

# State Crisis and Civil Consciousness in Greece

## Abstract

This is a sociological study of the self in modern Greece. Based upon a pilot study of social and political attitudes in Greece today, the study probes the sources of the moral self and of the internalized cosmological and ontological principles in Greece today, the types of social action they encourage, and the perception of the self, of civil society, and the type of the state they shape. The preliminary findings suggest that the Greek civil society is shaped by a distinct ‘civil religion’ that constitutes the cultural background of Greek secular life. This civil religion is strongly influenced by the Orthodox theology and religious practices that have decisively affected the various crystallizations of the four networks of social power (political, ideological, economic, and military) that constitute the Greek society in its various institutional formations.

## Authors:

Manussos Marangudakis, Associate Professor, Department of Sociology, University of the Aegean

Kostas Rontos, Professor, Department of Sociology, University of the Aegean

Maria Xenitidou, Research Fellow, Department of Sociology, University of Surrey

## With:

Angelos Zervos (BA), Eleutheria Monastiraki (MA), Gioula Saroukou (MA) and Flora Tsapala (MA)

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[m.marangudakis@soc.aegean.gr](mailto:m.marangudakis@soc.aegean.gr) University of the Aegean, University Hill, Mytilene, 81100, Greece, tel. 00302251036557, fax. 00302251036509

[k.rontos@soc.aegean.gr](mailto:k.rontos@soc.aegean.gr) University of the Aegean, University Hill, Mytilene, 81100, Greece, tel. 00302251036517, fax. 00302251036509

[m.xenitidou@surrey.ac.uk](mailto:m.xenitidou@surrey.ac.uk) Faculty of Arts & Human Sciences, University of Surrey, Guildford, Surrey, UK GU2 7X, tel. 0044(0)1483 68 3762

## **State Crisis and Civil Consciousness in Greece**

To explore the causes of the deep socio-economic crisis in Greece today, we need to examine the interaction of deep cultural historical structures with historical processes and contingencies in the framework of the social division of labor and the networks of social power (Alexander and Colomy, 1991). Adopting a phenomenological perspective we assume that the self is not prior to morality but, instead, that the self is “constituted in and through the taking of moral stances” (Calhoun, 1991); that these moral stances, or moral frameworks, are informed by and derive from ultimate values, of historically developed “constitutive goods” or “hypergoods” (Taylor, 1989) that they emerge out of, and they are embedded in cosmological and ontological principles (Eisenstadt, 1995); that these civilizational principles inform methodical-ethical ways of life through rationalization processes that can be analyzed using the Weberian types of rationality (Kalberg, 1980); and, last, that the constitutive elements of the cultural system can be extracted by quantitative and qualitative methods of analysis, thus allowing us to reconstruct at least some of the symbolic patterns (Alexander and Smith, 1993) that reflect these hypergoods in social action and structure.

The basic working hypothesis of the study is that, not unlike the American civil religion (Bellah, 1967; Marangudakis, 2010), Greek civil religion, that is, the secular political framework of sacred and profane, good and evil, and of the moral community and its boundaries are deeply affected by church religion, that is by Orthodox theology and religious practices that have permeated political mentality, irrespective of ideological and party identification and have become the deep cultural substratum of Greek civil life.

### **I. Religiosity and Civility in Greece**

In the case of Greece, moral convictions are provided at large by the Orthodox theology and religiosity that stress undifferentiated communalism, brotherly love, selfless struggle to achieve social harmony, disregard for bureaucratic/rational political organization, and emotive sources of the self for moral reflection and social judgment. In its worst, the ideal-type of an ‘orthodox’ individual is the ‘entrenched self’, unable to reflect and internalize rationally the modern, open-ended world; in its best, the ‘orthodox’ individual is a ‘charismatic’ agent of social change who acts in an ‘imagistic’ way, trusting his/her emotive convictions over calculative considerations.

This emotive mode of religiosity was transferred into the Greek secular public domain, becoming the mode of perceiving civility, not only by elective affinity, but as an intentional cultural strategy of forging a modern Greek political identity. This took place through the deliberate identification of the Orthodox believer with the Greek citizen not only externally, but as a personal, deep, existential experience. The individual who experiences the Christian-Orthodox truth, by definition experiences the condition of citizenship. This is a crucial identification; it meant

“[N]o clear distinction between the concepts and the relative perception of a human being, an individual, a citizen, a Greek, and a faithful, as there is no clear distinction between the rights of man,

the individual, the citizen and the faithful. Thus, it becomes clear from this point of view, that the attribute of the faithful and of the indigenous person constitute the main and primary features of the Greek from which all rights proceed” (Paparizos, 2000: 97-98)

This is much more than a manipulation of the Church by the State or of the State by the Church, whereas the state is consolidated by the ardent support of the Church, or that Church’s hegemony is guaranteed by State paternalism. It constitutes the definite infiltration of the public, secular, domain by religious imagism: Citizenship is not something which is realized through the involvement of the person in public affairs, through his/her involvement in horizontal voluntary organizations, through civil acts that turn abstract notions of morality material and visible, but through the experience of worship and acts of faith; citizenship *becomes* an emotive experience.

The “nation” and the “Church” become identical: the nation becomes a sacred entity that is perceived in transcendental terms similar to the religious ones. The regime, its functions, its wars are not to be questioned but revered in a fashion similar to the fundamental rituals and theology of the Church: faith, suffering, resurrection, redemption, salvation. These are not exceptional developments in the framework of the construction of modern states and state ideologies; they took place everywhere in Europe and beyond during the last two centuries. Yet, in a country with no middle class, and no civil tradition, their effects were overwhelming. They absorbed and neutralized any notion of civility based on individual propensities and creativity.

Karamouzis, in a brilliant article of reviewing the literature of the effects of the Eastern Church on Greek citizenship concludes that anything national by definition became sacred and inviolable and vice-versa: the good Christian *is* the virtuous citizen, but, crucially, we would add, *not* vice-versa. Religious behavior is an efficient verification of ethical civility:

We should not forget that the religious subbed of the modern Greek society throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century constituted a significant parameter in the identification of the Greek citizen; the result of this could have produced more permanent consequences in the consciousness of the modern Greek compared with a secular national-political identity free of religious overlays. In this way, a peculiar type of citizen was established, a citizen who ought to comprehend his/her political presence in the modern Greek society through a set of rules which were legitimized only through religious duties which defined the virtuous citizen” (Karamouzis, 2009: 92-3)

True as it is that the Church allied with the most traditional, reactionary in fact, parts of the political spectrum, and true as it also is that this alliance crumbled after 1981, the mode of being a citizen through the religious *experience* has not really been questioned, or even more important, has not been replaced by another hegemonic discourse. Indeed, there are individuals or social groups that experiencing citizenship through voluntarist action, but the basic argument of the religious spirit of emotive collectivism is still alive: the

undifferentiated “people” who deep in their heart experience the communal spirit in public ceremonies in acts of emotional heightens incarnate the essence of citizenship.<sup>1</sup>

This analysis of Orthodox religion and religiosity suggests that the cultural substratum of Greek civil religion today should be strongly collectivist, emotive, imagistic, as well as suspicious of bureaucratic institutionalism, formalities, and methodical ‘rationality’ (in Weberian terms). Following Eisenstadt’s structuration scheme, this cultural substratum should have permeated and affected the social division of labor as ‘ground-rules’, that is, specific ways of dealing with the indeterminacies of the social division of labor. Thus, while the responses of the participants in the research would be different, they should all comply to the aforementioned principles of Greek civil religion.

## **II. The Research**

How could the aforementioned political tendencies and cultural predispositions manifest themselves in an empirical study? We could hardly expect individual perceptions to correspond squarely with an analytic diagnosis that reduces a complex and turbulent situation to personal reflections and quantified preferences, especially so in the framework of an original pilot study with no previous equivalent to depend upon. Thus, the questionnaire was constructed as a probing device to inspect the significance of some of the theoretical arguments, cultural interpretations, and historical contingencies that we consider as important in making sense of the social condition in Greece. Equally probing was the nature of the questions that were asked in the interviews in an effort to identify patterns of reasoning amongst the interviewees.

Together, they constitute the methodology foundation for a more focused and more specific research which will be able to target significant issues that until now were virtually a terra incognita to sociological research.

### **1. The Quantitative Findings**

The questionnaire, consisting of 60 closed type questions and statements, was filled in by a selected sample of the General Greek Population during the period January-April 2012. A number of 49 qualified postgraduate students were employed as enumerators. A quota sampling method was employed and a total of 857 persons were finally selected. The sample was distributed proportionately not only to the population of the regions, but to the gender and age of the population as well.

#### **Data processing and initial analysis**

After field work a number of checks were applied to the questionnaires to improve their quality. Non Response Rate varies among the questions with “sensitive” of them to present lower responses. The income for instance presents a N.R.R of 16%. In general we think that

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<sup>1</sup> The presence of this fusion of civility and religiosity made itself visible during the ID cards crisis in 2000 when millions of Greeks demonstrated against the political decision to remove the recordation of the citizens’ religious affiliation from the ID cards.

the data gathered are of quite good quality in relation to our resources. Females consist the 57 % of the total and Males the rest 43 %. Mean age was  $33.64 \pm 0.896$  years old and the median age is 31 years old. Median should be used to present the average age instead of mean, as the variable of age do not follow the normal distribution. Factor and Clusters analysis are used as the main statistical methods.

First a Factor Analysis was applied on the variables of the Triandis' test (Table 1) which distinguishes amongst four types of social behavior: (a) horizontal individualism (HI) which stands for expressing individuality without a competitive attitude to others; (b) vertical individualism (VI) which corresponds to aggressive individualism and competitive stand towards to the others; (c) horizontal collectivism (HC) which stands for voluntary collaboration amongst people aware of their individuality; and (d) vertical collectivism (VC) which stands for a more traditional acceptance of group priority irrespective of personal preferences. The findings show that the more important behavioral patterns found amongst Greeks are the collectivist ones with Horizontal Collectivism coming first, followed by the more conservative, Vertical Collectivism. Individualism on the other hand is the least important in our sample, with Horizontal Individualism being the third most important behavioral pattern, while Vertical Individualism, the 'cut-throat' version of it, being the least important of all four. In order to ensure the indigenous correlations, the statistical measure Kaiser-Mayer Olkin (K.M.O.) was used, which indicates the data suitability, the existence of adequate endogenous correlations and the adequacy of the sample, ranging in 0.801. At the same time, Bartlett's Test Sphericity=3236.618,  $df=105$ ,  $p=0.00$  verifying the possibility of variable correlation, by using factor analysis.

Table 1

The second test is original and was developed to test the Ramfos (2011) thesis, that is the presence (and thus of absence) of the ideal type of Western citizen (the open, reflective, and responsible self) vis-à-vis the "entrenched self" that crystallizes the moral self of the closed society, and assumingly of the Greek political/social attitudes. In effect, the responses to this group of questions identify particular discourses concerning a series of civic and civil issues and for this reason we consider it as a group that tests *civil consciousness*. The results of the factor analysis (table 2) indicate that there are particular selective affinities amongst these items, suggesting five ideal-types of discourses that indicate particular moral hypergoods: the "phobic" (F1), the "righteous" (F2), the "populist" (F3), the "egoist" (F4), and the "leveling" (F5).

Table 2

The *phobic* discourse (F1) certainly is centered on the "foreigners" yet, believing in the miraculous intervention of God and the understanding of the political domain as a process of "demanding" unfolds a comprehensive cognitive model: It suggests an enclosed moral self fearful of external "intrusions" to its life-world, wrapped in traditional religiosity and a

simplistic idea of politics as a demanding-serving process. The belief in the miraculous intervention of God is the most intriguing item as it suggests not only traditional non-reflective religiosity, but also a more basic cognitive predisposition toward the immanent world: the *dues ex machina* principle of solving perplexed issues in a “magic” way, a way that involves little personal effort. This is the moral stand of a traditional self, entrenched in kinship and locality. Significantly enough, it is the discourse most likely to be structured by those who identify themselves with the far right (but not exclusively so).

The *righteous* discourse (F2) is an intriguing and most interesting combination of items. In its core lies the responsible and pacifist person which we consider, theoretical speaking, to be the foundations of a proper civil persona. Yet, it incorporates two more items that could be described as ambivalent, to say the least: self-righteousness and emotiveness. This latter blend of internal conviction and of filtering moral judgment by emotions suggests a highly personal sense of justice. This discourse matches the principles of the bi-polar individual of the Orthodox theological principles who combines righteousness with an inner, emotional, sense of justice irrespective of the consequence.

The *populist* discourse (F3) brings together the typical elements of populism and its moral principles. It is based on apocalyptic notions of good and evil, insecurity, and illegitimacy. This discourse is more secular and humanistic than the phobic one as it is neither xenophobic nor with supernatural associations, yet, we could consider it as an offshoot of the same moral discourse: it exemplifies the imagistic notion of the good and the just in equally entrenched ways. But while the phobic one is backward looking wishing for a routine life pattern, the populist one looks forward to a revolutionary “miraculous” and final resolution of the tensions of modern life. Interestingly enough, in this populist discourse we also find being included the item concerning “trust of fellow citizens” (20\_17). But, taking into account the context, this is not the civil trust of fellow citizens; instead, it is an abstract trust of the “people” who are seen as a community of transcendental worth.

The forth, *egoist* discourse (F4) is the more straightforward one. It exemplifies the identification of the moral good with the personal benefit irrespective of the law. In this discourse moral hypergoods, personal gains, and illegal behavior are mixed to produce a highly unstable mixture of anomic action. It indicates that naked egoism is not acceptable even for the egoist. It must be connected with some moral good, thus the connection of personal gain with justice; but not without cost: it isolates the actor from other hypergoods. And it is the discourse more likely to be preferred by people who identify their political preferences as far right or far left.

Last, the *leveling* discourse (F5). It appears as the most ideological (collectivism above individuality) but it is not even remotely connected to any other item that would add to the discourse a sense of purposeful moral intention. Isolated from other connotating items, the discourse projects a moral picture that resembles more a herding mentality rather than of a people in power: someone who is willing to give up his/her individual rights as long as he/she retains his/hers essential similarity to the next individual.

The statistical measure Kaiser-Mayer Olkin (K.M.O.) was 0.722. At the same time, Bartlett's Test Sphericity =1496.7, df=120, p=0.00 verifying the possibility of variable correlation, by using factor analysis .It is important to note, that the five Factors occurred show the total variance of 51 % and 49 % loss.

In all, the statistical analysis suggests low levels of civil consciousness which is reflected in the absence of a cluster of variables that gathers together the values of an ideal-type western civility. Instead, the clusters on the Factor's Analysis Scores, that resulted from the civil consciousness test, reflect two crucial matters of civil morality: First, a high percentage of respondents do not take account of the law when it comes to issues of justice; here, the personal 'feeling' of justice clearly predominates. Second, 'people' is considered to be an entity above and beyond institutional arrangements of power, and of rule of law. Both are clearly in line with the Orthodox perception of the hypergoods of Justice and Good and the ways that should be achieved. Indeed, the context is secular rather than religious, as Heavens has been replaced by secular hypergoods. Yet, the ways to achieve them clearly remains Orthodox Christian.

## **2. The Qualitative Findings**

### **Aim and Method**

The aim of the qualitative part of study was to identify regularities (and note irregularities) in the ways social actors in institutional posts as well as involved in social movements orient to the socio-political and economic challenges presented in Greece. These included key social and institutional macro-actors that shape and form the public agenda and are located in major syndicates of the public sector (ΓΣΕΕ, ΑΔΕΔΥ, ΟΛΜΕ, ΓΕΝΟΠ-ΔΕΗ, ΠΟΣΔΕΠ, ΤΡΑΙΝΟΣΕ), the private sector (federation of taxi owners, and federation of trucks), and the social movements that either emerged or came at the forefront during the last two years: 'I Do Not Pay' («Δεν Πληρώνω»), 'The Indignated' («Αγανακτισμένοι»), 'Open City' («Ανοιχτή Πόλη»), 'Potato Movement' («Κίνημα Πατάτας»). We interviewed key social actors identifying with the above organizations either as elected representatives of trade unions or who aligned themselves with particular social movements. The rationale was that, owing to the position of the social actors-representatives of trade unions, the ways in which they construct civic identity and the current situation in Greece pervade, influence but may also be 'in tune' with public understandings of them (Pavlou, 2001; Moscovici, 1984). Our central assumption is that cultural codes and moral arguments are located in discursive constructions which take their meaning from the context of their utterance (Edwards, 1997).

Similarly, due to the centrality of social movements in terms of action but also in terms of heated (public) debates and discussions around them, especially at the time of the research (March 2012-February 2013), it was assumed that people who categorized themselves along the lines of particular groups should be interviewed in order to investigate how these categories were constructed and what were the relevant categories of 'others' mobilized.

Interview data is suitable for the examination of the way participants construct and negotiate hypergoods and middle-range life goods. The focus was how people orient to issues of civic identity and action and what is the basis of participation as a citizen (collective/individual). The data analysis had three main focal points. The first was to identify the different contrary themes or ideological dilemmas participants face when they talk about civic action and identity in Greece-in-crisis. The analysis tried to identify the dominant lines of argument formulated by participants which indicate which explanatory resources participants primarily drew on and which constructions were treated by participants as more important or more relevant than others in the context of discussion. Second, emphasis was laid on category construction on behalf of the participants. Researchers argue that categories are places of contestation where different category definitions underlie different projects which try to mobilize audiences towards different actions (see for example Reicher and Hopkins, 2001). As a result, different category constructions may underlie different projects.

The aim of the study was to identify (a) the ways in which participants make sense of the contemporary situation in Greece, (b) the regularities (and irregularities) in the explanatory resources participants mobilize to make sense of the contemporary situation in Greece (and their ideological history), (c) the ‘rationalization processes’ and dilemmas in the lines of argument identified drawing on these resources.

The original plan was that we would carry out twenty (20) open-ended semi-structured interviews with members of the abovementioned groups in their everyday settings in order to attend to their social milieu. This involved holding the interviews in places familiar to participants, where they felt comfortable. We accessed participants through identifying entry points, hubs, key contact persons and gatekeepers. Participants were recruited using purposeful sampling, focusing on members of the afore-mentioned groups who act and are internally recognized as representatives of the trade unions or who identify with particular social movements. The focus of the interview schedule was on the ways in which participants orient to civic identity and culture in the context of the current situation in Greece. Namely, the topics covered were the socio-economic and cultural situation in Greece, participants’ involvement, role and action in it, the ways in which it is evolving, movements, actions, initiatives and interventions (Appendix 1). Overall, 12 interviews and 1 group interview were conducted with representatives of the following major syndicates of the public sector: ΓΣΕΕ (N=1), ΟΛΜΕ (N=2), ΠΟΣΔΕΠ (N=2), ΠΟΣ (N=1) and of the following social movements (N=6+1): ‘I Do Not Pay’ («Δεν Πληρώνω»), ‘The Indignated’ («Αγανακτισμένοι»), ‘Potato Movement’ («Κίνημα Πατάτας»). Interviews ranged between 14 minutes and 1 hour 18 minutes (mean=43 minutes, sd=20 minutes) and were held in participants’ places of work or socialization. Interviews were transcribed (see Appendix 2 for Transcription Notation) and the transcriptions were firstly extensively read till some basic categories/topics were easily discernible. Initially, therefore, we focused on identifying thematic regularities (Section 2).

At a second stage we concentrated on the lines of arguments used by our participants, what explanatory resources these drew on and mobilized, what versions of social life and reality they constructed. Within our portfolio of data, therefore, we attempted to identify regularities in terms of the lines of argument (Wetherell, 1998) mobilized, as well as, in terms of the



common places (Billig, 1987) around which these lines of argument were developed. Attention was also paid to the rhetorical organization of talk based on the premises set out in discursive psychology (DP) (Edwards and Potter, 1992).

The rationale for opting for such an approach overall was that, that while surveys and large-scale studies serve to identify the general stances and provide an empirical basis for the potential planning of policies, they provide limited information concerning the broader argumentative resources within which particular representations are constructed and/or about their functions in specific micro-social contexts. The two stages of the analysis follow in Sections 2 and 3 below.

### **Analysis: Resource and Argumentation Regularities**

Regularities were identified *mainly* in three topics which emerged as dominant in talking about the crisis in Greece:

- Orientation to change
- Treatment of ‘abroad’
- Relationship between state and people

#### **Orientation to change**

There were many accounts of change which were usually associated to accounts of the Greek crisis, how it was constructed and where/to whom it was attributed.

One common line of argument used by participants (mainly macro-social actors and few participants in social movements) was that a ‘*civic call*’ was required. According to this line of argument the crisis implicated civic values and by incremental, ‘educational’ steps, people will be converted into citizens. The ‘content’ of these steps varied from as vaguely formulated as ‘doing one’s best’, to engaging with politics, and to specific micro-actions.

#### **Extract 1 – Interview with representative of trade union in higher education**

82 if anything is to change in this model that we had up until now >I think that a lot has to  
83 change< e:h (.) we have to start in my opinion from what we call public and responsibilities  
84 of a citizen. >Rights and responsibilities< >rights and responsibilities< a constant thing in  
85 which as our CENTRE is the PUBLIC the public space (.) the public >whatever is public< to  
86 become finally comprehensible >that is< to the GREEK (.) therefore ((the Greek)) to become  
87 citizen

Another line of argument treated change as a more centralised process, gradually achieved as a result of the development of a *critical mass*. According to this argument there is a mismatch between practice and the politics which are in place to regulate it and it is a critical mass accumulating that drives change at a micro level and pushes changes at a macro level.

#### **Extract 2 – Interview with representative of trade union in higher education**

198 I have realized >and I think I am not at all< that there is now a (.) a very big mass of  
199 academics >that is may be it is the critical required mass of academics< who want to: us to  
200 leave the misery and the: this not pleasant situation in which the Greek university is found for  
201 many years now and to start approximating/approaching the foreign university systems e:h in  
202 the sense that (.) they are systems that produce new knowledge e:h produce good graduates  
203 >it is not just a matter of public relations< e:h and there I think that there is a dividing line  
204 >that is< people who (.) are good at thei:r job (.) have aligned >regardless of political  
205 conviction< with the group of those who: want to change things

Trade unionists and most social movement participants treated *change as relevant and applicable to the state, the government, the political system and model of production*. Namely, participants mobilized the association of civic action to outcome and argued that while *civic action comes from people, change comes from central government*.

### **Extract 3 – Interview with representative of trade union in secondary education**

114 We e:h in the last couple of year more e:h moved towards the logic of general strikes >that  
115 is< generalized strike movement in the public and private sector (.) e:h [...] these strike  
116 movements (.) e:h showed the intensity of reaction/opposition that existed in Greek people. It  
117 was the opposition in practice in any case (.) e:h (...) [...] but as regards the results we  
118 cannot say that we have succeeded (.) at this point we will be able to say that we have  
119 succeeded to the degree that this policy will start to be revised

A few participants argued that solidarity is the positive development of civic action.

### **Extract 4 – Interview with participant in square movement**

319 Generally though with the: whole issue of solidarity there i:s: this it is it started probably  
320 from then and worked more and it has stayed with many >more or less< >with some more  
321 with others less< nevertheless it works >that is< there is at any point in time that: “I have a  
322 need” >don’t know< “I will ca:ll a couple of guys” let’s say “in case something happens”.  
323 And you know that you will hear a good word >if anything< or he wi:ll try to mobilise  
324 himself to help you. Without always having a benefit. And that is very: a very very good  
325 thing that we didn’t have °up to now°. [...] And >that is< just from that you start to  
326 understand that: a small stone was laid. You might have not achieved >that is< what you  
327 wanted but a small stone was laid in this. You were with a plus sign. Probably if it didn’t  
328 happen this wouldn’t have happened either.

### **Treatment of ‘abroad’**

References to ‘abroad’ (εξωτερικό), Europe, the US, and individual states were made in different contexts. The main two contexts where ‘abroad’ was mobilized was in relation to agency for and origin of contemporary situation in Greece and in discussing ways out of it.

In relation to agency for and origin of the contemporary situation in Greece, some participants engaged in differentiating Greece to ‘abroad’ in cultural terms. These were at

points treated as ‘choices’ (rationalizing and embedding culture with agency); or as ‘pragmatic’ differences (rationalization on the basis of external events, conditions or circumstances).

This differentiation was made by participants who attributed a role or blame to ‘abroad’ for the developments in Greece and was used as they grounds for which it was ‘imposed’, ‘forced’ and ‘alien’. Attributions of agency to the state, the political system or government in Greece varied in these lines of argument but commonly treated them as ‘weak’.

#### **Extract 5 – Interview with representative of trade union in secondary education**

97 Look (.) the policy that was applied in Greece e:h (..) was designed e:h imposed from abroad.  
98 As a result those that designed this policy very simply had no political cost. It was very very  
99 DIFFICULT these that they are a:sk asking from Greek people to try in the slightest bit to  
100 apply to their people right? E:h so from the point (.) we fell in the calipers of supranational  
101 organisations (.) e:h it was evident that there would be highly: intense: e:h e:h attack on  
102 employees since it is a given that the lenders request (.) only their money (.) and ignore the  
103 human factor (.) this is exactly what is recorded in Greece (.) and in a milder manner i:n e:h  
104 (.) Portugal and Ireland

In terms of in discussing ways out of the current situation in Greece, the first argument used was formulated along the lines of an ‘*inward-looking*’ approach, particularising the Greek case as local or particular in the sense of presenting differences with other cases in other countries and arguing that (only) local and particular or tailor-made solutions are relevant.

#### **Extract 6 – Interview with participant in social movement**

424 Also in Germany there are e:h (.) citizens’ groups who: who have adopte:d twenty trees each  
425 in the woods and go and look after them (.) this is the other extreme (..) there is e:h saturation  
426 there (.) and the person tries to fi:nd (.) ways out (..) let me give you an example (.) at some  
427 point e:h sometime the communist party of Germany >in the age of seventy six seventy seven  
428 when I first went to Germany< e:h there were people (.) who handed out leaflets in front of  
429 the supermarkets about an armed revolution (.) there wasn’t anything more stupid (.) for what  
430 reason? You canno:t >to someone holding two cases of beer in their hands and is going home  
431 to watch (.) the world cup< >I don’t know< >to give him a paper and tell him “armed  
432 revolution”< (.) it has no sense (.) the person is somewhere else (.) has different needs (.)  
433 there is no chance that he would leave the beers and make ((laughs)) armed revolution (.)  
434 right? >that is< there as well you SEE >let’s say< how how silly parties can be (.) how stuck  
435 up they can be (.) e:h (.) here we have different circumstances (.) do you see anyone leaving  
436 with two ((laughs)) cases of beer from the supermarket? Here we could talk about an armed  
437 revolution in theory (.) because though we are against violence that we don’t WANT such  
438 situations let’s make our revolution

The second line of argument, which made an *'outward-looking' approach* relevant, was one of measuring Greece up on the basis of 'external' standards, treated as norms or as more advanced.

### **Extract 7 – Interview with representative of trade union of Greek employees**

77 When the political system falls apart, when no formal body >apart from the changes we had<  
78 gives a visible political perspective which is based on reality, which relates to the national  
79 developments and to developments in Europe >we are not alone< e:h we shouldn't at least  
80 have this autism or smugness that Greece is in the centre of the world. Because there wasn't  
81 (.) we made very big strike movements >we have made about twenty five general strikes<  
82 >as many as they have not done in all other European countries all other countries in the last  
83 five years we have made in two years<. We just managed to delay or interrupted some things  
84 but in essence >to be honest< in essence a clear political victory did no:t exist and, therefore,  
85 lobbying was not something that was in the culture >to refer to this way of pressure< in the  
86 culture of our syndicalism. It is not exactly as it is in the northern countries and especially in  
87 the Scandinavian ((ones)).

Participants treated this measuring up as yardstick to be reached top-down, and/or as a fact already reached bottom-up. Resource-wise, this mobilizes and engages with a common place in intellectual and lay accounts according to which modern Greeks constantly try to measure up with, though never fully achieve, a Eurocentric, metaphysical, normative and centripetal type of genealogised identity (Liakos, 2007).

It has been argued that the outward-looking view is a product of post-Enlightenment colonialism. However, others argue that this is an oversimplification (Liakos, 2001; Herzfeld, 1987) as Greek nation builders did not passively accept European colonialist discourse but engaged in 'practical occidentalism'. 'Practical occidentalism' refers to evoking Western prototypes of Greek national character, to disavowing or criticising aspects of culture as 'oriental' or to seeking to be seen as 'occidental' (see also Herzfeld, 1995) amidst evaluative accounts of the Orient and the Occident indicating a "painful awareness of the inequality of cultural models". This semantic 'ambivalence' is seen as reproduced by Greek lay and non-lay actors, expressing a "pervasive unease about the status and identity of modern Greek culture". The long-lasting official Helleno-Christian discourse, succeeded by a resilient official discourse of 'hegemonic syncretism', of combining - without omission - both Hellenic and populist aspects which was taken up by subsequent political forces right up to today, may be argued to have enabled the re-production of these resources, constituting them as dominant and prioritised over others (see also Herzfeld, 2001).

### **Relationship between state and people**

There were two main lines of argument here: according to some participants (macro-social actors) the state and people are one and the same thing, while other participants (in trade unions and social movements) drew a clear distinction between the two.

*The state and people are one and the same thing:* according to this line of argument the people *are* the state, and the ‘public’, the ‘commons’ are on these grounds citizens’ property *and* responsibility. On these grounds, the crisis in Greece is constructed as a value one and realisation of this is treated as a prerequisite for moving forward.

#### **Extract 8 – Interview with representative of trade union in secondary education**

47 I think that e:h especially the value crisis the cultural >if you wish< the social e:h has not  
48 begun >it would be absurd to say that it has begun in the last few years<. Simply because of  
49 the financial of the intense financial crisis of the past few years these phenomena have been  
50 more acute. I thi:nk that the role models especially in the new e:h the new generations e:h  
51 have changed especially through the bombardment they receive from the mass media e:h and  
52 in these I include the: television the radio the press the internet and I dare say tha:t in the  
53 Greek society there existed e:h a sense tha:t e:h through the: wealth through consumption  
54 wi:ll experience like: a: moral uplift that you will be someone who: has status. And this lead  
55 us to: some value some other mental standards of knowledge education e:h to to weaken to  
56 weaken a lot. E:h even the phenomenon >that is widespread< of sleaze/fraud >as we adults  
57 call it< e:h was left all these years to be understood tha:t there was an impunity that e:h it is  
58 ok that everyone ca:n take something or the: phrase (.) that we steal from the state thinking  
59 that it is something impersonal that it is a: the state is opposite us and we can each and  
60 everyone can take something from it not the we are indeed e:h we are: the state.

*Distinction between the state and people:* this line of argument treats people and the state as two entities (sometimes connected through clientelism; sometimes disconnected as the state representing a distinct level of ultimate management, administration and protection or aggression derives from).

#### **Extract 9 – Interview with representative of trade union**

Look (.) I at least represent ((anonymised)) >we are a party always in favour of dialogue< always through dialogue we want to find those ways out that will be in the interest of the state and of the ((anonymised)) >if you wish< and >personally< of the employees. When there is no dialogue when there is when it is eliminated or the space for dialogue is limited from then on (.) and they insist on certain policies that do not express us (.) a:nd obviously we have to defend because there are a lot of rumors (.) for layoffs for one (.) we have to defend even even our job. It is logical some will resort to extreme things. We of course: say that in the context of legitimacy the only weapon against this hurricane that tries to come i:s the issue of strike.

Participants who alluded to this distinction constructed the crisis in Greece is as (primarily) political and economic and change from above was treated as a prerequisite for moving forward. Some have traced the symbolic aspects of this in the Mediterranean context where the state from the 19<sup>th</sup> century onwards is associated with corruption, patronage and belated modernity. In this context, the state has been found to be counter-positioned to the individual or group, to be discursively used to represent inflexibility and estrangement from the people and, thus, ineffectiveness to respond reasonably in practice. In lay talk, this seems to enable self- criticism, but also ultimately a tendency to oppose the bureaucratic state to the people, and to direct blame attribution to (an) impersonal, external agency. This line of argument, therefore, seems to draw on an explanatory resource according to which the state is seen as the imposed, ‘foreign’ power, referring to a system of administration imported in the making of the modern Greek state, and history is read as a plot of foreign powers against Greece, which is in turn considered a nation symbolically disabled and condemned to servitude.

### **Rationalization processes and hypergoods**

The aforementioned rationalization processes could be seen as contextualizing cultural patterns of hypergoods. Description of the situation in Greece, of personal recounting of events, and description of emotional states in moments of heightened tension provide the background to bring forward the moral principles of the actors. Interesting enough, similar, pragmatic, descriptions of the political and economic evils of Greece (basically political corruption and economic weakness) were linked to three quite distinct lines of argumentation: A passive, an active, and a mixed one. In its passive form, ‘facts’ and personal experience were used to justify a preconceived idea of hypergoods, such as ‘direct democracy’, or ‘people in power’ as well as to condemned preconceived ideas of ‘hyper-evils’, such as the ‘political system’. We call it passive as it reacts to the evils, but without any clear course of developing long-lasting social structures. The Square Movement argumentation falls into this pattern:

#### **Extract 1 – Interview with a member of the Square Movement**

28 it means that Greece was not really developed, compared to the northern standards,  
29 capitalist: society neither as the production was organized , nor what it produced...  
30 nor how the productive forces were organized

31 there was a big team: of mediators, that there is mediation, eh: in all sides of life  
32 all forms of political life, legal and illegal, , and it is encouraged by the way it is  
33 organized... it also holds true for the political life. This mediation encourages the  
34 development of clientelistic relations...  
50 The result is that Greece became easily the victim of blackmailing...  
54 For a new relation between the forces of labor and the forces of wealth...  
65 I do not expect anything from the politicians. We will either develop direct-democracy  
66 structures, or we will be much worst in the near future  
67 We need to resist, it is the natural consequence of the most oppressed and poor classes  
96 We need to do something, to take the situation in our hands

In its active form, facts and personal experience were used as a basis to seek out solutions and reach out middle-range life-goods that were not appreciated beforehand. The 'no-mediators' or 'potato movement' represent such cognitive process: the worth of the community is found in actions that serve the common good in voluntary, non-hierarchical common action, inspired by a sense of contribution to the common good. The 'potato' or 'no-mediators' movement constitutes an example on an effort to develop new social structures that are both economical and moral.

### **Extract 2 – Interview with a member of the potato movement**

12 Greece went through a period of relative prosperity which at the end of the day was  
13 standing on wooden feet...  
57 Our society has collapsed because its cells are sick  
59 I mean the local authorities, I mean my neighborhood, I mean myself  
62 We need to change this situation, each and every one of us  
64 The change will not happen from the top, but from each one of us, the grass-roots  
72 Each one should be self-motivated to be a productive force in this society

A third strand, represented by the unionists, falls somewhere in the middle: Condemnation of the political system, and acknowledgement of long-term economic weakness neither leads to questioning the whole structure of liberal democracy, nor to proposals for new types of unionism. Instead, their arguments speak of either returning to the good old comprehensive structures of a united front, or a return to forgotten values. In all, this strand indicates that charismatic action, of changing social structures in radical reshuffling of cultural codes, does not emerge easily out of established channels of institutional organizations; change comes from outside, from free-floating actors that amass resources and appropriate them in their own social structures.

### **Extract 3 – Interview with a first unionist**

28 The problem for more than twenty years was the productive model, a wrong strategic

choice  
37 We experience a crisis of values as we see values being shrank in our society  
89 Each one of us can contribute to the betterment of our society  
95 From the position each one of us has in the society, or the state, to change things for the better

#### **Extract 4 – Interview with a second unionist**

9 Our prosperity was not based on a strong productive base,  
11 markets started showing their teeth  
15 the lenders enforced hard terms that upset the most vulnerable parts of our society  
53 [the state] never implemented a just tax reform  
66 Syndicalism is partly responsible. It entered the power sharing games, and disoriented  
67 simple unionist members that ‘they are there to get me a salary increase, why should I fight?’  
68 Thus we developed the democracy of the couch  
69 there is a great responsibility...  
145 Let us not forget that the unionist movement has achieved a lot, signing the  
146 general charter of collective bargain, the first crack on the wall of memorandum..

More important, the arbitrary way by which social actors link facts with binary oppositions of hypergoods and ‘hyperevils’, and of middle-range life goods and life evils, strongly suggest that values alone are not enough to depict the moral universe of a social actor; most people adhere to the same hypergoods and to similar life goods. Instead, we need to know the binary *opposition* to each one of them. We need to know the *full* binary code, that is, the juxtaposition; not only the bright side, but its shadow as well. Only then we can understand divisive lines of otherwise democrats who adhere to democratic principles but disagree on what constitutes the dark side of democracy.

## **Conclusions**

The starting point of the analysis of civil religion in Greece was the Ramfos thesis that Greek civility is significantly affected by the ‘entrenched self’ that is cultivated by the still pre-modern and non-reflective Orthodox religion. The findings produced much more than a simple verification or rejection of this thesis. Indeed, the analytical scheme on which our research was based upon allowed us to read, and by the primary research to reveal, albeit only tentatively, a moral universe that permeates and deeply affects the workings of the Greek civil society: Civil consciousness in Greece strongly correlates with the Orthodox theology and related religious practices to produce a very specific type of civil *attitude* that transcends modern ideologies and links them to the cultural, indeed, to the civilizational past of the country, centered around an emotive and personalized sense of justice and righteousness ‘above the law’, overwhelmingly collectivist and, ‘defiant’ of bureaucratic rationalization processes.



Furthermore, the study showed that this *religious* mode of perceiving *modern* hypergoods may take more specific, and to no small degree, antithetical forms crystallized in various middle-range life-goods which, nevertheless, are not clearly demarcated, but instead communicate with one another according to the position of social actors in the social division of labor and personal orientations and priorities. While more detailed investigation of the subject-matter is necessary, the importance of the social division of labor in shaping an individual discourse appears to be critical: As all of the five discourses the statistical analysis revealed are sub-routines of the same democratic code, particular binary sets of the latter could easily shift positions and priority according to the social status of the actor.

In a nutshell, out of the same cultural premises more than one political discourse emerges. These discourses, in the form of ethical behavior, are formed inside the social division of labor establishing hegemonic *wirtschaftsethiks*. It is intriguing, urging us to develop more precise methodological tools and detailed analysis, that while pragmatic reflections (e.g., ‘mistakes of the past’, ‘weak economic basis’, ‘political corruption’) are found in all interviews, this pragmatism is not identifiable in the quantitative analysis suggesting that it does not constitute a ‘value system’. Moreover, instead of being linked to a methodical rationalist value postulates, pragmatism is linked primarily to voluntarist hypergoods. All these need to be investigated in a future research project that takes into account the present findings, a comparative, cross-cultural, study if possible. For the moment, we could claim that this probing study has brought forward enough evidence that morality constitutes a key feature of social structure and social action, and as such it belongs to the core of the sociological analysis of civil society.

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## Tables

**Table 1**

Rotated Factor Matrix <sup>a</sup> on the variables of the Triantis Test				
	Factor			
	1	2	3	4
18_2. I rely on myself most of the time; I rarely rely on others	,077	,094	,702	,050
18_3. I often do "my own thing"	,079	,033	,515	,193
18_4. My personal identity, independent of others, is very important to me	,210	,201	,603	,018
18_5. It is important that I do my job better than others	,126	,239	,442	,461
18_6. Winning is everything	-,102	,005	,092	,647
18_7. Competition is the law of nature	,111	,133	,255	,430
18_8. When another person does better than I do, I get tense and aroused	-,225	-,039	-,018	,606
18_9. If a coworker gets a prize, I would feel proud	,603	,158	,183	-,073
18_10. The well-being of my coworkers is important to me	,632	,099	,078	-,034
18_11. To me, pleasure is spending time with others	,688	,156	,122	,036
18_12. I feel good when I cooperate with others	,676	,172	,082	-,153
18_13. Parents and children must stay together as much as possible	,031	,377	,039	,119
18_14. It is my duty to take care of my family, even when I have to sacrifice what I want	,226	,802	,161	-,043
18_15. Family members should stick together, no matter what sacrifices are required	,285	,711	,224	-,009

18_16. It is important to me that I respect the decisions made by my groups	,289	,323	,042	-,006
Extraction Method: Maximum Likelihood.				
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.				
a. Rotation converged in 5 iterations.				

**Table 2**

Rotated Component Matrix <sup>a</sup>					
	Component				
	1	2	3	4	5
20_9. The foreigners are jealous and conspire against us	,799	-,052	,090	,085	-,012
20_16. The foreigners impose a threat to our national identity	,788	,083	,137	-,052	,010
20_15. I believe in the miraculous intervention of God in the world	,571	,248	,149	-,135	,135
20_4. The role of the politicians is to adhere to my demands	,412	-,108	,213	,240	,114
20_8. At the end of the day I am responsible for what happens to me	,091	,646	-,214	,096	-,033

Rotated Factor Matrix on the variables of civil consciousness test

20_2. Physical violence by no means belongs to social life	,002	,599	-,003	-,217	,090
20_7. If I consider something to be right I support it irrespective of the consequences	-,111	,565	,105	,466	,026
20_6. I sense the world more with my feelings rather than my intellect	,115	,508	,326	,103	,006
20_14. When the people truly get the power, it would be a matter of time to solve the most important problems	,164	,112	,682	,151	,154
20_13. I feel that my life is controlled by dark networks	,204	-,074	,645	-,041	-,109
20_17. In general I trust my fellow citizens irrespective of how well I know them personally	-,008	-,187	,452	,043	,405
20_10. The interest of the people is above institutions and laws	,249	,180	,417	,328	,060
20_1. I am ready to fight for what I believe is right, even by breaking the Law	-,138	,148	,158	,726	,011
20_5. Before my personal profit I do not consider the Law	,352	-,326	-,068	,636	-,007
20_3. "Justice" is more important than "individual rights"	,203	-,016	-,168	,159	,780
20_12. Between individual freedoms and social equality, I prefer social equality	-,031	,169	,237	-,135	,647

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

a. Rotation converged in 12 iterations.