

Civil Society and Citizenship in Postwar Greece

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Abstract: Civil society in postwar Greece is examined from the standpoint of, first, social integration and, second, system integration. In terms of social integration, there has been notable progress in the fields of civil, political, social and cultural rights between the pre- and the post-dictatorship period. From the standpoint of system integration, the most notable feature undermining civil society in the pre-dictatorship period was the colonization of most institutional spheres by the state and party system. During the post-authoritarian period, old imbalances are reduced and replaced by new ones. While civil society colonization by the state and the party system recedes, colonization by the market economy is on the rise.

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1. Some definitions

Civil society, like most key notions in the social sciences, is a polysemic concept; its meaning varies with the changing contexts, the changing theoretical and practical debates in which it is embedded. For instance, in the old debate on the dynamics and ways of overcoming absolutist forms of domination, civil society was conceptualised as a system of relatively autonomous associations interposing themselves between ruler and ruled -- as *corps intermediaires* protecting the people from state authoritarianism (Alexander 1998: 3-4). On the other hand, when the issue is one of overcoming the obstacles the feudal or patrimonial state poses to the development of industrial capitalism, civil society (in the work of Marx, for instance) is considered as being “bourgeois society” *tout court*.

Finally today, as the key political and social debate tends to focus on ways of limiting both the profit logic of the market and the authoritarian/bureaucratic logic of the state, civil society is conceptualised as a “third sphere”, as a space of voluntary, non-profit organizations performing vital functions by following a logic of solidarity (Cohen and Arato, 1992). It is also conceived of as an ideal project that aims at creating a non-traditional solidarity based on a logic of universalistic inclusion into the “imaginary community” of the nation-state (Alexander 1998).

Taking into account the last two interrelated conceptualisations of the term one can argue that in the conditions of late modernity a strong civil society entails two basic dimensions. From the point of view of actors (using Lockwood’s well-known distinction, from the point of view of social integration),¹ it entails the autonomous rather than heteronomous inclusion of citizens into the broad arenas (political, social, economic, cultural) of the nation-state. To use T.H. Marshall’s theory (1964), autonomous inclusion entails the spread of civil, political, socioeconomic, and –we would add—cultural rights to all citizens.

From an institutional or systemic point of view (i.e. from the point of view of Lockwood’s system integration), a strong civil society entails a balance between the major institutional spheres or subsystems of modernity, whereas a weak civil society always entails various forms of imbalance as one sphere “colonises”, i.e. imposes its own logic, on all other institutional spheres.² In Habermasian terms the major

¹ On the key distinction between social and system integration, see Lockwood, 1964.

² In this sense, a strengthening of civil society is not tantamount to the strengthening of the market, as a part of the current literature of Eastern Europe tends to assume. Though civil society should be regarded as inclusive of private economic activity, and though the abolition of hierarchical/

pathology of late capitalist societies consists of a marked institutional imbalance between what he calls the “system” (the economy and polity) and the “lifeworld” (the social and cultural spheres). The fact for instance that those having economic capital can, via the ownership/ control of the mass media, buy more or less automatically what Bourdieu calls cultural capital is a clear indication of an institutional imbalance: the logic of the economic subsystem penetrates and colonises the cultural subsystem. To move from imbalance to balance would entail a greater autonomy of the cultural subsystem. It would entail devising mechanisms which would give to the actual producers of culture (writers, artists, intellectuals) and to those who are its legitimate transmitters (teachers, priests, parents) more power than to the owners of economic capital.

2. Civil society and citizenship in the early postwar period (1944-1967)

After the defeat in the late 1940s of the communists in the protracted civil war, the victorious coalition of nationalistic and pro-Western Greek forces established a regime of “guided democracy” in the country. It was “guided” in the sense that the throne and the victorious anti-communist army played the dominant political role – setting, in a clearly unconstitutional manner, strict limits to what was and what was not allowed to happen on the level of parliamentary politics (Mouzelis, 1978: 105-115). This post-civil war “guided democracy”, or what Tsoukalas (1981: 320) calls “the deeply original phenomenon of an authoritarian regime... built under the auspices of a democratically organized parliamentary state”, was the way in which Greek postwar society, in a most traumatic manner, internalised the cold war division. Civil war and the anticommunist witch-hunting until 1974 legitimated semi-institutionalised mechanisms of repression, provided a pretext for the advent of the colonels in April 1967, and can even be held responsible for the deep polarisation between Left and Right in the postauthoritarian period. Clearly, the communist defeat in the civil war ensured that Greece remained part of the Western system laying the groundwork for its postwar economic development and its post-1974 democratisation and Europeanisation –but the social cost to be paid for that was particularly high.

A. During the 1944-1967 period the situation of civil society seen from the perspective of the citizens and their rights was clearly negative. Civil rights were restricted because the rule of law and the rights of free speech, free association etc. were enjoyed mainly by the non-communists, and particularly the *ethnikophrones* (those who think “patriotically”, who are “nationally-minded”). Indeed the freedom of association of the *ethnikophrones* camp practically extended to the creation and operation under the authorities’ full tolerance and complicity of various para-state organisations that formed the state’s long arm in the political repression of left-wing citizens. Some of these organisations operated in a more clandestine manner within the army –from their ranks originated the protagonists of the 1967 junta. The various

authoritarian social formations is facilitated by market liberalisation, the subsequent hypertrophy of the market at the expense of other major institutional spheres may in effect undermine civil society strength.

means of discrimination against left-wing citizens included the institutionalisation of the so-called “certificate of national probity” as a formal prerequisite for access to all kinds of public resources including public employment. To that should be added the systematically demeaning treatment of left-wing citizens by the authorities, especially in the countryside.

Like civil rights, political rights were also restricted. Rights of political representation were severely curtailed, while active communists were exiled to concentration camps. The Greek Communist Party was banned, and its place was taken by the left-wing EDA (Union of Democratic Left), whose functioning was barely tolerated. While the right to vote was not denied to communists and left-wing sympathisers, it was severely compromised, particularly in the countryside where various repressive mechanisms –such as the para-state organisations mentioned above—ensured that villagers voted “correctly” (Tsoukalas, 1969: 143ff). In the characteristically cold-warlike nationalistic polarisation of that time, it was not just conservative or liberal bourgeois political forces pitted against the communists and fellow-travelers. More than asserting a simple politico-ideological conflict, the ideological discourse of the postwar state depicted the entire Greek nation in defence against its “internal” “organic” enemies.

Concerning now social rights, the first point to stress is that, relative to states in Western Europe, the Greek state allocated very few resources for welfare purposes. Welfare functions were still considered the responsibility of the family and the local community (Esping-Andersen, 1990, Katrougalos, 1996). While unemployment was largely left to be taken care of by emigration, the particularistic targeting of economic and financial resources substituted for the lack of a Keynesian universalistic welfare state (see Petmezidou-Tsoulouvi, 1992). Thus, the meagre resources available were distributed according to clientelistic, party-political criteria. Whether in the sphere of pensions, of state medical services, of state-created jobs to reduce unemployment – in all these areas those who had been on the losing side in the civil war were systematically discriminated against.

The lack of a Keynesian-type welfare state in the 1944-74 period can be attributed to a confluence of reasons. Firstly, it was highly compatible with the authoritarian-leaning and later plainly authoritarian political regime –as also exhibited in the other two outright authoritarian countries of Southern Europe, Spain and Portugal, which coincided with Greece in state corporatism and the lack of welfare state institutions (see Schmitter, 1995; Seferiades, 1998). If government could do away with labour demands through the political repression of left-wing labour unions and the appointment of regime-friendly union leaders, then no need existed for seeking to induce labour cooperation through welfarist concessions and inclusion in neocorporatist arrangements. Secondly, the impact of Keynesianism itself on the dominant Greek postwar economic elites was limited (Psalidopoulos, 1990). Instead, leading German-bred economic policymakers, such as the Bank of Greece governor Xenophon Zolotas, regarded Keynesianism as a recipe for advanced industrialised countries, inapplicable in the case of an underdeveloped economy on the road to

industrialisation (see Karamesini, 1994). They were thus more closely attuned to a mixture of orthodox policies emphasizing monetary stability and a balanced ordinary budget, with a developmental orientation (the postwar orthodoxy in many developing countries) committed to the build-up of an industrial infrastructure (see Kazakos, 1999). Thirdly, the above ideological orientation of economic policymakers was inseparable from the politico-economic and structural path dependencies created by Greece's reliance on the Marshall plan aid and subjection to US hegemony (Fatouros, 1981). Finally, conservative governments of the postwar period aimed at regime stability and popular acquiescence through the consolidation and expansion of a conservatively-minded bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie, whose welfare was pursued through particularistic policies such as selective state loans, licences, concessions and jobs. These could cement clientelistic patterns of relations more easily than universalistic welfare state institutions, which would have also contravened the policymakers' aversion to consumption spending instead of a full-fledged direction of resources to investment.³

Finally, in the sphere of cultural rights, the small number of the so-called Slavo-Macedonians in Northern Greece and, more importantly, the large Muslim minority in Thrace, did not have the right of self-definition. Although a large number of the Muslim community in Thrace were formally citizens of Greece, in terms of ethnicity and culture they were Turks. They were not permitted to call themselves Turks, however, neither were they allowed to form cultural associations related to their ethnic character. This, coupled with severe economic and social forms of discrimination and exclusion practiced by the local authorities (with the tolerance of the central government) vis-à-vis the Muslims in Thrace, meant that not only the Greek communists but also the Turks in Thrace were treated as second-class citizens (see Minority Rights Group International, 1994).

As far as other religious minorities were concerned, in this period there were also milder forms of authoritarianism exercised by the Greek-Orthodox Church (an administrative extension of the Greek state) vis-à-vis non-Orthodox Christians (Catholics, Protestants), as well as minorities officially branded by the Greek-Orthodox Church as "sects" (old calendrists, Jehovah's Witnesses, etc).² The latter's activity was severely constrained under the guise of the constitutional (in the 1952 Constitution) prohibition of "proselytism", aimed to curtail the activity of the non-orthodox religious churches. The "proselytism" clause was also included in the Constitution of 1975 under the concerted pressure of the Greek church; though theoretically meant to apply indiscriminately, in practice it was repeatedly used by judicial authorities to justify the selective persecution especially of Jehovah's Witnesses and Evangelicals (Pollis, 1988: 54-55).⁴

³ This section draws on Pagoulatos, 2003.

⁴ Since the mid-1970s the Greek courts have often attempted to interpret the constitutional prohibition of "proselytism" in a liberal spirit, by narrowing it down to the dissemination of religious faith that takes place through illegal means, through the exercise of pressure or blackmail or through exploiting the naiveté of the other party. But, as Koumantos notes, the use of such means is already illegal and prohibited under the Penal Law, which should thus render any specific constitutional clause, at best, redundant (Koumantos, 1998).

In the authoritarian-prone or outright authoritarian political regime of the early postwar era, discrimination against ethnic and religious minorities was but one aspect of a generalised repression of cultural rights. It would be hard to expect that a state apparatus driven by the attachment to a highly provincial version of nationalistic feeling would display understanding and tolerance to lifestyles that diverged from the prevalent norms of “acceptable” behaviour. Undoubtedly, the value of cultural rights as a defining principle of legitimate state behaviour is a relatively recent acquisition of mainstream political and jurisprudential discourse. Such historical contextualisation certainly acts as a “mitigating” factor when evaluating the culturally repressive tendencies of the postwar regime, but it does not annulate the validity of the at least factual account. Indeed, an authoritarian tendency permeated the treatment of other non-ethnic, non-religious cultural minorities by public authorities (a graphic example of which was a proverbial law against “teddy-boyism”), emanating perhaps from an attitude of excessive austerity at secondary or higher education institutions and culminating with street-level petty repression exercised by police authorities.

B. If now one looks at the same situation from a more systemic point of view –in Lockwood’s terms, if one shifts the focus of analysis from social to system integration—there the most striking feature undermining civil society was the pervasive colonisation of most institutional spheres by the state and party system. This early period witnessed an extreme form of “partitocracy”: the logic of political partisanship and party clientelism permeated the whole of society and undermined the specific logic of all institutional subsystems, from education and sports to recreation and religion. We would further argue that the same partitocratic principle applied also in the economic sphere, where “crony capitalism” flourished. The route to enrichment or the accumulation of capital lay less via competition in the market place, and more via competition for the right political patrons, the right political contacts facilitating access to clientelistically-granted loans by the state-controlled banking system.⁵ In such ways the institutionalized mechanisms guaranteeing the protection of domestic industry also ensured the mutually accommodative patronage of state actors over the economic life of a severely atrophic civil society.

In other words, the underdevelopment of civil society in the postwar period, or its virtual suffocation under the tutelage of a domineering state and party system, was causally related to two paramount structural constraints, pertaining to the economic and the political sphere respectively. The first had to do with the economy’s incomplete stage of development: a late-late industrialising market economy (Mouzelis, 1986), seeking to enable the accumulation of investment capital in selected manufacturing sectors through the pervasive activism of a dirigiste state. The second had to do with the precarious and flawed nature of the country’s nominal democratic institutions: given the institutionalised anomaly of extra-constitutional centres of power, the non-existent democratic party tradition, and the lack of universalistic institutions safeguarding civil rights and equal treatment under the law, upward

⁵ On the clientelistic nature of Greek society and politics, see Petropulos, 1968 (for the early 19th century) and Legg, 1969.

socioeconomic mobility or even mere socioeconomic survival was predicated upon the patronage of highly visible party barons viewed under the magnifying lenses of extreme social insecurity as the vital key-holders of power. Thus, the relative “backwardness” –both socioeconomic and political—of postwar Greece collaborated in enhancing a widespread sense of social vulnerability. In a rapidly urbanizing country, with rural, broadly uneducated masses flowing into the cities to be welcomed by a non-existent welfare state, this vulnerability only served to entrench the traditional grip of clientelism over political society.

3. Civil society and citizenship in the post-dictatorial period (1974-1999)

The seven-year dictatorship (1967-74) constituted the extreme form of pathology of the repressive post-civil war state and the ideological pillars of anti-communism and *ethnikophrosyne* (“national-mindedness”) on which it was founded. Its culmination into a national crisis of tragic proportions over Cyprus deprived the extreme right of any claim to an effective defence of national interest even in the eyes of *bona fide* conservatives. This facilitated the shedding-off by the conservative camp of its authoritarian legacy and its redefinition and transformation, under the leadership of Constantine Karamanlis, into a mainstream centre-right, democratic, Europeanist party. The symbolic weaning of the ND party from the authoritarian-prone postwar conservative camp, an objective concurrent with that of democratic consolidation, was pursued through measures such as a rise of social expenditure to reach the respective West European levels and a recourse to nationalisations –in other words the adoption of what were then still considered “progressive”, left-leaning economic policies. Both policies were continued and intensified by the 1981 PASOK government of Andreas Papandreou. The pronounced economic expansionism and redistributionism of the 1980s (with the brief exception of a 1985-87 stabilisation programme) accelerated the socioeconomic inclusion of marginalised left-leaning social strata, following their political emancipation. However, this populist-driven “expansionism in one country” had a grave cost for the national economy, bequeathing a heavy constraint to Greece’s effort to achieve economic integration with the EU in the 1990s.

If the establishment of the Colonels’ dictatorship dramatically accentuated the civil-society weaknesses of the early postwar period, its fall in 1974 inaugurated a period of considerable progress in the sphere of citizens’ rights. The re-establishment of a parliamentary system that included a legalised Communist Party and the attenuation of discrimination against adherents of the political Left meant a considerable spread of civil, political, and social rights over the entire population. The outburst of politicisation that naturally followed after the colonels’ long-freeze over political life accelerated the internalisation of these rights by the postauthoritarian Greek society, albeit at the cost of a pervasively contentious political atmosphere and a litany of maximalistic demands. This latter had much to do with the traditional persecution of the Left, the absence of the trade unions movement from the politics of democratic

transition,⁶ the dissociation of PASOK from the mainstream of the West European socialdemocracy and its *tiers mondiste* tendencies (Verney, 1994), as well as the inadequate modernization of the conservative party's political practice and discourse.

On the other hand, new systemic/institutional imbalances were created that undermined what strength civil society was gaining. One of them resulted from the fact that the pre-dictatorial non-communist parties were becoming mass parties, but without democratising –without, that is, shedding their predominantly clientelistic, populist, or even (in the case of PASOK) messianic tendencies. Only in the 1990s have these features somehow begun to recede in the two larger parties, PASOK and ND. But, overall, partitocratic elements in the sociopolitical system were intensified in the postauthoritarian period. All through the late 1980s political parties competed for the control of organised groups and trade unions. Later, as additional civic, non-governmental organisations timidly began to emerge, political parties continued to pursue the colonisation of the associational sphere. Thus, over the postauthoritarian period, the balance between the party system and civil society was skewed at the latter's expense.

Another imbalance was the rapid opening-up of the economy to global competition, brokered by the process of European integration, but with the Greek state, due to its profound weaknesses, unable to play a fully constructive role. At a preliminary level, the weakening of state influence in the face of an expanding and internationalising private economy amounted to an indirect positional strengthening of the civil society vis-à-vis the partitocratic state. With the expanding realm of the market, however, a growing systemic imbalance has begun to emerge, as the market logic gradually over the 1990s has been enlarging its scope of influence, this time permeating the autonomous realm of civil society. Overall, it can be said that the tension between economic pressures for adjustment and sociopolitical resistances to it (the latter typically comprising coalitions of state-protected interests) has been one of the dominant conflicts over the 1980s and 1990s. This tension has concurred with a process of gradual disentanglement of civil society from the smothering influence of partitocracy and the state.

A. In terms of civil rights, the legalisation of the Communist Party and the obsolescence of the postwar anticommunist ideology meant first of all a strengthening of the rights to free speech and free association. Added to this decisive improvement were radical changes in the civil code that terminated institutionalized infringements on constitutionally protected principles and civil rights (such as religious tolerance and gender equality) by the family law until then in force. These reforms of the early 1980s enhanced the rights of women within the sphere of matrimony, established the possibility of divorce by mutual consent, terminated the legal discrimination against children born out of wedlock, and allowed a choice between a religious or civil marriage ceremony (Koumantos, 1988; Koumantos and Stambelou, 1989).

⁶ Contrary to the case of Spain, where trade unions had an important role in the process of transition to democracy (Maravall, 1993; Zambarloukou, 1996).

On the negative side must be mentioned the persistence of an extremely cumbersome and formalistic judicial apparatus, and a government refusing to implement court decisions that supported citizens' claims against the highly inefficient and corrupt state bureaucracy. Such matters ranged from inadequate compensation in cases of compulsory expropriation to other forms of mistreatment at the hands of state authorities. This institutionally entrenched precedence of an ill-defined *raison d' état* over citizens' rights derived from a jurisprudence tradition of legal positivism viewing the state as the source of authority over individual rights.⁷

There are hopeful signs that this trend may be weakening. An important step to that direction has been the establishment in 1998 of the Office of the Ombudsman as an independent administrative authority with the task of protecting citizens from rights violations, abuses, mistreatment, or general malpractice on the part of the public administration. Well over 8000 such claims of citizens have reached the office of the Ombudsman within 1999 alone (Ombudsman, 2000). A report produced by the same body underlined a mismatch between the legal and constitutional framework enabling an effective human rights protection, and the actual practice of public authorities lagging substantially behind the formal legal requisites. A considerable number of human rights violations are attributed to organisational and human resource deficiencies of the wider state machine; such is, for example, the practice of certain public services declining to respond to citizens' questions or petitions on the grounds of lacking the necessary means or personnel to do so (report of the deputy Ombudsman, cited in *Kathimerini*, 7 November 1999).

The situation is ambivalent in the political sphere as well. It is true that the spread of political rights has been enhanced by the abolition of the throne, curtailment and abolition of the army's capacity for interfering in parliamentary politics, the unhindered functioning of the Greek Communist Party, elimination of electoral fraud, and the cessation of repressive political practices in the countryside. All these developments have formed the legacy of the postauthoritarian period, marking the post-1974 Third Republic as the most democratic era in modern Greek history.

It is equally true, however, that the fact that the major parties acquired mass organisations, but without abandoning or marginalising their clientelistic orientations, entailed that the phenomena of nepotism and corruption took on mass dimensions also. When the parties for the first time had the organisational capacity to reach the country's remotest villages, and given the hugely increased resources now at their disposal, they were able to indulge in clientelistic practices on a much more massive scale. This transformed the highly personalistic and local "baron"-based clientelism of the past into a form of "bureaucratic" clientelism (Lyrintzis, 1984). It is not surprising, therefore, that informal, quasi-clandestine networks of clients, state bureaucrats and politicians came to permeate the social pyramid from top to bottom,

⁷ A 1997 piece of legislation has brought about a notable improvement by allowing citizens to raise financial claims against the state and –if adjudicated—mandating the latter to pay. The record of application, however, has not been entirely satisfactory.

undermining the universalism upon which the rule of law is premised; and all this at the expense of citizens unable or unwilling to become involved in such dealings.

It should also be noted, however, that recent reforms over the 1990s have been undercutting traditional bastions of clientelism. Thus the curtailment of the public enterprise sector through privatisation and the liberalisation of the financial system, forcing state-controlled banks to operate efficiently and competitively, have limited the overall state domain potentially subject to clientelistic arrangements. In addition, the institution of general exams as precondition for being hired in the public sector has further eroded the scope of particularism and patronage, raising hopes for more meritocracy in the public employment sector. In general, the European integration process has provided crucial political backing and momentum for domestic policy reform initiatives aimed at restructuring and modernising the wider government machine.

In the sphere of social rights, Andreas Papandreou's PASOK government increased considerably the funding allocated to education and health. It also created the National Health System (ESY), within which all citizens have the right to free medical treatment. However, the ESY has been heavily fragmented and inefficient, and has cohabited with probably the largest private health sector in all Europe (Matsaganis, 1998: 339-40). Moreover, the ESY has been also to a large extent corrupt (a bribe to the doctor is often a precondition of adequate treatment), thus seriously undercutting the citizens' right to free health services. A parallel claim can be made with reference to education, where private spending (mostly cram schools, private tutorials, etc) is estimated to exceed 50% of public spending.⁸ Such cases indicate the quality gaps resulting from the inadequate provision of services by the public sector, pointing perhaps to the need for upgrading the state provision of certain social services by officially assigning the production of some of these services to qualified private sector providers, instead of tolerating the unofficial operation of a parallel private market for these services.

As regards unemployment, the relative enfeeblement of the unions under conditions of accelerating globalisation has led to a situation where part of the labour force (particularly the young) has few chances of being integrated into the labour market, and even fewer of being supported on a long-term basis by state unemployment benefits – though the familialist structures of Greek society are still cushioning the adverse effects. Though inequality and poverty were significantly reduced between the mid-1970s and the early 1980s, they remain quite high compared with the EU standard (Mitrakos and Tsakoglou, 1998: 26-27). Moreover, the economic collapse of the Eastern European countries from the beginning of the 1990s has transformed Greece from an immigrant-exporting country in earlier decades to an immigrant-receiving country. The dynamics of globalisation, combined with the large percentage of immigrant workers, are resulting in a two-thirds/one-third social split that is undermining social cohesion and creating a growingly underprivileged or peripheralised section of the population.

Finally, the situation of cultural rights is again a mixed one. The discriminating practices against the Muslim minorities in Thrace have weakened, and the current Foreign Minister, George Papandreou, has even hinted that the right to individual ethnic self-definition will have to be granted. Quite importantly, the current government has legislated affirmative action policies, such as the establishment of preferential quotas for the entry of Muslim minoritarian students in state universities, aimed at increasing the available opportunities for Greek citizens of a different ethnolinguistic and religious background. In such ways, the current state practice vis-à-vis ethnolinguistic minorities is increasingly leaning towards positive integration, in sharp contrast with the assimilation efforts of the not-too-distant past. Less commendably, the massive emigration from Eastern Europe and the Northern Balkans (especially from Albania) has fuelled xenophobia and racist attitudes among broad social strata. But unlike other EU countries such as France and Austria, rapidly growing xenophobia has not brought the emergence of extreme right-wing parties, or the spectacular strengthening of xenophobic fractions within the existing ones—an undeniably encouraging event that, among others, can be attributed to the Greek political system’s increasingly centripetal two-party structure. On the other hand, efforts to extend social rights to the large masses of inflowing immigrants have been restrained. Greece’s record of naturalization of foreign immigrants remains low, and the state has been preoccupied by the need to respond to the public safety concerns fuelled by the constant entry of large numbers of illegal immigrants (Baldwin-Edwards and Fakiolas, 1999).

There has been little change in the matter of religious minorities. The persistence of laws (instituted in the 1930s during the Metaxas dictatorship), restricting in certain areas the rights of both non-Orthodox Christians and the so-called Orthodox “sects”, means that the illiberal features of the earlier postwar period persist—despite the Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg having condemned such authoritarian practices.⁹ The EU’s pressure for religious liberalisation is counterbalanced by the policies of the present Archbishop Christodoulos, who is firmly set against any change in the status quo. He is also opposed to any attempt at separating Church and State—a separation which, in the Greek case, is a basic precondition if all citizens, Orthodox and non-Orthodox, are to have equal rights in the cultural sphere.¹⁰

⁸ Point made by Panos Tsakoglou.

⁹ Over the decades, a nexus of legal and administrative impediments were placed on the exercise of non-orthodox religious faith, from the public administration refusing to appoint non-Orthodox citizens to certain positions, to the imposition of tax levies and other discriminatory charges on the activities of non-orthodox communities, to the granting of a state licence for the establishment of a non-orthodox house of worship subject to the permission of the local orthodox bishop (Koumantos, 1998). It is a positive sign that several of these restrictions have or are in the process of being challenged or abolished.

¹⁰ Since cultural rights (such as the choice of a particular individual lifestyle including religious, artistic, or sexual orientation) involve the freedom of expression, they are hard to separate from *stricto sensu* civil rights. In the broader sense, they can all be regarded as forming part of a citizens’ right (vis-à-vis the state) to “equal concern and respect” (Dworkin, 1987: 272 ff). Such right could be considered to be violated by the mandatory inclusion of religious courses in the school education curriculum, or the entry of the citizen’s religious identity on public identity cards, both derivatives of the non-separation of Church and State.

B. If we now shift our attention from social to system integration, i.e. from actors' rights to institutional imbalances and their impact on civil society, we can see a decline of old imbalances and the rise of new ones.

Yes, the tendency of the party-political element to penetrate and undermine the autonomous logic of all other institutional spheres is on a relative decline. The "post-modern" mood of the young, and the malpractices and generalised political corruption mentioned above make citizens less and less interested in party politics. As a result of their disenchantment with the existing parties, the latter's ability to control developments in institutions like the universities as well as some professional associations has been markedly lessened. Though parties retain a prevalent role in civic and political life (and the political system retains its basically bipartisan character), there are signs of a widening trend toward more civic autonomy from party-political dependence as the recent spread of independent non-governmental organisations indicates.

But if the colonisation of the life world (to use Habermas' terminology) by the state and party system is weakening, colonisation by the economy is on the ascent. The most striking indication of the shift from partitocracy to plutocracy, from party-political to market colonisation, is the increasing dominance of a few economically powerful individuals who, via control over the media, exercise enormous influence, and even to a large extent shape the country's political and cultural developments. The accumulation of power in the hands of this new oligarchy is interrelated with the disappointing underdevelopment of independent regulatory bodies aimed at safeguarding market competition from monopoly or oligopoly collusion, and imposing rules of conduct in the areas of their jurisdiction. For example, the Competition Committee has been underperforming for years squeezed by the lack of adequate government funding, the recently created Committee on Radio-Television has confronted debilitating constraints in its ability to impose penalties on rogue but powerful TV producers, while other sector-specific regulatory bodies have been "captured" by state supplier interests.

Of course, the power of economic capital and its ability to buy political and cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1991) is not a new phenomenon. What is new is (a) the unprecedented influence of mass-media in general and television in particular for shaping people's identities and creating values and lifestyles; and (b) the concentration of control over these media in the hands of a few moguls who are in no way accountable to the public they address.

In other words, the global Murdoch syndrome is seen in Greece too. The owners of mass media constitute a centre of power that no politician can challenge without committing political suicide. Their power is enhanced by their dominant position in a number of (mostly protected) business sectors (telecommunications, information technology, constructions, state supplies, etc). From this point of view, today's so-called diaplekomena symferonta (intermeshed interests) undermine the autonomy of

parliament in a similar (though by no means systematically comparable) way as did the institutional complex of the throne and the army in the early postwar period.

The phenomenon can be regarded as one of the perverse effects of the otherwise positive development of the liberalisation of radio and television from the end of the 1980s. Liberalisation ended the monopoly of state-controlled television, which had often become a mechanism of shameless and unrestrained government propaganda. However, the gains in pluralism and freedom of information were somehow offset by a Gresham-like quality race to the bottom, as private channels competed to attract the mass audiences that would allow sufficient profit. Moreover, the rise of television programmes into the centre of public attention transferred the epicentre of political importance from the Parliament to the talk-show studios, thus further eroding the legislature's institutional role. More importantly, the high political visibility offered by privately-owned radio and television has constituted the new object of desire of competing politicians, increasing their dependence on media owners and raising the stakes (and consequent economic costs) of publicity. As in many other western democracies, the soaring financial costs of political campaigning, largely a result of the growing professionalisation of electioneering, have raised party dependence on the so-called "political money". The unprecedented power enjoyed by media moguls has had a lot to do with this nexus of interdependence at the level not only of party or government but individual politicians as well. The inevitable control of state resources (including public contracts, favorable selective legislative arrangements and administrative measures) by governments in power, and the penetration of media owners into a wide range of high-stake business activities perpetuates the umbilical cord between politics and business as a mutually accommodative relation of dubious transparency or legitimacy.¹¹

4. Some concluding remarks

In conclusion, in terms of the spread of civil, political, social and cultural rights it is possible to discern an overall positive trend, leading from the early postwar guided democracy to the consolidation of a more genuine parliamentary system in the post-junta period. In terms, on the other hand, of the balance/imbalance of institutional spheres, the early partitocratic imbalance has become plutocratic in the past one or two decades, with the so-called diaplekomena interests exercising a type of control in the political and cultural spheres that seriously attenuates the autonomy and vitality of Greece's civil society.

Both developments, at the actors' level and at the systemic level, correspond to substantial transformations of the state/ civil society relationship. In the postwar period the state had assumed an assertive role at two levels: at the level of Greece's

¹¹ Again some positive initiatives are worth mentioning, including the creation of the Greek chapter of Transparency International on the NGO side, as well as the very recent (summer 2000) introduction of a new anti-corruption bill expected to bolster efforts to confront mostly middle-upper level public sector corruption.

developing state-directed, or at least state-assisted, market economy; and at the level of Greece's protracted post civil-war division. Both frameworks necessitated a commanding state presence over an infirm civil society, either as a mechanism of active influence over the economic process, or as a mechanism of repression of sociopolitical dissent. The availability of such sociopolitical and economic control, via clientelism or sheer repression, in the hands of the political forces in power vested the postwar state/ civil society configuration with a distinctly partitocratic character.

The postauthoritarian period has transformed that configuration. While clientelism persisted, repression was rendered obsolete as a means of political control. Though certainly responding to long-suppressed sociopolitical demands, the extension of civil and political rights was perhaps more a function of Greece's democratisation-cum-Europeanisation than the result of a civil society-driven process. In any case, the entire postauthoritarian period meant a consistent strengthening of civil, political and cultural rights, and in that sense the transfer of power from the state to an awakening civil society. The strengthening of clientelism under the combined conditions of hyperpoliticisation, polarisation and an organisational restructuring of political parties led partitocracy to its peak in the 1980s. By the 1990s, however, partitocracy was bound to wither under the winds of spreading political de-ideologicalisation, public cynicism, and increasing professional opportunities in the private sector. On a reverse trend, perhaps the most notable consolidation of state presence in the post-junta era (especially over the 1970s and 1980s) was in the sphere of social policies; that, however, also amounted to the strengthening of civil society through the invigoration of social rights. Finally, in the economic sphere, after reaching a climax between 1975 and the end of the 1980s, state activism has been receding over the 1990s, surrendering traditional bastions of often clientelistic control (financial services, radio and television, public works, various industrial sectors) to the competing (or colluding) forces of the private economy. Consequently, and despite its important beneficial effects, the rolling back of state interventionism (being incapable of a transformation into adequate regulatory power) has also signified the shift to a different form of colonisation of civil society –this time by a highly oligopolistic and politically collusive private capital.

At a broader level, these developments in the postauthoritarian era reflect a reprioritisation of state objectives. Quite consistently with the Southern European pattern (Maravall, 1993; Gunther, Diamandouros, and Puhle, 1995), the period of transition to and consolidation of democracy was characterised by the primacy of politics, in other words the nearly unrestrained subordination of economic policies to the political objectives of consolidating the new democratic political regime, or at least consolidating the governing party's grip on power. However, into the 1980s, the primacy of politics reached its limits of economic sustainability, combined with the intensifying pressures of the European and global political economy. The reprioritisation of economic governance became more manifest in the 1990s, when the primacy of politics can be claimed to have given place to the primacy of economics. The latter implies the increased salience and urgency of "objective" economic pressures, as well as a new bi-partisan convergence over economic policy and the

concerted employment of political strategies at the service of boosting the effectiveness of economic adjustment.

Correspondingly, the first postauthoritarian phase brought an emphasis on the spread of civil, political, social and cultural rights, thus enhancing the preconditions for the political enfranchisement of civil society. The second postauthoritarian phase was keener in divesting the state of some of its economic power, thus precipitating however the systemic imbalance described above, ie, the colonisation of various civil society spheres by private economy.

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