From Artisans to Activists: Greek Shoemakers' Political Mobilization and Radicalization (1880s-1921)

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MA Thesis

MA History – Politics, Culture and National Identities

Leiden University

Academic Year 2022-2023

Supervisor: Dr Dennis Bos

Second Reader: Dr. J. Augusteijn

30-06-2023

Word Count: 19,768

Figure 1: Shoeworker – cobbler Mending Shoes on the pavement in the Kolwnaki-Lycabettus area (1910-1919)[1]

[1] Shoeworker-cobbler, *Shoeworker – cobbler Mending Shoes on the pavement in the Kolwnaki-Lycabettus area*, ERT Archive, Petros Poulidis Collection, 0000001556, Approximate date: 01/01/1910 – 31/12/1919, https://archive.ert.gr/1556/.

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Acknowledgements

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my supervisor, Dr Dennis Bos, for his constant support and guidance throughout the semester. His comments and constructive critique on my ideas and approach of the research subject were invaluable in completing it.

I am also deeply grateful to Dr Bernhard Rieger whose tutoring during the first semester led to the formulation of my initial idea through the fascinating discussions that we had in class. His genuine interest and enthusiasm about my project fueled my determination and decision to turn it into my MA Thesis.

I would also like to thank Kostas Paloukis for providing me with numerous suggestions of primary material and secondary literature and, most importantly, for always being available and willing to lend a helping hand.

Last but not least, I would like to thank my family and friends for their unwavering support during this fascinating journey.

Introduction

> *I am an anarchist! I have struck the capital, not the individuals. If it was about individuals, I would not have touched a hair on their head. To hell with the laws. The rich have sucked the sweat out of us poor people. I have done my sacred duty. I am -I repeat- an anarchist!*[2]

This was the ardent response of the shoemaker Dimitrios Matsalis to the reporters of the newspaper *Acropolis* on November 3rd, 1896, following his surrender and arrest by the authorities in the Greek city of Patra. Matsalis had assaulted Dionysios Fragopoulos and Andreas Kollas -both merchants by profession- stabbing the former to death and seriously wounding the latter. The events that unraveled would come to an almost tragedy-like climax just four days later, when the perpetrator reportedly took his own life in his cell by detonating a stick of dynamite, thus placing a capstone to his radical message.

According to Eric Hobsbawm, "the political radicalism of the 19th-century shoemaker is proverbial"[3] and the aforementioned paradigm emphatically confirms his claim. Evidently, the phenomenon is widely acknowledged and studied by scholars but is usually taken for granted, thus Hobsbawm's paper, "Political Shoemakers" is targeted toward providing an explanation. He is drawing numerous references from the admittedly rich British tradition on which there is ample biographical material.[4] Indeed, the paper goes into shoemakers' realities, traditions, and forms of political mobilization and radicalism in various countries including Great Britain, France, Germany, and Austria. Making a selection of countries that serve the aims and scope of his paper well is only logical and also necessary in order to construct a solid but at the same time realistic -in terms of magnitude- argumentative line. Nonetheless, one realizes that examples of Greek shoemakers and their culture -artisanal or political- are nowhere to be found, neither in Hobsbawm's paper nor in non-Greek historiography in general.

Testament to that are various articles on shoemaking in the United States and Canada. John Commons and Gregory Kealey heavily focus on the matter through the lens of modernization.

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[2] Kostas Galanopoulos, *Δημήτριος Μάτσαλης: Μια περίπτωση ατομικού τερορισμού στην Πάτρα του ύστερου 19ου αιώνα* [*Dimitrios Matsalis: A case of individual terrorism in Late 19th century Patras*], Vivliopelagos Publications, Athens, 2013, p. 44.

[3] E. J. Hobsbawm, Joan Wallach Scott, "Political shoemakers", *Past & Present*, Volume 89, No. 1, November 1980, p. 86.

[4] Ibid., p. 90.

They acknowledge the expansion of capitalism and the free market in particular and subsequently trace its effect on craftsmen.[5] In a slightly different approach, Paul Faler elaborates on the cultural friction that springs from the confrontation of the shoemakers' pre-capitalist and the new emerging industrial morality.[6] Finally, under that lens, Hobsbawm's article on labor aristocracy is also highly relevant in showcasing the feelings of pride and independence induced in craftsmen through the process of mastering their art.[7]

Concerning Greek historiography, studies of the working class and workers' movements have multiplied, providing original and nuanced analyses on related topics, especially for the period stretching from the late 19th century until the interwar years. Prominent examples were produced by Petros Pizanias who attempted to approach the working class "from below" by examining the conditions of the urban poor during the interwar years.[8] Two more recent endeavors were those of Antonis Liakos and Nikos Potamianos. Liakos investigated the relation between labor and politics in interwar Greece, touching mostly on institutional shifts and advancements in the form of work hours and wages, syndicalism, and social insurance. What is most interesting however for the scope of this paper is that he dedicates a chapter to tobacco workers, implying a tendency to research distinct occupational groups as organic parts of the working class as a whole.[9] This tendency is in line with non-Greek historiography, and Timothy Mitchell's discussion on coal miners is a prime example.[10] Potamianos described in great detail the shopkeepers and craftsmen of Athens (1880-1925) as a distinct class straddling the line between working class and petty bourgeoisie.[11] His book constantly references shoemakers in this particular context of belonging

[5] John Commons, "American Shoemakers, 1648-1895: A Sketch of Industrial Evolution", *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, Volume 24, No. 1, November 1909, pp. 39-84. and Gregory Kealey, "Artisans Respond to Industrialism: Shoemakers, Shoe Factories, and the Knights of St. Crispin in Toronto", *Historical Papers/Communications Historiques*, Volume 8, No. 1, 1973, p. 137-157.

[6] Paul Faler, "Cultural aspects of the industrial revolution: Lynn, Massachusetts, shoemakers and industrial morality, 1826–1860", *Labor History*, Volume 15, No. 3, pp. 367-394.

[7] E. J. Hobsbawm, "Artisan or Labor Aristocrat?", *The Economic History Review*, Volume 37, No. 3, August 1984, pp. 355-372.

[8] Petros Pizanias, *Οι Φτωχοί των Πόλεων: Η Τεχνογνωσία της Επιβίωσης στην Ελλάδα τον Μεσοπόλεμο* [*The Urban Poor: The Know-how of Survival in Interwar Greece*], Themelio Publications, Athens, 1993.

[9] Antonis Liakos, *Εργασία και Πολιτική στην Ελλάδα του Μεσοπολέμου: Το Διεθνές Γραφείο Εργασίας και η ανάδυση των κοινωνικών θεσμών* [*Labor and Politics in Interwar Greece: The International Labor Office and the emergence of social institutions*], Research and Education Foundation of the Commercial Bank of Greece, Athens, 1993.

[10] Timothy Mitchell, *Carbon Democracy: Political Power in the Age of Oil*, Verso, 2011.

[11] Nikos Potamianos, *Οι Νοικοκυραίοι: Μαγαζάτορες και Βιοτέχνες στην Αθήνα 1880-1925* [*Shopkeepers and craftsmen in Athens 1880-1925*], Crete University Press , Heraklion, 2016.

in a grey zone, thus facing both the prospect of social elevation and degradation. However, including a myriad of occupational groups and trying to cover a large time span, naturally deducts depth from the analysis of shoemakers in particular (the same goes for the rest of the groups). This approach leads to a generalizing rationale because every occupation is fitted into the framework of the shopkeepers and craftsmen category, about which the author articulates his final conclusions.

What accrues from engaging with the existing body of historiography -otherwise pioneering on studying other occupational groups or the working class in general- is a historiographical gap concerning Greek shoemakers. This paper will explore how Greek shoemakers and shoeworkers were mobilized and radicalized politically from the last third of the 19th century until 1921. The initial research question must be broken down into three sub-questions in order to be answered efficiently. Firstly, which were the various factors that led to their mobilization, secondly, in what different ways was this political momentum expressed, both individually and collectively and finally, to what extent their mobilization assumed a radical character. The terminology that will be used also requires some clarification, because in the time span that will be addressed, new terms describing shoe-craftsmen were created and older ones lost their traditional meaning. The term "shoemaker" will be used to mainly describe the master-shoemaker of the 19th century but also some of the shoe retailers of the 20th century. On the contrary, "shoeworkers" will be used for 20th century craftsmen employed and working under wage in workshops but not factories, as these were absent during the timespan discussed. Finally, there will not be a dedicated part of the research on cobblers as a separate category, but they will be mentioned as an indicator of identity formation, either connected with the "dishonorable parts of the profession"[12] or -during the early 20th century- with an emerging working class consciousness. The contribution of the paper aspires to be dual. On the one hand, it will provide Greek historiography on the working class with a comprehensive piece of research on the admittedly ignored while -almost provocatively to the historian- ubiquitous shoemaker. On the other hand, it will inform non-Greek historiography on Greek shoemakers' political mobilization in relation to the socioeconomic and political realities in the country. Those realities -as it will be argued- slightly differed from the corresponding

[12] E.P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class*, Vintage Books, New York, 1966, p. 251.

developments in western Europe and the United States both in timing and character, inducing useful nuancing.

In terms of methodology, the paper will be devised chronologically in order to demonstrate the gradual shifts in the character of the mobilization and the perceptions of the historical subjects facilitating it. Moreover, E. P. Thompson's notion of moral economy, which runs through "The History of The English Working Class" and is more systematically developed in his article on "The Moral Economy of the English Crowd in the Eighteenth Century"[13] will be used as a theoretical framework. The artisanal character of shoemakers and their responses to the development of capitalism makes Thompson's theory an invaluable analytical tool.

The selection of primary sources presented certain challenges mostly because of the specificity of the subject. Acquiring material from a single source type would not yield sufficient results neither in terms of quantity nor of quality/credibility. Hence, multiple kinds of sources were utilized in order to synthesize a comprehensive narrative on shoemakers out of the great magnitude of information concerning the relevant time span. In practice, this hurdle can actually be seen as an advantage because the theme can be analyzed under the scope of varied source types and thus viewed from many angles.

Specifically, the memoir of the shoemaker Georgios Makropoulos will be used.[14] As an egodocument it is prone to subjectivity but at the same time it provides a unique gateway into the profession's realities. Furthermore, the statute of the 1921 "Athens Shoeworkers Union", provided by the Archives of Contemporary Social History,[15] will be utilized. The Union was the direct successor of the 1904 "Athens and Piraeus Shoeworkers Brotherhood", the first non-mixed[16]

[13] E.P. Thompson, "The Moral Economy of the English Crowd in the Eighteenth Century", *Past & Present*, No. 50, February, 1971, pp. 76-136.

[14] Georgios Makropoulos, *Georgios Makropoulos Memoirs*, Located in Loukas Karliaftis Archive, Available by Kostas Paloukis, https://www.scribd.com/document/602330516/%CE%91%CE%A0%CE%9F%CE%9C%CE%9D%CE%97%CE%9C%CE%9F%CE%9D%CE%95%CE%A5%CE%9C%CE%91%CE%A4%CE%91-%CE%93%CE%95%CE%A9%CE%A1%CE%93%CE%99%CE%9F%CE%A3-%CE%9C%CE%91%CE%9A%CE%A1%CE%9F%CE%A0%CE%9F%CE%A5%CE%9B%CE%9F%CE%A3?fbclid=IwAR2SSZSjOEdqoRYA8Ab3zSLAaBOMHfPHm1jk5vFtOB3gP4BuZlbQRTR_h2s# .

[15] Athens Shoeworkers' Union, *Καταστατικόν Σωματείου Υποδηματεργατών Αθηνών* [*Statute of the Athens Shoeworkers Union*], Archives of Contemporary Social History (ASKI), EDA Archive, 374_001.001, https://askiarchives.eu/infopubl/374001/files/assets/basic-html/page-1.html#.

[16] (mean.) Having only workers and not employers as members with the right to elect and be elected on the organs of the Union.

shoemakers' union which constitutes a milestone in the development and expression of class consciousness. The Benakeios Library hosts highly relevant material as well, in the form of "The Athens Shoemakers' Guild Accountability Report of 1880-1881"[17], along with the "Summary of the 1920 Labor Inspection Report" conducted by the Ministry of National Economy.[18] In the same archive, an 1893 theatrical play was located which will be employed as an indicator of shoemakers' culture through its depiction in art.[19] Moreover, a large portion of the information is drawn from historical newspapers archived in digital form by the Hellenic Parliament Library.[20] Lastly, the "International correspondence of the Secretary of the International Union of Shoemakers", provided by the International Institute of Social History, will give further perspective through the comparison of Greek shoemaking, in terms of unionizing, with the situation in other European countries.[21] Apart from qualitative material, quantitative sources will be utilized. Firstly, the "1917 Athens and Piraeus Workers Census", and secondly the "General Population Censuses" provided by the Statistical Authority of Greece.[22]

The paper consists of three main chapters. The first chapter includes the analysis of the theoretical framework provided by Thompson and subsequent historiographic approaches in relation to Greek shoemakers and also a concise description of the economic and political conditions in the country in the form of a historical background. The second chapter, dealing with the 19th century, is split in three subsections. The first refers to the guilded character of the occupation and the changes that accrued gradually, the second includes the analysis of the aforementioned theatrical play as an

[17] Athens Shoemakers Guild, *Λογοδοσία της διοικούσης τα της συντεχνίας των υποδηματοποιών εφορίας (Από 15 Φεβρουαρίου 1880 - 30 Απριλίου 1881) : αναγνωσθείσα υπό του προέδρου Αντωνίου Βιδάλη : έτος πρώτον* [*Athens Shoemakers' Guild Accountability Report (February 15th 1880 – April 30th 1881): Read by the president Antonios Vidalis: first year*], Benakeios Library, Η-Π* 1881.245, https://opac.parliament.gr/cgi-bin/koha/opac-detail.pl?biblionumber=188023.

[18] Ministry of National Economy, Directorate of Labor and Social Welfare, Labor Inspectorate , *Περίληψις εκθέσεων του προσωπικού επιθεωρήσεως εργασίας επί της εφαρμογής των εργατικών νόμων κατά το έτος 1920* [*Summary of reports of the labor inspection staff on the application of labor laws in 1920*], Benakeios Library, Giannios Collection, https://opac.parliament.gr/cgi-bin/koha/opac-detail.pl?biblionumber=178691.

[19] Christos Christovasilis, *Ο ερωτόληπτος υποδηματοποιός : κωμωδία μονόπρακτος* [*The lovestruck shoemaker : comedy one-act play*], S. Thomopoulos (publ.), Benakeios Library, Η-Π* 1893.638, https://opac.parliament.gr/cgi-bin/koha/opac-ISBDdetail.pl?biblionumber=148398.

[20] https://library.parliament.gr/Portals/6/doc/microfilms_catalog2022s.pdf.

[21] International Boot and Shoe Operatives and Leather Workers, & International Union of Shoemakers, *International correspondence of the Secretary of the International Union of shoemakers,* International Institute of Social History, IISG ZO 16075, https://hdl.handle.net/10622/CA43453C-79CE-4815-BDA2-B777DA5B5CEB .

[22] Hellenic Statistical Authority, *Απογραφές Πληθυσμού – Κατοικιών: 1821-2021* [*Population - Housing Censuses: 1821-2021*], Piraeus, 2021, https://www.statistics.gr/el/census_priv_results_1821-2021.

indicator of moral economy manifestations and the third investigates the case of Dimitrios Matsalis as an example of the early radical shoemaker type. Finally, the third chapter -on the first twenty years of the 20th century- sheds light to the process of transcending from guilds to unions as proof of class conscience formation through the paradigm of the 1904 shoemakers strikes in Athens and is concluded with the emphatic example of the "Athens' Shoeworkers' Union Statute" of 1921.

Chapter 1

1.1. Historical Background

> *Until 1860 there was no significant (economic) activity in free Greece. From then on, however, chimneys began to smoke in some cities, indicating that capital was getting bolder and making attempts to create industrial enterprises in the country.*[23]

For long, the economic circumstances in the Greek nation-state, after its foundation in 1832, have been interpreted largely as the attempt -or even just the desire- to escape economic backwardness and achieve modernization. This view is not without justification, considering the desolation of the country after the ten-year-long War of Independence against the Ottoman Empire, its predominantly agrarian character, and hardly viable border stretch. A full-scale land reform, organized and coordinated by the government, to provide small farmers with lots that sufficed for their subsistence was completed only by 1917. This situation created a peculiar form of non-institutionalized serfdom as farmers were forced to be bound to the estates of large landowners, perpetuating the image of backwardness. Urbanization was a non-existent concept and it suffices to mention that Athens can be categorized as a big village numbering just above 41,000 inhabitants according to the 1861 census.[24] Affluent Greeks living in communities in Europe and the Balkans constantly subsidized their relatives in the Kingdom until the end of the 19th century, providing a

[23] Giannis Kordatos, *Ιστορία του Ελληνικού Εργατικού Κινήματος* [*History of the Greek Labor Movement*], Mpoukoumani Publications, Athens, 1972, p.12.
[24] Hellenic Statistical Authority, Απογραφές Πληθυσμού – Κατοικιών: 1821-2021 [Population - Housing Censuses: 1821-2021], Piraeus, 2021, pp. 32-33, https://www.statistics.gr/el/census_priv_results_1821-2021.

much-needed but irregular and situational source of revenue that could not make up for the lack of consistent economic development.[25]

It is no puzzle then, that this endemic stagnation perpetuated a society that resembled more its medieval and early modern counterparts than synchronic nation-states that were by then experiencing the second wave of the industrial revolution. Not only in practical but also in symbolic terms, modernization in the form of steam engines, factory units, and railroads were nowhere to be found in Greece. Accordingly, the sight of the "smoking chimneys" naturally attracted the full attention of their contemporaries but was also registered as a solid chronological beacon for Greece's baptism into modernity. The modernization project of prime minister Charilaos Trikoupis (1880s), combined with the raisin crisis (1890s),[26] turned a part of the agricultural workers toward the newly born industry, mining, shipping, and railways. Critical masses of workers began to gather in the first Greek industrial cities: Piraeus, Volos, Patras, Syros, and Lavrion. This trend intensified in the first two decades of the twentieth century, it was gradual and accompanied by the timid introduction of wage labor which however by no means constituted the norm of 19th-century work relations.[27]

Evidently, an economic shift was indeed facilitating in the country after the 1860s' irrespective of its fledgling character, inconsistency in areas of investment, and disturbingly slow pace. It must be noted that the term industry, when used in the chronological context of the paper, refers to light industry as the creation of heavy industry was further delayed. The most common industry sites included flour mills, tanneries, spinning mills, shipyards, forges, soap works, paint factories, and printing works. Analogous to this process was the mobilization of the working class that was being created and, on several occasions, responded radically to their novel industrial conditions. Various

[25] Kordatos, p. 9-10.
[26] In 1878 a fortuitous event caused the demand and consequently the price of raisins abroad to soar. French vineyards were attacked by phylloxera, with the result that French raisin production fell enormously. The immediate consequence of this was a rapid increase in the demand for Greek raisins and, at the same time, in their price, as French wine producers made up for their losses with Greek grapes. It was reported that Greek producers even destroyed other crops in order to substitute them with raisins. From the early 1890s onwards, however, the raisin crisis slowly began to manifest itself. The French managed to restore the vineyards from phylloxera and gradually began to yield fruit, while at the same time, Greek production had reached large quantities. The result was that a large part of the production remained unused in warehouses, while prices began to fall, affecting the whole of the predominantly agrarian Greek economy that was relying largely on raisin exports.
[27] Charis Athanasiadis, *Ιστορία και Συνδικάτα: Σωματεία και Ιστορία* [*History and Syndicates: Unions and History*], Institute of Labor G.S.E.E, Athens, 2022, p. 11-12.

instances of spontaneous strikes that sometimes took the form of violent riots, like the Lavrion miners' strikes of 1883, 1887, and 1896, confirm this fact.[28] This was accompanied by the creation of union-resembling organisms, the character, and functions of which will be elaborated on subsequently through the analysis of the shoemakers' political mobilization and radicalization.

That the idiosyncrasy of Greek industrialization affected the character of the working class, and its development cannot be denied. Nonetheless, insisting on a direct analogy between the two, equals ignoring the truly important peculiarities of this development and especially their impact. Understanding the creation processes of collective identities in general and class conscience in particular, goes far beyond setting temporal nodes for the emergence of industry or simply tracking the proletarianization of artisans and laborers. Two elements should be noted at this point, that are necessary to get a grasp of the connection between the aforementioned historical background and the topic of the paper. Firstly, the asynchronous economic development of Greece compared to the countries that Hobsbawm or Commons mention in their articles. This is vital for realizing that some of the realities experienced by shoemakers in Great Britain and the United States during the 18th or even the 17th century respectively, can still be traced in their Greek counterparts with an almost 100-year delay. Whereas, after 1880, the British "artisan philosopher" had already been transformed into either a factory worker or a retailer[29] increasingly or altogether disconnected from his craft, the Greek shoemaker was just beginning his radical run. Secondly, the qualities of the economic development, as stated before, that did not amount to comprehensive industrialization. This led to the co-existence of modern and pre-modern work relations, cultures, and moralities for a prolonged period of time and constitutes the context into which the research on shoemakers will be conducted.

The two aforementioned elements indicate that the complex economic, socio-political, and cultural landscape of Greece -even though it does not deem claims of Greek exceptionalism justifiable- constitutes a conundrum when it comes to the research strategy on a specific occupational group. In response, it is necessary to utilize a theoretical framework which corresponds to the characteristics of the group under investigation so that navigating among a mosaic of working-class constituents and their accruing cultures becomes feasible.

[28] Kordatos, pp. 35-36.
[29] Hobsbawm, Scott, p. 112.

1.2. Theoretical Framework

E.P. Thompson probably belongs to the chorus of historians whose prolific writing makes an introduction redundant. Not least because of his magnum opus -The Making of The English Working Class- he has contributed immensely to the enrichment of social and labor history and constitutes a point of reference to which contemporary research can always glimpse for inspiration. This is also the case for the current paper which will be looking into the political mobilization and radicalization of Greek shoemakers, a process that unravels alongside the creation of a class conscience. Thus, the interpretation of the term is vital, and Thompson's analysis is key in this aspect.

If one was to presuppose that class is just a "structure" or a "thing" that is defined mathematically according to the relation that a number of men have with the means of production[30], he would find himself bewildered at the sight of a shoemaker workshop in 19th and early 20th century Greece. The means of production would largely -if not entirely- correspond to those present during the time of Ottoman rule or even Byzantium. The shoemaker's tools were predominantly manual, hand or pedal-powered sewing machines barely count as an exception, and even they were introduced only after the turn of the century. The workplaces were typically small but numerous, hosting multiple craftsmen which combined with the aforementioned lack of mechanization accounted for an established labor-intensive mode of production. Accordingly, even references to "factories" well into the 1910s' should be scrutinized and interpreted simply as bigger workshops or workshops connected with a separate retail shop to which they provided a steady supply of shoes. In other words, the art of shoemaking remained almost untouched by technological innovation and seemed to be just a remnant bound to a previous era.

This view also appears to find a sort of organizational validation by the guilded character of the occupation because the hierarchical and multilayered structure that included masters and apprentices also survived as it will be analyzed later on. The logical conclusion from this superficial analysis would be that class consciousness could not be developed, especially in the context of an occupational group that constituted a monolith and did not correspond with modernity. Indeed, Thompson warns us that such a danger lies on both sides of the ideological

[30] Thompson, The Making of the English Working Class, pp. 9-10.

spectrum but is expressed in different terms. On the one hand, class conscience is imagined as what it ought to be in order to fit in a supposedly orthodox Marxist analysis even if the created image is contradicted by reality. On the other hand, it is denied altogether as an intellectual construct that obstructs the "harmonious co-existence" of groups that are just performing different "social roles" for the well-being of society as a whole.[31] For the time span that concerns this paper, the second take seems to be the dominant one and it was thoroughly backed and propagated. It is no coincidence that the guilds themselves put forward the notion of a preferred identity connected strictly with the occupation rather than class in general.[32]

However, such an interpretation would inevitably deduce research to a mechanistic procedure of description and deprive it of an analytical character. Class must be rather viewed as a "sum of relationships"[33] with an intensely dynamic potential and the development processes and expressions of class conscience as multifaceted as those relations' plethora of forms and implications. Shoemakers, although most definitely bound with tradition and slowly moving towards modernity, cannot be viewed as isolated as they naturally existed in the wider context of Greek society which was evolving and changing. The aftershocks of this change were definitely felt by them and arguably with greater intensity due to the character of the occupation. Hence, there lies an acute antithesis, which triggered various responses by the shoemakers, and it is exactly these responses that are to be investigated.

Thompson has spent an immense amount of ink elaborating on the responses of the British working class to the advent of capitalism. A debate on the definition and constituents of the British working class provided by the author go beyond the scope of this paper, hence it suffices to mention that he covers a wide spectrum of social groups spanning from people related to the petite bourgeoisie, to craftsmen, artisans and unspecialized laborers. What is to be elaborated on during the following chapters is the position and self-image of Greek shoemakers within this spectrum. Thompson, in listing the aforementioned responses, does not confine himself in the description of economic and generally material changes that trigger them but highlights the clash between distinct sets of values which he characterizes as "moral economy". Even violent acts such "destroying a silk loom,

[31] Thompson, Ibid., pp. 10-11.
[32] Potamianos, *Οι Νοικοκυραίοι: Μαγαζάτορες και Βιοτέχνες στην Αθήνα 1880-1925* [*Shopkeepers and Craftsmen in Athens 1880-1925*], pp. 152-53.
[33] Thompson, The Making of the English Working Class, p. 9.

throwing down fences when commons were enclosed, and firing corn ricks"[34] are seen as an unconscious expression of an "older moral economy" as opposed to a "free market moral economy".[35]

The notion of unconscious expression in 18th and early 19th century England, corresponds with Greek reality during the late 19th-early 20th century and with shoemakers in particular. Class conscience was in the making and by no means established neither in organizational nor in ideological terms as the working class in Greece was in an infantile situation until the 1910s.[36] As stated before, this by no means denudes it from its analytical importance. On the contrary, "moral economy" will be utilized to track those seemingly trivial or random expressions – periodically interrupted by more pronounced outbursts such as Matsalis' case- that denote this ongoing procedure.

In his article "The Moral Economy of the English Crowd in the Eighteenth Century"[37] Thompson further builds on moral economy through the example of food riots. He suggests that the riots sprung from the fear of hunger and were highly instinctive. Accordingly, one can neither characterize moral economy as political nor as apolitical because -apart from the fear of material deprivation- they were fueled by the perception that the rioters were defending traditionalism in the sense of supporting widely accepted values of justice and common weal.[38] Implementing this framework on Greek shoemakers means that one should not anticipate finding concrete evidence of mobilization and radicalization towards just one definite political direction (ex. Shoemakers affiliated only with the socialist movement). Instead, moral economy is expressed in various ways, especially for an occupational group that is straddling the line between working-class and (aspiring to become) petty bourgeoisie. Hence, the paper is gazing through the lens of moral economy, that in the defense of traditional values against the advent of capitalism is manifested in multiple ways. As a result, shoemakers can be observed turning to different directions according to the political stimuli that happen to present themselves and span from state paternalism to anarchism.

[34] Ibid., p. 60.
[35] Ibid., p. 67.
[36] Kordatos, Introduction.
[37] Thompson, "The Moral Economy of the English Crowd in the Eighteenth Century", p. 77.
[38] Thompson, Ibid., pp. 77-79.

It is no surprise that moral economy has attracted significant attention and is widely utilized in social sciences. However, one cannot find a complete definition of the term in Thompson's literature and, naturally, its increasingly widespread use has further blurred its meaning. In this respect, the collective work "Versions of Moral Economy"[39] constitutes a valuable historiographical addition that clarifies and nuances moral economy. Firstly, the introduction by Nikos Potamianos follows the thread of moral economy through various historiographical conceptions and devises a suitable definition. Secondly, the following chapters -in the form of thematic articles- touch multiple topics which are however relevant to moral economy, thus providing depth and different angles for its use.

Potamianos defines moral economy as:

> *a set of perceptions on justice, limits to exploitation, reciprocities that should govern social relations, and proper behavior in the economic field in general. Perceptions that are generated by and feed the reactions of the "popular classes" to the transformations brought about by the spread of market logic.*[40]

The analysis is largely based on the reversal of Karl Polanyi's "embeddedness".[41] In other words, the increasing dominance of the free market and its economy over established social norms which in turn produces friction. According to the author, this also finds expression specifically in relation to work as whole communities felt the need to defend against capitalism, the new moral economy of which threatened the relative autonomy and customary labor culture that was largely premodern.[42] It becomes plausible that this is exactly the case with shoemakers, for whom independence -in the form of full control over the production procedure including the definition of the "appropriate" prices and wages - was a prominent characteristic. The argument becomes even more convincing if independence is viewed as a privilege that the shoemaker acquired exclusively through mastering his art. Craftsmanship not only resulted in his distinction from "unspecialized"

[39] Nikos Potamianos (ed.), *Εκδοχές της Ηθικής Οικονομίας: Ιστορικές και Θεωρητικές Μελέτες* [*Versions of Moral Economy: Historical and Theoretical Studies*], Institute of Mediterranean Studies, Rethymno, 2021.
[40] Ibid., p. 60.
[41] Karl Polanyi, *The Great Transformation: The Political and Economic Origins of Our Time*, Beacon Press, Boston, 1957.
[42] Adrian Randall, «The Industrial Moral Economy of the Gloucestershire Weavers in the Eighteenth Century», in John Rule (ed.), *British Trade Unionism 1750-1850*, London, 1988, pp. 29-51.

laborers but also provided an alternative "prestige scale" that made up for the undemanding physical character of the art.[43]

At this point, it is necessary to mention the relation between moral economy and gender in the context of the paper's theme. Thomson has made clear that the presence of women in the British popular movements was proverbial and their fervor renowned.[44] However, the food riots that constitute Thompson's prime example do not directly correspond with the much narrower occupational group of shoemakers, as the latter was comprised predominantly of men. It is safe to assert that women were not present in the workshops and possibly female outworkers usually performing supplementary leather work from their homes are frugally mentioned or are completely invisible in the sources. Kostas Paloukis confirms that moral economy when it comes to craftsmen is connected to the masculine identity that is perpetuated in the male-dominated and strictly hierarchical environment of the workshop where deep knowledge of the art stemming from the control over the production process is a source of pride amongst peers.[45] Consequently, if we return to the creation of an alternative "prestige scale" that the shoemaker is trying to uphold through the projection of moral economy, it becomes evident that the alienation from his art due to the free market economy inflicts a dual identity crisis. Namely, losing control of his craft equals the challenging of his perceived role and corollary value not only as a craftsman but also as a man.

The intricate connection between specialized workers and moral economy is -according to Potamianos- also validated by John Rule. He confirms craftsmen's tendency to defend their customary work arrangements by calling their employers to stay "faithful to the art and its rules" instead of adopting the new free market economy.[46] However, Rule argues that this process alone is not sufficient to interpret the mobilization and radicalization of the working class and complements it by suggesting that a "syndicalist conscience" was also surfacing. In order to understand against what this syndicalist conscience was being developed one should utilize

[43] Hobsbawm, *Political Shoemakers*, pp. 96-97.
[44] Thompson, "The Moral Economy of the English Crowd in the Eighteenth Century", p. 115.
[45] Kostas Paloukis, «Ηθική Οικονομία και Ηθικός Συνδικαλισμός: Συνδικαλιστικές πρακτικές στους μισθωτούς εργάτες τεχνίτες (Αρχές 20ου αιώνα-Μεσοπόλεμος) [Moral Economy and Ethical Syndicalism: Trade Union Practices among Wage Workers and Artisans (Early 20th Century - Interwar)] », in Nikos Potamianos (ed.), *Εκδοχές της Ηθικής Οικονομίας: Ιστορικές και Θεωρητικές Μελέτες* [*Versions of Moral Economy: Historical and Theoretical Studies*], Institute of Mediterranean Studies, Rethymno, 2021, p. 132.
[46] John Rule, «Industrial disputes, wage bargaining and the moral economy», in Randall και Charlesworth (eds.), *Moral Economy and Popular Protest*, Palgrave, New York, 2000, pp. 166-186.

William Reddy's work on French weaving.[47] Reddy puts forward the idea that free market capitalism was not fully developed until the 1900s', thus workers were protesting not entirely against the free market itself but also its culture. This realization is key as capitalism was infantile in Greece even after the turn of the century so the reactions of shoemakers will not be explored strictly as a protest against the new system but largely against the penetration of its logic.

It becomes clear that Potamianos, in condensing a complex debate into the collective work so as to formulate his definition, manages to effectively inform Thompson's notion of moral economy. According to this complete theoretical framework, the paper will look into the radicalization and mobilization of shoemakers as reactions against both capitalism and its culture, in the context of their moral economy. The pre-modern and customary traditions of shoemakers can now be viewed not as an analytical handicap but as a driving force for acquiring security, a reminder of craftsmen's sense of independence and masculinity, and a sort of safe haven among the risk, anxieties, and precariousness of modernity -without suggesting the idealization of the past.[48] It is unlikely that shoemakers looked back to the functions of the exorbitantly strict Ottoman-era guilds with nostalgia, but they were definitely influenced by their "cultural baggage", thus -for example- the continuation of apprenticeship. Likewise, one should not suppose that moral economy operated by default only in a politically progressive way. On the contrary, the aforementioned reactions found various political expressions as the procedure was facilitated in parallel with the creation and development of class consciousness.

To address this puzzle, the course of Greek shoemakers' reactions will be investigated first through the 19th-century guilds with their traditionalist and mixed (employers and employees in the same guild) character and then through the development of defined workers' unions in the 20th century. This approach is also capable of highlighting the gradual shift from an occupation imagined as homogenous to the polarization between shoemakers that belonged to -or identified as- petty bourgeoisie and "shoeworkers".

[47] Nikos Potamianos (ed.), *Εκδοχές της Ηθικής Οικονομίας: Ιστορικές και Θεωρητικές Μελέτες* [*Versions of Moral Economy: Historical and Theoretical Studies*], pp. 28-29.
[48] Potamianos, *Versions of Moral Economy: Historical and Theoretical Studies*, pp. 58-59.

Chapter 2: 19th Century

2.1. A "guilded" occupation

2.1.a: The origins and character of the guilds

Arguably, the changes that led to the transformation of mixed guilds to workers' and employers' unions are indicative of the development of class-conscience among the shoemakers that expressed their moral economy and fueled their mobilization and radicalization. However, there are additional -even more fundamental- reasons to investigate collective entities of organization when exploring a particular occupational group. The mere existence of these entities denotes that shoemakers themselves had developed a self-perception of belonging to a group, defined by the craft that its members were exercising and the character that emerged from it and distinguished them from other groups. The first issue that arises is that of terminology use, because those entities were formed and legally registered as "Unions", "Guilds" or "Associations".[49] It is deemed more appropriate for the scope of the paper, when referring to the 19th century, to use the term "Guilds", not because the rest are legally incorrect but for two practical reasons. Firstly, in the context of 19th century Greece, when all shoemakers' guilds were mixed (with no exceptions), to use the term Union appears to be an exaggerated neologism, more appropriate for the 20th century. Secondly, the remaining terms are extremely vague and clearly overlook the guilds' cultural baggage which dates back to the time of the Byzantine and Ottoman empires. The fact that various customs, habits and practices connected to the "old" guilds survive into the 19th and even 20th century, makes their investigation sine qua non.

In the Byzantine period, the guilds of the middle class, in manufacturing and trade, flourished and became a significant driver of economic power of the empire. The forms of collective organization of the merchants, artisans and craftsmen in Constantinople and other large cities of Byzantium, -which to a certain extent were a continuation of the Roman collegia- also served the practical goal

[49] Charilaos Gkoutos, *Ο Συνδικαλισμός στο Ελληνικό Κράτος 1834-1914: Επίσημο και Ζωντανό Συνδικαλιστικό Δίκαιο, Συνδικαλιστική Κίνηση* [*Trade Unionism in the Greek State 1834-1914: Official and Living Trade Union Law, Trade Union Movement*], E.E.E. Deltion Ergatikis Nomothesias, Athens, 1988, pp. 124-127.

of supplying the population with goods. Guild organization was characterized by strict rules, in educating their members, controlling prices, and organizing commercial activities.[50]

After the fall of Constantinople, guild organization, based on strictly professional rather than income-related criteria, was maintained in the context of broader cultural traditions on the one hand, and on the other, on the basis of serving certain administrative needs of the Ottoman state. The master craftsman was typically accompanied by his assistant par excellence, the "kalfa" and the apprentice, the "çirâg". The Ottoman guilds were charged with the responsibilities of ensuring adherence to taxation, the proper functioning of the food industry, the movement of raw materials, the determination of prices, and the construction of works. The presidents of the guilds were elected among the masters, were accountable only to them, and represented the guilds before higher political and ecclesiastical authorities. Nevertheless, in a sense, the guilds constituted a form of anti-authority, a self-reliant political and social force within the Ottoman Empire, as they defended the economic and social acquisitions of both their members and wider communities.

Accordingly, the guilds in the context of the Ottoman rule era were created based on occupation groups and were intensely regulation oriented, with a strict hierarchical structure of apprenticeship, including master-craftsman, kalfa, and çirâg. This arrangement was not legally vested[51] but it was firmly established as a tradition connected with the central role of the craft as something that had to be passed on and mastered. Respect for the art was also expressed through the obligation of the apprentice to adhere to a strict morality and obey his master. This is confirmed by the 1773 Imperial decree of Sultan Mustafa III according to which:

> *The apprentice, in any profession, is obliged, above all, to learn and get used to obedience, modesty, kindness, respect, care, and good and unobtrusive conduct; without these virtues and qualities, he cannot develop to the degree of kalfa and cannot open a shop or workshop on his own account.*[52]

[50] Konstantinos Katsoudas, Gerasimos Karoulas, Vasiliki Papakonstantinopoulou, *Συνδικαλισμός Εργοδοτών Μικρών Επιχειρήσεων* [*Small Business Employers' Syndicalism*], IME GSEVEE, Athens, 2013, pp. 22-23.
[51] Giorgos Papageorgiou, *Η Μαθητεία στα επαγγέλματα (16ος-20ος αιώνας)* [*Apprenticeship in professions (16th-20th century)*], Historical Archive of Greek Youth, Athens, 1986, p. 36.
[52] Imperial decree of Sultan Mustafa III (1773) concerning guild issues. Published by the Bulgarian D. A. Ihciev, "Esnafski documenti i esnafski organizacii n tursko vreme" ("Guild documents and guild organizations under Turkish rule") in Spisanie na balgarskoto ikonomicesko druzestvo, Volume 3, Sofia, 1907, pp. 345-452.

This example is also enlightening of how the cultural norms of the guilds had a significant material impact, as failure to adhere to them equaled deprivation of the right to become an independent master-craftsman. Furthermore, the guilds had particular responsibilities towards the Ottoman state, giving them a sense of autonomy and self-reliance. They were not viewed just as professional associations but -as stated before- as a prominent forces and contributing actors of social life.

2.1.b: Post-Ottoman shoemakers' guilds

The establishment of the Greek nation-state drastically affected the guilds and those of shoemakers were no exception. Namely, their old regulatory functions on the market were relinquished as they were now operating within a liberal institutional framework and were created voluntarily.[53] They initially were in effect informal organizations of craftsmen practicing the same occupation until their legal recognition, after the 1864 Constitution affirmed the right of association for Greek citizens. As a result, twenty years before 1900, numerous shoemakers' guilds sprung out and their statutes were formally recognized by the government. One can trace those "new" guilds in various cities and towns such as Athens (1880), Piraeus (1895), Kalamata (1892), Lavrion (1899), Patras (1894), and Nafplion (1894),[54] even though their authority in matters outside of the occupation had drastically disappeared and hence their prestige diminished. However, many of their characteristics managed to survive the transition because they were integral to shoemaking as a craft, the most prominent of which being apprenticeship that continued to be exercised.

Arguably, apprenticeship constituted a catalyst for the creation and development of the shoemakers' moral economy. It denoted the importance of craftsmanship for the shoemaker's identity and reinforced their sense of autonomy as the masters possessed the exclusive responsibility of passing down the secrets of the art, thus not only ensuring its continuity but also perpetuating a practice that predated modernity and differentiated them from unskilled laborers or other occupational groups. For example, differentiation was also visible in comparison to retailers who were not practicing apprenticeship, hence bonds between them were less strong and their "retailing skills" did not constitute such solid a base for their collective identity.[55] Moreover, the

[53] Potamianos, *Shopkeepers and craftsmen in Athens 1880-1925*, p. 141.
[54] Gkoutos, p. 73.
[55] Potamianos, Ibid., p. 126.

concrete hierarchy that was de facto created can be characterized as an embryonic but extremely intense class stratification that created divisions visible in the relations between master, kalfa and apprentice, deeming their investigation necessary. Such divisions are confirmed by many of the guilds' statutes. For example, the Shoemakers' Guild of Piraeus stated that:

> *Members of the guild can become those who are workshop-owners [shoemakers themselves], shoeworkers [kalfas[56]], and apprentices. However, kalfas cannot be elected and apprentices have the right neither to elect nor be elected and are not considered for the quorum of the assembly*.[57]

Kostas Paloukis contributes to the compartmentalization of work relations in 19th/early 20th-century workshops along the lines of apprenticeship.[58] Apprentices, the continuation of the çirâgs, were usually employed from a young age, traditionally around 10 years old, and performed non-specialized work, supplementary to shoemaking such as moisturizing the leather, waxing the cords for the laces, or taking care of the tools. Furthermore, they were charged with tidying the workshop and running errands for the master craftsman.[59] The kalfas performed specialized work along with the master and theoretically, their social and economic standing was improved compared to the apprentices. However, their working conditions were essentially the same throughout the late 19th century and remained virtually unchanged during the early 20th century. This is confirmed by various personal accounts describing a typical workday in workshops producing traditional shoes (tsarouhia) in the city of Ioannina. The workshops were up to 5 meters deep and split by a corridor, to the sides of which two slightly elevated platforms were located. On those platforms under the dim light of a lamp, the master, kalfas, and apprentices performed their duties while seated cross-legged and not wearing shoes in order to be more comfortable working "from dusk till dawn".[60] It is worth mentioning that the right to close the workshop for one to two hours every noon during summertime was obtained in the late 1920s and prior to that workers were only allowed two short

[56] This term will be used in the paper to describe 19th-century shoeworkers that had finished the apprenticeship but were not masters themselves (in the sense of employing other craftsmen) as it is widely used in public discourse.

[57] Gkoutos, p. 124.

[58] Paloukis, p. 133.

[59] Papageorgiou, p. 47.

[60] Marina Vrelli-Zahou, *Τα τσαρούχια και οι τσαρουχάδες στην Ήπειρο: Συμβολή στη μελέτη της λαϊκής υπόδησης* [*Tsarouchia and tsarouhades in Epirus: Contribution to the study of popular footwear*], Peloponnesian Laographic Institute, 1991, p. 37.

breaks in order to eat.[61] Even on Sundays, "after church" the workshop had to be open in case a customer wanted to pay a debt or make an order.[62]

Accordingly, one distinguishes two major dissections in the shoemakers' hierarchy that constitute a breach to the occupation's perceived homogeneity. Firstly, shoemakers can be categorized as specialized and non-specialized, the former including the master and kalfas who were accomplished craftsmen, while the latter the apprentices that were unable to practice the craft independently and as such performed complementary work. As a result, masters and kalfas shared the common characteristic of possessing the secrets of the art and thus having solid knowledge on every step of the production process. By and large, this made them share a similar value system that revolved around self-reliance for manufacturing quality products, from raw material to refined and ready for sale shoes. This, in contrast to industrial workers that were responsible only for fractions of the production often created a sense of belonging to a "labor aristocracy" as Hobsbawm puts it. There is no evidence that a self-perception of aristocracy derived its origin from the image of shoemakers as "intelligent artisans" but from their conviction -as mentioned before- that they owned their art, a right that they had obtained through a vigorous and laborious process of apprenticeship.[63] Perceiving their artisanal heritage as aristocratic was expressed both by contempt towards apprentices and cobblers, who simply mended shoes, but most importantly by the tendency of master craftsmen to portray themselves as petty bourgeoisie. However, this is exactly the point where the second dissection becomes clear and challenges homogeneity. The moral economy of both masters and kalfas might have been similar at an imagined level but practically they were related in terms of employer and employee respectively and separated by a significant material chasm.

This antithesis is evident in the "1880-1881 Accountability Report of the Administration of the Athens Shoemakers' Guild". On the one hand, the merits of collective organization through participation in the guild are vividly stressed, by mentioning that "craftsmen that are not members of the guild should realize its strength and accruing advantages".[64] Moreover, there is a reference

[61] Ibid.
[62] Ibid., p. 38.
[63] E. J. Hobsbawm, "Artisan or Labor Aristocrat?", p. 359.
[64] Athens Shoemakers Guild , *Accountability Report of the Administration of the Athens Shoemakers' Guild 1880-1881*, p. 6.

to the "celebration of Saint Andrew, protector of the guild, which was funded by shop-owners in order not to encumber the guild's treasury".[65] Thus, a first image of moral economy is provided which includes positive perceptions on collectiveness that affirms the shoemakers' solidarity in protecting their occupation. However, this collectiveness is -as expected- premodern and essentially paternalist as the wealthier shop-owners were funding some of the guild's functions, an action that automatically denotes class disparity in the form of cleavages in wealth. This argument is in line with Hobsbawm's assertion that "the best paid stratum of the working class merged with what may be loosely called the 'lower middle class… which included the aristocracy of labor… shopkeepers, some independent masters, foremen and managers".[66] In other words, kalfas and masters both emphasized a premodern collectiveness and employed a moralizing discourse, but gradually they were being pushed apart by objective circumstances as it will be elaborated on.

Special attention must be paid to the moralizing discourse expressed through the guilds for three reasons. Firstly, because it constituted a significant part of their moral economy by binding them to familiar values (collectiveness, self-reliance etc.) that were threatened by modernity. Secondly, as such, it contributed to the mobilization of shoemakers that looked up to the guilds as necessary tools for dealing with their difficult material circumstances. Finally, because in this moralizing discourse one can track embryonic traits that would radicalize shoemakers in the near future. As Thompson notes, referring to English artisans, their connection to Owenism was not a result of "radical paranoia", a random and abrupt occurrence, but it had its roots to the fact that they were inheritors of a long tradition of premodern mutuality, sense of custom and fairness.[67] The basis for the exploration of the moralizing aspect of the guilds largely originates from the gradual urbanization from 1880 onwards and has to be assessed from different angles.[68] On the one hand, the concentration of large numbers of internal economic migrants in urban centers contributed to the disintegration of the traditional interpersonal relations that dominated small and close-knit villages and rural communities in general. Thus, those belonging to the working class naturally sought out institutions that would replace their lost sense of security and provide protection within

[65] Ibid., p. 9.
[66] E. J. Hobsbawm, *Laboring men: Studies in the History of Labor*, Doubleday Anchor, New York, 1967, pp. 223-223.
[67] Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class*, pp. 789-790.
[68] Potamianos, *Shopkeepers and craftsmen in Athens 1880-1925,* pp. 150-151.

their new and alien environment. On the other hand, employers looked to the guilds and their traditional paternalist character to avert any dangers to social peace that might arise from the concentration of large numbers of - usually poor - workers in the cities. Evidence of this is the fact that these guilds - as has been noted - were mixed but also "mutually supportive" rather than "assertive".

On the front page of the *Newspaper of the Guilds* on February 3rd 1891, the character of the guilds is captured through the exposition of the "political and social program of the newspaper" with a "public benefit purpose".[69] This newspaper was the journalistic expression of the guild phenomenon and was associated with the "Social League", an organization of students influenced by early socialist ideas. Nevertheless, the criticism of capitalism, or plutocracy as it was more often referred to, was made in an idealistic light, consisting of utopian precepts which concerned the education and moralization of artisans.[70] It was proclaimed that a struggle would be waged against "the encroachment by the powerful rich on the rights of the little people, the working classes, the artisans and manual plebeians who are plagued by immoral politics and plutocracy".[71] It is confirmed that the guilds -and the newspaper as their organ- were not just undefined collective entities, but by having a program they were self-aware of their role as instruments of political mobilization and change. It also becomes evident how the "guild world" conceived society. If attention is paid to the terminology, it is clear that class was not perceived according to Marxian terms. On the contrary, a broad and rather generalizing dichotomy between "the people" and "the rich" was present, demonstrating intense social injustice. The mixed nature of the guilds clearly denotes that this distinction was not based on the possession of the means of production since most employers-shopkeepers participated in them along with employees. In the case of shoemakers, as emerges from Potamianos' research, the landscape was quite murky as many of the master-craftsmen oscillated between the petty bourgeoisie and the bourgeoisie, and most of them wished to ascend from one to the other. However, what they clearly perceived as the criterion for this to happen was the knowledge or lack thereof of their art. Therefore, for shoemakers, the criterion was

[69] Anonymous, Newspaper of the Guilds , *Το πρόγραμμα της εφημερίδας των Συντεχνιών* [*The Newspaper of the Guilds program*], Sunday, February 3rd 1891, sheet no. 1, p. 1, https://digitallib.parliament.gr/display_doc.asp?item=40786&seg=.
[70] Paloukis, p. 138.
[71] Ibid.

not based on class but profession. This is also a reason why master-craftsmen shared common values with the kalfas, even though the former were employers while the latter employees.

In addition, according to the *Newspaper*, although societies were made "so that men lend a helping hand to one another, for their material and moral benefit, two insidious elements have unfortunately appeared, immoral politics and plutocracy".[72] This phrase is indicative of the moral economy that the paper discusses. Social injustice in the context of capitalism was viewed as a disruption of the natural tendency of societies to be possessed by a spirit of collectivity and solidarity and this process was seen not simply as reprehensible and harmful but mostly as generally immoral since it went against the shoemaker's pre-modern prism for understanding the world. Therefore, morality in its conception by historical subjects of the 19th century, could be extremely political which may seem strange to the modern observer who is familiar with clearly defined (in terms of ideology) socio-political movements. According to Thomson, though, "working men formed a picture of the organization of society, out of their own experience ... which was above all a political picture".[73] Consequently, the mobilization of Greek shoemakers, expressed through the 19th century guilds can definitely be considered as political.

Specific evidence of the "mutually-supportive" character of the guilds and their connection with the moral economy of shoemakers can be found in the interview of the President of the Athens Shoemakers' Guild, Antonios Vidalis on the 14th of February 1891. It was part of a series of interviews of various' guilds' presidents that the *Newspaper* initiated during the first year of its circulation with the aim of shedding light to the particular character and issues that each of them was facing and make them known to the public. Vidalis stated from the outset that in this "lively guild", founded in 1880, there were 332 registered members and 35,000 drachmas in the treasury. This money was allocated for members suffering from diseases with the exception of "reproachable" diseases. A distinction is already made, explanatory of mutual support without specifying which diseases are considered to be "reproachable". It is safe to assume, however, that it refers, for example, to alcoholism or possibly also to sexually transmitted diseases which could be considered evidence of an immoral life. After all, according to Thompson, moral and practical sobriety were linked, were central to the code of conduct of the craftsman and were perceived as

[72] Newspaper of the Guilds, Ibid.
[73] Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class*, p. 712.

an anti-paradigm against the immoral habits of unskilled industrial workers.[74] Such perceptions had their basis in ethics derived from religion and evidently religion -as a means of moralization- played a central role in Greece as well. Vidalis, when asked how the guild achieved the moral development of its members - as stated in the second article of the statute - answered in two ways. Firstly, by teaching the apprentices their obligations towards the seniors which means nothing less than "to their employers". Secondly, by them attending church regularly. Religion seems to have played an important role in the identity formation of the guild world and shoemakers in particular. As mentioned above, their participation in the celebrations for the patron saint was taken care of by benefactors and, as Potamianos informs us, was part of a wider 'folklore'.[75] The celebration was one of the few days on which workshops were closed and a common meal was organized, validating solidarity and brotherly love. We find similar rhetoric in the debate surrounding the Sunday holiday. Specifically, it is stated that:

> *For a long time, in the civilized territories of Europe, where the people are educated according to Christian precepts and the working people are moralized by the warm and sincere friends of the people, Sunday has been considered a holy day and the workers take a holiday. Indeed, this custom is in accordance with the Orthodox religion (of the Greeks) on the basis of which it is devoted to the Lord.*[76]

Thus, the justification for obtaining labor rights was not only practical (getting rest in order to work more efficiently) but also moral. Many other aspects of the working conditions of shoemakers were understood both by Vidalis and the authors of the newspaper but their conception and means to assert them were far from being radical. A major issue for shoemakers was definitely the seasonal character of the occupation which led to severe wage fluctuations. It is revealing that according to Vidalis: "a shoemaker without work for a week, is in danger of starving to death."[77] However, even though this problem was noticed, it was not the guild's responsibility to intervene as help was only provided in case of disease and not unemployment. An image of precariousness

[74] Ibid., pp. 740-41.
[75] Potamianos, *Shopkeepers and craftsmen in Athens 1880-1925,* pp. 153.
[76] Anonymous, Newspaper of the Guilds, *Η Κυριακή Αργία* [*Sunday day off*], Tuesday, February 19th 1891, sheet no. 15, p. 1, https://digitallib.parliament.gr/display_doc.asp?item=40786&seg=.
[77] Anonymous, Newspaper of the Guilds, *Οι Υποδηματοποιοί δια του προέδρου του Σωματείου τους Αντωνίου Βιδάλη: Συνέντευξη 5η* [*The Shoemakers through the President of their Union Antonios Vidalis: Interview 5*], Thursday, February 14th 1891, sheet no. 11, pp. 1-2, https://digitallib.parliament.gr/display_doc.asp?item=40786&seg=.

is further drawn by the president's complaints about severe competition and unjust taxation that were crippling the shoemakers. Lastly, the author of the newspaper admitted that working for 12 or 15 hours a day led the workers' brains to "atrophy" which made the establishment of an 8-hour workday imperative, however in a way that would not "cause violent shocks to the enterprises of employers".[78] In other words, the guilds acted as collective entities that, realizing the threats presented by the market logic and the worsening material conditions of shoemakers, were the embodiment of the pre-modern moral economy which in this case, as argued, became explicitly political. Nevertheless, although they possessed the potential to be agents of political mobilization, due to their mixed character, which was still maintained, they were unable to turn into agents of radicalization.

2.2. Shoemakers' depictions in art: The Lovestruck Shoemaker

Guilds are not the only indicators of the circumstances that Greek shoemakers faced during the 19th century, and art can also be of great value for understanding different aspects of the occupation and the accruing moral economy. This subchapter will be dealing with the one-act comedy by Christos Christovassilis titled "The Lovestruck Shoemaker", which was published in 1893. Unfortunately, it is difficult to accurately determine the popularity of the play or the extent to which it was brought on stage and thus, its dissemination to the public is more or less unknown. However, the author himself was relatively well known and even awarded with a prize of 20,000 drachmas for his literary work by the Ministry of Education. Born in Epirus in 1861, he came to be a staunch monarchist and nationalist, dedicating much of his life to the struggle against Ottoman rule in regions such as Northern Epirus and Macedonia. What is interesting for the paper though, is the fact that, in 1879, Christovasilis settled in Thessaly and in the 20th of August 1881 he was present during the liberation of one of Thessaly's major cities, Trikala, where he stayed for three more years. Trikala happens to be the place in which the play was set and considering that the author lived there for a prolonged period of time, one can assume that he was familiar with the everyday life of the inhabitants. That, combined with his overall literary work, which was rich with ethnographic and folklore elements, converges toward the conclusion that the "Lovestruck

[78] Anonymous, Newspaper of the Guilds, *Ώρες και Ημέρες* [*Hours and Days*], Friday, February 22nd 1891, sheet no. 18, p.1, https://digitallib.parliament.gr/display_doc.asp?item=40786&seg=.

Shoemaker" -to an extent- reflected reality and was not the product of complete literary fiction. The approach of the analysis, in order to contribute to answering the research question, will proceed accordingly: Firstly, a summary of the play's plot will be provided and references will be made to the main characters involved. Then, the information that emerges about the profession and the perceptions on it both by the shoemakers themselves and by third parties will be discussed. Finally, the findings will be linked to moral economy and evaluated in relation to the potential mobilization and radicalization of shoemakers.

The scene of the play is set in the Greek city of Trikala, in the workshop owned by a shoemaker who is the main protagonist. The narrative begins with the shoemaker in a state of total despair, complaining to the kalfa who is employed by him about the difficulties of the profession.

> *I am the best shoemaker in Trikala, but to what end? No one recognizes my value. Wherever I go they scorn me '-Who is he? -The cobbler!' But if I were someone else! Lawyer, pharmacist, merchant.... Shoemaking is the devil's art. An art that is vile and brutal! If I were something else instead of a shoemaker, I'd have my value too.*[79]

On top of his desperation, he confesses that he is in love with a young woman that belongs to the bourgeoisie, but he is repeatedly rejected by her for being part of a lower social stratum. Because of his continuous failures, he decides to learn French -a language associated with social standing- in order to impress her and to this end he is taught by one of his clients that happens to work as a professor. He is so eager in his endeavor that he reckons that very soon he will master French, improve his standing and have no need to work as a shoemaker anymore. Subsequently, after the request of his kalfa, he signs a document committing to transfer the workshop to him for free after three months. However, his optimistic predictions are dashed when he talks to the woman who informs him that if they ever get married, she would not want to be called "the shoemaker's lady" but mastering the French language does not constitute a profession by itself.

> *I want you to find an honest job that will provide our family with food, clothing ... but also entertainment such as traveling, theatre visits, etc. You must get a job that is respectable... doctor, lawyer, judge, officer in the military.*[80]

[79] Christos Christovasilis, *The Lovestruck Shoemaker*, p. 1.
[80] Ibid, p. 26.

The shoemaker realizes that most of the professions mentioned require years of arduous education which includes attending university, therefore postponing his efforts to win the woman he loves into the distant future. He therefore decides to pursue a military career especially when he is informed that the government has declared that it will promote to the rank of captain anyone who manages to capture a notorious bandit. The play ends with his grotesque efforts and ultimately abject failure to capture the bandit.

The most elementary conclusion to be drawn from the play concerns the established roles and hierarchy within the workshop. There is no detailed reference to the specific tasks performed by the master-craftsman and the kalfa, nor to their level of knowledge of the craft. However, it is evident that the basic work-relation that bound them was that of employer and employee. Moreover, the master, in addition to being a craftsman, also appears to be the owner of the workshop since he had the right to transfer it to his subordinate and this is a key factor for differentiation within the profession. In addition, different conceptions of shoemaking as a craft are evident. The shoemaker himself stated that he was “the best in town”, thus excellence in the craft was still a significant source of pride in his own value system. However, the view of society seems to be different as craftsmanship was not considered sufficient to ensure respect for the practitioner any more. The woman in the story must have thought the same, since she urged the shoemaker to acquire a new profession as a prerequisite for them to get married. Failure to secure respect ultimately prompted the shoemaker himself to call his art “vile and brutal”. Finally, the position of shoemakers within the social pyramid is also obvious, since even the master, even though he is an employer and a shop owner, was greeted with contempt and excluded from the middle class which was forming at the end of the 19th century in Greece and had important references in European standards and values (e.g. familiarity with French language and culture). In order to understand the character of this middle class and also its points of divergence from artisans, it suffices to refer to the three types of "respectable" professions that are discussed in the play. First, professions related to intellectual skill and prestige such as lawyer and doctor, followed by those directly connected to the state apparatus such as judge and military officer and finally those related to capital such as merchant. The shoemaker and his manual, artisanal profession was not included in any of the categories.

The play provides illuminating insight into the moral economy of shoemakers and the circumstances under which it was expressed, according to the theoretical framework of the paper. As stated during the first chapter, moral economy constituted a response to modernity, not necessarily against capitalism itself, but also against the market logic that accompanied its development. Indeed, the shoemaker made no reference to competition from large mechanized shoemaking enterprises that threatened his traditional workshop, and it is perfectly safe to assume that in 1891 Trikala such enterprises did not exist. Nevertheless, his traditional conception of society in which artisans were of its most respected members was collapsing before his eyes. That is because the perception of craftsmanship's contribution to the collective well-being was gradually disappearing and being replaced by a much more individualizing logic. The Greek bourgeoisie was then valued because it was able "to provide" goods and entertainment not to the benefit of society but to one's family at most. This, of course, is in distinction with the shoemakers' pre-modern habitus of crafting products of good quality that were then provided to everyone for a fair price. Moreover, the play is testament to the relation between occupation and gender roles as part of moral economy. One can argue that an individual's value in society was disconnected from craftsmanship and attached to being affluent, thus the shoemaker's primary source of pride was diminished along with his sense of manhood that was derived from it. The rejection by the woman he wanted to marry does not constitute a basis for this argument but in the eyes of the shoemaker it must have confirmed his general devaluation that was proceeding in an almost deterministic way.

It is evident that the rejection of the shoemaker's value system sufficed to mobilize him, and as it was argued before, moral economy -when challenged by an economic system and its own value system- can be viewed as highly political. The solution which the shoemaker's mobilization aimed to achieve is also political by itself. That was because he resorted to the protectionism of the state -the primary political entity on a national level- in order to alleviate his situation. His choice can arguably be explained twofold. Firstly, the paternalist character and functions of the pre-modern guilds continued and found expression, however differently, in the late 19th century guilds which -however- were in decline, thus unable to single-handedly cover the shoemakers' needs. Adding to that, workers' unions had not yet emerged, thus a void was created and was partly covered by the state and its paternalism which must have been appealing for shoemakers' and the pre-modern aspects of their political logic. Secondly, his position within the hierarchy of the profession did not

allow him for further maneuvering. In other words, he was an independent craftsman, able to employ others and also operated his own workshop, hence -in premodern terms- the limitations of the profession had been reached, the dream of every young apprentice realized, but still, there were no rewards to be reaped. With the exception of becoming a retailer, the implications of which will be discussed in the next chapter, his only option to better his conditions was to abandon the occupation in an outburst of "social anxiety". This take on the matter also explains Potamianos's claim of desperate attempts by craftsmen to ascend to the middle-class or petty bourgeoisie. The very different stance of the kalfa also confirms the argument. In contrast to his employer, he could still maneuver and did not aspire to abandon shoemaking and ascend to the status of the bourgeoisie. Accordingly, when the opportunity presented itself, he asked the shoemaker to transfer the workshop to him, affirming not only the existence of class differentiations among 19th century shoemakers but also their potential to critically influence one's course of action.

2.3. The radical "type"

As demonstrated, the protagonist of the play turning to paternalism can be explained by analyzing shoemakers' moral economy. However, considering this to be the single response to capitalism and its cultural arsenal would mean only looking one side of the coin but also reducing shoemakers to a homogenous group with uniform reactions. On the contrary, Paul Faler, when investigating the interaction between shoemakers and the emerging industrial morality in Massachusetts, discerns them into three categories. The shoemaker of the play would probably fall into the category of "traditionalists" and not "loyalists" in the sense that he had no interest in reforms of any kind and he was even eager to abandon the profession altogether without having a realistic alternative in mind. Nevertheless, Faler also mentions the group of "rebel mechanics" who -according to him- were the catalytic force among the shoemakers[81] and vigorously criticized capitalist exploitation, economic injustice and moral degradation.[82] The radical type constituted an alternative to the paternalist character of political mobilization and a prelude for the 20th century. Dimitrios Matsalis, was a representative of this type, his actions constituting the first indication of Greek shoemakers' radicalism during the 19th century, and however with a significant delay of

[81] Faler, p. 392.
[82] Ibid., p. 391.

half a century compared to the time period that Faler describes, they went far beyond just "editing newspapers" or "founding libraries".[83]

Matsalis murdered Dionysios Fragopoulos on November 3rd 1896 near a central square in the Greek city of Patras. When arrested and questioned, he admitted -while being surprisingly calm and serene- that he was planning to kill any rich person that was to be found along his way. However, the selection of the victim by no means seems to be completely random. Fragopoulos was a major raisin-merchant in Patras, dealing with a product that constituted the most significant monoculture in Greece at the time and that was not only sold in the domestic market but mainly exported to Europe en masse. Considering that he also operated a banking enterprise, Matsalis could not be more accurate in stating that he had "struck the capital". The motives behind the murder are of great importance for the scope of the paper and, according to the perpetrator's confession, can be traced to his anarchist ideals and his aversion in observing affluent people enjoying a lavish lifestyle without working hard to make a living.[84] Matsalis himself was not a pariah of society but a known shoemaker who, for a long time, enjoyed a relatively good economic standing, maintained a large clientele and is described as "always well-dressed".[85] However, it appears that his situation suddenly shifted, when in 1890 Patras too was struck by the raisin-crisis and the subsequent huge strain that it brought upon the economy, resulting in him accumulating a huge debt and even being evicted from the property that he was using as a workshop.

Evidently, Matsalis was mobilized by his anarchist ideals but his material situation must have also played a major role in murdering Fragopoulos. In order to understand how his actions correlate with the shoemaker's moral economy it is imperative to investigate their reception by himself but also by society. Under this lens, moralizing discourse was proverbial during his examination by doctors after his arrest. He clarified that he was a materialist and did not believe in God, but when describing his actions, he vested them with an almost religious rhetoric. The deed was often referred to as "sacred duty" which denotes that it was not impulsive but supposed to be fulfilled and it can also be read as an obligation, probably towards the poor who were being exploited. Moreover, Matsalis stated that he had long decided to "take revenge against the capital", thus

[83] Ibid., p. 392.
[84] Galanopoulos, pp. 44, 46.
[85] Galanopoulos, p. 39.

declaring a war not against his victims but against the whole value system that they impersonated. However, "revenge" is by definition a reaction to actions or events that have already taken place, thus for Matsalis, the murder was justified because it constituted a response against the violence of capital. Accordingly, it was not only "propaganda by deed" as Galanopoulos suggests but it also summed up the emancipatory demands of the shoemaker's moral economy which was challenged by the dominance of capitalism. Thompson lists murder along the crimes that are condemned both by the legal code and the unwritten popular code,[86] which is true for this case as well. The act shocked the Greek society of the time and it is obvious that the press as a whole condemned Matsalis directly, albeit with different rhetoric. The consensus among both conservative and progressive newspapers of the time was an aversion to the violent nature of the murderous act. However, the former, rather than simply expressing a vague fear, observed two key points in light of the incident. First, there was a basic realization that "European ideas", namely socialism and anarchism, had slowly begun to be transmitted to Greece. [87] Secondly, and most importantly, a connection was made between the social classes that were now beginning to be inspired by those ideas. Matsalis, as a craftsman, signified that these ideas were no longer limited to intellectuals and students but also affected working people. As Galanopoulos so aptly puts it:

> *But Matsalis is a working shoemaker. The question thus poses itself inexorably: what will happen if these ideas visit the slums and shanties?*[88]

Of course, the Matsalis case was an extreme example representing the exception rather than the rule. Nevertheless, its analytical value does not lie in the action per se but in noticing the emergence of a class conscience that led to more radical forms of political mobilization compared to the traditionalist character of the guilds or state paternalism. This paradigm also challenges the perception of a harmonious Greek society in which every class cooperated deriving mutual benefits from the process. This perception proved to be impressively resilient in the context of the pre-modern notions that were encompassed into the shoemakers' value system, thus their non-radical mobilization efforts during the 19th century. However, Matsalis signifies a change of quality in artisanal moral economy, the traditional elements of which – such as "fairness", "collectiveness", "mutuality" and "pride"- were gradually starting to be channeled towards more radical directions

[86] Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class*, pp. 59-60.
[87] Galanopoulos, p. 64
[88] Ibid., p. 62

and were articulated increasingly around the theme of class. The following chapter will be exploring the forms of collective radical mobilization through the creation of separate shoeworkers' unions and the series of strikes organized by them.

Chapter 3: Early 20th Century

3.1. Investigating the causes

Undoubtedly, the 20th century did not mark the immediate disappearance of the mixed guilds or of their paternalist connotations. It suffices to look at the profile of two of the candidates for the 1908 presidency election of the Athens Shoemakers Guild mentioned by the "*Newspaper of the Shoemakers*".[89] Ioannis Tsamis was referred to as a "respectable and amiable factory owner who had an undefiled and unblemished past and was marked by the rare virtue of persistent and reasonable will and by a strong character".[90] When interviewed, Tsamis reported that "what he had done for shoemaking in general and for the guild in particular is well known, concerning both the needs of the members and the material and moral progress of the guild".[91] Konstantinos Rigopoulos -the second candidate- interestingly enough, was mentioned too as an "amiable factory owner" who had risen to greatness through his "competence, vigor, entrepreneurial spirit and a keen mind".[92] Rigopoulos went on to express his admiration for the guild which he had manifested through generous donations that are listed at the end of the article. It accrues, that both candidates exhibited sentiments of utmost care for the guild and its members which they supported both materially and morally. Even if their concern was a mere tool for gaining the sympathy of voters, it denotes that the members were likely to consider it as a merit anyway, which indicates the partial survival of the guilds' paternalism logic. The article also points toward the aforementioned moral economy of shoemakers that revolved around collectiveness and mutual help among the craftsmen. However, polarization within the profession was becoming increasingly pronounced as master

[89] Anonymous, Newspaper of the shoemakers, *Οι υποψήφιοί μας: Πρόεδροι και Σύμβουλοι* [*Our candidates: Presidents and Consultants*], March 2nd 1908, sheet no. 9, pp. 1-2, https://digitallib.parliament.gr/display_doc.asp?item=38009&seg=.
[90] Ibid.
[91] Ibid.
[92] Ibid.

shoemakers were clearly attempting to earn their place and portray themselves as part of the bourgeoisie. None of the candidates was a kalfa but they were all "factory owners", employers that had risen to their current economic and social standing and were praised not merely for their mastering of the art but mainly for their capacity to bear economic burdens for the "good of their colleagues". This perception goes beyond just affirming the paternalism of the guilds and denotes acute stratification within the profession. Indeed, Potamianos informs us that probably employers were dominant and most of them were registered in the guild.[93]

Since class polarization was becoming increasingly evident since the end of the 19th and the first decade of the 20th century, it is necessary to identify its causes, as these can also provide an explanation for the formation of the shoemakers' class identity and their further radical mobilization. In other words, what justified the use of the term "factory owner" and its capitalist connotations by the editors of the newspaper in contrast to the kalfas? Literature concerning mostly Western Europe and America (United States and Canada) convincingly explains the phenomenon, therefore it is the basis for interpreting the behavior of Greek shoemakers. However, the peculiarities of the Greek case must be taken into consideration, because they suggest a slightly different course in the now articulate expression of preexisting -as argued- rival class identities. The forms of workers' organization are determined by the general economic conditions and in the case of shoemakers, these conditions did not always have to do with the advancement of the technical means that were used in the production process. The main factor that fueled change in this particular profession was the rapid development of new markets and its implications.[94] It was "the widening out of these markets with their lower levels of competition and quality, but without any changes in the instruments of production, that destroyed the primitive identity of master and journeyman cordwainers and split their community of interest into the modern alignment of employers' association and trade union".[95] Paul Faler stresses the importance of market expansion that in turn created demand for the enlargement of production which, in his case study of Lynn, Massachusetts, drove the majority of the town's residents to abandon their professions and become shoemakers. They were firstly operating into workshops that could be characterized as sweatshops,

[93] Potamianos, *Shopkeepers and craftsmen in Athens 1880-1925*, pp. 181-182.
[94] Commons, p. 48.
[95] Ibid., p. 50.

until their full mechanization which led to the establishment and prevalence of factories between the 1820's and 1860s'.[96]

According to John Commons, there were various stages of shoemaking work that reflected market expansion in the United States and at the same time altered and fragmented the roles of shoemakers. The first stage was "bespoke work", within a custom-order market. The clientele consisted of the shoemaker's neighbors with him being at the same time master, craftsman and custom merchant. However, the widening of markets gradually led to "shop-work", the creation of a retail-shop stage whose purpose was to serve a bigger client base also consisting of visitors and sojourners. This stage required a stored stock of finished products of standardized patterns and sizes, ready to be viewed and sold according to demand.[97] This stage did not necessarily displace bespoke work shoes and the two usually coexisted. However, maintaining a large stock of ready-made shoes required additional capital, for purchasing larger amounts of raw material, hiring additional craftsmen, renting a retail shop (usually doubling as workshop) in a busy street and even extra space to be used as a warehouse. Lastly, the "wholesale order" stage appeared, where even larger amounts of products were crafted and channeled towards foreign markets through distant merchants. In the context of the United States, these changes had multiple implications. Firstly, the pre-modern workshop homogeneity (even though it largely existed only in an imagined form) was entirely crushed as the different functions of the master-shoemaker were violently separated, and, most importantly, his function as a merchant prevailed over his craftsmanship. Secondly, workshops were turned into sweat shops[98] in order to cope with increasing demand, making working conditions even more arduous. Lastly, moving from bespoke to shop and wholesale order work, created serious conflicts over wages, as employers demanded from shoeworkers a minimum product quality for every market but at the same time offered lower wages for products directed to lower and wider markets (mean. not bespoke but ready-made shoes). On the contrary, shoeworkers aspired to receive the same minimum wage irrespective of the market type but also to have the choice of a better wage for higher markets.[99]

[96] Faler, pp. 372-373.
[97] Commons, p. 49.
[98] Ibid., p. 64.
[99] Ibid., p. 49.

In the case of Greece, when exploring the impact of market expansion on shoemakers, it is essential to consider a number of factors, among which urbanization appears to have played a major role. The phenomenon -as indicated in the previous chapter- was facilitating already from the late 1870s and its implications were definitely felt in the dawn of the 20th century. It will suffice to mention that according to the censuses, the population of Athens was growing at a steady pace. From over 68,000 in 1879, to 128,735 in 1896, and over 317,000 residents in 1920.[100] The result of this tendency was the partial transformation of many of the traditional shoemaking workshops into part-workshops, part retail-shops located in the main streets of the city and enjoying an increased clientele. A series of articles in the newspaper *Acropolis* in 1912, while investigating various professions, explicitly mentions shoemaking. It is confirmed that city centers were proving to be prolific for this particular craft for various reasons. To begin with, while traditional shoes that were still largely used in the countryside were usually repaired or even made by the wearers themselves, modern shoes that were more commonly used in the city centers, required the tending of an experienced, professional craftsman. Furthermore, in the urban context, shoemaking was elevated more and more to the level of art, in the sense that clients belonging to high strata of society were eager to order modern and ornate designs.[101] Those factors, combined with the general increase in population were fueling the demand for shoes both in terms of quality and quantity in the city centers. However, it is revealing that the craft itself remained "totally manual" with the exception of hand or foot-operated sewing machines. That "a shoemaker working always with his wrists and hands was not difficult to recognize as they were always callous"[102] attests to the fact.

To further understand the reasons for the mobilization and radicalization of shoemakers during early 20th century, it is essential to establish their "professional profile" by looking into their working conditions such as hygiene, pay and unemployment rates but also other traits such as age and gender. To begin with, their concentration in city centers is confirmed by the Athens and Piraeus workers' census of 1917. According to the census, everyone that was employed under a wage (monthly, daily, by piece or otherwise) was considered to be a worker and it appears that shoemakers constituted the second largest professional group in Athens, representing almost 5%

[100] Hellenic Statistical Authority, *Population - Housing Censuses: 1821-2021*, pp. 38-57.
[101] Anonymous, Akropolis, *Οι Υποδηματοποιοί* [*Shoemakers*], Saturday, May 5th 1912, sheet no. 6982, p. 2, https://digitallib.parliament.gr/display_doc.asp?item=47284&seg=.
[102] Ibid.

of the total workers' population, only outnumbered by tailors. Adding to that, 66,5% of them came from provinces outside of Athens, confirming the claim of increased urbanization from the 1870s onward. Nevertheless, shoemakers appear to have been overwhelmingly men (98,2%) -in contrast to tailors (24,45%)- and predominantly during their productive age spans with more than 2/3 being 18-50 years old and a good 40% being particularly young (18-30 years old). The size of this age group not only demonstrates the existence of young people in the trade, but more importantly, it testifies to a generational change in the shoemaking workforce during the first twenty years of the 20th century. A generation that had obviously been influenced by the values of the shoemaker's pre-modern moral economy by its predecessors but could be more receptive to novel ideas encountered in the new environment of the cities to which it had migrated. This is confirmed by Paloukis who suggests that most shoemakers in the early 20th century were "of non-guild origin", not implying their absence from late 19th century guilds but stressing that they were not the children of already established master-shoemakers,[103] which constitutes another instance of breaking from paternalism.

Figures on employment status are also enlightening as only half of them appear to have been employed, the other half finding themselves among the ten professions in the capital that were ravaged by unemployment the most. The census located the causes of the phenomenon not in illness but in an explicit lack of jobs which led to "intervals of employment and unemployment", the latter usually lasting from 3 to 6 months. Summing up those quantitative data, one realizes the precariousness of shoemakers during the first quarter of the 20th century. This meant that young men would leave their place of birth along with the safety both of their family and the small rural societies to which they were used in favor of a large city. Upon arriving there, even if they managed to find work, they would probably have to face constant unemployment for considerable time spans.

The memoirs of Georgios Makropoulos, who had been a shoemaker's apprentice since 1914, confirm this perception of shoemakers both as migrating and seasonal workers facing near life-threatening situations. By these words, the 16-year-old Makropoulos was informed by his father,

[103] Paloukis, p. 137.

who paid him a visit in the workshop he was hired as an apprentice, that he could no longer sustain him and thus had to leave his hometown of Volos:

> *The law requires me to raise my children until they are 12 years old. You're 16. I can't afford bread. See to it that you find your bread by yourself... I have to look after your two younger brothers.*[104]

The boy traveled first to the towns of Karditsa and then Kavala where he aspired to work as a shoemaker as he had finished his apprenticeship which lasted for three years. In Kavala, he was forced to sleep on the pavement outside a cobbling workshop in order not to spend his scarce money. During those difficult times, Makropoulos was traveling equipped only with a mattress, pillow, bread, and his briefcase containing shoemaking tools.[105] However, he was still unable to find a workshop that would hire him, so he was forced to move once again to the town of Drama, where he finally managed to get employed.

> *It was the most aristocratic shop in Drama, that is, it had as its clientele the economically prosperous society. The master craftsman of the shop (before he hired me) asked me if I made women's shoes and I told him that I made men's shoes, but I would also make women's shoes. He replied, "bring your tools". ... his enthusiasm (when I finished) was indescribable because they were wonderful in terms of art and weight ... Our [workers'] wage was 15 drachmas per pair. I immediately joined the union of shoeworkers in Drama ... we made demands for an increase of 5 drachmas a pair and went on strike which succeeded.*[106]

It accrues that Makropoulos was a skilled craftsman, impressing his employer, and was paid by the piece for his work. Accordingly, craftsmanship continued to play a major role for the employment of shoeworkers, affirming their moral economy. However, deep knowledge of the craft alone was not a sufficient justification for a "fair" or viable payment anymore as Makropoulos had to join the shoeworkers' union and participate in a strike in order to demand an increased wage, thus confirming Commons' claim of wage conflict. This instance reveals a decisive break from the 19th century habitus as employer and shoeworker were now actively clashing in defense of their conflicting interests. At this point, it must be stressed that the common moral economy of employer and shoeworker did not vanish altogether as a concept, and to assume so would mean

[104] Makropoulos, p. 2.
[105] Ibid., pp. 9-10.
[106] Ibid., p. 11.

projecting the experience of the United States and Western Europe on Greece, leading to false assumptions. Greek shoemaking never reached the wholesale order stage, which resulted in the involvement of huge capital holders and merchants in other countries. Instead, the retail shop stage seems to correspond more accurately with the circumstances in Greece, as either master-shoemakers were gradually transforming into retailers or actual retailers having no knowledge of the craft but some amount of available capital, employed shoeworkers. *Acropolis* confirms this assumption through the statement of a master-shoemaker operating his shop in a central street of Athens:

> *Our workshops should be made up of and run by people of craft. They themselves should be able to practice it in all its forms and stages. People that are just entrepreneurs and capitalists should not be allowed to enter, because they contribute to the decline of craft and the exploitation of the craftsmen whom they treat as instruments of their profiteering tendencies.*[107]

This situation is also in line with the aforementioned paradigms of Tsamis and Rigopoulos who are mentioned as "factory owners". The workshops in their possession were definitely not actual factories, neither in terms of size and workforce nor in terms of mechanization and invested capital. The 1917 census confirms this, mentioning that none of the Athens shoemakers was employed in a factory at the time.[108] However, in the context of Greek economic standards and figures, the amount of capital that they possessed and their paramount role as merchants were enough to designate them as "factory owners" and to indicate a chasm from their employees. Evidently, the dichotomy of master and kalfa that was connected to a profession-oriented identity was no more in line with the circumstances of 20th-century Greek shoemaking and it was gradually replaced by the employer-shoeworker dichotomy that denotes the establishment of clearly conflicting class-identities.

Another element that reinforced this chasm was the worsening of working conditions in shoemakers' workshops. The earliest official document on such matters was the "Summary of work inspection of 1920". According to it:

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[107] Anonymous, Akropolis, *Οι Υποδηματοποιοί* [*Shoemakers*], Friday, May 17th 1912, sheet no. 6998, p. 2, https://digitallib.parliament.gr/display_doc.asp?item=47284&seg=.

[108] Ministry of National Economy, Statistics Division, *Athens - Piraeus workers census conducted in 25 February 1917*, p. 36, http://dlib.statistics.gr/Book/GRESYE_02_1903_00033.pdf.

> *Before the establishment of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry and later the Ministry of National Economy ... on 28 April 1909, there was no labor inspection body in Greece, nor were there any labor laws ... The enactment of the first labor laws on Sunday as day off, ... on the health and safety of workers and on the work of women and minors in 1911 ... led to the creation of a special body to monitor their implementation.*[109]

However the inspection was constantly postponed or interrupted both due the Balkan Wars and the First World War and the country's internal state of instability and even the authors of the summary admitted that there were serious deficiencies in their reports.[110] In spite of this, the source retains its analytical value, because the majority of the inspections that took place concerned shoemakers' workshops in Piraeus and Athens, thus -even with some scrutiny- the sample can provide insight into the working conditions. When commenting on craft workshops, the inspectors stated that shoemakers' workshops were in the lowest tier because they exhibited the worst conditions in terms of facilities and hygiene:

> *They are located in sunless and damp basements with poor lighting, unclean walls and slab floors, or in dull semi-basements, disproportionately narrow in respect to the number of workers in them, or in poorly lit ground-floor apartments with inadequate ventilation, behind the retail-shops.*[111]

It is not surprising then, that out of the 600 shoemakers' workshops that were inspected in Athens and Piraeus, it was reported that not a single one met the hygiene standards and that even in smaller cities such as Patras, Volos, Karditsa, and Larissa, shoewokers were found to be exercising their craft under unsanitary conditions. According to the reports, 30 out of 59 shoemakers in Athens that passed away due to unnatural causes during 1920, had tuberculosis identified as the cause, deeming shoemaking the profession affected by the disease the most. This is also in line with the situation in Europe from 1831-1911, though with the usual delay that appeared in every aspect of the profession as the paper argues.[112]

Summing up, not mechanization but the broadening of internal markets in Greece due to urbanization and the general population increase, was what pushed shoemaking towards what

[109] Ministry of National Economy, Directorate of Labor and Social Welfare, Labor Inspectorate , *Summary of reports of the labor inspection staff on the application of labor laws in 1920*, p. 3.
[110] Ibid., pp. 5-6.
[111] Ibid., p. 11.
[112] Margaret Cairns, Alice Stewart, "Pulmonary Tuberculosis Mortality in the Printing and Shoemaking Trades: Historical Survey, 1881-1931", *British Journal of Social Medicine*, Volume 5, No. 2, April 1951, pp. 73, 80.

Commons would call the “retail shop stage”. This development demanded but also expedited the accumulation of capital and led to the violent separation of the master-craftsman’s different roles with that of retailer assuming paramount importance. Irrespective of the common morality that employer and worker shared at an imagined level, the two were repeatedly being pushed apart as practical issues -such as wage conflicts- were arising. The 19th century argument of homogeneity could no longer be sustained as masters were being transformed into capital holders and “factory owners” while shoeworkers were struggling to acquire employment and cope with working conditions, in what could be called a procedure of “proletarianization in the absence of factories”. The deep knowledge of their craft, was losing ground as a source of pride and fulfillment with all the repercussions previously discussed for a predominantly men-dominated historical subject. If constant internal migration, the seasonal character of the profession -which created repeated unemployment intervals-, and the horrific working conditions are added to this image of alienation it is not difficult to assume that, sooner or later, shoeworkers would attempt to protect and advance their interests against those of their employers. Indeed, their pre-modern moral economy advocating for “fairness”, collectiveness” and “mutuality” was soon to be channeled not into the paternalism of the guilds but into their separate worker’s unions and what Paloukis calls “ethical syndicalism”.

3.2. The expressions

3.2.a.: The 1904 shoeworkers’ strike

The delay of Greek shoeworkers in organizing into unions based on class becomes explicit when compared to the United States. Commons locates the first major break of capital and labor back to the 18th century as two separate employer and workers’ unions were created in the form of the “Society of the Master Cordwainers of the City of Philadelphia" in 1789, and the "Federal Society of Journeymen Cordwainers"[113] in the same city. The “Correspondence of the International Shoemakers’ Union” provides further nuance on the unionizing of shoemakers that can be utilized for putting the Greek case into perspective. The “International Shoemakers’ Union” was founded in 1907, indicating that unionizing was transcending national borders and assuming a

[113] Commons, p. 45.

universalizing character. The statute that was devised that same year made explicit that the union had a clear goal not only to "establish connections between the different territorial organizations" or fight against "lock outs conjured up by the body of employers for paralyzing the organization of the workmen".[114] The culmination of those small battles would be much more far reaching, because according to the Union: "It shall contribute toward strengthening their [the working classes] joint interests and enable them ultimately to defeat capitalism, their common enemy".[115] Thus, a clear anti-capitalism accrues that evidently found its expression in socialism, as the Union was affiliated with the Second International. It appears that in the first Congress of the Union, 8 different countries were represented and there was an apparent desire to include even more, something that facilitated the following years.[116] A Greek shoeworkers' organization was never represented in the Union and in order to understand why, one can study the paradigms of Serbia and Bulgaria. Of course there are differences between the three countries, but the fact that all of them are located in the Balkans, thus being part of the European periphery, induce great analytical value into the realization of their commonalities and differences.

It is reported that in 1909 Serbia, the recruitment of members for the International Union was difficult as shoeworkers were employed by masters in small numbers into traditional workshops. However, it is also mentioned that at least one shoe-factory where 80 workers were employed was operating in the capital city of Belgrade.[117] The Union provides a similar image for Bulgaria where, in 1912, there were factories present, employing 50-60 shoeworkers each.[118] The existence of factories, even though they co-existed with smaller workshops, indicates a greater volume of production in those two countries and the possibility of a gradual transition to the wholesale-stage of the market which in turn gave incentives and reasoning for mobilizing and radicalizing on an international level. Accordingly, it is not illogical that the more local character of the Greek markets led to the delay of such international organization. The retail-shop stage of Greek

[114] International Boot and Shoe Operatives and Leather Workers, & International Union of Shoemakers, *International correspondence of the Secretary of the International Union of shoemakers*, International Institute of Social History, IISG ZO 16075, No. 1, September 1907, p. 6, https://hdl.handle.net/10622/CA43453C-79CE-4815-BDA2-B777DA5B5CEB.
[115] Ibid., p. 7.
[116] Ibid.
[117] International correspondence of the Secretary of the International Union of shoemakers, No. 2, October 1909, p. 16, https://hdl.handle.net/10622/CA43453C-79CE-4815-BDA2-B777DA5B5CEB .
[118] International correspondence of the Secretary of the International Union of shoemakers, No. 5, November 1912, p. 2, https://hdl.handle.net/10622/CA43453C-79CE-4815-BDA2-B777DA5B5CEB .

shoemaking that was argued before, is also confirmed by the Hellenic Statistical Authority's reports on imports and exports of 1908 and 1918, as shoes' exports are non-existent.[119] However, this lack of internationalism is not contradicting the paper's main argument, but -on the contrary- it provides nuancing. It appears that Greek shoeworkers, without the presence of factories or a wholesale-stage market were still able to explicitly express their radical mobilization attempts on a local level.

The explicit break between capital and labor facilitated in 1904, when the "Shoeworkers Brotherhood of Athens and Piraeus" and the "Shoemaker-Retailers' Association of Athens and Piraeus"[120] were founded, representing workers and employers respectively. This came as a response not only to the arduous material circumstances that shoeworkers found themselves in but also to the new market morality that stressed competitive individualism, in order to excel and climb the social ladder.[121] Their resentment quickly assumed a radical form, and in October the shoeworkers went on strike against their employers, which was depicted vividly by the press of the time. Three daily newspapers are mainly used for the creation of the strike's chronicle, namely «ΣΚΡΙΠ» (*SKRIP*), «ΑΣΤΥ» (*ASTI*) and «ΕΜΠΡΟΣ» (*EMPROS*) from which, the former had a conservative and, during the following years, explicitly royalist orientation while the two others were characterized by more progressive and republican convictions. However, their ideological affiliations seem not to affect the image of shoemaker-retailers and shoeworkers, on the contrary all of them formed narratives of the strike that did not conflict with each other and mostly focused on its day-to-day presentation in a neutral tone.

According to *SKRIP*:

> *On the 27th of October, the workers of the shoe workshops on Aeolus Street [one of the major commercial streets in Athens] went on strike. Previously, a union had been formed by the shoeworkers, the main purpose of which was to improve the conditions under which they work and*

[119] Ministry of Economy, *Statistics of special commerce of Greece with foreign countries: Navigation in the year 1908*, provided by the Hellenic Statistical Authority, http://dlib.statistics.gr/Book/GRESYE_02_1502_00037.pdf . and Ministry of Economy, *Statistics of the special trade of Greece with foreign countries by the year 1918*, provided by the Hellenic Statistical Authority, http://dlib.statistics.gr/Book/GRESYE_02_1502_00048.pdf.
[120] Gkoutos, p. 73.
[121] Alan Dawley, Paul Faler, "Working-Class Culture and Politics in the Industrial Revolution: Sources of Loyalism and Rebellion" , *Journal of Social History*, Volume 9, No. 4, 1976, p. 467.

> *live today. The members decided ... to demand an increase in the wages of workers in ready-made shoe shops.*[122]

The shoeworkers' demand for the increase of a drachma of their daily wage -for each pair of shoes- was articulated two weeks prior, accompanied by the threat of a strike if they would not receive a positive answer[123] and accordingly, the employers conferred in order to "defend their interests".[124] Interestingly enough, their opinions appeared to be divided as bespoke shoe retailers were positive towards the increase while ready-made shoe retailers were adamant on refusing it. This dichotomy clearly reflects the transformation of a portion of the employers to capital owners motivated by the free-market logic which dictated the intensification of labor with the goal of creating a stock and maximization of profit. Thus, they articulated their interests in stark contrast to those of their workers, at the same time differentiating themselves from the more tempered bespoke shoes employers. The shoeworkers' initial response was to go on a "partial strike" which concerned the three largest "factories" on the street and suggested to the workers in the rest of the workshops to continue working in order to make the potential economic damage even more evident.[125] However, after conferring again, the employers declared that:

> *The demands are completely unreasonable and they [shoeworkers], after unionizing, imposed so much on us shopkeepers that they themselves set their own wages and working hours. We are therefore in need of "striking" against our workers by firing them until they have been "corrected".*[126]

Indeed, in the afternoon of the 27th, the full lock-out of the Aeolus Street workshops was put in effect and the strike expanded in retaliation. Around 200 shoeworkers also visited their colleagues of custom-made shoe workshops, receiving their words of support and solidarity.[127]

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[122] Anonymous, SKRIP, *Απεργία Εργατών Υποδηματοποιών της Οδού Αιόλου: Αι αξιώσεις των* [*Aeolus Street Shoeworkers' Strike: Their demands*], Sheet no. 9578, Thursday, October 28th 1904, p. 2, https://digitallib.parliament.gr/display_doc.asp?item=46149&seg=.

[123] Ibid.

[124] Anonymous, ASTY, *Απεργία Εργατών Υποδηματοποιών: Αι χθεσιναί αποφάσεις* [*The Shoeworkers' Strike: Yesterday decisions*], sheet no. 5310, Thursday, October 28th 1904, p. 2, https://digitallib.parliament.gr/display_doc.asp?item=37841&seg=.

[125] Ibid.

[126] Anonymous, EMPROS, *Απεργία Υποδηματοποιών Εργατών* [*Shoeworkers' Strike*], sheet n. 2881, Thursday, October 28th 1904, p. 1, https://digitallib.parliament.gr/display_doc.asp?item=36286&seg=.

[127] ASTY, ibid.

From the get-go, there are many remarks to be made on the strike, both in terms of the discourse used by the press and the protagonists themselves and the stance of the opposing sides. Firstly, it is proven that the 20th-century terminology that the paper has advocated for was well established and used already by 1904. The shoemaker of the previous century, under whom capital and labor were at least to some extent unified, was nowhere to be found and the distinction between employer and employee was clear. The latter is referred to as "shoeworker" [υποδηματεργάτης] while the former either as "retailer-shoemaker" [καταστηματάρχης-υποδηματοποιός] denoting the importance of his role as merchant, or "factory owner". It is enlightening that the term factory-owner was directed toward the owners of ready-made shoe workshops. As it was argued before, the term did not stem from the fact that these employers owned actual factories, but from their ability to accumulate capital through the creation of a shoe stock which was then funneled to the expanded market that Commons has described. Furthermore, the stance of shoeworkers was much more radical as they were not responding in a premodern, spontaneous manner anymore. They were taking collective action and organized by their class-oriented Union were going on an "offensive strike" which does not suggest a timid defensive stance but an urge to immediately better their circumstances. Their moral economy played a major role in this development because it had become evident to them that what had traditionally been considered a "fair" wage or living and working conditions was not a given anymore and had to be earned against the will of their employers.

On the other hand, retailers themselves realized that they had to defend their own interests as opposed to those of their workers and they perceived the Union to be a threat, which motivated them to facilitate the lock-out. This also denotes a differentiation in terms of morality. The employers' main challenge during the 19th century was the possibility that some of their more skilled apprentices could turn out to be future antagonists by establishing their own workshops but this threat was easily countered through the guild system -which master craftsmen dominated- by prolonging indefinitely the apprenticeship years. This experience was transferred into the 20th century which is evident by the use of the lock-out as a means of "correction". The original Greek word, described by the term, is «σωφρονισμός» (sofronismos), it literally translates into "getting someone's mind right" and has extensively reformative and educational connotations. However, the paternalism fueling this perception was not applicable anymore and it was transformed into

direct oppression towards another social class. The major difference was that the "modern kalfas" were collectively fighting back.

The following day found the two parties conferring again and both deciding that they were unwilling to back off, thus the strike continued with reignited fervor.[128] Between 500 and 600 shoeworkers proceeded to a public manifestation of their demands and headed en masse to the central offices of various newspapers requesting "the support of the press and thanking the newspapers that dedicated articles to the strike".[129] It is mentioned that the numerous strikers were managing to sustain themselves through the treasury of their Union "which they have continuously contributed weekly".[130] This occurrence is indicative of the fundamental difference between guilds and unions. While the former were mixed and only provided help in case of sickness, the latter had an "assertive character" as their class-based composition required the protection of shoeworkers' interests. They were dedicated to the purpose of realizing their demands and thus provided economic support during the strike. Subsequently, shoeworkers proceeded to sing a song that was collectively devised and used as a spontaneous rally motto with the aim of celebrating the upcoming successful outcome of the strike, and the realization of their demand.[131] According to *EMPROS*, the song was created by a shoeworker named G. Tsoumis who was also a cantor in the church of St. Theodoros.[132]

All cobblers are on strike

They demand that the masters give a drachma

And the drachma they'll give in peace and quiet

We have hope in God and society

Today it's Aeolus Street turn

[128] Anonymous, ASTY, *Η Απεργία των Εργατών Υποδηματοποιών: Οι χθεσινές συσκέψεις* [*The Shoeworkers Strike: yesterday's conferences*], sheet no. 5311, Friday, October 29th, 1904, p. 2, https://digitallib.parliament.gr/display_doc.asp?item=37841&seg=.
[129] ASTY, Ibid.
[130] Ibid.
[131] Ibid.
[132] Anonymous, EMPROS, *Η Απεργία των Υποδηματοποιών: Το τραγούδι της απεργίας* [*The Shoeworkers' Strike: The strike song*] , sheet no. 2882, Friday, October 29th 1904, p. 3, https://digitallib.parliament.gr/display_doc.asp?item=36286&seg.

To be paid humanely, for the worker to live

To be paid humanely, for the work of the kalfa

Let our colleagues live, we are not playing around[133]

The song must have only been sung during that specific day as it is not tracked in any other instances in the future, however, it captures the enthusiasm of the shoeworkers and informs us about their moral economy and the formation of their class identity. One can safely assume that they deliberately referred to themselves as "cobblers" not because they were actually cobblers - only capable of repairing and not crafting shoes- but because they were attempting to propagate that they belonged to the working class. The use of the word constitutes a "controlled downgrading" which served the purpose of drawing a line between them and their employers. This instance infers a complete reversal of the previous century's rationale when being called a cobbler would be demeaning. On the contrary, it seems to be a title of honor according to the shoeworkers' 20th century arising working-class identity. Subsequently, the song made explicit the demand for 1 drachma raise and confirms Commons' claim of wage conflicts between masters and workers. The shoeworkers not only expressed the centrality of wages as their only demand but also were excessively optimistic that their employers would satisfy it "in peace and quiet", in other words without resisting them. The following verses provide an extremely informative picture of their moral economy by affirming their "hope in God and society", which is the direct continuation of the shoeworkers' pre-modern conviction that they were operating for the mutual benefit of society while at the same time being pious. The same theme is affirmed by the multiple use of "humane payment", in the sense of fairness. However, in the 20th-century context, fairness was intermingling with class identity as the humane payment would allow "workers to live" and constituted the just remuneration of the "work of the kalfa". Interestingly enough, in the version of the song provided by *EMPROS*, instead of "masters", the word "masqueraders"[134] is used, denoting mockery, disrespect, and outright rivalry. Thus, it accrues that, unlike the play by Christovasilis where the shoemaker sought salvation through the state and his kalfa took advantage of his master's situation

[133] Anonymous, SKRIP, *Η Απεργία των Εργατών Υποδηματοποιών της Οδού Αιόλου* [*The Aeolus Street Shoeworkers' Strike*], sheet no. 9579, Friday, October 29th 1904, p. 2, https://digitallib.parliament.gr/display_doc.asp?item=46149&seg=.

[134] Anonymous, EMPROS, Η Απεργία των Υποδηματοποιών: Το τραγούδι της απεργίας [The Shoeworkers' strike: The strike song] , sheet no. 2882, Friday, October 29th 1904, p. 3, https://digitallib.parliament.gr/display_doc.asp?item=36286&seg.

to usurp his workshop, this song indicates a break from paternalism due to the now clear dichotomy of class identity between employers and shoeworkers. Lastly, the song confirms Hobsbawm's descriptions of shoemakers as "worker poets". The author himself admits that "of course, nobody would claim that all, or even the majority among shoemaker activists, were artisan intellectuals … Yet the striking fact is the connection between politics and articulate literacy. Who says cobbler surprisingly often says journalist and versifier, preacher and lecturer, writer and editor."[135] It is no surprise then that "preacher" and "versifier" are also represented by Tsoumis and his colleagues in the 1904 strike of the Greek case.

The strike continued unabated and shoeworkers asserted that they would compromise with nothing less than the 1 drachma increase that they demanded, even threatening to establish independent workshops that they would run on their own.[136] When on the 1st of November employers appeared willing to only provide an increase of 0.25-0.50 drachmas, depending on the shoes' leather type, shoeworkers proceeded in taking their tools from the workshops of Aeolus Street and depositing them to a warehouse that was rented by the Union and was purposed to serve as their "self-managed workshop".[137] At this point, one can observe a clear distinction between artisans -a category into which shoeworkers fall - and proletarian factory workers, as the latter did not own tools and accordingly did not enjoy the same degree of independence in their workplace. The shoeworkers' decision had a practical but also highly symbolic value connected directly to the character of the profession. As argued previously in the paper, shoemakers sourced their pre-modern sense of pride and accomplishment through complete knowledge and control on the entirety of the production process. In the context of the Greek case, this trait found continuation during the 20th century because of the total lack of mechanization in the shoemaking industry. The strikers were not dependent on their employers or their capital (in the form of machinery) for facilitating production and -most importantly- well aware of the fact, thus they used their independence as a bargaining chip to apply pressure and enforce their demands. Withdrawing their tools from the workshops was obviously necessary for their endeavor but also propagated acutely

[135] Hobsbawm, Scott, p. 89.
[136] Anonymous, SKRIP, Η Απεργία των Εργατών Υποδηματοποιών [The Shoeworkers Strike], sheet no. 9581, Sunday, October 31st 1904, p. 2. https://digitallib.parliament.gr/display_doc.asp?item=46149&seg=.
[137] Anonymous, SKRIP, *Οι Απεργοί Εργάται Υποδηματοποιοί: Ίδρυσις ιδίου εργοστασίου* [*The Striking Shoeworkers: Establishment of their own factory*], sheet no. 9583, Tuesday, November 2nd 1904, p. 2, https://digitallib.parliament.gr/display_doc.asp?item=46149&seg=.

their absolute self-reliance because just as in the case of Makropoulos they were the only thing they needed. On that basis, they added that if the employers would not succumb soon, they would also demand compensation after the end of the strike for the time they remained unemployed.[138]

According to the press, during the employers' conference that day, even the partial increase of the wage was opposed by most of them and especially by Konstantinos Rigopoulos,[139] who would be presented as an "amiable factory owner" by the *Newspaper of The Shoemakers* in 1908. However, the main topic of discussion was the overall "behavior" of the workers that was characterized verbatim as "satrapic"[140] and one of the employers suggested that "serious measures should be taken immediately" as they were being "deprived of their independence".[141] The tense situation that had been created even made the article author of *ASTY* comment that spirits in both sides were aroused and "if the situation continues, it would not be unrealistic for things to go off the legal track and for clashes between workers and shopkeepers to ensue."[142] In spite of those predictions, on November 2nd, employers exhibited further signs of yielding as four of them advocated for satisfying the strikers' demands,[143] followed by one more the next day.[144] As a result:

> *The strike of the shoeworkers ... can be considered to have finally concluded since most shopkeepers accepted the terms proposed by the workers and work that had been suspended for a week has resumed*.[145]

[138] SKRIP, ibid.
[139] Anonymous, EMPROS, *Η Απεργία των Εργατών Υποδηματοποιών: Η σύσκεψις των εργοστασιαρχών* [*The Shoeworkers' Strike: The factory-owners' conference*], sheet no. 2886, Tuesday, November 2nd 1904, p. 2, https://digitallib.parliament.gr/display_doc.asp?item=36286&seg=.
[140] Anonymous, ASTY, *Η Απεργία των Εργατών Υποδηματοποιών: Αι χθεσιναί αποφάσεις* [*The Shoeworkers' Strike: Yesterday's Decisions*], sheet no. 5313, Tuesday, November 2nd 1904, p. 2, https://digitallib.parliament.gr/display_doc.asp?item=37841&seg=.
[141] EMPOS, ibid.
[142] Anonymous, ASTY, *Η απεργία των Εργατών Υποδηματοποιών: Έξαψις πνευμάτων* [*The Shoeworkers' Strike: Spirits aroused*], sheet no. 5313, Tuesday, November 2nd 1904, p. 2, https://digitallib.parliament.gr/display_doc.asp?item=37841&seg=.
[143] Anonymous, EMPROS, *Η Απεργία των Εργατών Υποδηματοποιών: Η χθεσινή απόπειρα συνεδριάσεως* [*The Shoeworkers' Strike: Yesterday's conference attempt*], sheet no. 2887, Wednesday, November 3rd 1904, p. 1, https://digitallib.parliament.gr/display_doc.asp?item=36286&seg=.
[144] Anonymous, EMPROS, *Η Απεργία των Εργατών Υποδηματοποιών* [*The Shoeworkers' Strike*], sheet no. 2889, Thursday, November 4th 1904, p. 2, https://digitallib.parliament.gr/display_doc.asp?item=36286&seg=.
[145] Anonymous, ASTY, *Η Απεργία των Εργατών Υποδηματοποιών: Τα ληφθέντα μέτρα* [*The Shoeworkers' Strike: The measures adopted*], sheet no. 5318, Friday, November 5th 1904, p.2, https://digitallib.parliament.gr/display_doc.asp?item=37841&seg=.

The relatively short and non-violent strike of 1904 brings to light some interesting facts. Firstly, it demonstrated the powerful dynamics of collective assertion as workers rallied around their union and driven by their emerging class identity, succeeded in forcing their employers to satisfy their demands. Secondly, conflict emerged in the opposing camp mainly between bespoke shoe shopkeepers and ready-made shoe shopkeepers which, as it has been argued, was rooted in the greater concentration of capital by the latter. However, even hardline "factory owners" were forced to yield as the lock-out failed to force the resolute strikers back to the workshops. Lastly, the character of the strike confirms Paloukis' claim of the existence of a "moralizing and democratic Christian-socialism … that in this period expressed the radicalization of the artisanal workers in their attempt to protect their workshop-culture from the free market, offering a discourse of class differentiation and worker identity".[146] This fact becomes even more explicit through the references of the strike song to "hope in society and God" but also to the "worker's humane payment", affirming the adoption of ethical syndicalism by the shoeworkers.

3.2.b.: The 1921 Union Statute

As it was shown, the "Athens Brotherhood of Shoeworkers" played an important role in the strike of 1904 and expressed the demands of the shoeworkers, who eventually succeeded in increasing their wages. Nevertheless, in order to give a full account of the character of their political mobilization and radicalization, it is necessary to study the Union not statically - that is, only in the case of the strike - but in the context of its continuous evolution and movement. Indeed, the statute of the same Union in 1921 demonstrates that the class identity expressed through it at the beginning of the century not only existed but was further consolidated. This particular statute was retrieved through the membership card of the shoeworker Georgios Sioros and is available in the digital repository of the Archives of Contemporary Social History.

The most obvious change is the renaming from "Athens Brotherhood of Shoeworkers" to "Athens Shoeworkers Union"[147] which was the continuation of the 1904 Union, consolidating on a lexicological/symbolic level the clear split from the employers, while Sioros himself is registered

[146] Paloukis, p. 144.
[147] Athens Shoeworkers' Union, *Καταστατικόν Σωματείου Υποδηματεργατών Αθηνών* [*Statute of the Athens Shoeworkers Union*], Archives of Contemporary Social History (ASKI), EDA Archive, 374_001.001, p. 5, https://askiarchives.eu/infopubl/374001/files/assets/basic-html/page-1.html#.

as a kalfa. The articles of the statute referring to its purpose can be classified into two categories; firstly, those referring to practical, material, and immediate demands, and secondly, those touching ideological-political, moral, and wider issues. When looking at the first category, the statute explicitly advocates for "extension of labor legislation", "reduction of working hours and increase or fixing of the price of work and daily wage" and achieving "collective labor agreements".[148] The aforementioned demands indicate an explicit class-oriented course that was dictated by the conflicting interests of employer and employee and was further reinforced by the provisions of the statute concerning the members. It is mentioned that "every shoeworker over 16 years of age can be accepted and have the right to elect and be elected for the organs of the Union after 6 months".[149] However, the most interesting element of the accruing class identity lies elsewhere. Apart from the obvious obligations of the members, such as attending assemblies, voting, and paying the weekly contribution, everyone should "propagandize the aims of the Union … and defend the workers' struggle when slandered by plutocracy's agents."[150] Evidently, both the ideologically and emotionally charged language and the aggressiveness of the articles point toward a major development in the shoeworkers' mobilization which departed from being vaguely or embryonically radical and assumed an acutely militant character. This claim of class-related militancy is also confirmed by the statute's 10th article according to which a member would be expelled from the Union not only in case he "became an employer and developed his own exploitative operation" but also if he "if he spread anti-worker principles... or brought bourgeoisie political debates into assemblies and conventions."[151]

Returning to the purpose of the Union, the second category should be analyzed as well. The statute, from the get-go, mentions that one of its aims is the:

> *Fraternal union and solidarity of the members for the elevation of their moral, economic, and professional situation away from all bourgeoisie influence, into a united force on the basis of Class Struggle.*[152]

[148] Ibid., p. 6.
[149] Ibid., p. 7.
[150] Ibid., p. 9.
[151] Ibid., p. 10.
[152] Ibid., pp. 5-6.

This excerpt affirms that the shoeworkers' moral economy was still present through the emphasis on fraternity and solidarity, as continuation of their pre-modern sense of collectiveness and mutuality, however, it was now expressed through the prism of Marxian/Scientific socialism, a point made clear by the reference to Class Struggle. The statute also provides a paradigm of the complexity of moral economy as advocated by Thompson and further analyzed in "Versions of Moral Economy". It is confirmed that the shoeworkers morality still combined contemporary elements of socialist political economy with their pre-modern cultural baggage. Interestingly enough, the Union would "celebrate the 1st of May along the other Unions" but also "its foundation anniversary, on St. Basileus day."[153] Nonetheless, undeniably, the incorporation of socialist ideas into the shoemakers' discourse and rationale, contributed to the intense politicization and broadening of the Union's end-goal which is summed up to the demand for "the nationalization of the means of production, making the fruits of labor the exclusive possession of the producers and abolishing the exploitation of human being by human being."[154] The two categories do not constitute a break from the class identity that was expressed in 1904 but its evolution. The direct demand of the strikes, namely the increase in wages, was preserved because it was rooted in everyday material needs and perils. However, the 1921 statute showcases that a portion of the shoeworkers was arguing that temporary measures (ex. wage increase) alone did not suffice to provide a remedy for their difficult situation, thus their attention was turning to the construction of an alternative socio-economic system that could provide a holistic solution. Evidently, it appears that shoeworkers had also developed a high level of awareness of the magnitude and hurdles of their endeavor. This is confirmed by the Union's expressed desire to "…unite all the Shoeworkers' Unions of Greece in a Federation"[155] but also "to be in contact and correspondence with all the Professional Unions and Organizations in Greece".[156]

Conclusion

Modern historical research is no longer limited to dealing with the labor movement as a standardized and homogeneous social phenomenon but proceeds to the analysis of the

[153] Ibid., p. 21.
[154] Ibid., p. 6.
[155] Ibid., p. 7.
[156] Ibid., p. 12.

characteristics and behavior of particular professional groups. This approach nuances and informs narratives on the intricate connections between the working class and its identity formation but also provides paradigms of the various ways that this identity was internalized and subsequently articulated, usually in the form of political mobilization and -potentially- radicalization. Timothy Mitchell's work "Carbon Democracy" is a prime example, showing how coal, as a new energy source, created the prerequisites for miners to express democratic demands because of their profession's "character", namely the miner's freedom from supervision in contrast to the carefully ordered and regimented work of the machine-feeder.

> *The militancy of coal miners can be attributed in part to the fact that moving carbon stores from the coal seam to the surface created unusually autonomous places and methods of work. … and [the militancy] was an effort to defend this autonomy against the threats of mechanization, or against the pressure to accept more dangerous work practices, longer working hours or lower rates of pay.*[157]

However, this case is directly connected with the developments attributed to the industrial revolution and the changes that were facilitated along with it due to the fact that coal is widely viewed both symbolically and literally as its primary driving force. The shortcoming of this particular point of view -though invaluable as a conceptual starting point for research- is that it excludes cases that divert from this "traditional" pattern of industrialization.

Such deficiencies can be complemented by attempting to explore professional groups that did not fit into the aforementioned dominant tendency, thus -without systematic and in-depth analysis- their political mobilization and radicalization would appear as a paradox. While shoemakers have generally attracted the attention of historians due to their proverbial militancy, the case of Greece and its particularities have not been included in the body of literature. This paper constitutes the first attempt to introduce a comprehensive image of the political mobilization of Greek shoemakers, by addressing its causes, expressions, and extent of radical character. In order to achieve this goal, the phenomenon was historicized, and its gradual development tracked and analyzed from the 1880s until 1921. Hence, the evolving political culture and identity of shoemakers along with their expressions are viewed over a time span of 40 years and connected with wider and long-term changes that were facilitating in the Greek economy and society. Apart

[157] Timothy Mitchell, pp. 20-21.

from the aforementioned historicization, this approach avoided an exceptionalist understanding of this particular professional group and -on the contrary- dealt with it as a collective historical subject that was interconnected and interacting with its socio-economic environment and surrounding groups and the respective cultural connotations that this dynamic process produced. The starting point for unraveling the thread was the 1880s when there was a "wave" of guilds' foundation, which -nonetheless- had their roots in entirely premodern structures operating during the time of the Byzantine and Ottoman Empire. The guilds played a major role in the analysis because, as it was shown, they provided a paradigm of collective political mobilization that projected the shoemakers' premodern morality including a strong sense of paternalism. Furthermore, the "guilded past" of shoemaking gave significant insight into the character of the profession by showcasing the importance of apprenticeship and a strong link with the environment and culture of the artisan's workshop. However, instances of uncoordinated, individual mobilization were also taken into account by including the cases of the "Lovestruck Shoemaker" and Matsalis. Interestingly enough, the latter constituted an exception to the pattern observed during the 19th century and assumed an acutely radical character. Matsalis's early act of individual terrorism -in the form of Fragopoulos's murder- is testament to the fact that the development of shoemakers' mobilization was -by no means- a linear process.

Subsequently, the first twenty years of the 20th century were explored through the departure from guilds and the formation of class-based unions, the radical expression of conflicting class identities that were fermenting already from the previous century. The 1904 strikes and the 1921 Statute were the capstone of this process, as conscious radical mobilization, that in the case of the latter assumed explicit socialist characteristics. Thompson's moral economy was an invaluable tool for overcoming the puzzle that would accrue because of the total lack of mechanization in Greek shoemaking. One of the British historian's contributions lies in the realization that class consciousness and its implications do not necessarily spring out of "smoking chimneys" but can also be triggered by the penetration of the free market, its morality, culture, and overall logic that pose a threat to the moral economy of the masses. Only under this light can the complexity of political processes be understood, as even conservative structures such as guilds become important for the character of mobilization because they contain in embryonic form, tendencies that can develop into radicalism.

Ultimately, it was shown that the causes of the shoemakers' mobilization during the 19th century were linked with their pre-modern moral economy and "workshop culture". These commanded strict hierarchical patterns and the sense of honor and masculinity connected to the shoemakers' craftsmanship skills. Furthermore, the perception of reciprocal obligations and relations inside the profession but also between the shoemaker and wider society connotated with "collectiveness", "mutuality" and "fairness", namely the manual crafting of quality products which, in the end, justified a fair pay. This remuneration, however, did not constitute a "self-purpose" but the obvious outcome of the aforementioned moral economy. This value system was gradually challenged by the penetration of the free market and the flagship of its cultural arsenal, competitive individualism, which was reflected in the creation of a bourgeoisie deriving its power not from craftsmanship but from the accumulation of capital. Nevertheless, the mobilization of shoemakers during this time period -with the exception of Matsalis- was generally expressed in a conservative manner and took the form of seeking shelter in the paternalism either of the guilds or the state. At this point, one should consider that the different "functions" of shoemakers were largely still unified under the master craftsman, obscuring, and alleviating the tensions that sprung up but also explaining the persistence of paternalism. It must be mentioned that the lack of radical mobilization during the 19th century is not a denial of the existence of class differences or of an early class identity, which is demonstrated by the very existence of the institution of apprenticeship and the poor working conditions of the kalfas. It is nevertheless evident that the construction of clearly antithetical conceptions of this classness certainly had not yet matured at this early stage. Testament to this is the unification of the merchant and craftsman roles under the master shoemaker.

The change that facilitated during the following century lies exactly in this role fragmentation. Urbanization and the widening/expansion of markets in Greece contributed to the separation of the unified shoemaker's functions and made that of merchant or "factory-owner" dominant. It was observed that employer and worker were being pushed further apart because of the capital-labor antithesis which for the first time was so strongly expressed and established. This process brought to the surface disputes such as conflicts on wage, which was no longer defined by premodern fairness, violating the morality of the -now- shoeworker. The deterioration of working conditions resulting from the intensification of labor for the creation of stock products, combined with Greece's lagging behind in the introduction of labor legislation and the peculiarities of the

profession such as seasonality, which created unemployment, increased the feeling of insecurity. Thus, this situation acted as a catalyst for the conflict between employer and worker but also for the conscious formation of a class identity and the following radicalization.

This particular course for creating the Greek shoeworkers' class identity had a significant impact affecting the expressions of radical mobilization. Specifically, it is evident that during the early 20th century, pre-modern elements such as religiousness co-existed with novel demands and ways of asserting them as was shown by the 1904 strike. Moreover, the shoeworkers' morality did not disappear in favor of an entirely new value code, but it was largely funneled into the mutuality, collectiveness, and fairness of socialist ideals. The paper's findings confirm Thompson's claim of moral economy's potential to assume various political expressions. As the Greek case shows, those expressions may range from paternalism to Marxian socialism indicating a mobilization that, starting off as timid and conservative, ended up becoming radical and even militant. Another interesting realization is that the Greek shoemakers' political mobilization had been an instance when moral economy was not expressed as a wish to return to an idealized past but -on the contrary- called for the radical change of contemporary society, hence confidently looking to the future. Lastly, the temporal mismatch between Greek and European/American shoemaking in terms of political mobilization was confirmed and explained, adding new elements to the historiography. The relevance of the paper is further reinforced, since despite the discrepancies and differences with its neighbors, the Greek shoemaker, to a large extent, satisfied even the normative prerequisites set by Hobsbawm for the existence of radicalism.

> *To say that shoemakers, or any other trade, have a reputation for radicalism may, of course, mean one or more of three things: a reputation for militant action in movements of social protest; … a reputation for sympathy or association with, or activity in, movements of the political left; and a reputation as what might be called ideologists of the common people.*[158]

Despite the conclusions of this paper, which shed light on the political mobilization and radicalization of Greek shoemakers, while setting them into the wider European/American context, it would be absurd to claim that research on the topic has reached its limitations. On the contrary, there are many more questions to be asked and answered. Accordingly, future research could focus on aspects that this paper could not have dealt with because they would exceed its scope and

[158] Hobsbawm, Scott, pp. 86-87.

volume. To be specific, case studies on shoemaking in individual cities or regions of Greece could be explored, in order to get a more nuanced and complete image. Moreover, dealing with a time period after 1921 would be an invaluable addition, because of the arrival in Greece of huge numbers of refugees in the aftermath of the Asia Minor failed campaign, influencing immensely the demographics of the country. Thus, not only the population increase, in general, could be examined, but also the role of refugees in relation to shoemaking and its working-class identity. Lastly, the affiliation and involvement of this radical professional group with organizations of the Greek Left and their possible links with the international labor movement could result in a novel, transnational view. Going to such lengths of inquiry for a single professional group may at first glance seem like an exaggeration. Nevertheless, as this paper has demonstrated, specific case studies can be used to further inform and nuance narratives on class-identity creation and the development of the working class itself as a dynamic collective historical subject. Apart from this practical justification though, dedicated research and attention on our behalf are, after all, the least that it is owed to the neglected shoeworker, who -armed only with his toolkit and seemingly obsolete moral economy- attempted to assert his radical demands.

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