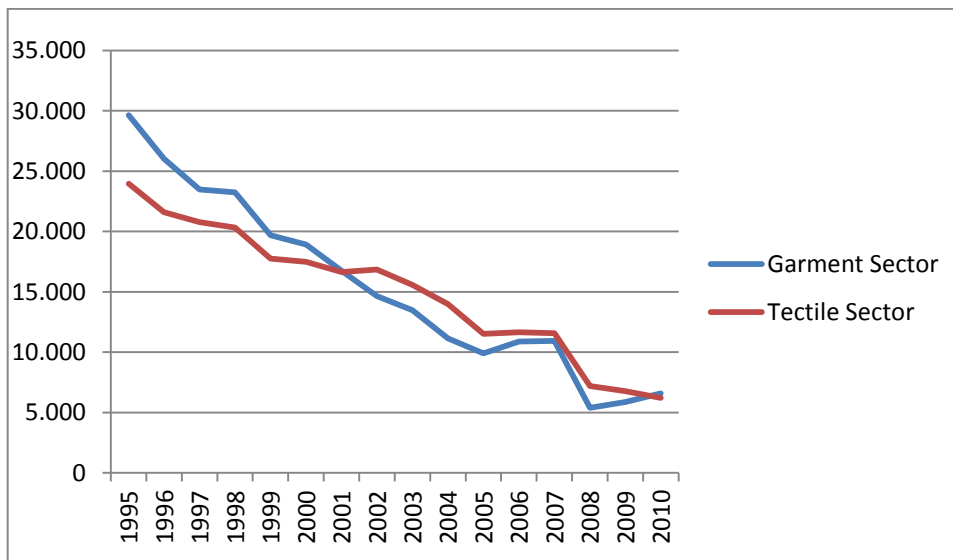
Source: *EL.STAT*.

Here, it should be noted that the above data do not take into account manufactures that employ less than 10 people and constitute a large part of the Greek garment

sector. For example, in 1986 more than 250.000 employees used to work in the garment sector (INE 1993). In any case the real numbers are significantly higher than those presented in figures.

Another interesting fact is the constant search for cheap labour which first was expressed by the recruitment of native males, then native women and lately by the predominance of male immigrants mainly from the Indian Peninsula[3] and some Arabian countries (Syria). In his PhD thesis, Katsouras (2004) studied the textile and garment industry, finding that women garment workers (natives) surpassed their male counterparts only in the mid of 1970s. At that time, women constituted 60 percent of the total labour force. However, the rising migration flows from Asian countries in the late 1980s changed decisively the industry's outlook. Informal discussions with trade unionists revealed that approximately 90 percent of the garment workers are male immigrants (Dimos 2013). The majority is situated in the metropolitan area of Athens where the production of garments takes place nowadays (ibid). Indeed, the transformation of garment industry had major implications not only for big manufactures and the size of labour force, but also contributed towards the spatial redistribution of economic activities in favour of big urban metropolises (mainly Athens and Thessaloniki) (Katsouras 2004).

The case of Bangladeshi and other migrant workers from the Indian Peninsula can be traced back to the late of 1980s and the beginning of 1990s. Only after that point, the migrant flows from these countries started to grow rapidly in Greece (Broersma & Lazarescu 2009). The census of 2001 revealed that immigrants from the Indian Peninsula constituted almost 8 per cent of the total migrant population (Kandylis et al. 2012:274). The total legal migrant population in Greece is estimated to be around 1 million people or 9 per cent of national population (Kolovos 2011). In most of the cases, migrant workers from the Indian Peninsula are engaged in semi or un-skilled jobs in the lowest end wage sectors and are exposed to various forms of physical and mental exploitation (Kandylis et al. 2012: 274; Triantafyllidou & Maroukis 2010). The group is dominated by males aged between 18 and 35 years old (ibid). A recent study

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[3] With the term Indian Peninsula countries, I refer to three countries namely Bangladesh, India and Pakistan.

carried out by the European Union in coordination with the Hellenic Foundation for European and Foreign Policy estimates the number of Bangladeshi and Pakistani migrant workers to be around 30.000 (Eurostat 2011). However, other reports take both illegal and legal immigrants into consideration, increasing the total number of immigrants to 60.000 (Australian Government 2010).

1.3. Concepts

1.3.1. Sweatshops and Exploitation

Recently, few scholars have pointed out that garment workers are self-autonomous subjects and their choice to refuse other jobs and work in sweatshops constitutes a prove of a win-win relation (Zwolinski 2007). As a consequence, they argue that most of the labour agreements between employees and employers are signed on a non-exploitative basis (ibid). However, it is apparent that the above analysis does not take into account structural socio-economic issues that might affect the spectrum of choices for workers. Moreover, there are still cases of sweatshops, even if the laws are followed and employers pay the agreed wages. Thus, I consider the concept of sweatshop very problematic, at least, in the micro level. As a consequence, throughout this thesis I look for these conditions that favour *structural unfairness* and "put large categories of persons under a systematic threat of domination or deprivation of the means to develop and exercise their capacities" (Young 2006: 114).

1.3.2. Political Economy

For *historical materialism*, social phenomena are understood as a consequence of social relations within a particular mode of production. As Marx (1977 [1859]) put it "it is not the consciousness of men [or women] that determines their existence, but their social existence that determines their consciousness". In the current mode of

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production (capitalism), labour force is compelled to sell its intellectual and physical power in return for a living wage. The consequence of this differentiation, people who sell their power and people who buy that power, is the creation of social classes with rival interests and means to accomplish them. The objectification of these means is reflected in the form of social struggles that take place in particular historical times (Marx 1977 [1859]).

The *political economy of scale* as outlined by Peck (2002), Jessop (2002) and Swyngedouw (2003, 2005) supplements the above analysis by introducing the importance of scale and space towards the (re) production of economic and social relations. Indeed, scale matters as social relations are constantly being rescaled and new dynamic schemes replace the old ones (Peck 2002). The transition from Fordism to post Fordism-neoliberal regimes reveals a total upward and downward rescaling of power relations which in turn leads to the emergence of new spatial forms of exploitation, disempowerment and oppression (Swyngedouw 2005).

1.3.3. From Fordism-Keynesian to post Fordism-Neoliberal regimes

During the *Fordism* era labour process was taking place on a mass production basis and the standardization of labour practices was prominent (Jessop 2002). The combination of mass production and mass consumption was the cornerstone for further capital accumulation. Central to that process and the assurance of further accumulation was the role of the *Keynesian Welfare National State* (KWNS) towards the implementation of demand-side interventions and the protection of full employment and welfare rights for citizens in the national level (ibid). The passage to *Post Fordism* regimes reshaped the process of accumulation[4] in favour of a new era of *flexible accumulation* (Harvey 1989). The emergence of the *Workfare, Neoliberal* state signifies the re-articulation of public policies towards the diminishment of social wages and the further underestimation of welfare rights (Jessop 2002). While

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[4] Again by the term regime of accumulation, I refer to the stabilization "of both the conditions of production and the conditions of reproduction of wage earners" that until that time had the form of mass production and mass consumption and the presence of the KWNS (Harvey 1989: 121).

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a variety of definitions of the term neoliberalism have been suggested, this paper will use the Marxist term suggested by Jessop (2002: 260). Thus, *Neoliberalism*:

> [i]s concerned to promote a market-led transition towards the new economic and social regime. For the public sector, it involves privatization, liberalization and the imposition of commercial criteria in the residual sector; for the private sector, it involves deregulation and a new legal and political framework to provide passive support for market solutions.

1.4. Purpose and research questions

As outline above, there has been little discussion and research about the working conditions of migrant workers in the garment industry of Athens. Therefore, the first aim of this thesis is to investigate these working conditions. In addition, I draw upon Marxist accounts of political economy in an attempt to understand how changes pertaining to the new flexible regime of accumulation and the emergence of the Neoliberal state have transformed the apparel industry. Finally, an attempt is made to draw implications for MIC, especially those of Latin America. Consequently, in this thesis I attempt to answer the following questions:

Table 1.1.: Research Questions

Primary Question
How have changes in the global political economy contributed towards the transformation of the Greek garment industry?
Sub-Questions
a) What are the implications for migrant workers with regard to payments, working conditions and welfare in these small contracting firms?
b) After all, how does the contracting scheme work? How does this system affect

choices made by workers, contractors and manufacturers/retailers?

c)[5] How has garment industry changed in Greece since 1985 in relation to trade, competition, production processes as well as employment?

1.4. Outline of the Thesis

This thesis begins by laying out the research design (chapter 2) of this study and its limitations. It will then go on to introduce the theoretical background (chapter 3) and the propositions upon which observed phenomena and outcomes will be analysed. Chapter 4 describes the methods of selection and other concerns regarding methodological issues. Chapter 5 constitutes the main analytical part where I focus on the working conditions in the garment industry and I discuss changes tied to the political economy of Greece in an attempt to trace the emergence of sweatshops over the years. Finally, chapter 6 aims to draw further conclusions for MIC of Latin America.

2. Design of the study

2.1. The research design

In this chapter I briefly summarise the principles of my research design. When I tried to formulate my research i remembered Yin's (2009: 52) words that "the complete research design embodies a "theory" of what is being studied". Both the Marxist political economy and the literature on sweatshops have targeted the transitional period from Fordism to post Fordism and the emergence of Neoliberalism as the main causes behind the resurgence of sweatshops. Consequently, an attempt was made to formulate a solid theoretical background that can interpret in the best way

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[5] The sub question c) has been adjusted to the context of Greece. Montero's (2011: 71) initial research question was "how has clothing industry changed in Argentina and in Italy since 1980 in relation to investment, trade, production processes and employment?"

outcomes, behaviors and phenomena in my case (Yin 2009). Rather than being merely a "background", the formulation of the theoretical propositions constituted the cornerstone of my research design.

For this study the case study research approach was used and semi-structured interviews were carried out coupled with multiple sources of evidence (primary and secondary). The research design has been influenced by Montero's (2011) research in Buenos Aires and Prato. Accordingly, I followed the principles of his research design as well as many questions from his questionnaires were adjusted to the context of Greece.

The main idea behind the case study research is that you "cover contextual conditions – believing that they might be highly pertinent to your phenomenon of study" (Creswell 2007: 76). As described in the background section, the Greek garment industry has undergone major changes during the last thirty years and the consequences of trade liberalisation have led the industry to a chronic meltdown. In addition, the de-industrialization of the economy and the emergence of neoliberal policies were suitable to the theoretical propositions of the transition. Meanwhile, "fittingness" or the ability to generalise conclusions and findings was also an important consideration (Gomm et al. 2009: 18). Accordingly, my next step was to generalise potential implications for MIC, particularly those of Latin America. The last thirty years an increasing number of MIC have adopted structural adjustments programmes in order to adjust their national economies in accordance with the global competition. The cases of Mexico and Argentina are indicative of these changes (Harvey 2007). Until the end of 1970s, import substitution and protective trade policies were going hand in hand with demand-led growth and the interventionist role of the state (Moreno et al. 2009).

Following my research questions, i chose a mixture of *exploratory* and *explanatory* approaches, answering the questions of "*what"* kind of working conditions are more favourable in these production units and "*why"* as well "*how*" these units are back (Yin 2009: 29). The selection of one case study was identified as the best approach in my attempt to deepen my analysis (Creswell 2007).

The unit and the time of analysis were then the biggest challenges for the viability of my research. The latter was solved by advocating several academic papers and books. Generally, the neoliberal transition in Greece follows a small delay in comparison with other developed countries. Using Marxian indicators over a period of fifty years, Maniatis (2005) showed that the neoliberal era started in 1985. Therefore, I chose this year as the starting point of Neoliberalism and I searched for data before 1985 and after 1960, which was the beginning of the industrial period in Greece. With regard to the unit of analysis, in the beginning I thought that a sectorial analysis could have answered my research questions.

At the same time, the political economy of scale influenced in a decisive way my research design. According to Peck (2002: 339) geography of scale "entails a reconstitution of scalar relationships and the reterritorialization of social processes". Indeed, sectorial analysis tends to be very static and unable to address complicated phenomena tied to the global economic and political level (Kaplinsky&Morris 2001). Therefore, by taking into consideration multiple scalar relations as these expressed in different units of analysis (individual, sectorial, national as well as global), my research undertook major changes. However, the collection of primary data took place on the micro individual and entrepreneurial level as well as the macro national level.

All my interviews were selected on the basis of my research questions. On the one hand, my initial goal was to investigate the working conditions in the garment sector. The majority of garment workers were male immigrants. Accordingly, qualitative semi structured interviews were carried out with them. On the other hand, my second goal was to understand and explain how changes pertaining to the broader political economy have transformed the national garment industry. As a consequence, I carried out interviews with all the involved parts such as retailers, manufactures, contractors, trade unionists and officials. Finally, native garment workers with extensive working experience were identified as key informants in my attempt to understand how working conditions have changed throughout the years. In all these cases, qualitative semi structured interviews were chosen in order to facilitate a more open and flexible discussion (Bryman 2008). Finally, I visited several

times different contracting manufacturers and I conducted direct observations during work hours. All my questionnaires are included in the appendix II.

2.2. Limitations

A main problem is the relative small size of the garment industry in Greece. However, my purpose was not to emphasise on quantitative changes, but rather was to show and understand how particular changes in the global level have affected the examined sector. Indeed, I attempted to illustrate qualitative changes and not absolute numbers, while at the same time I focused on the strategic responses of manufactures and retailers. One major limitation of this study is the complexity of discussing phenomena and the tendency towards the over simplification of observing outcomes and the causes behind them. It is, thus, obvious that Neoliberalism and the various changes in the global garment industry are non-linear phenomena and as a consequence there are several differentiations among the observed countries (Peck 2004). However, throughout this thesis I searched for interconnections and familiarities between different cases (ibid).

Another limitation of this thesis is that due to word limit constraints, a detailed account of the political and economic situation in the countries of Latin America was not possible. In contrast I paid particular attention to the formulation of a solid and coherent theoretical background (Yin 2009).

3. Theoretical background

The transition from Fordism-Keynesian to post Fordism-Neoliberal regimes reveals, first of all, changes in the *accumulation regime* characterising each of these periods (Harvey 1989: 122). It also has implications on the *modes of production* and *modes of political regulation* among others (Jessop 1997: 563). Drawing upon the literature of

sweatshops I attempt to identify the most important determinants, of this transition, that could have led the creation of these small units of production. I understand the transition described above as a new way of socio-economic organization that can be summarized by Harvey's notion of "*flexible accumulation*" (Harvey 1989: 147). The latter, "rests on flexibility with respect to labour processes, labour markets, products and patterns of consumption (…) the emergence of new ways of production, new markets (…) and new industrial ensembles in hitherto underdeveloped regions" (ibid: 147).

In order to limit the range and widen the depth of my analysis I critically examine changes in five broad categories. As I consequence I seek to address changes with regard to *the organization of production*, *the rearticulation of institutional apparatus*, *the function of labour markets* and *the deterioration of union power* as well as the ways upon which *garment industry is being organised* in response to the new globalised competition. In all of these cases, the priority is given to the functionalities of the neoliberal paradigm.

Before turning to the analytical part, as Peck (2004) argues it would have been quite naïve to suggest a monolithic approach of neoliberalism or the existence of a blue-print that guides governments' decisions. In contrast, neoliberalism takes different forms that result from different spatial-temporal environments. Nonetheless, between these national forms of neoliberalism there are "telling interconnections and family resemblances" (Peck 2004: 397). Indeed, in this part of my thesis I will try to shed additional light on the emergence of the neoliberal paradigm by using extensively examples and cases from developed and developing countries. The implementation of the neoliberal paradigm was far from being a linear equation towards pre-standardized results, but was rather was implemented by a trial and error effort in order to rearticulate local, national and regional/global institutions (Peck & Tickell 2002; Peck 2004).

3.1. From Fordism to Post Fordism: The search for flexibility

In the years following the Second World War (WWII), western countries and especially those of Europe and U.S.A. used to organize their modes of production under the regime of Fordism (Jessop 2002). In a similar way the principles of Fordism were followed in other countries of Latin America coupled with a state-led industrialization (Bertola & Ocampo 2012). Jessop (in Montero 2011: 37) "assures for Atlantic Fordism is also pertinent to developments in several peripheral countries as well". Jessop (2002: 55) and Harvey (1989: 130) describe this regime as "the golden era of capitalism" in which the KWNS had a prominent role. The KWNS was a particular form of the state whose role was to ensure mass production and full employment for its citizens towards increased consumption rates (Harvey 1989; Jessop 2002). In turn, mass production had been facilitated by public investments in infrastructure and the standardization of labour processes extensively based on economies of scale (ibid). The presence of big factories and manufactures was of vital importance for the organization of industrial production in mass assembly lines (ibid). Meanwhile, mass consumption was a consequence of sharp increases in the level of productivity and the level of real wages as well as the constant rising of living standards (ibid).

The two crises which occurred during the 1970s brought on the surface a mixture of high unemployment and high inflation rates which in turn led to a vicious circle of low growth rates for the majority of the developed and developing countries in Europe, U.S.A. and Latin America (Harvey 2007).

Harvey (2003) points out that the crisis was a result of the inherent contradictions of the capitalist mode of production and the sharp decline of profit rates. Consequently, the crisis revealed problems of rigidities tied to "*big labour, big capital, and big government* [my emphasis] (…) [that] undermine rather than secure capital accumulation*" (*Harvey 1989: 142*).*

The antidote to that crisis was first introduced by force in the case of Chile with the military coup against the elected president Allende (Harvey 2003). In the developed

world, the elections of Reagan and Thatcher in the U.S.A. and the U.K. respectively, as well as the appointment of Volcker as the senior central banker in Federal Reserve, signified a new turn in policies of dealing with the chronic stagflation problems (Harvey 2007). In countries of Latin America the interventions of the I.M.F. and the W.B. introduced a new era of structural adjustment programmes (ibid). A mixture of monetary deregulations, high taxes reductions for private companies, and the restructuring of labour markets highlighted the transitional period (ibid). The new paradigm was based on a flexible accumulation shift, highlighting the need to prioritise private ownership, the rule of law and the liberalisation of markets (ibid). The organization of firms on the basis of mass production and standardized processes was replaced by a new organizational scheme in which flexible specialization and smaller units of production have been prioritised (Harvey 1989).

3.2. Upwards and Downwards mobility: Institutional/Regulatory rescaling

Central to that shift was the importance of rescaling of the "modes of political regulation" (Jessop 2002). The latter incorporates a mixture of laws, regulations, institutions and so forth (Harvey 1989). I will draw upon the institutional/regulatory part and the shift from national to multinational, supranational and subnational level. Peck (2002: 341) points out that it is "almost impossible to theorize the passage of one regime to another without alteration in the form and scalings of the state." Every accumulative regime has its own distinct ways to regulate itself. In the era of Fordism the KWNS was the vanguard of protecting and regulating the economic and social reproduction. Classical Marxist theorists such as Gramsci and Poulantzas (in Jessop 2009: 42) identified the state as the fundamental apparatus towards "securing important economic and extra economic conditions for accumulation".

The passage to the workfare state was primarily identified by the emergence of a new "glocalized" world (Swyngedouw 2004). *Glocalization* of institutions implies that

social conflicts and tensions are constantly being rescaled in the supranational level, while the hollowing out of the national state contributes towards the reterritorialization of governance (Swyngedouw 2004). Beyond all the passage reveals in the best way the re-articulation of power relations once embedded in the national level and the upscaling of decision power to supranational level as well as the downscaling of risks and obligations to the local, individual level (Peck 2002). Jessop (2002) describes this rescaling as the *denationalization* of the state's apparatus which takes the form of a constant upward and downward mobility. Thus, decisions and regulations over the functions of financial and labour markets are being dispatched and upscaled from the state level to the supranational level (Jessop 2002). The current formation of the E.U. is an indicative example towards the above mentioned changes (ibid). The emergence of the "globalized state" has opposing implications for the local level as the latter is promoted as the main executive body of globalized decisions (Peck 2002). For example, decisions regarding the function of labour markets are made in the supranational level, whereas the regulatory framework is constantly downscaling towards the corporative or individual level (ibid). Both the white and green papers of the European Commission regarding the functionality of labour markets are among the most cited examples of this mobility (Jessop 2002).

On the other hand, there is a prominent *decentralization* of power which takes the form of think tanks, NGOs, private research institutions and so forth. This demassification of government functionalities in favour of governance, mobilizes new potentials for sharing ideas and know how between governmental and non-governmental bodies (ibid). Nonetheless, it has been "an effective way to protect key decisions from popular-democratic control and/or socialize risks of private capital" (Jessop 2002: 199). Parallel to these changes is the *internationalization* of policies with the emergence of global institutions such as the I.M.F. and the World Bank (ibid). These institutions emphasise on the regulatory framework of global competitiveness and structural adjustment programmes are prioritised in order to fasten the economic integration of weak national economies into the world economy**.**

In sum, the roll-back of the KWNS and the emergence of a new scalar apparatus signifies the emergence of a new era in which top down approach to policy decisions is prioritised and undisputed beliefs are subscribed as the antidote to local crises and social conflicts (Swyngedouw 2004). Indeed, as Swyngedouw (2004: 41) argues, it is many times the case that "the 'glocalisation' or territorial rescaling of institutional forms leads to more autocratic, undemocratic and authoritarian (quasi-)state apparatuses".

3.3. Labour markets: Flexible workforce

Labour markets are an indicative example of those institutional rescalings and the reterritorialization of power relations. While during the Keynesianism era, wages were seen as an active tool towards increases in the demand side, neoliberalism prioritised flexible wages as a crucial part of competitiveness (Jessop 1993). The search for flexibility was apparent after the oil crises of 1970s and problems pertaining to the high unemployment of that time were tied to real wage rigidities (ILO 2008a). Large companies had lost their ability to raise profits and the rate of surplus value [6]was worsening year by year while the rate of profit-wage ratio[7] was at the lowest level in many countries (Maniatis 2012). Profitability was then threatened by the presence of rigid real wages and various other restrictions tied to national labour institutions (ibid). The right of citizens to full time employment, the relative high real wages and the presence of strong unions were then targeted (Harvey 1989).

The reconstruction of labour markets in the following years would have taken the form of tow tier markets with an increasing demand for high skilled jobs due to the progress of globalisation and the spread of technology as well as a relevant decrease

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[6] Surplus value is the difference between the value created by workers and the real wage at the end of their work. This difference takes the form of profit for capitalists. The latter is the class that under the capitalist mode of production owns the means of production and purchase the labour power of workers (Abreu 2012:24). The rate of surplus value can be also seen as the level of exploitation for workers (Maniatis 2005).

[7] The profit-wage ratio (Π/W) is simply the ratio between profits (Π) and wages (W) (Maniatis 2005).

in demand for low skilled jobs (ILO 2008a). The right for forty hours per week jobs will be then contested and undermined by the extension of working hours beyond that time (Harvey 2003). Despite a relevant stabilisation of unemployment rates in developed countries by the mid of 1990s, several reforms in labour markets had resulted higher flexibility. As the ILO report on World Working Conditions (2008a) shows, the latter was usually expressed by the extensive usage of part time and temporal jobs which was believed to be the main antidote to high long term unemployment rates. Several reforms took place in the form of drastic cuts in unemployed benefits (see Table 3.1.).

Table 3.1. Changes in the unemployment benefit system 1994-2001

Country	Percentage of unemployed receiving benefits	
	1994	2001
Belgium	74.4	59.9
France	46.2	35.6
Germany	72.4	72.2
Ireland	72.4	52.4
Netherlands	48.3	18.3
Greece	12.1	13.9

Source: ILO 2008a

The withdrawal of the welfare state and the rescaling of labour market decisions was seen as a stimulating power towards a new regulative (or unregulative) labour market scheme which according to ILO (2008a: 160) "generated underemployment and insecurity for a substantial section of the workers".

The second target was the relatively high real wages that prevailed during the pre-crisis period. The emergence of the Washington Consensus institutions, namely the W.B. and the I.M.F., had led many countries, especially in Latin, to deregulate their labour markets by imposing strict structural adjustment programmes (Harvey 2003; 2007). Meanwhile, in the rest of the OECD countries the gap between productivity and real wages was rapidly increasing. Figure 3.1 illustrates the widening gap between productivity and real wages in OECD countries. It was the latter phenomenon that led prominent institutions such as the ILO (2008b: 1) to conclude that:

Employment growth has also occurred alongside **a redistribution of income away from labour**. In 51 out of 73 countries for which data are available, the share of wages in total income declined over the past two decades /…/ and **the gap in income inequality is also widening** [my emphasis].

Figure 3.1.: Gap between productivity and real wages – Average data from OECD countries.
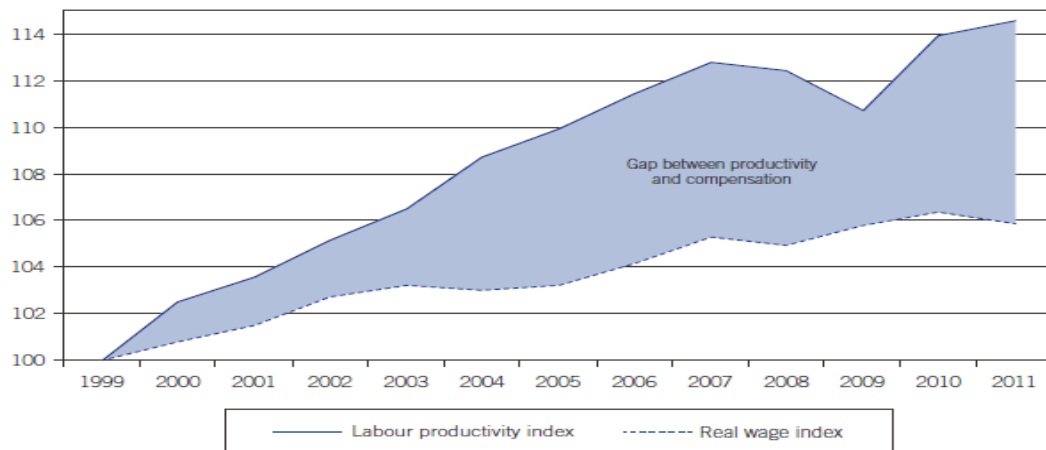
Source: ILO 2008b

Several attacks on strong unions were also launched in order to disempower the collective bargaining power of unions attained during the Fordism era (Harvey 2007). In Mexico, the election of President De La Madrid (1988-1992) signified a new attack on union power by the promotion of presidents' friends and acquaintances as the new union leaders (Harvey 2007). The cases of the U.S.A. and the U.K. under the leadership of Reagan and Thatcher highlight these changes in the developed world (Harvey 2007). Both the air traffic controllers union (PATCO) and the National Union of Mineworkers (M.U.M.) faced enormous pressures from the above mentioned governments that coupled with the decline in corporative taxes and the average real wage led to a rehabilitation of corporative profits (ibid; Maniatis 2012). The profit-wage ratio illustrates the redistribution of profits in favour of capital and increases in labour productivity, reflected in the rate of surplus value, were absorbed by capitalists (see figure 3.2.) (Maniatis 2012: 10). Despite this redistribution which in neoliberal economics leads to greater investments and advanced growth rates, the reality was an adverse impact in which "taxes and social transfers have generally not been able to reverse this raising trend *[of income inequality]*" (ILO 2008b: 127). Last

but not least, the World Work Report of ILO (2008b: 82) examines empirical data from 51 countries (among them Argentina, Mexico and Greece) between 1989 and 2005, showing the constant downsizing in union density and the decentralization in the average union bargaining power.

Figure 3.2.: Rate of surplus value and profit-wage ratio in the U.S.A. (1948-2007)
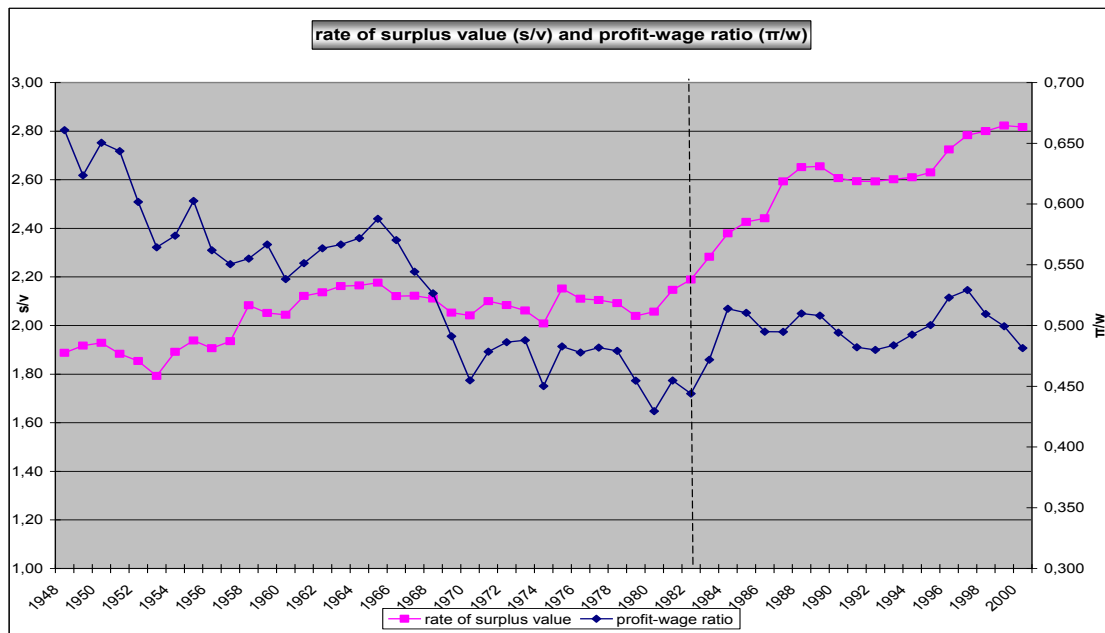
Source: Maniatis 2012

3.4. Neoliberal Fashion

3.4.1. The obsession with free market policies

Until 1995 the global trade on textile and garment products was regulated by bilateral agreements and the regulatory framework of Multifibre agreement (MFA) (ILO 2005). The MFA was in turn a progress of the trade in Cotton Textiles and Substitutes (LTA) which first launched in 1962 (ibid). Under the MFA, various quotas were in place aimed at protecting developed countries particularly from the emerging competition of textile and garment products in countries of Asia such as China, India, Bangladesh and so forth (ibid). However, the round of Uruguay in 1995 decided that within the next 10 years all quotas and trade barriers must be gradually

repealed (European Commission 2003). The implementation of the Agreement on Textiles and Clothing (ATC) was agreed to take place in three phases (1995, 1998, 2002), each of them phasing out the quotas imposed in different product categories (WTO 2012). The agreement was signed by all the member countries of WTO (ibid). Despite the fact that most of the member countries phased out all trade quotas in 2005, the E.U. signed a bilateral agreement with China for the exclusion of 7 products until 2008 (ILO 2000).

These changes enormously affected the ways in which the garment industry functions nowadays (ILO 2000; 2005). It has to be noted that the general trend was the deindustrialization of developed countries (including Argentina, Mexico and other countries of Latin America) and the emergence of developing countries as the new production leaders (ibid). As a consequence, between 1980 and 1998 Europe's output share in the global clothing production fell from 48 to 26 percent (ILO 2000: 6). Similar trends were seen in exports and employment. Only in Europe, employment was reduced by 47 percent during the 1990s (ibid: 14). As a whole, the TCF industry in Europe lost more than 1 million employees during the last decade of the twentieth century (ibid: 21). In contrast, the Asian countries especially those of China, India and Bangladesh were the big winners, utilising their competitive advantages as low wage countries (ibid).

In the case of Mexico, the NAFTA agreement was signed (1 January of 1994) by Mexico, the U.S.A. and Canada with the aim to phase out trade barriers and other restrictions (Moreno et al. 2005). The result was the further pauperization of working conditions for the garment industry and the emergence of maquiladoras aimed at processing raw materials and exporting garments for American-based companies (Delgado & Cypher 2007). Meanwhile, Montero (2011: 136) maintains that "[g]arment workers in Argentina are amongst the most affected by the political and economic changes". These policies contributed towards the deindustrialization of economy and the further devaluation of welfare rights (ibid).

3.4.2. Divide and Conquer: The (sub) contracting system

Meanwhile, these changes took place within a total transformation of the apparel industry from producer-driven to buyer-driven (Montero 2011). That led to a shift of power between manufacturers and retailers with the latters gaining increasingly negotiation power over the former (ibid). It was this backward vertical integration that enhanced the power of retailers (Ross 1997). In other cases, manufacturers responded to this squeeze by a forward vertical integration, opening new retail stores (Bonacich & Appelbaum 2003). The crisis also revealed problems of rigidities in penetrating new markets and opening new ways of consumption. As a result, new fashion collections were introduced in which small batches of products were being send to small and flexible (sub) contractors.

I will now turn to analyse the particular changes which occurred for each of the following categories:

Manufacturers/Retailers

The creation of a two-tier labour market of standardized and unstandardized clothes led many companies from the latter group to adapt flexible strategies. The creation of the "fast fashion" or "pronto moda" logic was primarily based on the introduction of many collections within the year and the fast renewal of them (IOBE 2011). Fashion trends are of major importance in this business model, while particular emphasis is placed on the relatively cheap prices and the average quality of producing garments (ibid). In general, small batches are produced while small niche markets are targeted. On the other hand, consumers buy on a "buy now or you lose it" basis, knowing that they might not find the same garment again (Ferdows et al. 2004; Montero 2011: 66). The leaders in this market are companies such as ZARA, H&M, and earlier Benetton (Ferdows et al. 2004).

Whether adopting or not the logic of fast fashion, garment companies[8] organise their production on a (sub) contracting basis. The extensive usage of the (sub) contracting system offers great flexibility to manufacturers and retailers and renders them able to better control their stocks, while they avoid the existence of strong labour unions (Bonacich & Appelbaum 2003; Green 1997). The overall downsizing of risks and decisions provides the necessary flexibility needed to customize their production according to their needs (ibid).

Contractors

On the other hand, the intensive competition and the extensive presence of many small to medium size contracting companies lead contractors to a decision of "take it or leave it" (Bonacich & Appelbaum 2003:148). In Paris, Los Angeles, New York, Buenos Aires and Tuscany almost all the garment firms tend to outsource their production to small (sub) contracting shops (Bonacich & Appelbaum 2003; Green 1997; Montero 2011). For example, in the garment industry of Buenos Aires more than 75 percent of the total output is produced by small and medium contracting firms (Montero 2011: 94). It is estimated that close to 15.000 contracting firms operate nowadays in Buenos Aires (ibid). The ethnic division of roles within the industry is another interesting part. According to Bonacich and Appelbaum (2003) most of the contractors in the Los Angeles garment industry are Asian, mainly Koreans. Similarities can be found in other industries of the world such as those of Tuscany with the domination of Chinese or Buenos Aires with the presence of Bolivians (Montero 2011; Wu&Sheehan 2011). It is, however, this ethnic division of roles that deliberately undermines the real exploiters in the productive chain. These are the manufacturers and retailers who monopolize the power in the industry (Montero 2011).

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[8] In the following chapters (especially in my analysis) I divide the women garment industry into two broad categories: a) The fast fashion industry with companies that prioritise reasonable prices and quality of garments and b) the pret-a-porter high fashion industry whose companies prioritise higher prices, high quality and customized services.

Other important characteristics of these units of production are their relatively small size and their spatial distribution. Flexibility and proximity are again important elements upon which manufacturers and retailers pick up their suppliers. In the garment industry of Los Angeles approximately 70 percent of contracting shops occupy less than 20 employees (ibid). Manufacturers, on the other hand, require quick responses and time pressure is continuous (Bonacich and Appelbaum 2003). Contractors have deadlines of few days or weeks to prepare and give back their production. In this sense, the proximity of those units is considered as an important fact (ibid).

Migrant Workers

As Green (1997: 284) points out "flexibility of production explains much about the composition of the labour force". Bonacich and Appelbaum (2003) note that the 90 per cent of labour in the garment industry of Los Angeles is constituted by immigrants, mainly Latinos. Similar phenomena have been described by Palpacuer (in Soyer 2005), this time in the garment shops of New York. Green (1997: 214) argues that 1 out of 2 garment workers in Paris is immigrant, showing that the labour engaged in these activities are either women or undocumented male immigrants.

Moreover, the labour demand for immigrant workers creates a new segment in which certain demands need to be met. *Working conditions* have seen a downward path. Many times workers are found behind locked doors and dirty basements (Bonacich & Appelbaum 2003). They usually get a stipend for *wage* and get paid only when needed by the contractors (ibid). In his PhD study on the working conditions of five different migrant categories in Athens, Fouskas (2010, 2012) showed that the average hourly wage for migrant workers was approximately 3 euros while the average working hours varied between 10 to 15. In most of the cases workers were found without health insurance and additional hours were not paid to workers (ibid).

In sum, the emerging sweatshops tend to hire immigrants with "*no experiences with unions, submissiveness, dexterity, sewing experience, readiness to work unsocial hours, acceptance of very low wages* [my emphasis] etc." (Morokvasic 1986: 451).

4. Methodology

4.1. Methods of Selection

The fieldwork took place during the period of January to the end of March (a total period of 3 months). In total, 40 semi-structured interviews were conducted with migrant garment workers, native garment workers, manufacturers, retailers, contractors, trade unionists and officials. A detailed account is given in the following table. In addition, the full interview list is included in the appendix I.

Table 4.1.: Conducted Interviews

Category	Number
Migrant Garment Workers	18
Native Garment Workers	6
Manufacturers/Retailers	7
Contractors	5
Trade Unionists	2
Officials	2
Total	40

The data collection took place in the metropolitan area of Athens situated in central Greece (Figure 4.1.). In sum, in my attempt to answer the research questions i followed a mixed method approach with semi structured qualitative interviews and a literature review in order to supplement my findings in the field. I triangulated my data by repeating similar questions to different groups of participants and by using multiple sources of evidence as a way to ensure the reliability of the gathering data (Yin 2009). In this way, I also searched for data in public articles and newspapers, official reports, sectorial reports and records as well as official statistical studies. A detailed account is given in the table 4.2.

Figure 4.1: The city of Athens
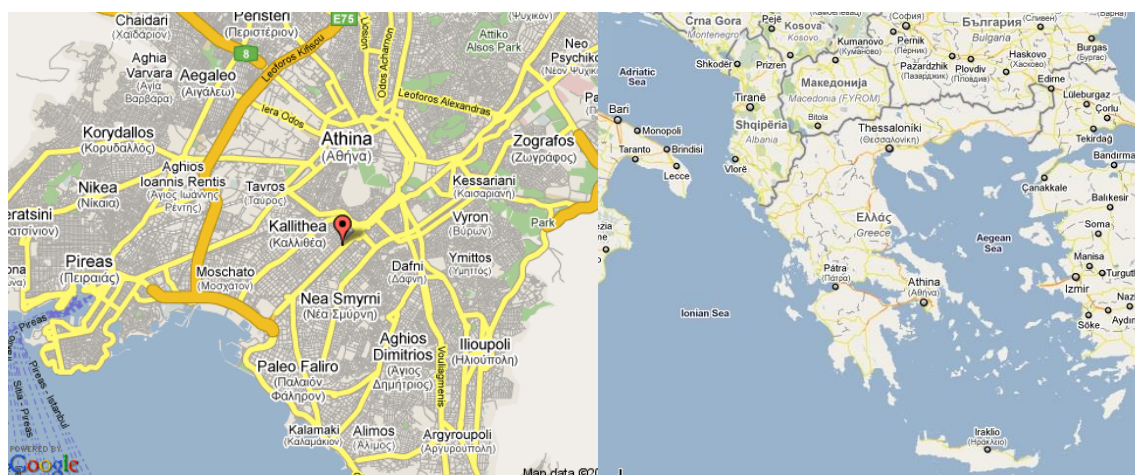
Source: *Google Maps*

The literature review process was divided into two periods namely as the pre-fieldwork and the fieldwork. During the former, literature was searched further for relevant publications on the (re) emergence of sweatshops. In addition, i searched for theories related to the Marxist political economy. During the latter period, I spend several hours in the national libraries of Athens looking for books, reports and special editions on the political and economic situation in Greece during the period 1960-2013. I kept notes of dozens of books and reports (see Table 4.2.) Moreover, I gathered data from private research companies in an attempt to understand better the changes occurred in the garment sector.

The snowball approach was used as the main sampling method in my qualitative research especially with regard to migrant and native workers as well as contractors. As Mack et al. (2005:6) point out the snowball method is the most appropriate in cases of "hidden populations, that is, groups not easily accessible to researchers through other sampling strategies". As I have already mentioned, the contracting system in Athens usually work on a semi-formal basis. Approaching these small manufactures and talk with tailors and contractors was one of the biggest challenges faced during the fieldwork.

It was decided that the best tactic to adopt for this investigation was to identify the main gate-keepers, who at a later stage will be used as the connection link with migrant workers and contractors (Bryman 2008). Having this in mind, I identified the

main cultural and working associations of immigrants in Athens. Thus, I looked for community representatives and I visited several times the Bangladeshi Immigrant Workers' Union of Greece (BIWUG) as well as the Bangladeshi Community in Greece. In accordance, I was also informed that the Hellenic-Pakistan Community would help me finding garment workers and contractors. Throughout the fieldwork I spent extensive time with the presidents and representatives of these communities and unions in an attempt to establish the right connections and build relations of mutual trustiness (Bryman 2008; Mack et al. 2005).

In those unions i met Ozman and Alam who later became my translators (from Bengali and Urdu to Greek). One important consideration was my relationship with the translators and the assurance that the meaning of my questions will not be distorted. In the beginning, I had several informal meetings with them and I clarified any question with regard to the purpose of my research and the context of the questionnaires (Mack et al. 2005). All the interviews with migrant workers were conducted with the presence of one of my translators and were carried out either in Bengali (language of Bangladesh) or Urdu (language of Pakistan). Many interviews were carried out in the premises of BIWUG in Athens and the rest in the small contracting firms that i visited. All the participants expressed their willingness to participate in my research. I suspect that was due to the presence of my translators who were compatriots with the interviewees. Contractors were also interviewed on the basis of garment workers interviews. The only difference was that all the interviewed contractors knew Greek as they have been living in Greece for several years.

The contact with manufacturers and retailers was established by business lists that I found in sectorial reports (ICAP 2011). I targeted those manufacturers and retailers who have been producing women fabric garments, at least since 1980. The latter was of key importance in my attempt to understand how the garment sector has changed since 1980s in terms of production processes, competition and employment. Many of the directors of those companies were very busy and postponed our meetings. Others refused to take part in my research for the same reason. Trade unionists were identified through my initial connections with the

migrant communities which in many times had tied relations with trade unions. In turn, trade unionists suggested me available native workers and key officials from the labour ministry. Both native workers and officials were very willing to assist my research.

The total number of my interviews was influenced by time constraints and the relevant enough data that I gathered. I noticed that after a certain point, interviews were not generating any new knowledge.

4.2. Presenting Primary Sources

The duration of the interviews varied between 20 and 40 minutes. All the interviews were not recorded due to the sensitivity of the discussed topic. However, I kept notes of all my interviews and then I transcribed them to word documents.

Apart from garment workers and contractors, the interviews with manufacturers, officials and trade unionists took place in their corresponding offices. Moreover, interviews with native workers were conducted in their houses. The interviews listed above (apart from those with migrant tailors) were carried out in Greek which is my mother tongue. The places of observation were identified by my two translators and the trade unionists. I visited several times different contracting firms where I made direct observations or/and carried out interviews with the garment workers.

4.3. Analysis and Transcribing interviews

My analysis relies upon the theoretical propositions described above on the emergence of sweatshops (Yin 2009). In order to answer "why" and "how", I have followed a chronological sequence, aiming at tracing causes over the years (ibid). Thus, I first organized my data according to the theoretical propositions and my research questions. Likewise, I matched the questions of my interviews and all the other related sources of evidence with each of the themes described below (Table

4.3). In some cases i quoted the most important statements whereas in others I summarised the most important findings during my discussions.

The conducted interviews were transcribed within 24 hours to Word documents. At a later stage, I translated the word documents from Greek to English. In the following table I summarize the main theoretical propositions upon which I categorised my primary and secondary data.

Table 4.3: Matching primary and secondary data with theoretical propositions

Theoretical Propositions
Working conditions of migrant workers
Organization of the (sub) contracting scheme
a)Contractors
b)Manufacturers/Retailers
Main institutional shifts
Production processes
Working relations - Employment
Union power
Competition (external-internal)

4.4. Criticism of the Sources

The use of Internet as the main source of data has been frequently criticized for its contesting reliability (Yin 2009). Therefore, I focused more on alternative sources of evidence such as books, academic articles, sectorial reports and qualitative interviews-observations. The literature review on sweatshops and neoliberalism took into account distinguish scholars such as David Harvey, Bob Jessop, Bonacich and Appelbaum as well as well-known Greek scholars and researchers. Reports and sectorial analyses of garment industry in Greece were founded in private libraries of big multinational consultancies like ICAP.

Table 4.2.: Data collection protocol.

Source of Evidence	Collection methods	Purpose	Sources
Interviews	40 semi structured interviews	The main source of data.	Migrant and native garment workers, manufacturers, retailers, contractors, trade unionists and officials.
Literature Review	Review of the current literature on neoliberalism and garment sector in the Greek and global context	Constitutes part of the presentation of empirical data	Katsos and Ioannou (1986), Kazakos (2003), Katsouras (2004), Katsanevas (1996), Ksanthakis (1989), Mitropoulos (2008) Ioakeimoglou (1991, 1999), Karamesini (2005), Kouzis (2001, 2008), Lumperaki (1991, 1996, 2004), Maniatis (2005, 2012),
			Harvey (1989, 2001, 2003, 2005), Jessop (1993, 1997, 2002, 2009), Swyngedouw (2003, 2005), Peck (2002, 2004), Peck & Tickell (2002), ILO Reports (2000,2005, 2008a and 2008b)
			Bender&Greenwald (2003); Bonacic&Appelbaum (2000); Green (1997); Morokvasic (1986); Morokvasic et al. (1987); Phizacklea (1990), Ross (1997); Ross (2004), Montero (2011)
Archival	Multiple sources of statistics Maps of the places that I visited	Constitutes part of the presentation of empirical data	Hellenic Statistical Authority (EL.STAT.), Google Maps
Documentation	Articles in newspapers Official reports (progress, annual reports etc.) Sectorial Reports	Provide additional information	ICAP (2007; 2009, 2011) IOBE (1995, 2001, 2011) Annual reports of the Greek economy (National Institute of Labour)
Direct Observation	Observations made during the labour process	Covers things happening inside small manufacturers	
Other sources	Photos	Complementary role	

In some cases the interviews were carried out inside the garment firms and a few times they were carried out with the presence of supervisors. However, as can be seen in my questionnaires I tried to be flexible by asking garment workers to answer the same question twice (one for 2008 and one for 2013). Thus, I isolated the fact that garment workers were afraid of revealing harsh working conditions in front of their supervisors. In addition, this differentiation helped me isolating the impact of the current economic crisis on the working conditions. Moreover, trade unionists had a particular understanding of the situation in the garment sector, as they were members of the communist party in Greece. Triangulation was also used as a key strategy in "converging data" through multiple source of evidence (Yin 2009 125).

4.5. Reliability and Validity

Problems regarding validity might occur if the researcher misunderstands causal relationships and underestimate external factors that might have influenced or caused the observed outcomes and phenomena (Yin 2009:58; Bryman 2008:32). In the case of sweatshops there is an amount of economists and sociologists focusing on ethnic, gender and cultural attributes, linking the adverse working conditions and the emergence of sweatshops to the newly arrived (il) legal migrant workers (Bender & Greenwald 2003; Green 1997). It is also true that in the case of Greece as well as in many other countries, immigrants constitute a large part of the labour force. Likewise, ethnic tensions and conflicts might occur in those cases that Greek manufacturers choose to outsource their production to contracting firms mainly run by immigrants. However, in this thesis I challenge these arguments by focusing on the functionalities of the garment industry. Indeed, as Green (1997:432) highlights:

> The search for an inexpensive yet expansive labor source is a continuous one, from men to women, from natives to immigrants, from older immigrants to newer ones, to out-of-town and off-shore workers (…) **by shifting the focus from supply to demand** [my emphasis], from the supposedly inherent characteristics of women or immigrants to a better understanding of the industry, we can question the pertinence of explanations based on gender or ethnicity alone.

Multiple data triangulation techniques were also used in order to address more effectively problems related to validity (Yin 2009). Accordingly, throughout my paper and particularly in the analytical part I tried to understand occurring phenomena by interpreting multiple sources of evidence. In addition a case study protocol was designed in order to guide the selection of data during the fieldwork period and address problems regarding reliability (Creswell 2007).

4.6. Ethical Consideration

Central to the importance of qualitative research is the ethical behaviour of researchers. During my data collection process i tried to respect interviewees and other participants while at the same time ensure the avoidance of any risk related to the interview process (Bryman 2008). A particular emphasis was placed on the safety of meeting places and the confidentiality of discussions (Mack et al. 2005). Oral consent was asked in order to use parts of our discussions in my thesis and anonymity (Mack et al. 2005). Accordingly, I informed beforehand, usually during a phone call, my interviewees about the purpose of my research and the context of questionnaires (ibid). Nicknames were used instead of the real ones. All the participants were informed that they could withdraw from the interview at any time (Creswell 2008).

5. Thesis

5.1. Working conditions in the garment industry

All my interviewees were male tailors either Bangladeshi or Pakistani. They varied between the ages of 26 and 48. They have lived in Greece and worked in the garment industry for an average of 9 years. This shows relatively high experience in the garment sector. They have been chosen as the majority, apart from two, have some previous experience in sewing. Many Bangladeshi workers, for example, stayed

for certain periods in Pakistan where they learned how to sew and handle the sewing machine. Another interesting fact is the high ethnic division of labour in the garment industry. Most of the garment tailors work for supervisors and contractors of the same ethnicity, while manufactures and retailers are strictly native Greeks.

Upon arriving in Greece the first thing they do is look for other compatriots. During the first months they usually stay together in shared apartments and it is through these roommates and relatives that they find jobs in the garment sector. Word of mouth is the most important factor in their attempt to find a job. It is also common for migrant tailors to change jobs many times during their stay in Greece. For example, Hasan (2013) has worked for more than 30 contracting firms since he first came to Greece in 2000.

With regard to working patterns and payments all garment workers nowadays in Athens usually work on a daily wage basis. This implies that they get paid per hour. However, extra hours are not paid more, though the last collective agreement strictly states that every additional hour after the completion of the basic 8 hours must be compensated by an additional 50 percent fee (Kouzis 2001: 294). Five years ago (2008) the average daily wage was 3.5€ while the average monthly income was approximately 841€.

The economic downturn which has hit the Greek economy since 2009 as well as the austerity measures imposed by troika have been reflected in the sharp decline in real wages. Indeed, the average day wage per hour declined to 2.3€ while the average income per month dipped to a record low of 435€. In addition back in 2008 tailors used to work 10 to 12 hours per day (6 days per week) while in 2013 they average between 6 and 7 hours per day (4 days per week). Despite the fact that seasonality is an inherent characteristic of the garment industry with pick and quiet seasons, most of the garment workers worked an average of 8 months every year in 2008 while in 2013 they only worked 5 months on average. Meanwhile, interviews carried out with native garment workers showed that working and payment patterns as well as welfare conditions usually go hand in hand with those of migrant workers. Indeed, it is particularly in the last years in which jobs have usually been unpaid and in many

cases insurance has not been guaranteed while most of the agreements between employers and employees have been signed on an individual basis.

Despite their obvious usefulness, numbers tend to underestimate the extent of human exploitation in the industry. Tensions between supervisors and tailors are a daily phenomenon. Usually contractors are hidden and their position is covered by experienced former tailors who have become the new supervisors. Many times supervisors have bad reputations among the migrant workers especially for their rude manners. Samir (30 years) says that "Many times he is shouting at me in order to finish the production on time. He stresses me saying that "If you don't work fast enough, you will get out of here"". A recent trend is that contractors do not pay the agreed money, saying that manufacturers delay payments. Most of my interviewees highlighted this fact and the ways in which contractors constantly avoid payments. They usually pretend that they do not have money and urge workers to wait until the next month and so forth. Meanwhile, my interviews with contractors revealed similar problems as it is usually the manufactures who are responsible for late payments or uncovered checks (Abir 2013; Rajun 2013). The result is that many workers end up waiting months while they cannot cover their expenses and as a consequence ask for friendly loans. Rana (42 years) says that "I have not seen my boss for more than 3 months. Now he owes me 1700 euros". In other cases, contractors try to reassure tailors that payments will be delivered by paying them a tiny amount of 100 or 200 euros and then disappear (Arif 2013; Mohammad 2013; Nazir 2013). Paid leave, of course, has never been given to tailors. They usually work when they are needed during the year, irrespective of whether this is during national or religious holidays or even weekends.

Table 5.1.: The demographic data of garment workers/ Working patterns, Payments and Welfare.

				Personal Data						Working Pattern							
Date of Interview	Name	Age	Gender (M/F)	Ethnicity	Years in Greece	Residency Status	Manager's Ethnicity	Number of Workers	Previous Experience	Hours per day		Days per week		Months per year		Weekend /holidays work	
										2008	2013	2008	2013	2008	2013	2008	2013
10/2/13	Akash	29	M	Bangladesh	13	Valid card	Bangladesh	15	Yes	12	7-8	7	3-4	-	-	Yes	Yes
17/2/13	Sumon	26	M	Pakistan	6	Red Card	Greek	25	Yes	12	5-6	7	5	-	-	Yes	Yes
24/2/13	Zahir	48	M	Bangladesh	12	Valid card	Bangladesh	8	Yes	11-12	11-12	6	6	6	6	Yes	Yes
2/3/13	Rasel	37	M	Bangladesh	6	Not now	Egypt	6	Yes	10-12	5-12	6-7	2-3	-	-	Yes	Sometimes/Yes
2/3/13	Rana	42	M	Bangladesh	5	Red Card	Bangladesh	6	Yes	10-12	10-12	6	Varies	-	-	Yes	-
2/3/13	Shamin	31	M	Bangladesh	7	Red Card	Greek	12	Yes	11-12	5-6	7	3-4	9	5-6	Yes	Yes
10/3/13	Hasan	46	M	Bangladesh	14	Valid card	Greek	22	No	12	No	6-7	No	11	No	Yes	Yes
17/3/13	Mamun	34	M	Bangladesh	5	Pink Card	Bangladesh	6-7	Yes	10-12	8	6	3-4	9-10	5-6	No	No/Yes
20/3/13	Arif	32	M	Pakistan	12	Valid card	Pakistan	15-20	Yes	12	8-10	7	4-5	10	4-5	Yes	Sometimes/Yes
20/3/13	Rashed	32	M	Bangladesh	10	No	Pakistan	15-20	Yes	11-12	8-9	6	6	8-9	4-5	Yes	Sometimes/Yes
20/3/13	Adnan	34	M	Bangladesh	12	Valid card	Pakistan	6-7	Yes	8-12	6-8	6	5	6-7	3	Yes	Sometimes/Yes
20/3/13	Mishkata	36	M	Bangladesh	15	Valid card	Greek	7-8	Yes	8-12	5-8	6	3	8	5-6	Yes	Sometimes/Yes
20/3/13	Rajib	26	M	Bangladesh	8	No	Pakistan	7-8 (120)	Yes	12	6	6	3	6	Varies	Yes	Sometimes/Yes
21/3/13	Mohammad	32	M	Bangladesh	5	No	Bangladesh	6-7	Yes	12	10-12	6	6	8-9	6-7	Yes	Yes
24/3/13	Samir	30	M	Bangladesh	5	Red Card	Bangladesh	7-8	Yes	12-13	7-8	6	6	5-6	5-6	Yes	Yes
24/3/13	Nazir	30	M	Bangladesh	5	Red Card	Greek	5-6(15)	Yes	10-11	6-7	5-6	No	7-8	No	Yes	No
24/3/13	Omar	30	M	Bangladesh	14	Valid card	Bangladesh	6-7	No	10	6-7	6	3-4	9-10	5-6	Yes	Yes
24/3/13	Abdul	35	M	Bangladesh	12	Valid card	Syrian	10-12	Yes	10-11	5-6	6	4	9-10	5-6	Yes	No/Yes
	Average				9,2					11	7	6	4	8	5		

Table 5.1.: The demographic data of garment workers/ Working patterns, Payments and Welfare.

Personal Data			Payment								Welfare	
Date of Interview	Name	Age	Payment per hour (€)		Income per month (€)		Paid leave		Insurance		Illness leave	Member of Union
			2008	2013	2008	2013	2008	2013	2008	2013		
10/2/13	Akash	40	3,8	2,5	-	-	No	No	No	No	No	Yes
17/2/13	Sumon	26	4	2.2-2.5	1000-1200	400-500	No	No	No	No	No	Yes
24/2/13	Zahir	48	3,8	2.5	900	650	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes
2/3/13	Rasel	37	4	3,2	800-900	400-450	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes
2/3/13	Rana	42	3,3	2,2-2,5	700	600	No	No	No	Yes	No	No
2/3/13	Shamin	31	3,9	2,4-2,6	800-900	300-400	No	No	No	No	No	Yes
10/3/13	Hasan	46	3-4	No	800	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes
17/3/13	Mamun	34	2,6	2,5	800-900	400	No	No	No	No	No	Yes
20/3/13	Arif	32	4	2,5	1200	500-600	No	No	Yes	No	No	No
20/3/13	Rashed	32	3,5	2-2,5	800-900	400-450	No	No	No	No	No	No
20/3/13	Adnan	34	3,8	3	600-800	400-500	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	No
20/3/13	Mishkata	36	3-3,5	2-2,5	700-800	400-500	No	No	No	No	No	No
20/3/13	Rajib	26	3,2	2,7	700-800	400	No	No	No	No	No	No
21/3/13	Mohammad	32	2,5	2,7	800	500-600	No	No	No	No	No	No
24/3/13	Samir	30	3,5	3	600-700	500-600	No	No	No	No	No	No
24/3/13	Nazir	30	3	No	700-800	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes
24/3/13	Omar	30	3,6	2,5	800-900	Varies	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	No
24/3/13	Abdul	35	4	2,5	900-1000	500-600	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes
	Average		3,5	2,3	841	435						

If we now turn to *the welfare* of garment workers the situation is even worse. Most of the workers are without medical insurance even though the majority has the necessary resident permits. The Greek law requires that employers grant employees social security stamps as well as pay a relevant amount of money as the employer contributions (Kouzis 2008). However, employers do not follow the law and there are cases in which contractors have become very provocative. According to Sumon (26 years) his employer argues that "if you want health insurance, you should pay it by yourself". Similar cases have been reported in the Italian garment industry with the presence of Chinese tailors (Wu&Sheehan 2011). Other workers accuse employers of paying fake social security stamps (Arif 2013; Shamin 2013). According to the law, migrant workers are able to renew their residency permits only if they show their social security stamps (or alternatively pay the corresponding amount) and verify their relevant work experience in Greece (Maroukis 2010). This renders them even more vulnerable and further undermines their social life.

The *working environment* is also poor. Infrastructure, safety planning, ventilation, hygiene are words prohibited in these contracting firms. During my visits I noticed, among other things, that no safety exit or any form of ventilation system were in place. In contrast, these firms are usually situated in basements of old premises where the front door is covered by cardboard or white paint. In the beginning, I remember that I could not believe that behind those cartons, or better under them, migrant workers would be working in a small garment shop. Many interviewees emphasized the poor working conditions and the absence of fresh air, especially during the summer. There are cases in which tailors got sick and supervisors sent them home or just ignored them. However, health problems related to the adverse working conditions were the most serious accusations. Five garment workers (Adnan 2013; Mishkat 2013; Rajib 2013; Samir 2013; Shamin 2013) complained about lung problems and intense cough as well as chest pain while two others mentioned liver problems. In all these cases employers did not provide the necessary protective masks. The literature on health risks related to adverse working conditions in the garment industry shows that the limited oxygen and the prolonged repetition of the same activities can lead to several breathing and musculoskeletal problems (Saha

2010; Pun et al. 2004). In addition, the exposure to airborne contaminants and the absence of protective equipment (such as protective mask) has been linked to various respiratory problems (Eraso et al. 1997).

Safe conditions were also absent. Nazir (30 years) noticed that "If a fire occurred in this place, an escape would be impossible. There was only one exit and that was locked". Most of the visited firms locked their doors. One had a camera and the contractor with whom I had an appointment identified me within a short time (Abir 2013). When I asked Mohon (39 years) whether he had any kind of plan in case of emergency (fire, accident), his answer was astonishing: "We have the front door!".

In sum, insecurity, physical exhaustion, disrespectfulness and low self-esteem are among the main feelings that garment workers have regarding their daily life in these contracting firms. They constantly face derogatory comments about their work from supervisors and are threatened to be laid off if they do not finish on time. Many times workers and contractors or supervisors argue during work hours and there are other cases in which oral disputes trigger real physical fights.

5.2. The Contracting System: The key players

Contractors

My interviews with contractors revealed that all of them have been living in Greece for more than 15 years. In the beginning, they used to work as tailors and within the passage of years they became supervisors and a few of them contractors (Abir 2013; Mahmud 2013). A combination of connections and money are among the most crucial factors towards upward mobility in the hierarchical chain of the garment industry.

The contractors usually find a job in the contracting system through friends and relatives as indicated in the case of garment workers. Most of them had learned the work of sewing and pressing either in their countries of origin or in the countries through which they had passed during their journey to Europe.

They usually sew women's dresses, skirt tops, trousers, t-shirts, long sleeve shirts, bathing suits, jackets all women fashion sensitive garments. Their clients are medium-sized stores and brands as well as the largest national and international brands. Firms such as ZARA, BSB, Anna Breska, Attrativo, Online, Toi&Moi, and Paranoia outsource (or used to outsource) their production to these small contracting firms. The production goes as follows. Firstly, the designing and the cutting part of the products take place at manufacturers' premises. At a later stage the manufacturers sample their initial models and choose their contractors. At the same time, contractors visit different manufacturers and negotiate the final price of the garments. They usually get a good offer after extensive market research. Others prefer long time relations with certain manufacturers (Abir 2013; Mohon 2013). When the agreement is completed, manufacturers provide the parts of the garments to contractors, whose responsibility is the sewing, pressing and packing of them as well as the final delivering of these products to the manufacturers. The above process takes place within a few days as time is precious for these firms. The average size of these contracting firms is between 5 and 15 workers. However, fluctuations in demand drastically affect the above-mentioned number. It is usually during the peak times when they are able to employ up to 20 individuals while the rest of the year they are only able to employ between 4 to 8 workers. Five or ten years ago those numbers were double or even triple. Mahmud (2013), for example, used to supervise 24 workers but now only oversees 8. They all come from Pakistan or Bangladesh and while they have valid resident permits they do not possess Greek permanent citizenship.

The production time depends on the quality of garments and the work that needs to be done. In general contractors' answers corroborated those of manufacturers. For example, if they have to sew 200 garments this might be done within one day while production of up to 1000 garments requires approximately 5 to 6 days (Mahmud 2013). On the other hand, Abir (2013) remembers the time they used to sew 5 to 6 thousand garments per month. Nowadays they usually sew 2 to 3 thousand garments per month. It is also common nowadays that many small contracting firms work for about 10 or 15 days per month and then repair clothes (Tripon 2013).

Another important fact is the relations with manufacturers. Those who have constant relations with manufacturers tend to acquire more benefits from the relationship (Abir 2013; Mohon 2013). However, problems have occurred for all the contractors in recent years. Tripon (34 years) argues that

> Nowadays we are literally slaves. Even if we get paid 2 or 3 euros for a long sleeve shirt, it is possible to wait more than 3 months to get our money due to the fact that many checks are uncovered.

Other contractors (Mohon 2013) accuse manufacturers of taking advantage of them by threatening to outsource their production to other countries such as Albania or Bulgaria. According to Mohon (39 years) "in this way it pushes prices down". It is also common that manufacturers fool the contractors by giving them a tiny amount of the agreed money and owe them money for months. All contractors stressed that these tactics are not due to the ongoing economic crisis but they have been a common strategy for many years now. Finally racist attacks are rare but during the last years and with the increasing power of Golden Down (the right wing party) many citizens have expressed their anti-immigrant feelings. Abir (63 years) shows me an uncovered check of 5000 euros, saying that "They do not consider us as human beings, rather they treat us like animals. He [the manufacturer] is a racist. He says to me: "I don't want to see your face, get out of here [of his office]"".

Contractors and manufactures agreed on the advantages of the contracting system. Indeed, all contractors acknowledge that their competitive advantage or their strongest point is the relative good balance between price and quality as well as their quick response time to manufacturers' needs. An illustrative case was that of Mahmud (30 years) who mentioned that:

> We are doing a good job. When they first show us the sample [of the garment] we are able to sew it in the same way. Primarily we are very quick in our response time. We are also quite cheap. If the same manufacture goes to a Greek contractor he/she will get the double price.

Manufacturers/Retailers

The interviewees with manufacturers and retailers revealed that the women fashion industry is divided into two broad categories. On one hand, the fast fashion industry

(4 out of 7) with companies that prioritise reasonable prices and average quality of garments and the pret-a-porter high fashion industry with an emphasis on high prices, high quality and customized services. Flexibility in production (specialization), labour (avoid high costs and permanent labour) and quick response times were among the top priorities for manufacturers. But above all, the contracting system seems to give them the best excuse of what they are doing without actually doing it. Dimitris (55 years), the director of a leading fast fashion company, is a typical case of that logic. He argues that:

> If I were obliged to sew my production indoor, expenses would then be higher and employees would refuse to work extensive hours. In contrast, I require each batch of garments to be ready within one week and the contractor will do his best to deliver it within 3 days.

How the contractor can be so efficient, while his company (and others) is not, is an issue that does not seem to be a problem for him. When asked to explain why they think these small contracting firms dominate the garment industry their responses were shocking. According to Aggeliki (45 years) "the cost of labour is significant for manufacturers. Contracting firms work under different conditions. They [the contractors] are over their heads [of employees], telling them we must finish X [a certain amount of] garments today". Simos (42 years) goes even further by saying that "[i]f you are a contractor and you deliver the production on time, then I do not care whether you employ immigrants or not". Other manufacturers answered in a more nuanced way, attributing harsh working conditions to cultural habits of immigrants and the inability of the states' institutions to deal with these emerging phenomena. One unexpected finding that raises questions is that even the high end fashion companies with a clear emphasis on quality and personal services tend to prioritise quick response time and proximity to their suppliers (Maria 2013; Nikos 2013).

All my interviewees stated that they usually visit their suppliers. Thus, any excuse that they might not have seen or heard about the working conditions of these places is just another case of "business as usual". In many cases the companies I visited have been accused (from migrant workers) of constant violations with regards to payment, insurance and working conditions.

The production time for a batch of garments varies depending on the type of company. Both fast fashion companies and high fashion companies do not give more than 2 weeks to their contractors. Companies included in the second group usually give 1 week and in some cases 2 weeks if the production exceeds the ability of the contractors. On the other hand, companies that follow the fast fashion strategy (four out of seven) pay particular attention to just-in-time deliveries and quick responses. In general, the production must be delivered within 2 or 4 days, but in no case more than 6 days.

5.3. State's Response

Interviews with labour inspectors revealed that the state's response in most of the cases is weak. Despite the fact that informality and the black economy constitute approximately 30 percent of the annual GDP, most of the labour inspection departments (SEPE and EYPEA) are understaffed and inspections of working conditions are rare for the informal sector (Maroukis 2010; Nick 2013). Nick (2013) mentioned that his department (EYPEA) had only 15 to 20 investigators for inspecting the whole metropolitan area of Athens. Their attitude was narrow as they attributed all the problems related to sweatshops to the presence of high wages and taxes. Likewise, Marios (55 years) believed that "[o]nly with harsh punishments we will be able to tackle the phenomenon [of sweatshops]. Closing down these firms is the indicative solution". Both officials agreed that the production in these contracting firms has been increased during the last years and that in most of the cases these contracting firms work for the biggest companies in Greece.

In the remaining chapters I attempt to trace the emergence of these sweatshops over years, analysing the political and economic changes in Greece during the last 50 years. In every chapter I draw upon the theoretical propositions outlined in chapter 3 and I focus on five broad categories that contain changes with regard to institutions, production processes, competition, working relations and union power.

5.4. The Golden era of Greek Capitalism: (1960-1969), (1974-end of 1970s)

The decade of 1960s and the first part of 1970s, with a small break of for the military dictatorship during 1969-1974, were characterised by constant increases in productivity rates and real wages as well as a constant rise in GDP growth (7,3 percent annual growth) (Maniatis 2005:511). Meanwhile, profitability of Greek companies followed the same upward path (ibid). It was the time when Greece was rapidly transforming into an industrial country. Agriculture was being replaced by a growing manufacturing sector (Lymperaki 1991). Central to that growth was the role of the *Keynesian state* in allowing big capital to invest in an almost virgin market (Kazakos 2003). The main priorities of that time were the creation of the right economic environment through national protective policies, increased infrastructure and the protection of full employment for every citizen (Ksanthakis 1989). In the five years plan of 1960-1964 it clearly states that the government's role was to primarily focus on funding big industrial activity while supporting private investments (Kazakos 2003). Indeed, foreign private investments rose approximately 113 million dollars between 1955 and 1965 (ibid: 209). Unemployment rates were always below 6 percent (Maniatis 2012: 11).

The rapid industrialisation of the economy was based, among other things, on the rapidly growing textile and garment sectors (Table 5.2.). Indeed, by the end of 1970s 7 percent of labour force or close to 90.000 workers worked in the formal garment industry (Katsos and Ioannou 1986). The majority were women coming from rural areas to big cities in their attempt to find more lucrative employment (Maria 2013). According to Katsouras (2004) this extensive urbanization resulted in the unprecedented proletarianisation of female population. Athens, Thessaloniki and Patra were the main industrial cities at that time (Lymperaki 1996). However, many other semi-urban areas, particularly in North Greece, had a piece in the total garment production. During this period, employment in the sector constantly increased and small, informal and kinship-style manufactures were replaced by larger and more organized units of *production* (Katsouras 2004). As shown in Table

5.3., within 20 years employment in those big manufacturers rose by 24 percent (Lymperaki 1996: 227). It was during the 1970s when the Greek garment industry took advantage of the average low wages and produced massively for the national as well as foreign markets of Europe, such as Germany, France and Italy (ibid; Katsos and Ioannou 1986). Companies usually produced on a mass production basis and in most of the cases product lines consisted of very few designs (Maria 2013; Nikos 2013). Nikos (63 years), the director of one of the oldest fashion companies in Greece, remembers:

> At the beginning [1976] our factory was in Peristeri [an industrial area at that time]. More than 300 employees used to work there and the production unit was well organized. In addition, production was bigger than nowadays, though differentiation of the products was limited.

Table 5.2: Contribution (%) of garment sector to the total industrial output (P), Employment (E) and Investments (I).

Countries	1963			1973			1977		
	P	E	I	P	E	I	P	E	I
Greece	5,1	9	0,7	-	-	1,5	4,8	7,2	2,2
OECD (Europe)	3,5	5,7	1,3	2,5	4,9	1,1	2,2	4,4	0,9
OECD (Total)	3,4	5,5	1	2,6	5,2	1	2,4	5	0,7

Source: Katsos and Ioannou 1986

Table 5.3.: Employment (%) by the size of manufacture in the garment industry of Greece (1963-1983).

Number of Employees	Employment			
	1963	*1973*	*1977*	*1983*
	%(employees)			
1-9	80,8 (56583)	56,9 (40998)	44,5 (38872)	43 (42449)
10-49	13,4 (9383)	23,7 (17073)	28,3 (24743)	27,6 (27278)
>50	5,8 (4047)	19,4 (197591)	27,2 (23669)	29,4 (29038)
Total	100 (70013)	100 (72030)	100 (87284)	100 (98763)

Source: Lymperaki 1996

At that time indoor *production* was the rule, while many companies in the beginning of 1970s set up their operations as contractors of German manufacturers, utilising foreign capital from Western Germany (Katsouras 2004). During the period of 1970-1980 the output for ready to wear industry grew at an annual rate of 8.5 percent (Katsos and Ioannou 1986: 46). Most of the raw materials were provided by the Greek textile industry and thus imports were relatively low in volume and value (ibid). But the most important fact was the relative high competitiveness of Greek products, as a consequence of reduced costs rather than high quality and design, which was reflected in the increased annual pace of exports (Lymperaki 1996; Katsos and Ioannou 1986). Indeed, during the period of 1970 to 1975, exports grew at the annual rate of 65 percent (Katsos and Ioannou 1986: 50). For the whole period of 1960 to 1983 the ready to wear industry was one of the leading industries in terms of exports, growing approximately 43 percent every year while the corresponding rate for the whole manufacturing was 20 percent (Patsouratis 1985: 195). The outburst of the global crisis of 1970s did not seem to have any severe impact on the Greek garment industry as the latter was continuously taking advantage of the international labour division in favour of countries with low average wages (Katsouras 2004). All manufacturers stressed upon the relative ease of starting-up your own enterprise.

Soon after the fall of dictatorship (1974) that coincided with the outbreak of the global crisis of 1970s, the Greek economy underwent a smooth fall with regard to the annual growth rates of GDP (3,1 instead of 7,2) (Maniatis 2005). Orthodox economists saw that fall as the inability of the newly elected government of New Democracy (the conservative party) to reduce corporate taxes and support private investments (ibid). However, that fall needs to be understood as the starting point of the following crisis in which both indicators of real and net rate profits[9] peaked in 1974 and then plunged downward until neoliberal policies restore them again (ibid: 510-511).

Despite this fall, Maniatis (2012: 9) argues that the "successful *labor struggles* [my emphasis] and the need of the political system [after dictatorship] for legitimization"

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[9] Net Rate Profit: " the main determinant of investment and growth" (Maniatis 2005).

coupled with the legacy of earlier years led to higher wages and better *working conditions* for a large part of the society. According to Maria (2013), a native garment worker, from 1976 to 1982 *union power* had strengthened and wages as well as labour conditions were constantly getting better. Ioanna (55 years) supports Maria's view, pointing out that:

> When I started in 1972 I used to get paid well. I did not have any complain. We used to work 8 hours per day and 6 days per week. We all had insurance. My company was Aigaio [more than 300 workers] which even had dining rooms. Working conditions were very good.

However, working conditions were still harsh for a large part of labour force, particularly in the garment sector. During my interviews I understood that people used to work in relatively larger factories had better working conditions and treatment than those in smaller ones. Meanwhile, one of my interviewees pointed out that when she first found a job as tailor in a small manufacture she was only 15 (Georgia 51). The above mentioned difference can be explained by the strong presence of trade unions inside big factories and the relative easier organization of garment workers within those production units. The former national union leader (Dimos 63 years) in the textile and garment industry illustrates that point further: "Personally, I remember that the main union in Athens had 5000 members and more than 3000 members used to vote every year. In every major municipality of Athens there was a sub-union".

5.5. Stagnation and Transition: From the 1980s to the early 1990s

5.5.1. The Outbreak of Crisis

The capital-output rate or the ability of entrepreneurs to use less or more effectively the invested capitals rose during the period of 1960-1985 and coupled with a fall in surplus value and profit-wage ratio, as a direct consequence of the social struggles after the fall of dictatorship, led to further erosion of companies' profits (Ioakeimoglou 1999; Maniatis 2012). The new elected government of Pasok (1981-

1985), the social democratic party in Greece, had to deal with increasing inflation (24,5 percent), a decreasing GDP (-1,6 percent) and the emergence of high debts as well as the predicted downfall in competitiveness due to integration into the European Union and the consequent liberalisation of markets (Kazakos 2003: 307). Recession was then understood in terms of the chronic structural problems and the inability of national economy to be adjusted to the ongoing unification of Europe (Lymperaki 1996).

Nonetheless, as I argued before, the recession was the outcome of a classical capitalist crisis of over-accumulation (Ioakeimoglou 1999:71). The consequence of this over-accumulation was reflected in the sharp rise of heavily indebted companies, especially in the textile and garment sector (Ksanthakis 1989). Since the second part of 1970s loans increased from 69 to 77 percent (ibid). Classical Marxist theory would have assumed that one possible solution should be the devaluation of less efficient capital (Maniatis 2012). Indeed, there was a 20 percent increase in heavy debt companies and 95 companies were declared bankrupt (Ksanthakis 1989: 28). The socialist government of Pasok chose to bail out those bankrupted companies and take over their management. Among them were 35 textile and garment companies whose debts exceeded 32 percent of the overall debt and had more than 33.000 employees (ibid: 147).

Despite the four year socialist plan of Pasok towards the so called "socialisation of production modes", further integration into the E.U. and the rescaling of decisions had already changed the balance against the national welfare state. Indeed, the second term of Pasok (1985-1989) highlights several changes in the political agenda in favour of neoliberal reforms and policies (Lymperaki 1996). Stable prices, balance in foreign trade and tighter control over debts were among the top priorities for the next governments. Consequently, drastic cuts in money surplus and exchange rates took place during that period while labour costs decreased by 30 percent during the second part of 1980s (Babouras et al. 1990:54; Ioakeimoglou 1999:15).

Despite the fact that the Greek government postponed the liberalization of national markets until 1984, the beginning of 1985 found most companies unprotected from

external competition (Lymperaki 1996). The withdrawal of the states' and E.U.s' subsidies led to sharp declines in output ratios, exports and an opposite trend in imports (ibid). Interviews with native workers and trade unionists revealed that during that period the biggest factories, such as "Aigaio" or "Peiraiki Patraiki", collapsed and thousands lost their jobs. Outsourcing the labour intensive parts was then prioritised as a response to the ongoing crisis (Dimos 2013; Vasilis 2013). Indeed, manufactures (6 out of 7) pointed out that since 1985 *production* has taken place in contracting firms in Greece or abroad. Usually the bankrupted firms transferred their production to workers' homes. In her Phd thesis, Lymperaki 1996 (243) describes this trend as following: "In many streets [in Athens], every window hides a sewing machine and one invisible woman tailor", concluding that the majority of the garment companies used to operate out of private homes with home workers.

The crisis of 1970s and the subsequent changes in the global garment industry also influenced the Greek ready to wear industry especially that of women. It was only after 1980 when Greek women started to follow the trends of fashion and wear casual western clothes (George 2013).

5.5.2. The answer? (Neo) liberalize it!

The prolonged economic recession had devastating consequences for the socialist government. After one year of political turbulence, the conservative party of New Democracy won the elections of 1990, which signified a deepening of neoliberal policies (Maniatis 2012). In his inaugural speech as the new prime minister, Mitsotakis (in Kazakos: 464) gives the signal:

> The over-expansion of the public sector and extensive state interventionism that can be seen everywhere nowadays, not only did it not solve our problems but it created new ones (…) It has been proven globally that free market policies ensure better and cheaper products (…) Healthy competition is the best control.

The party of New Democracy would implement several programmes towards the privatization of national companies, the downsizing of public spending and the

further reduction of the public sector (ibid:460). Maniatis (2012:10) points out that real wages during 1990s were lower than those in the second part of 1970s. The continuing growth of private profits during the decade of 1990s was not enough to boost investments and restraints in real wages precipitated a further decline in competitiveness (Ioakeimoglou 1999).

Once again, flexibility was the subscribed antidote for dis-functionalities in labour market. Flexibility materialized in forms of work time, context of work and wages. Both laws 1892 and 1829 of 1990 established the legislative framework for part-time jobs and introduced flexible work during the weekends (Kouzis 2001). The most important change, however, was the looming degradation of national collective agreements in favour of entrepreneurial or even individual agreements (ibid). Informal and formal migration was another technique to keep the real wages down. During the first part of 1990s, a new massive migrant wave was still in progress, transforming the national labour market. According to Maroukis (2010) the high level of informality among the low skilled immigrants illustrates the need of Greek business and political elite for cheap labour and the further downsizing of real wages.

Union power downsized due to the relative de-industrialization of the economy and the sharp decline of big units of production (Katsanevas 1996). Dimos (63 years) remembers that after 1990-1992, when most of the big factories closed down, labour movement radically toned down as well. The collapse of the Soviet Union was another factor towards the legitimization of the neoliberal policies. As a result the demassification of labour movement was significant.

5.5.3. The emergence of sweatshops

A mixture of open market policies, the constant deterioration of working relations, the diminishment of union power, the high inflow of formal and informal migrant workers and the constant search for low cost labour transformed the garment industry. After the completion of the first part of 1990s, the industry was founded

again decentralized in small manufactures, regressing to a new outsourcing model concentrated in the main metropolitan areas. Interviews with union leaders and native garment workers confirmed my preliminary assumptions by saying that since 1990 outsourcing was the rule and production was realized in small to medium-size contracting firms. According to Maria (54 years) "the big outsourcing movement was then created and *new small and medium contracting firms mushroomed everywhere* [my emphasis]". The exact year of this emergence cannot be clearly stated, though it can be traced back to the end of 1980s and the first years of 1990s as shown in figure 4.1.

Figure 5.1. A summary of the major units of production in the garment sector after 1950.

Late 1950s
Pre-industrial manufacture

1960s and 1970s
Big factory

End of 1980s
Work at home

1990s -Now
Organization in small units
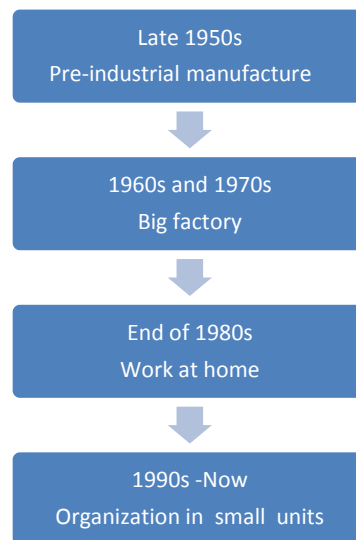
However, during my interviews I noticed that not all of the companies followed the same strategic path. The women ready to wear industry had changed in different ways in this new era. In the following section I give a detailed account of these changes, dividing the women ready to wear industry into two broad categories.

Fast Fashion Industry

Four out of seven companies follow a clear fast fashion strategy. According to Aggeliki (2013) fast fashion was first introduced in Greece in 1990. Zara was the leader and influenced the way upon which companies used to produce until that

time (George 2013). This strategy gave great flexibility to manufacturers and established a new direct connection with their final clients. The case of one of the leading fast fashion companies in Greece nowadays is indicative of this strategy. It is worth quoting the director's (George 50 years) words. His analysis is far better than any other book I have read on fast fashion so far:

> Our company has been affected completely from the imported garments. At the first stage they attack us on price. To be honest, it is quite difficult to be accustomed to a price war. Within the time we have changed our company towards a pronto moda [fast fashion] company. The main characteristic [of the fast fashion strategy] is that our competitors are not able to produce at the same pace as we do. Within 3 days we are able to finish our production. Youths, as you know, are aware (through MTV) of fashion trends and want to get dressed in a fashionable way, in short times and pay a relative small price.

The above mentioned companies started using the fast fashion strategy during 1990s when the agreement on textiles and clothing was in progress and cheap imports had already begun to dominate the national market. Following fashion trends and reacting to competitors' strategies are of key importance for the companies of this category. Quick response times and a highly organized supply chains have been prioritised as necessary preconditions for the successful implementation of the fast fashion strategy. Similarly, Simos (42 years) points out that "[t]he sooner you produce a garment batch, the easier it is for you [for your company] to become a winner".

Pret-a-porter high fashion industry

The rest of the companies prioritised a combination of high prices and quality as well as customized services as response to the crisis. Building a strong brand name was also a typical strategic decision. Thus, advertising expenses are high for the companies of this category. Since the second part of 1980s companies have always outsourced the production of garments to small and medium contracting firms. Two companies outsourced their production to the neighbor countries of Bulgaria and Turkey (Dimitris 2013; Nikos 2013). A mixture of high wages, extensive cuts in subsidies and the domination of imports rendered the cost of production unaffordable for most of the companies. One unexpected finding was that two of the

fashion companies mentioned quick response time and proximity as important criteria during the selection of suppliers/contractors (Maria 2013; Nikos 2013). This makes us suspicious of the ongoing changes in garment industry and the adaptation of fast fashion strategies from companies that usually prioritise high quality and high prices. In his study in Buenos Aires, Montero (2011) found that the economic crisis which hit Argentina in 2001 led many fashion companies to adapt fast fashion strategies by giving particular emphasis to lower prices and quality.

5.6. From Roll back to Roll out: Neoliberal Hegemony

In the following years the scene did not change radically as the constant hollowing out of the KWNS and the rescaling of national policies to the upward supranational-European level would be prioritized and solidified. The years before 2001 were of key importance towards the integration of national economy into the Eurozone and were followed by policies aimed at introducing strict inflation targets, higher revenue taxes and regulating further monetary policy (Kazakos 2003). The ten years plan (2001-2011) for the economic competitiveness of Balkan countries would subsidize those companies in the textile and garment sector willing to move their production to neighbor countries such as Bulgaria, FYROM and so forth (Dimos 2013; Kazakos 2003).

During the 1990s many garment companies chose the outsourcing of *production* to neighbor countries in order to avoid high labour costs. Vasilis (2013), the current garment union leader, points out that the biggest companies followed the above mentioned strategy. Meanwhile, these changes had as a consequence the re-territorialization of production and the emergence of a new spatial division of labour. Semi urban areas, particularly in north Greece, that used to produce garments for national and foreign markets were abandoned as many companies collapsed or chose to cross borders (Katsouras 2004). In many cases the closure of those companies was followed by the launching of new small contracting firms (ibid). In the following years, the collapse of the remaining big factories such as those of

Palco (600 workers, closed in 2002), Triumph (400 workers, closed in 2005) and Sex Form (600 workers, closed in 2006) was the final blow for the garment industry (Vasilis 2013; Dimos 2013). Table 4.5 illustrates the producing output as well as the imports and exports of garments in the women ready to wear industry for the period of 1995-2008.

Table 5.4.: Women ready to wear industry (1995-2008)

Years	Production*	Percentage Change	Imports*	Exports*
1995	37.500	-	7.500	15.000
1996	36.400		8.000	13.300
1997	35.500		9.800	13.500
1998	34.700	-12.31	11.500	13.700
1999	33.800		12.100	13.100
2000	33.100		12.700	12.900
2001	32.700		13.200	12.800
2002	32.300		14.500	13.000
2003	31.400		15.700	12.700
2004	30.000	-31.33	17.200	11.800
2005	28.200		19.100	10.700
2006	27.100		21.300	10.400
2007	26.000		22.700	9.800
2008	24.000		23.000	9.500

*Quantity in thousand pieces

Source: ICAP 2009

As can be seen from the table, output and exports have followed a downward path since 1995. As has been noted in the European and the Argentinian garment industries, the progressive implementation of the agreement on textiles and garments has enormously affected the absolute numbers of production and exports, particularly since 2000. The liberalization of markets in 2005 created a shock in the industry, downsizing further employment, production and exports (IOBE 2011; Dimos 2013). Soon after 2005, production was decreased by an annual pace of 5 percent. All manufacturers pointed out that with the passage of years the reliance on imported raw materials were constantly increasing. Meanwhile, new competitors and international brands had entered the national market, downsizing the power of

small and medium enterprises (IOBE 2011; Aggeliki 2013). Mergers and acquisitions then took place and new international retail stores have increased their power since then (ibid). Despite the fact that the garment industry is still fragmented and four retailers/manufactures control the 38 percent of the market share, there has been seen an increasing backward vertical integration which will be solidified in the following years (ICAP 2011; IOBE 2001).

The liberalisation of markets coincided with the preliminary signs of the following crisis. Consumer power was constantly decreasing and cheap imported garments flooded the national market (Aggeliki 2013; Maria 2013). More and more consumers then started buying cheap garments, aggravating further the internal competition (Tripon 2013). However, competition was not only intense for those companies following fast fashion strategies. Indeed, as one of my interviewees (Nikos 2013) argues, many Italian and French fashion companies usually use immigrants for the labour intensive parts, thus taking advantage of low wages while at the same time they sell their products as Italian or French.

Turning to *working relations*, the upscaling of labour policies to the European level continued with an increasing pace. The main changes tied to this rescaling were a series of legislative regulations that in many cases moved towards the flexibilisation and the corporatization of working agreements (Mitropoulos 2008). Interviews with native garment workers and union leaders revealed that working conditions were getting worse and jobs in the garment sector were scarce. Meanwhile, the outbreak of crisis in 2009 aggravated further the situation in the garment sector and led to further pauperization of working conditions. Vassiilis (45 years) argues that "until 2009, national and sectorial collective agreements used to be followed by many employers. Since then all the agreements have been cancelled." Finally, *union power* followed the same path and during my visits to trade union offices I noticed that few people were actually engaged in the national office.

6. Conclusion

"When that part of the world is growing, which it is, it becomes even more interesting to look at production in South America or Central America"

Karl-Johan Persson, CEO of H&M (FT 2013)

The de-industrialization of countries that once followed demand-side interventionist policies and a general protective economic environment in favour of neoliberal supply-side or laissez fair policies has altered in a decisive way the structure of the garment industry. The transition from Fordism to a flexible regime of accumulation should not be seen as an effort towards the contemplation of old times when the Keynesian Welfare State had a prominent role in national economies. In contrast, this thesis suggests that the ongoing proceedings in the global political economy and the implications of decisions made at the supranational level for the garment industry and its workers around the world requires further attention and problematization.

The current findings add to a growing body of literature on sweatshops and enhance our understanding of those particular factors that favour the emergence of new types of organized labour. This neo-form of organized labour is materializing in a political-economic environment that moves towards the gradual degradation of working conditions, the demassification of union power, the liberalisation of markets and the concentration of a large pool of legal and illegal immigrants willing to work for lower wages than those of natives. These features are coupled with the promotion of the (sub) contracting scheme, which is seen as the most efficient form of organization, as well as the adaptation, by both manufacturers and retailers, of new strategies that aim to curb rigidities tied to productive and consumption patterns.

The implications of this for the garment industry have been the gradual transformation into an industry characterized by advanced levels of hierarchy and authoritarianism. The emerging organizational structure can be parallelized with a pyramid, on the top of which few retailers and manufacturers decide over the distribution of work and control a large number of subordinate contractors.

Simultaneously, the last years have seen an increasing concentration of power in the hands of big multinational companies. Contractors as a result have limited decision power and are mainly focused on delivering batches of production and supervising the labour force. On the bottom of the pyramid, where most employees are situated, insecurity, uncertainty as well as disrespectfulness go hand in hand with precarious working conditions and a much more ambiguous future for migrant workers.

These conditions have occurred within a macro environment that seems to contribute rather than hinder the creation of different forms of vulnerability for garment workers. Nonetheless, exploitation cannot be attributed only to the functional problems of the garment industry. Indeed, the findings of this study suggest that other factors such as ethnicity might also be contributing towards advanced forms of vulnerability for migrant workers. A future study investigating ethnic and racial factors in the garment industry of Athens would be very interesting.

The empirical findings in this study enhance our understanding of the strategies followed by manufacturers and retailers especially with regard to a particular segment of the sector known as the fast fashion industry. The resultant prioritization of quick response times and proximity of production to the final markets have important implications for middle income countries particularly those of Latin America. A.T. Kearney (2012: 4), one of the global leading consulting firms, rates 5 Latin American countries at the top 10 of Global Retailing Development Index, concluding that the region of Latin America as a whole is one "of the *most attractive markets* in the Index when comparing country risk and market potential". Indeed, the ongoing reterritorialization of production renders many countries that once followed the principles of the Keynesian Welfare National State vulnerable to labour abuses. The empirical data for the city of Buenos Aires confirm these fears, showing that it is the combination of neoliberal policies and fashion strategies in the women's fashion industry that "led to the resurgence of [those] small inner-city workshops" favouring harsh working conditions (Montero 2011: 190). Future research should therefore concentrate on investigating other countries such as Mexico or Brazil so as to support or dismiss these findings and suggest several courses of action.

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APPENDIX I – INTERVIEWS

Nick name (Age)	Occupation	Place of Interview	Date of interview
Akash (46)	Migrant Worker	Contracting Firm	10/2/2013
Sumon (26)	Migrant Worker	BIWUG	17/2/2013
Zahir (48)	Migrant Worker	BIWUG	24/2/2013
Rasel (37)	Migrant Worker	BIWUG	2/3/2013
Rana (42)	Migrant Worker	BIWUG	2/3/2013
Shamin (31)	Migrant Worker	Contracting Firm	2/3/2013
Hasan (46)	Migrant Worker	BIWUG	10/3/2013
Mamun (34)	Migrant Worker	BIWUG	17/3/2013
Arif (32)	Migrant Worker	Contracting Firm	20/3/2013
Rashed (32)	Migrant Worker	Contracting Firm	20/3/2013
Adnan (34)	Migrant Worker	Contracting Firm	20/3/2013
Mishkat (36)	Migrant Worker	Contracting Firm	20/3/2013
Rajib (26)	Migrant Worker	Contracting Firm	20/3/2013
Mohammad (32)	Migrant Worker	BIWUG	21/3/2013
Samir (30)	Migrant Worker	BIWUG	24/3/2013
Nazir (30)	Migrant Worker	BIWUG	24/3/2013
Omar (30)	Migrant Worker	Contracting Firm	24/3/2013
Abdul (35)	Migrant Worker	Contracting Firm	24/3/2013
Abir (63)	Contractor	Contracting Firm	6/2/2013
Tripon (34)	Contractor	Contracting Firm	7/2/2013
Mohon (39)	Contractor	Contracting Firm	7/2/2013
Mahmud (30)	Contractor	Contracting Firm	12/2/2013
Imran (46)	Contractor	Contracting Firm	20/3/2013
Maria (40)	Manufacturer/Retailer	Office	28/2/2013
Nikos (63)	Manufacturer/Retailer	Office	29/3/2013/
George (50)	Manufacturer/Retailer	Office	21/3/2013
Dimitris (55)	Manufacturer/Retailer	Office	5/3/2013
Aggeliki (45)	Manufacturer/Retailer	Office	21/2/2013
Simos (42)	Manufacturer/Retailer	Office	20/3/2013
Giannis (33)	Manufacturer/Retailer	Office	15/3/2013
Maria (54)	Native Worker	Home	5/3/2013
Dimitra (52)	Native Worker	Home	5/3/2013
Ioanna (55)	Native Worker	Home	12/3/2013
Denia (52)	Native Worker	Home	15/3/013
Georgia (64)	Native Worker	Home	17/3/2013
Anna (50)	Native Worker	Home	28/3/2013
Dimos (65)	Trade Unionist	Office	15/1/2013
Vassilis (45)	Trade Unionist	Office	15/1/2013
Nick (53)	Inspector	Office	4/1/2013
Marios (55)	Inspector	Office	25/3/2013

APPENDIX II – QUESTIONNAIRES

Interview Questionnaire – Migrant Garment Workers

Personal Data

Name:
Age:
Ethnicity: Date:
Gender:
Years in Greece:
Produces clothing for (companies):
Manager:
Ethnicity of Manager:
Workers (Number):
Residency status:
Previous experience:

Questions

1. When did you start working in the garment sector?

2. How and why did you enter the garment sector?

3. How many hours a day do you usually work at present and at that time (5 years ago)?

4. How many days a week (and months per year) do you usually work at present and at that time (5 years ago)?

5. Do they pay you regularly (5 years ago)?

6. Which is your daily salary at present and which was 5 years ago?

7. Which is your monthly salary and which are your monthly expenses now and 5 years ago?

8. Do you have any insurance (now and 5 years ago)?

9. Do you usually take any break during the day (now and 5 years ago)?

10. Do you usually work during the weekends and holidays (now and 5 years ago)?

11. How would you describe the working conditions in the contracting firm (now and 5 years ago)?

12. Have you ever faced any health problem related to your work?

13. How would you describe your relations with your boss or/and supervisor (now and then)?

14. What kind of problems can be emerged during a working day (now and then)?

15. Have you ever worked at home?

16. In which ways do you claim your employment rights? Have you ever participated in any of the trade union organizations?

Interview Questionnaire – Native Garment Workers

Personal Data

Name:
Age: Date:
Gender:
Produces clothing for:
Manager:
Ethnicity of Manager:

Questions

1. When did you start working in the garment sector?

2. How and why did you enter the garment sector?

3. Was it difficult to find a job in the garment sector?

4. How where working conditions at that time (regarding payment, hours, premiums and infrastructure/health and safety)?

5. How have working conditions and the labour processes changed throughout the last 30 years? Can you identify specific policies/events that influenced them (directly or indirectly)?

6. How would you describe your working conditions 5 years ago (2008)?

7. How would you describe your working conditions at present?

8. Who (or what institutions) is/are responsible for the current working conditions in clothing manufacturing?

*Questions 1,2,3,4,8 were adjusted to the context of Greece. They were initially found in Montero's (2011) questionnaires.

Interview Questionnaire – Manufacturers / Retailers

Name:
Position: Date:
Year of settlement of the company:
Approximate yearly revenues and quantity of employees:

Questions

1. How was the company born (regarding the reasons to settle it, its initial size and the market segment it targeted)?

2. At that time, was the economic and political situation in the country very good, good, regular or bad for the competitiveness of the company?

3. How has the company changed since its formation regarding to employment and production processes?

4. Regarding the domestic market, is competition important? To what extent is imported clothing affecting the company?

5. How has competition changed its formation? Can you identify specific policies/events that influenced its performance (directly or indirectly)?

6. What strategies does the company adopt to maximise benefits and enhance its competitiveness?

7. Which are the main benefits from subcontracting part or whole of the companies' production?

8. How would you describe your relations with your suppliers (contractors)?

9. How have you selected those subcontractors? Which are the criteria?

10. How long, do you usually have for completing a regular order?

11. How have changes in fashion affected your production?

12. Who (or what institutions) is/are responsible for the conditions faced by workshops' owners like you?

13. We all know the existence of sweatshops in the city of Athens. Several brands are blamed for subcontracting their production to these. Is it a common practice in the sector? Why?

*Questions 1,2,3,4,5,12,13 were adjusted to the context of Greece. They were initially found in Montero's (2011) questionnaires.

Interview Questionnaire – Contractors

Personal Data

Name:

Age:

Ethnicity: Date:

Gender:

Produces clothing for:

Residency status:

Workers (Number):

Previous Experience:

Questions

1. When did you first start working as a tailor or entrepreneur in the garment sector?

2. How and why did you enter the sector?

3. In which part of the garment sector do you specialize your production? What kinds of garments do you produce?

4. Who are you clients (manufacturers)? Could you please let me know some manufacturers you have worked for the previous years?

5. How long, do you usually have for completing a regular order?

6. Which are your responsibilities regarding you client (manufacturer or retailer)?

7. How would you describe your relationship with the manufacturer/retailer/workers?

8. What do you think is your competitive advantage or the strongest point of your company?

9. How would you describe the conditions for garment subcontractors right now and five years ago? Is your company doing well?

10. Which kind of changes have influenced you company the most (the last 15years)? Can you identify specific policies/events that influenced them (directly or indirectly)?

11. Who (or what institutions) is/are responsible for the conditions faced by workshops' owners like you?

Working and Safe Conditions

14.   Do you keep your obligations with regard to wages and insurance?

15.   Have you planned any kind of emergency plan (evacuation of the building, fire box etc) in case of emergency (for example in case of a big fire) ?

*Questions 1,2,11 were adjusted to the context of Greece. They were initially found in Montero's (2011) questionnaires..

Interview Questionnaire – Union Leaders

Name:

Age:

Position: Date:

Questions

1. When did you start working in the garment sector?

2. How where working conditions at that time (regarding payment, hours, premiums and infrastructure/health and safety)?

3. How have working conditions and the labour processes changes throughout the last 30 years? Can you identify specific policies/events that influenced them (directly or indirectly)?

4. How have labour union power changed throughout the last 30 years?

5. How would you describe your working conditions 5 years ago (2008)?

6. How would you describe your working conditions at present?

7.   Who (or what institutions) is/are responsible for the current working conditions in clothing manufacturing?

8. Which are the main benefits from subcontracting part or whole of the companies' production?

9. How have changes in fashion affected production processes?

10. We all know the existence of sweatshops in the city of Athens. Several brands are blamed for subcontracting their production to these. Is it a common practice in the sector? Why?

11. What is the extent of these subcontracting activities?

*Questions 1-3,5,9 were adjusted to the context of Greece. They were initially found in Montero's (2011) questionnaires.

Interview Questionnaire – Officials

Personal Data

Name:
Age:
Position: Date:

Questions

1. How would you describe working conditions in the garment industry 5 years ago (2008)?
2. How would you describe working conditions in the garment industry at present?
3. Which are the main benefits from subcontracting part or whole of the companies' production?
4. We all know the existence of sweatshops in the city of Athens. Several brands are blamed for subcontracting their production to these. Is it a common practice in the sector? Why?
5. What is the extent of these activities?
6. How many informal workers there exist in the sector? How many of them are immigrants?
7. What does your department do regarding informality in the sector?
8. Does your department coordinate activities with similar state agencies in other jurisdictions?
9. Is the number of sweatshops diminishing?
10. Who (or what institutions) is/are responsible for the current working conditions in clothing manufacturing?

*Questions 2,4-10 were adjusted to the context of Greece. They were initially found in Montero's (2011) questionnaires.