

European political cultures
Conflict or convergence?

Edited by Roger Eatwell



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7 Greece

Nicolas Demertzis

INTRODUCTION

The way fellow Europeans think of Greece is usually a strange mixture of an idealised past and a series of confusions about, even ignorance of, Greece's more recent history. On the one hand, their vision is inspired by the Classical tradition, of the glories of Athens and the other city-states, which forms an important part of a common European heritage. On the other hand, an incomplete knowledge of modern Greece is quite widespread. For example, everybody knows that democracy was created in Classical Greece, but it is hardly known that modern Greece has one of the longest parliamentary traditions in the West: in 1864 the male population in Greece was completely enfranchised, whereas in 1880 the number of the disenfranchised in Great Britain – supposedly a latter day font of democracy – was as high as 40 per cent.

European knowledge of Classical Greece is often partial, or highly selective. Its tradition was mixed: certainly not all the city-states were democracies, and in Athens 'democracy' was a male preserve and perfectly consistent with slavery. However, the main focus of this chapter is not the Classical tradition, or ancient Greece. Rather, the point is to identify a more modern Greek political culture which begins to emerge in the nineteenth century. History is vital to understanding modern Greek identity, but it is debatable whether any major insights are gained by beginning in the mists of time, or with the foundations of Europe's first major civilisation. The crucial point is to understand tensions within modern Greek culture, for instance, its more democratic, outward looking side, and its more holistic Orthodox religious aspect. Without this background, it is difficult to understand the nature of contemporary Greek political culture – the main subject of this chapter.

EARLY NATIONALISM, THE ORTHODOX LEGACY AND ATROPHIC CIVIL SOCIETY

As with all European countries, Greece's road to modernity had its own peculiarities. Founded in 1830, the Greek state developed from the 1821–7 revolution against the Turks, who had ruled the area for centuries and whose long-standing presence in the Balkans to this day makes it difficult to draw a neat boundary of 'Europe' along Greece's eastern boundary. That revolution, typical of the separatist Eastern nationalist movements,¹ was an historical case where an ethnic population under the domination of one of the great modern multiethnic empires undertakes the project of independence by appealing to the ideal of the nation. In Greek nation-building, the idea of the nation precedes the formation of the state, which, in turn, transforms this nation into a political entity.²

The making of the Greek state was feasible both because of the Ottoman weakness in the southern part of the Balkan peninsula and external intervention by England, France and Russia aimed at keeping the 'Eastern Question' under control. In addition it was affected by major competition and conflicts among the Greeks caused by great social inequalities, especially between peasants and landowners. The rationale of the Greek movement of independence was marked by the articulation of two different discourses: a nationalist-separatist discourse and a popular-egalitarian discourse with localist overtones. Although in the beginning the revolution was both national and social-agrarian, it ended with the traditional elites as the victors of that inner struggle. Thus a more conservative form of nationalism prevailed in the discursive practices of early Greek statehood.

Yet Greek nationalism was, and still is, far from unequivocal. On the one hand there existed those who defined the nation in terms of the Classical heritage and the new Enlightenment ideals such as freedom, rationality and secularisation. On the other hand, one may find the proponents of the resurrection of the Byzantine empire who understood nation in terms of Orthodox Christianity. This bifurcation caused numerous intense debates, social upheavals, policy disorientation, and feelings of insecurity, angst and ambiguity. For instance, the great dispute concerning the name of the modern Greeks: should they call themselves 'Hellenes' or 'Romii'? (The latter term comes from the 'Romans', which is the way the Byzantines referred to themselves; this debate was linked to the linguistic question of the constructed and Classical-like *katharevousa* and everyday *romelika*.) The Hellenic designation referred to an outward-directed image of the nation as the immediate heir of the Classical culture, whereas the Romeic designation had strong connotations with the Orthodox religious origins of the Greeks.³ By the same token, in spite of their radical-liberal character, when compared with their West European counterparts the concepts of citizenship and Greekness in the first revolutionary constitutions were continuous with the ideas of Christian believers.⁴ One could pick up

plenty of similar instances from Greek political history; however, the point to underline is that early Greek nationalism was not only more 'cultural' than it was 'political' but it created highly ambivalent collective identities as well. Moreover, the concept of 'Hellenic-Christian civilisation', introduced much later, has never managed to reconcile this ambivalence effectively.

Though 'invented' and 'selective',⁵ they both have pertinent effects on contemporary Greek political culture. But the two clashing traditions are of different types in many ways. Although the linguistic side represents an important social continuity, the Hellenic and Enlightenment tradition has been less grounded in popular culture: for the most part, it has been cultivated from above by elites. Contrariwise, the Byzantine and Ottoman religious and political tradition has been much more ingrained in everyday habitus, a term borrowed from Bourdieu to refer to the orchestration of activities based on practical consciousness.⁶ This tradition is distinguished by a particular intersection of instrumental and consummatory orientations (where the former relate to empirical ends and the latter to more transcendental and integrative values).⁷ On the one hand (and to use two Weberian terms relating to traditional authority), the 'patrimonial' political domination of the Byzantine empire and the 'sultanist' type of Ottoman power, as well as the familial and communal kind of social organisation and economic production, diminished the possibility of a contractual idea of citizenship, which was to become so important in much of Western Europe. That was due to the personified, though not entirely arbitrary, style of politics of both empires. The lack of institutionalised political procedures that would guarantee natural and civil rights and duties was the chief reason for the shaping of instrumental and defensive outlooks towards authorities. This was reinforced by the reality of everyday life, which resulted in the mistrust of any sort of secular power, and the belief that much of public life was based on nepotistic principles.⁸

On the other hand, the Orthodox conception of the self, with its mystic and communitarian overtones, was the basic theological context within which individuals were seeking for long-term justification and meaningfulness. Unlike the Catholic and the Protestant conceptions, where the relationship between man and God is mediated by reason and the law, the Orthodox Christian feels united with God in a non-mediated personal relationship. Consequently, a deep-going fatalism has grown out of this conception, but this has not led to a single consummatory vision which could harness the entire social energy. Partly, this was due to the elastic character of the Orthodox dogma which, contrary to many other Christian dogmas, has been flexibly adjusted to the day-to-day practical demands of life. The personified element made Orthodoxy more of a popular-religious practice than a prescriptively codified set of religious ethics, especially ones which required strict adherence.

The making of the Greek state and nation, including its parliamentary

system, took place principally in a non-capitalist socio-economic environment.⁹ Nineteenth-century Greece was an overwhelmingly agrarian society whose later economic development has been of a quasi-capitalist character. The latter is characterised by three notable factors. First, Greek economic capital has been more commercial and in general small business-based than industrial and productive. Second, most of the economic development has been mediated by the state as the principal mechanism of surplus distribution. And third, an institutionalised capitalist market *per se* has never been a major feature of Greek development. Thus neither a deep-rooted labour class nor a capitalist class in the proper sense have ever developed historically in Greece. Indeed, bourgeois culture is severely limited; instead, petty bourgeois patterns of life have tended to prevail.

Alongside these factors, clientelism and patronage have had major long-term effects which have been responsible for an atrophic civil society and an hypertrophic state. Atrophic civil society means the absence of strong intermediary 'bodies' between the state and the quasi-capitalist market of Greece, as well as the prevalence of the family as one of the central institutions of social, economic and cultural reproduction. In spite of their early appearance, for the most part parliamentarism and enfranchisement were the means for securing an essentially traditional mode of domination of various local elites rather than legitimating a social contract based on the logic of the market relationship. The institutional rules were ultimately subjected to a preferential clientelistic relationship between the central authority, the political elites, and the citizens. Thus the typical legal-contractual principles were subverted by an essentially non-modern mode of domination; consequently, particular state benefits have created expectations for personal and/or family aggrandisement rather than for collective development. By and large, legitimisation was rendered, as it were, a face-to-face cause rather than one arising from the non-personal binding constitutional setting. Consequently, the state was the primary means for making clientelism possible under the regime of formal parliamentary democracy.¹⁰

Undoubtedly, many fundamental changes occurred in the economy and polity of twentieth-century Greece, especially after the Second World War. Contemporary Greece is an intensively urbanised, thoroughly consumer-oriented and Western-style country which since 1981 has been a full member of the European Union. Yet the unequal situation of a non-articulated civil society and an overriding paternalistic state remains as one of its most important structural features. Notable areas where this has manifested itself are in state-corporatist regulations of interest intermediation, in the absence of local activism and basic organisational structures of most political parties, in the populist style of governing, in the military interventions, up to 1967, in the subjugation of the Orthodox Church to the state, and in the gigantic public sector, as well as in the widespread grey economy which makes for the multivalent character of modern Greeks' social identity.¹¹

All in all then, the fundamentals of Greek nation-building and statehood

were an ambivalent selective tradition made up of Christian Orthodox and Classical-Enlightenment dimensions, and the state-centred organisation of economy and polity as well as a weak civil society. As we shall see, these fundamentals have pertinent effects on Greek political culture today, since they operate at the macro-analytical level of the *longue durée*.

CONTEMPORARY GREEK POLITICAL CULTURE

Apart from a number of previous pioneering works on the political system, political history and economy, research on Greek political culture only began essentially in the mid-1980s and much remains to be done. This research started with a comparative project on South European political culture,¹² and is characterised by a more or less firm attachment to the mainstream political culture theory of the 1960s, including a preference for quantitative methods at the expense of the qualitative ones, and the primacy of the national level as a unit of analysis over the sub-cultural one. But since then, some efforts have been made to complement this research profile with more integrative theoretical approaches inspired by a broad conception of culture, with more sophisticated qualitative methods, and with an emphasis on the political sub-cultural level of analysis.¹³ The discussion in the rest of this chapter will seek to outline contemporary Greek culture against the background of this growing breadth of perspectives.

POLITICAL CLEAVAGES AND MAJOR SUB-CULTURES

As with any other case, Greek political culture is made up of sub-cultures; for most of the time their articulation has rendered it imperfectly integrated or even fragmented.¹⁴ The political cleavages of the country have deep historical roots inherited from two traumatic periods: the National Schism of 1915-22 and the Civil War of 1945-9. The first gave rise to a right and anti-right coalition; the second to a communist or left and an anti-communist division. During the 1960s and definitely after 1974 the two cleavages overlapped so that the major political families corresponded to two major parties, with the left being still fragmented, isolated and minimal.¹⁵ Thus the Third Greek democracy (1974 until the present) is more or less a 'tripolar party system with bipolar competition'. It should be noted that the cleavage between right and anti-right does not match the traditional right-left division that characterises most European political cultures (though with post-industrialism and other changes, this feature is declining). This is so because, for the most part, the respective identifications and loyalties correspond less to rival socio-economic collective interests than to competing forms of vertical clientelism – though especially during the 1990s the right-anti-right cleavage refers horizontally to separate social groups.¹⁶

In spite of the intense regional inequalities of Greek society, clientelism has also been one of the prime reasons for rural and urban cultures not

having been transformed into two major separate political sub-cultures – though since 1974 the traditional patron-client form of clientelism has largely been replaced by a party-bureaucratic form.¹⁷ Another major reason is the diffuse middle-class profile of this society and the increased levels of conspicuous consumption supported by remittances from abroad, by foreign loans and by grey economic activities. Last but not least, the strong economic, sentimental and familial connections of urban dwellers who were part of the massive internal immigration from the countryside during the 1950–70 period is one more reason why a clearer rural–urban split has not opened up.

Quite a lot of work has been done recently, written in Greek mainly, on the subject of women's political culture; although the old stereotypical profile of women has been confirmed (i.e. less politically interested, more alienated, etc.), this work brought some new facets to the fore. Given that from 1971 to 1989 female employment increased from 27.7 per cent to 37.0 per cent, a certain relationship has been observed between systematic work experience and participatory orientations in public affairs. Younger and more educated women place themselves more to the left than male respondents of the same status; besides, there is among them an active minority which has developed a special awareness of female gender that makes them reject the male definition of politics and the public sphere. Nevertheless, women's political issues remain underdeveloped compared to those of many of the Western European countries.

By and large, Greece is an ethnically and religiously homogeneous society, though this does not imply the absence of minorities, whose rights and needs have only recently been given some serious thought. The oldest of these minorities are:

- 1 the Muslim community in Western Thrace which to a great extent is self-defined as Turkish;¹⁸
- 2 the Slavophone population in (Greek) Macedonia which, although constituting little more than 1 per cent of the total population and thoroughly Hellenised, is a controversial group as far as the Greek government's Balkan policies are concerned;
- 3 the gypsy (Roma) minority which numbers no more than 120,000 people, who are almost totally Christianised and of Hellenic consciousness;
- 4 the Jewish community, which after the Nazi extermination and post-war emigration is small and well integrated into Greek society;
- 5 the Roman Catholics, the Protestants and the Jehovah's Witnesses, who are all small religious communities, the latter being the most oppressed because of its members' refusal to serve in the army.

Apart from these there are newer national minorities too, which mainly come from the Middle East, Africa, the Far East, Albania and Poland. Although racial, ethnic and religious discrimination in Greece seems far less widespread than in other Western countries, the virtual absence of research

on the different groups' lives and political cultures means that this is an area about which little is known systematically. But one thing is certain: the identification of Hellenicity with Orthodoxy has made it difficult for various minorities to become fully integrated into the dominant political culture, and the concept of multiculturalism and ethnic pluralism remains underdeveloped.

MAIN POLITICAL CULTURAL FACETS

With reference to the national level, compared to both the European Union nations and the Southern European ones, Greeks appear to have an unusually high and constant interest in politics. In 1983 Greece ranked sixth among the 10 EC countries; in 1989 it advanced to fourth and by 1990 had almost overtaken the Netherlands for third place.¹⁹ From 1985 Greek respondents have been the most interested in and positively oriented to politics among the Southern Europeans. The situation has remained almost unchanged since then and it is in accord with what has been described as Greek 'over-politicization'.²⁰ According to the 1990 data, as many as 59.6 per cent of Greek men were interested in politics whereas only 48.6 per cent of women were. Also, interest in politics in Greece is directly proportional to length of education, something which agrees with almost all comparative political culture research: 66 per cent of those with university education claimed an interest in politics compared to 49.7 per cent of those without tertiary education.

What did change, however, was the Greeks' satisfaction with the way in which democracy works in their country as well as with the life they lead. Whereas in 1985 and 1988 Greeks ranked fifth and fourth respectively in terms of satisfaction with democracy in their country, in 1992 and 1993 they ranked next to last (the Italians took last place), though in 1994 the Spaniards pushed them out of the penultimate place. The same trend appears as far as the index of overall life satisfaction is concerned, an index that is less influenced by short-term fluctuations; during the last five years Greeks have been characterised as being by far the most dissatisfied among the Europeans: in 1993 17.1 per cent of Greeks were not at all satisfied with their life whereas the next least satisfied were the Portuguese with 9.3 per cent.²¹ It should be pointed out here that there is almost no difference between the degree of political interest exhibited by those who declare themselves to be satisfied with life and those who express dissatisfaction (54.4 per cent and 53.8 per cent respectively). Similarly, 58 per cent of those who are satisfied with the way democracy works are interested in politics, compared to 53.6 per cent of the dissatisfied ones.

It might be thought that as well as a tendency towards de-legitimation, these findings imply a protest potential too. This would be correct if it were not for the presence of some other notable and counteracting elements: these are, first, a relatively low index of political efficacy and second, a rising

degree of *political alienation* and *political cynicism*. As a matter of fact, these elements have been growing since 1985; for instance, in 1990 though 54.5 per cent of Greeks were interested in politics either 'a great deal' or 'to some extent', 64.2 per cent declared that politics was so complicated that they could not understand it; at the same time 69.5 per cent were cynical towards politicians in general.²² To be sure, such attitudes are not conducive either to conventional or to unconventional political action: in spite of low degrees of life satisfaction and high political dissatisfaction among the Greek public, the likelihood is that the combination of low efficacy and low trust will lead to withdrawal from politics. Yet so far this has not been the case; Greeks are still interested in politics and they still participate massively, although party dealignment and declining turnout is growing, especially among the young. Therefore, a 'paradox' comes out of this situation; as we know from the mainstream political culture theory, great political interest is not a symptom of either low political efficacy or high political alienation. How can a person be interested in something strange that they cannot understand?

One can find a way out of this paradox by placing the Greeks' meaning of politics and citizenship into its proper political cultural context which draws much from the selective tradition referred to above. That is, one should move beyond a quantitative analysis to a qualitative understanding of the particular ways in which most Greeks institutionalise the political. Of course this requires a separate book; it suffices here to recall the tradition of atrophic civil society, the preponderance of the family and the clientelistic statism. All these have contributed to the merging of the public and the private – a privatisation of the public and a publicising of the private. This makes for personification of institutions and of agencies of authority and for the replacement of political equality by a diffuse sort of assimilation. By the same token, rights are seen primarily as *ad hoc* claims and privileges, and civic obligations are chiefly viewed as external impositions upon a supposedly unbounded personal freedom.²³ Thus, by and large, politics is understood as a 'private' issue rather than a public one; the statist and clientelistic mode of domination fosters an essentially pre-modern atomistic and/or domestic conception of politics that collides with the modern democratic understanding of it. It is an atomism – not an individualism in the modern sense of the word – which in its ideal-typical condition is sustained before and beyond any socio-centric or contractual normativity and rationality;²⁴ this is so because the social and political self in Greece is constituted by means of reciprocal and yet asymmetric bonds within various reference groups which are principally organised on a personal basis following a concentric circle-like scheme. This primordial atomism is the basis of the limited *trust* among the Greek public which is conditional for the shaping of a civic culture (in a 1993 *Eurobarometer* study only the Italians and French among EU members trusted each other less). In many ways, the result is similar to the concept of 'amoral familism' in southern Italy, where the family is the key unit beyond the individual and 'honour'

(*philotimo* in Greek) is the central concept guiding behaviour.²⁵ Needless to say, these sorts of orientations and practices are not conducive to the ideal of participatory democratic politics, based on reason, compromise and marginal bargaining.

A crucial aspect of any political culture is *political communication* at both interpersonal and mass level. As a symptom of the over-politicisation referred to above, *Eurobarometer* in 1993 showed that Greeks discuss political matters very much when they get together with friends, with only Danes and Germans ranking higher. Those who discuss politics most are men (though as age and education increase, the distance between men and women on interpersonal political communication decreases), more educated and younger people, managers and white-collar workers, and those who place themselves subjectively in the upper middle class. Another major source of influence in this context seems to be the extent to which the news media are used: the more Greeks follow the news the more they tend to talk about politics. As with all Europeans, television is the prime news medium for Greeks: 74 per cent in 1994 said that they watch the news on television every day (the average in the European Union at the time was 75 per cent).²⁶ Almost a third of the population listen to radio news and read newspapers every day, with the latter playing a less important role than in many other Western European countries. Thus one could maintain that although Greeks are television dependent they are not high media users in general when compared with the Northern Europeans.

THE GREEK ATTITUDE TOWARDS EUROPEAN UNION AND OTHER COUNTRIES

Attitudes towards European affairs depend both on short-term socio-economic fluctuations and longitudinal political cultural factors. By the end of the 1970s, the entry of Greece into the EC was a highly controversial issue for the public and the parties. A great deal of later foreign policy decisions were conditioned by that controversy. Measurements of the Greek interest in EC/EU politics started in 1982,²⁷ since then the percentage of those who are not interested in EC/EU politics ('not much' and/or 'not at all') decreases fairly steadily: 64 per cent in 1982 and 1986 and 39 per cent and 47 per cent in 1990 and 1994 respectively. Comparatively speaking, from 1982 to 1994 Greece ranks very high as far as the interest in EC politics is concerned: apart from 1988 and 1989 Greece is constantly to be found within the first three places. Also, together with Luxembourg, Greece comes second in the rankings of positive attitudes towards European integration and scores equally highly concerning the positive opinions of its respondents about whether Greece has on balance benefited from being a member of the EC/EU. As with other Mediterranean people, Greeks are more likely to express dissatisfaction with the way democracy works in their country than with the democratic deficit in the European Union. Whereas in 1993 65 per

cent of the Greek respondents were dissatisfied with their country's democracy, only 37 per cent were not satisfied with democracy in the EC.²⁸ Perhaps even more revealing of their desire to identify with the new Europe, Greeks have consistently shown themselves to be among those most willing to identify themselves as 'European' as well as their own nationality.

To be sure, these favourable attitudes, which to some extent disprove the stereotypical idea of the profoundly xenophobic character of Greek political culture,²⁹ are counterbalanced by some traits which, of course, are not unique to the Greek public. One of them is a remarkable discrepancy between the affective and the cognitive component of the Greek attitude towards the EU. That is, although Greeks are positively disposed towards European affairs they appear to know very little about them; on the one hand it is a perceived information deficit, shared also by other Europeans, especially from the southern countries. Seventy-eight per cent of Greeks say they know little of the workings of the EU, the Community average being 71 per cent.³⁰ Greeks also exhibit the most limited awareness of European institutions; on a crucial question asking about the names of institutions of the European Community that they had heard of, 70 per cent of the Greek public replied 'don't know' whereas the EC average was 39 per cent and the next closest value of 60 per cent was that of the British, normally thought of as the most Euro-sceptic and unaware in the Union.³¹

Perhaps the nature of *Eurobarometer* polling does not tap true feelings. Certainly the recent nationalist mobilisations ignited by the relationship between Greece and the former Yugoslavian Republic of Macedonia and directed, among others, against the European Union, is another major inconsistency of the Greek attitude towards Europe (these sentiments, and related issues like the growth of economic refugees, have not yet spawned a major new radical nationalist party, though the Political Spring won 4.9 per cent in 1993). Greece wants to be part of Europe, but there is a sense in which it is still distant and separate. Briefly speaking, there are three prime reasons for these inconsistencies. First, there is the local-global antinomy that marks the international system under contemporary conditions of economic, military and cultural rearrangements. Second, there is the traditional ambivalence of Greeks towards the West in general which, as we show, comes from the specificities of Greek nation-building; this ambivalence is expressed historically as a socio-psychological interchange between attraction and repulsion.³² Third, and simultaneously, the favourable attitudes towards the European Union are nothing but a 'rationalisation' of a deep-rooted instrumental understanding of Greek membership; by and large, the EU is seen as the source of economic benefits that subsidise the poor public finance of the country.

There are also potential tensions with the EU over the admission of Turkey, or more generally improved relations with that country. This is not simply a question of the war with Turkey to gain independence, or even more recent territorial conflicts, notably over Cyprus. Although there is a

diffuse instrumental support for the EU, Greeks are suspicious of other nations in general – a feature of a defensive attitude fostered by the state bureaucracy and rural sectors since the nineteenth century (though there has been more cosmopolitanism among Diaspora Greeks and the small but growing echelons of industrial and financial capital). It should be noted that contemporary Greece is the most distrusting member country in the EU, followed by Italy, Ireland, Spain and Portugal.³³ Greeks trust the French and the Spaniards more than any other EU nations, but this feeling is not mutual since the French and Spaniards trust Greeks very little. As a final point, it is interesting to note that Greeks appear to trust Americans less than most Europeans, probably largely a hangover from populist anti-American outlooks of the 1970s and the 1980s.³⁴

CONTINUITIES AND CHANGE IN GREEK POLITICAL CULTURE

Normally, political cultures evolve quite slowly. Nevertheless whenever swift changes do occur they do not come out of thin air; there is always an interplay between the stable and the unstable traits.

As mentioned earlier, from the 1960s to the early 1980s a number of changes took place in Greek society due to the process of modernisation. In a very short period, Greece ceased to be an agrarian society, without however becoming a profoundly industrial one; put another way, in terms of mentality, contemporary Greece is a post-agrarian rather than an industrial or post-industrial society, although it encompasses traits of the latter societal types. At its core, it became a state-centred petty bourgeois society marked by the domination of the tertiary sector. One of the principal aspects of modernisation was a rapid upward social mobility that resulted in a less cohesive form of extended family structure and generational differences. The high level of social mobility increased already existing relative deprivation between groups, a tendency which has continued to this day. These trends have been buttressed by both the clientelistic statism and the widespread grey economic activities. Moreover, they provided the ground for the development of populist political practices and anomie social behaviour before, after, and during the colonels' dictatorship (1967–74).

The most sound changes in Greek political life appeared after 1974: the abolition of the monarchy, the end of the politically exclusionary state of emergency that followed the civil war, the debasement of 'veto groups' such as the military and the para-constitutional cycles, the renovation of political personnel, the establishment of an open competitive political system, the pluralistic reorganisation of the party system, and the expansion of political communication are some of these changes – developments largely determined by the dynamics and the conjunction of transition to the republic.³⁵ Yet, as manifest as it might be, political modernisation did not transcend the continuity of the fundamentals of the country's political culture, i.e. strong

nationalism, traditional patterns related to the legacy of Orthodoxy, and atrophic civil society.

It is precisely this merging of modernisation processes and traditional components that most scholars have in mind when they refer to the peculiarity of the Greek road to modernity. In fact, Greece seems to stand somewhere 'in between', with the crucial point being the need to explicate its 'in between' condition. So it is frequently argued that Greece is a *transitory society* and that its political culture is a transitional one characterised (in the terminology of Almond and Verba)³⁶ by a mixture of parochial, subjective and participatory orientations, with the latter steadily growing.³⁷ It is also argued that modernisation and tradition in contemporary Greece are so contrasted as to give rise to two opposing political cultural camps³⁸ and to a new political cleavage that tends to predominate over the other cleavages of the political system. According to these arguments, there are two incommensurable political cultures in Greece. One is indigenous, parochial, precapitalist, protectionist, populist, underdog and defensive; the other is liberal, outward-looking, and modernising. It is also argued that despite its earlier mastery, the traditional culture will sooner or later be marginalised by the modernising one, pressed by the rationalising imperatives of European unification.

In spite of important insights into recent changes, I do not think that these arguments do justice to the Greek case. It is my conviction that the transition thesis is overwhelmed by the evolutionism that has marked comparative politics of the past decades. Transition – not transformation – means that something moves towards a predetermined objective; this type of reasoning, however, cannot cope with contingencies and indeterminacies since it is embedded into the well-known ideal typical evolutionary scheme 'traditional–transitional–modernised society'. To characterise Greek society nowadays as transitional says too little, inasmuch as modern Greece was seen and understood from the outset as being somewhere in between.³⁹ As an analytical category, therefore, unless one wishes to over-generalise, 'transition' blurs rather than enlightens something which was taken into account by developmentalists themselves as early as the mid-1960s.⁴⁰

Furthermore, interpreting contemporary Greek political culture in terms of the 'cultural dualism' described above seems to me to miss two crucial, interrelated points: first, by contrasting tradition with modernisation it neglects the fact that there is not one single tradition and that modernisation itself cannot exist outside a framework of some tradition; thus, tradition is not something negative by definition. Second, it views tradition and modernity as two pre-constituted and mutually exclusive rather than inter-constituted and interrelated cultural entities; for the point is not that there are two opposing political identities as much as that the contradiction between tradition and modernity penetrates all camps, any identity, and every individual or collective political actor.

On the whole, I think that the best conceptualisation of contemporary

Greek political culture comes from inventing, as a working hypothesis, the category of *inverted syncretism*. It is a category designed to deal more accurately with the articulation of modernity and tradition in Greek political culture. Originating in the sociology of religion and cultural anthropology, 'syncretism' was used by political scientists to mean the functional relatedness of heterogeneous traits whenever two different political cultures communicate. As a reinterpretation, syncretism is an acculturation process where the patterns of one culture are domesticated and conformed to the schemes of another and yet retain their original function. Thus in countries like Japan, Taiwan, and South Korea, where the traditional cultures were more instrumental than consummatory, syncretism took place because modernising patterns were assimilated to the traditional ones without however losing their original function.⁴¹ In Greece an almost inverted process took place: retaining just a formal status, modernising patterns lost their original function while traditional ones remained intact or even became rejuvenated. Hence, the condition of inverted syncretism explains better both the change and continuity in Greek political culture referred to above.⁴² The question however remains whether this condition can stand still in the highly complex environment of European unification and renewed nationalist pressures.

NOTES

- 1 J. Breuille, *Nationalism and the State*, Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1985, pp. 107–11.
- 2 See P. M. Kitromilides, "Imagined Communities" and the Origins of the National Question in the Balkans' in M. Blinkhorn and T. Veremis (eds), *Modern Greece: Nationalism and Nationality*, Athens, Sage-ELIAMEP, 1990.
- 3 M. Herzfeld, *Ours Once More. Folklore, Ideology, and the Making of Modern Greece*, New York, Pella, 1986, pp. 18–21.
- 4 See A. Papanizos, 'Enlightenment, Religion and Tradition in Modern Greek Society' in N. Demertzis (ed.), *The Greek Political Culture Today*, Athens, Sage, 1994 (in Greek).
- 5 For these concepts see E. J. Hobsbawm and T. Ranger (eds), *The Invention of Tradition*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1983, pp. 1–14; and R. Williams, *The Long Revolution*, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1961, pp. 66–8.
- 6 P. Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1977, pp. 78–87.
- 7 A distinction made by D. Apter, *The Politics of Modernization*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1965, pp. 83–7, 250–1.
- 8 See N. Demertzis, 'The Selective Tradition of the Greek Political Culture' in Demertzis, *op. cit.*; D. Charalambis and N. Demertzis, 'Politics and Citizenship in Greece: Cultural and Structural Facets', *Journal of Modern Greek Studies*, 1993, 11; A. Pollis, 'Political Implications of the Modern Greek Concept of Self', *British Journal of Sociology*, 1965, 16; and J. K. Campbell, 'Traditional Values and Continuities in Greek Society' in R. Clogg (ed.), *Greece in the 1980s*, London, Macmillan, 1983.
- 9 N. Mouzelis, *Politics in the Semi-Periphery*, London, Macmillan, 1986.
- 10 J. K. Campbell, *Honour, Family, and Patronage*, Oxford, Clarendon, 1964,

- pp. 213–62; N. Mouzelis, *op. cit.*, Part II; and C. Tsoucalas, 'On the Problem of Political Clientelism in Greece in the Nineteenth Century', *Journal of the Hellenic Diaspora*, 1978, 5; N. Mouzelis, 'Capitalism and the Development of the Greek State' in R. Sease (ed.), *The State in Western Europe*, London, Croom Helm, 1980; and 'Class and Clientelistic Politics: The Case of Greece', *Sociological Review*, 1978, 26.
- 11 R. Fakiolas, 'Interest Groups: An Overview' in K. Featherstone and D. Katsoudas (eds), *Political Change in Greece Before and After the Colonels*, London, Croom Helm, 1987; P. C. Schmitter, 'Still a Century of Corporatism?' in P. C. Schmitter and G. Lehmbruch (eds), *Trends towards Corporatist Intermediation*, London, Sage, 1979; Y. Papadopoulos, 'Parties, the State and Society in Greece: Continuity within Change', *West European Politics*, 1989, 12; G. Mavrogordatos, 'Civil Society under Populism' in R. Clogg (ed.), *Greece 1981–89. The Populist Decade*, New York, St Martin's, 1993; V. Macrides, 'Orthodoxy as a *conditio sine qua non*: Religion and State/Politics in Modern Greece from a Socio-historical Perspective' in *Ostkirchliche Studien*, 1991, 40.
 - 12 See the issues 69A and 75A of *The Greek Review of Social Research*, Summer 1988 and 1990 respectively (in Greek).
 - 13 For instance: N. Demertzis, *Cultural Theory and Political Culture*, Lund, Studentlitteratur, 1985; M. Pantelidou-Malouita, *Political Attitudes and Perceptions at the Onset of Adolescence. Political Socialization in the Context of Greek Political Culture*, Athens, Gutenberg, 1987; and *Women and Politics*, Athens, Gutenberg, 1992 (in Greek).
 - 14 N. Diamandouros, 'Greek Political Culture in Transition: Historical Origins, Evolution, Current Trends' in R. Clogg (ed.), *Greece in the 1980s*.
 - 15 See Papadopoulos, *op. cit.*, pp. 58–61 and G. Mavrogordatos, 'The Emerging Party System' in R. Clogg (ed.), *Greece in the 1980s*.
 - 16 For the concepts of 'vertical' and 'horizontal' coalitions see E. Wolf, *Peasants*, Englewood Cliffs, NJ, Prentice-Hall, 1966, pp. 81–6.
 - 17 V. Papacosma, *Politics and Culture in Greece*, Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Press, 1988, pp. 20–1; C. Lyrantzis, 'Political Parties in Post-Junta Greece: A Case of "Bureaucratic Clientelism"?' in G. Pridham (ed.), *The New Mediterranean Democracies. Regime Transition in Spain, Greece and Portugal*, London, Frank Cass, 1984.
 - 18 F. de Jong, 'The Muslim Minority in Western Thrace' in G. Ashworth (ed.), *World Minorities in the Eighties*, Sunbury, Surrey, Quatermaine House, 1980.
 - 19 *Eurobarometer*, June 1983, December 1988, June 1989 and December 1990.
 - 20 See among others M. Spourdakis, *The Rise of the Greek Socialist Party*, London, Routledge, 1988.
 - 21 See *Eurobarometer* 1985, 1988, 1992, December 1993 and July 1994; and *Eurobarometer* March 1991 (Trend Variables 1974–1990) and June 1993; see also Ronald Inglehart, 'The Renaissance of Political Culture' in *The American Political Science Review*, 1988, 82.
 - 22 P. Kafetzis, 'Political Crisis and Political Culture. Political Alienation and Involvement in Politics: An Incompatible Relationship?' in Demertzis (ed.), *The Greek Political Culture Today*.
 - 23 A. Pollis, 'The State, the Law and Human Rights in Modern Greece' in *Human Rights Quarterly*, 1987, 9.
 - 24 See C. Tsoucalas, 'Enlightened' Concepts in the "Dark": Power and Freedom, Politics and Society', *Journal of Modern Greek Studies*, 1991, 9.
 - 25 See Campbell, *op. cit.*, p. 186, etc.; and V. Vassiliou and G. Vassiliou, 'The Implicative Meaning of the Greek Concept of *Philotimo*', *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 1973, 4.
 - 26 *Eurobarometer* July 1994.

- 27 See *Eurobarometer* April 1993; Trends 1974–1992.
- 28 See *Eurobarometer* June 1993, pp. 7–9.
- 29 See Diamandouros, *op. cit.*, pp. 46–7, 59.
- 30 *Eurobarometer* December 1993, pp. 35–9.
- 31 *Eurobarometer* June 1993, pp. 3–5, A12.
- 32 On this see T. Lipowatz, 'Griechenland: Eine gespaltene Identitaet' in *Politische Psychologie PP-Aktuell*, 1994, 3.
- 33 *Ibid.*, p. 84, A50. Yet unlike Italians and Belgians, Greeks' trust is highest in people from their own country.
- 34 On this see J. Iatrides, 'Greece and the United States: The Strained Partnership' in Clogg, *op. cit.*; and 'Beneath the Sound and Fury: US Relations with PASOK Government' in Clogg (ed.), *Greece, 1981–89*. On the populist phenomenon in Greece generally see C. Lyrantzis, 'The Power of Populism: The Greek Case', *European Journal of Political Research*, 1987, 15.
- 35 See Papadopoulos, *op. cit.*, pp. 55–8; D. Kioukias, 'Political Ideology in Post-dictatorial Greece: The Experience of Socialist Dominance', *Journal of Modern Greek Studies*, 1993, 11; and N. Diamandouros, 'Transition to, and Consolidation of, Democratic Politics in Greece, 1974–1983: A Tentative Assessment' in Pridham (ed.), *op. cit.*
- 36 G. Almond and S. Verba, *The Civic Culture*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1963.
- 37 See for instance Papacosma, *op. cit.*, p. 28; and Diamandouros, 'Greek Political Culture in Transition', pp. 59–60.
- 38 See among others Diamandouros, 'Politics and Culture in Greece, 1974–91: An Interpretation' in Clogg, *Greece in the 1980s*, where one can find quite extended literature on Greek political culture.
- 39 This, however, does not mean that it is immovable.
- 40 E.g. Apter, *op. cit.*, pp. 13, 15, 20; S. N. Eisenstadt, *Tradition, Change, and Modernity*, New York, Wiley, 1973, pp. 17, 30–1, 37, 103–6 and 158–9; also F. Riggs, *Administration in Developing Countries: The Theory of Prismatic Society*, Boston, Houghton Mifflin, 1964, pp. 4, 11, 27 and 34–7.
- 41 See S. Huntington and J. Dominguez, 'Political Development' in F. Greenstein and N. Polsby (eds), *Handbook of Political Science*, Vol. III, Cambridge, Mass., Addison Wesley, 1975, especially pp. 18–19.
- 42 I think that inverted syncretism can be combined with Riggs' concept of 'prismatic situation' (*op. cit.*, pp. 24–30) which refers to the superimposition of modern political structures on traditional cultural patterns which fail to function autonomously and get embedded in traditional orientations.