Before closing, I would like to make a few comments of my own concerning contemporary research on modern Greece.

- The advantage of a symposium such as this is that we can develop a specialist dialogue. We overcome our academic isolation and talk to others with similar interests and expertise. And it is important that we maintain this dialogue after today. We should endeavour to maintain continuing contact by building a new research network. This should be good for us as individuals, as well as for the field of Hellenic Studies.

- The Symposium has been a success in bringing us altogether. This has provided us with the opportunity to establish new contacts and to engage in a specialist academic dialogue with our immediate peers. There is a risk, however, that in doing so we cut ourselves off from the wider academic community. There is a natural temptation to emphasise the uniqueness or exceptionalism of the Greek case. We say you can only fully understand my argument if you know Greek or Balkan history, if you are familiar with the nature of the Greek state, if you appreciate the roots of social identities or whatever. Who can deny these aspects are very important? They are crucial foundations for understanding Greece today. But, we shouldn't build too many barriers to wider international comparison!

- Such endogeneity can be too easy an excuse. The risk is that we avoid the full transparency of our argument. Our causation and inferences
become hidden. We lack precision in our logic, in identifying the role of structure and of agency.

- I am not here making an appeal for shallow comparisons, broad generalisations that tell us little. Our discussions today have rightly illustrated the importance of conditions that have a specific character in Greece. We can only give depth to our explanations by taking full account of such indigenous traits.

- Instead, my argument here is that we need clarity in our research designs. That is, we should have a clear set of questions or hypotheses. We give clarity to our argument by identifying as accurately as possible the causation that underlines our explanation. We should be clear as to what our independent and dependent variables are. And we must endeavour to be precise as to the effects or outcomes we have identified. If you have doubts about the structure of your argument or how you should present your argument – I strongly recommend that you take a look at the new book by Prof. Patrick Dunleavy on how to write a PhD. It’s a very helpful guide as to how to write a good PhD.

- With such clarity and precision, we open our case up to researchers working on other countries, sectors, structures or agents. Only then can we properly gauge today’s ‘Greek exceptionalism’.

- Social science research on Greece has made much progress. We can all identify a range of works on modern Greek society, politics and economics that have been landmarks in their field and which still guide our research perspectives.
Still, gaps remain and research can be distant from the European and American mainstream. There are two important needs here, I suggest. The first is that in my own field of political science and international relations, more empirical work is needed to support general characterisations and theoretical assumptions. PhD research typically requires you to collate and analyse lots of material from primary sources: archival searches, personal interviews, perhaps even surveys. This endeavour should not stop with your PhD, but it should be a continuing modus operandi. We need more studies that are based on good quality interviews, surveys and primary documents.

The second need is to fill some of the gaps in our coverage. Research on contemporary Greece can be distant from the European and American mainstream as it exists today. The fashionable foci in European and American research are not always those found in contemporary Greek studies.

I looked the other day through the search facility of the ‘International Bibliography of the Social Sciences’ – an electronic library search facility that is the biggest single database in the world for the social sciences. I entered a number of key terms, to try to gauge the pattern of recent research on Greece. The search came up with some interesting results. These results are very rough and approximate. The precise results are almost certainly not very reliable. Yet, they suggest some general patterns that are consistent with informed intuition.

There has long been a large academic literature on Greece and the European Union, Greece and Turkey, the Greek state, and Greek identity.
Some very valuable work has been done in these areas. Of course, there is plenty of scope to do much more in these same fields: they remain very important. But, my simple point is that we know relatively more about these subjects than we do about other topics that are also important.

- It is striking how few publications have been produced in the areas of public policy, public administration, and political economy. Even in the specific area of privatisation, there have been very few publications on Greece. And in the new area of Europeanization there are also very few publications.

- So I am making two points here. First, we have a tremendous imbalance between the coverage of certain topics as opposed to others. Secondly, the neglect of the areas of public policy, public administration and political economy is in striking contrast with the research interests prevalent in America and most of Europe. I was very surprised to find, for example, only 9 publications on Greece & Europeanization. ‘Europeanization’ has become a very sexy area in the social sciences elsewhere. Perhaps it shows once again that the Anglo-Saxon notion of sexiness is rather different from that of Greece!

- You’ll see from the chart that Greece & policy process, policy learning produced only one publication, but that Greece & policy yielded some 387 publications. Greece & policy, of course, is a much looser and more general search parameter. Almost anything might come under this rubric. But even here there was an interesting pattern: about half of the publications recorded under Greece & policy have appeared in the last four years. In other words, there is a recent trend to focus more on policy.
But, the focus does not appear to be framed within the political science notion of public policy analysis, focusing on agenda-setting, policy learning, etc.

- PhD topics reflect, to some extent, these overall trends. We are much more likely to find PhD students working on Greek foreign policy or Greek identity than we are to find new PhDs on public policy or political economy. Again, research in these popular areas is very important, but it would be to our collective gain if the balance was redressed somewhat.

- A focus that can serve the dual purpose of avoiding academic isolation and of requiring greater empirical work is that of the processes of Europeanization. Here, we can take common external pressures and stimuli and examine the responses or effects in Greece. The research agenda is one that is common to Greece and other member states. Moreover, the circumstances of the various member states differ enormously, so there is an inherent need to be sensitive to local conditions.

- But here we come up against a wider problem. That is: how we conceive of and apply ‘Europeanization’ in our research design. ‘Europeanization’ like ‘globalization’ can be a glib term: used loosely and with little precise meaning. This serves little purpose. But the ontology of ‘Europeanization’ is very complex.

- The Europeanization agenda covers major aspects of how Greek society, politics and the economy is changing. It refers to the adaptation of institutional settings in the broadest sense; shifts in cognitions, discourse and identity; the restructuring of capabilities and strategic opportunities;
policy learning and transfer; and the emergence of new policy networks and communities.

- But: Europeanization is not a theory – rather, it is a distinct set of processes in need of explanation. As such, Europeanization does not necessarily imply convergence of outcomes between states: common pressures can lead to divergent outcomes. Moreover, the effects of Europeanization are not necessarily permanent or irreversible. It is not a simple ‘top-down’ process. Europeanization has a dynamic quality and is a matter of degree or extent. In short, Europeanization involves a basic asymmetry of effects and outcomes: it restructures, but not necessarily permanently.

- How Greece may or may not have been affected by Europeanization is a highly topical – as well as a common – question to pose. Europeanization has some basic link to the literature on modernization in Greece and, indeed, to the political project advocated by Simitis. The work of Nikiforos Diamandouros on the modernization process in Greece has highlighted cleavages and asymmetries that bear some relationship to the more recent phenomenon of ‘Europeanization’. The perspective needs to be applied to specific cases and with more fulsome empirical material. In doing so, we fill empirical gaps and we bring the study of Greece closer to the literature on other European states.

- An area where the ‘Europeanization’ perspective can be usefully applied is that of the study of public policy and administration in Greece. As the electronic search suggested, we have relatively few studies in this area. In other national contexts, a strong research focus has applied social
constructivism or rational choice models to explain policy ideas and interests.

• Both approaches seem particularly relevant to the Greek case. A social constructivist perspective examining the origin and evolution of policy ideas can help us to gauge how agendas have been formed and the role of ‘Europe’ in this regard. Such studies can shed light on the relative weakness of a technocratic community in Greece, the significance of there being fewer independent policy think-tanks in Greece than in most EU states, and the apparent shallowness of European networks.

• Similarly, a rational choice perspective might help to illustrate the systemic constraints that affect reform initiatives in Greece. I am thinking here of reform attempts to do with pensions, labour market regulation, privatisation, environmental policy, amongst others. What are the structural impediments to cooperation between the key actors, why has the social dialogue been so problematic in Greece? Who wants reform? What are the problems of representation and commitment?

• Both constructivist and rational choice approaches can illustrate the viability of reform coalitions and the blockages to reform. We can place such analysis in a longer-term context of reform being leader-dependent. We can thus compare agency and structure.

• Some years ago, the fashionable focus on Greece was of democratic transition and consolidation. It then shifted to PASOK’s independent reform path. Prior to the Simitis Government, a topical consideration was of the Greek ‘paradox’: why Greece was under-performing economically. Today, I suggest the critical questions have moved on again. Today, the
we need to know more about adaptation: that is, of Greek adjustments to the new external environment. We need to contrast agency will and domestic structural resistance and the Europeanization perspective is very important in this respect.

End.