# *Why Orthodoxy?*
# *Religion and Nationalism in Greek Political Culture*

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ABSTRACT

This paper is a contribution to the analysis of Helleno-Christian nationalism in Greece. It seeks to investigate the reasons for the politicization of religion and the Church, to account for the production, development and propagation of religious nationalism and the sacralisation of politics in Greece, and explain the paradoxical way in which the Greek Church was constructed as a nationalist political and cultural institution, while its canonical tradition, the Gospel, and its Byzantine past were inherently ecumenical in character. The aim of the presentation is to offer a coherent and convincing narrative about the political processes whereby the Helleno-Christian ideology attained a hegemonic status in Greek political culture, and account for the present eminence of this prominent type of Greek nationalism, by 'blending' the theoretical frameworks of ethno-symbolism and discourse analysis.

## I. Prologue

The first article of the first constitutional text of modern Greece, the "Epidaurous Constitution" of 1822, classifies as Greeks "all natives [autochthonous] who believe in Christ".[1] Since then, the close ties between the "Orthodox Eastern Apostolic Church of Greece" and the Greek nation have been more then merely preserved. In the words of the former Prime Minister Constantinos Karamanlis, in a speech he gave in 1981, while in office:

> The nation and Orthodoxy…have become in the Greek conscience virtually synonymous
> concepts, which together constitute our Helleno-Christian civilization.[2]

Even the most superficial observation of Modern Greek history and society would almost certainly accord with Karamanlis' conclusions: In the first three Greek revolutionary constitutions (1822-1827), there is no clear distinction between the notions of 'Greek citizen' and 'Greek Orthodox Christian'.[3] One can observe in these constitutions the crucial role of Orthodoxy in identifying "Greekness" in a rather exclusionary manner. Even in our epoch, the Greek constitution uses a sanctified language, which denotes the close links between Hellenism and Orthodoxy, while Orthodoxy is the established religion in Greece. Instead of being written 'in the name of the people/nation', which is the usual preamble of most liberal constitutions, the Greek constitution is written *In the name of the Holy and Consubstantial and Indivisible Trinity*.[4] In addition to that, the oath of the President of the Republic is clearly a religious one.[5]

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[1] Cited in Rafailidis, V., (1993:445)
[2] Cited in Ware, K., (1983:208).
[3] Paparizos, A., (2000:89)
[4] Dimitropoulos P., (2001:67-68)
[5] See article 33, §2 of the Greek Constitution: "2. Before assuming the exercise of his duties, the President of the Republic shall take the following oath before Parliament:

Greek children are taught a divinity lesson in school for seven years, which propagandizes the ideas of the Orthodox Church against other religions.[6] Orthodox priests are treated as civil servants and are officially paid by the Greek government.[7] In order for a temple of another religion to be built in Greece, authorities seek the advice (apart from the usual permission of the local city-planning office) of the local Orthodox bishop, and the police.[8]

The last census in which there is data about the religious attachments of Greeks is the one conducted in 1951. According to that census, 96.7% of Greeks considered themselves as members of the Greek Orthodox Church.[9] In 1991, a Eurobarometer survey showed that 98.2% of the Greeks declared to be members of the Orthodox Church.[10] The *2002 CIA World Factbook* places this figure at 98%. This trend does not appear to vary significantly when it comes to younger generations, since a 2002 Eurobarometer survey showed that the Greek youth (15-24 year-olds) is the most religious youth in Europe after the Irish one.[11] Despite the fact that Church attendance levels in Greece are quite low, the level of religiosity (belief in the existence of God) is very high, and comes only second to that of Portugal. Moreover, the level of those who sporadically attend Sunday services is one the rise recently, while the level of those who do not attend Church services at all is dropping over the last years.[12]

The Church is also present in all official state celebrations (oath-taking of new governments, parades, etc.). It is inseparably linked with numerous Greek cultural activities (e.g. open fairs to honour local Saints), customs (e.g. Good Week fast), and foods (e.g. the Paschal lamb).[13] The Church is also connected in the Greek conscience with "past glories" like the Byzantine Empire, while the Greek language occupies a central role in the Orthodox liturgy

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"I do swear in the name of the Holy and Consubstantial and Indivisible Trinity to safeguard the Constitution and the laws, to care for the faithful observance thereof, to defend the national independence and territorial integrity of the Country, to protect the rights and liberties of the Greeks and to serve the general interest and the progress of the Greek People"; cited in http://www.mfa.gr/syntagma/artcl25.html#A3. However, there is a provision in the Constitution that allows heterodox MPs to swear according to the rules of their own religion (Art. 59, §2). See Manitakis, A., (2001). Presumably, there is an analogous right for the President. See Venizelos, E. (2000:143)

[6] Although we should note that there is a provision, which allows heterodox children to abstain from the religious classes. However, this provision is rarely used, both because there is not an alternative religious module that teaches other dogmas, and for reasons of pier pressure.

[7] Venizelos, E., (2000:110)

[8] According to the law 1363/1938 which is still in effect

[9] Ibid., p.209.

[10] Cited in Stavrakakis, Y., (2002:5).

[11] Survey conducted throughout the 15EU countries, from 27/5-16/6/2002. See http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/public_opinion/archive/flash_arch.htm . However, according to the last census of 2001, the number of immigrants in Greece has increased to more than 800,000 (more than 7% of the total population). Only 52.7% of those immigrants are baptised Christian Orthodox. See Vernadakis, Ch., (2002: 191)

[12] See Georgiadou, V & Nikolakopoulos H. (2001:141-165)

[13] Stavrakakis, Y., (2002: 5 n.)

ritual.  The Church claims for itself the role of the protector of the Christians during the Ottoman rule in the Balkans, as well as that of the saviour of the Greek language during the '400 years of slavery of the Greek people'.  Mouzelis (1978) rightly argues that, in Greece, being a good Christian means being a patriot and vice versa,[14] since attachment to Orthodoxy is perceived as automatically implying a commitment to the protection of the Greek traditions. Unlike what happens in other European countries, being a communist, atheist, or agnostic does not preclude someone from attending Church celebrations in Greece.[15] **Orthodoxy in Greece is mostly experienced as a "way of life" rather as an attachment to metaphysical beliefs**. This attitude of the Greeks towards Orthodoxy is graphically exemplified in the words of a Greek dentist as it is narrated by Ware: "Personally I am an atheist; but because I am Greek, I am of course a member of the Orthodox Church".[16]

The Church has been responding to these strong feelings of affiliation of the Greek public by acting as a political and cultural agent, which mainly aims to counter the effects of the 'westernization' of Greece by articulating a nationalist discourse, while at the same time protecting and promoting its political privileges. It regards itself as the guardian of the "Greek identity" and continuously interferes in Greek political affairs. This Church policy comes into direct antithesis with the liberal spirit of secularization, which is expressed through the policies of the ruling center-left party (PASOK). The liberal view with regard to the societal role of the Church is quite clear, and suggests that the practice of religion should be confined to the private sphere. This tension between the traditionalist discourse of the Church and the westernization-oriented policy of the government is becoming increasingly important for Greek politics, since it creates cultural and political tensions in the Greek society. The *Economist* 'Intelligence Unit' summarizes the current situation in Greece as follows:

> The Orthodox Church regards itself as the repository of Hellenism during the 400 years of Ottoman rule and the first 150 years of the struggle to establish the Modern Greek state. The church argues that over the past 20 years the Socialists have adopted an increasingly secular stance in order to achieve European and international acceptance. This, according to Archbishop Christodoulos, has undermined the unique Greek cultural heritage of which the church considers itself the guardian (The identification of the church with a Hellenistic state was best embodied in Cyprus, where the first head of state at independence was Archbishop Makarios, who was also known to the Greek Cypriots as the Ethnarch, essentially the embodiment of the state in the person of the cleric).

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[14]Ibid.
[15]Ibid.
[16]Ware, K., (1983:208)

Archbishop Christodoulos has repeatedly spoken out in public against what he considers the corrosive influence of the EU on the spiritual and nationalist character of Hellenism. He has likened the EU to a grinder making mincemeat of the national identities of member states and refers disparagingly to the "Euro-craving" of Greek politicians.[17]

As the *Economist* columnist rightly points out, the identification of Greekness with Orthodoxy has been even more evident in the case of the Greek-Cypriot community. This paper is a contribution to the study of the development of the aforementioned religious nationalist political discourse on the part of the Greek Church.

## II. Placing the Subject into its Historical and Legal Context

This heavy politicization of the Church is not a new phenomenon. On the contrary, the Orthodox Church has been acting as the main producer of a particular type of nationalism (Helleno-Christianism) since the founding of the Greek state, while the origins of its political activism can be traced even further back. For the last 1600 years, the Eastern Christian Orthodox Church has played an active political role in the Balkan region. Since the times of the Byzantine Empire, it enjoyed the status of the 'state approved church'. The ties between the Church and the state in Byzantium were legal, political, and most importantly 'ideological' in nature. The emperor derived his/her power from God (*ἐλέῳ Θεοῦ βασιλεύς*), and the official Orthodox dogma was under the protection of the state that showed little, or no religious tolerance at all. The Byzantine emperor was carrying out the role of the holy inquisition in Byzantium.[18] The religious policy of the Byzantine Empire was based on the doctrine, 'one God, one empire, one religion'.[19]

This attitude of the Byzantine Empire was not an idiosyncratically Eastern or Orthodox phenomenon. Throughout the medieval Europe, religious homogenization was seen as a precondition for the consolidation of the state/empire.[20] The particularity of Greece is to be found in the fact that she did not follow the path of secularization like most of the other European nation-states, where civic nationalism replaced religion as a basis for national solidarity.[21]

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[17] See *the Economist*, 7/6/2000
[18] Adrachtas, V., (2001:41)
[19] Ibid.
[20] Llobera, J. R., (1996:134)
[21] Ibid. p. 143

After the fall of the Byzantine Empire, and the emergence of the Ottoman rule in the Balkans, the Orthodox Church found itself again in an advantageous political position. The archbishop of Constantinople was the spiritual leader of all the enslaved Balkan Christians, responsible for the collection of some of their taxes, and the representative of the people to the Porte.[22]  The special privileges of the Church during the Ottoman rule may *partly* explain the disapproval of the Constantinople archbishops for the Greek War of Independence (1821-1827).[23]

After the achievement of independence, a nation-building process began in the newly founded Greek state. During that epoch of nation-building and identity formation, different competing discourses and national imaginaries struggled to acquire a hegemonic position in defining Greek national identity. The place that "Orthodoxy" occupied in these discourses varied. Out of these political and intellectual confrontations, a particular political, social and legal arrangement emerged which delineated the relations between Church, State and civil society. At an institutional level, the Orthodox Church became the "established" religious organization in Greece through a royal directive of 1833 (23/7-4/8/1833), which legally established the autonomy of the Greek Church from the Constantinople Patriarchate. Since then, the "Orthodox Eastern Apostolic Church of Greece" enjoys the status of the established state religion in Greece. Ecclesiastical and secular authorities were brought together, and the right of the State to intervene in the internal affairs of the "autocephalous" Greek Church was institutionalized. At the same time, the Church obtained an important political and ideological role and retained some of its Ottoman legal and political privileges. At a social and cultural level, Orthodoxy was recognized as an integral part of Greek identity, and this idea was reflected in official and unofficial public discourse, historiography, education, folklore studies, literature, poetry, architecture, as well as in everyday practices, and customs.

Over the last 170 years, since independence from the Ottoman Empire, the Greek Orthodox Church has developed a nationalist and conservative discourse, it has allied itself with extreme right wing governments, and it was officially a supporter of the military dictatorship in Greece (1967-1974).  The autocephalous Greek Church has acted in the recent Greek history **not only as a state-funded institution, but also as an ideological and legitimating mechanism of the state**, which has been "blessing" governmental decisions, in exchange for special privileges.[24]  The Greek Church has come to understand itself as the

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[22]Dimitropoulos, P., (2001:53)
[23] Ibid. See also Kitromilidis, P., (1989:179)
[24] Manitakis, A., (2000:52)

guardian of tradition and national identity, and the expression of the "true" Greek spirit. This myth has appealed to the Greek public. The Church considers itself more as a guardian of the nation (or even race- *γένος*[25]), rather than as a messenger of the will of God.[26] However, it considers its views as carrying a divine legitimization, which places them above positive law, and makes them immune to criticism,[27] since the "will of God" is perceived as the ultimate foundation for legitimizing one's views.

Since the declaration of the autocephaly of the Greek Church in 1833, the relationships between the Greek state and the Church have been relatively harmonious, within a legal context of subordination of the ecclesiastical power of the Church to the secular power of the state. The Church played an active role in supporting, through its influence to the people, state decisions, and augmenting popular feelings of national solidarity and nationalism in the face of external "threats" and internal dissents. This congruent cooperation amongst the Church and the State started disintegrating in the beginning of the 1980s when the center-left "Panhellenic Socialist Movement" (PASOK) came to power. Since its first years in office, PASOK attempted to introduce a series of secularizing measures (e.g. civil marriage), which were perceived by the Church as direct attack against its hegemonic position in the Greek national life.[28] As James Pettifer argues,

> The Church has generally seen PASOK governments as an object of cultural opposition;
> a secularist party with only a weak, if any, commitment to the position of the Church in
> national life and enemy likely to champion changes in social legislation of which the
> Church disapproves.[29]

The relationships between the Church and the State further deteriorated when the dynamic and charismatic Archbishop **Christodoulos** succeeded the low-profile **Seraphim** as head of the Greek Church in 1998. Christodoulos seemed unwilling to make any further concessions to the state that would compromise the position of the Church in the Greek society. His personal popularity, the strong attachment of the Greeks to the Orthodox dogma, as well as his rhetorical and leadership capabilities facilitated his cause.

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[25] The meaning of the word "genos" (γένος) is ambiguous. It may mean "Greek speaking populations", "Orthodox Christians of the Balkans", or "the Greek race".
[26] Ibid. p. 53
[27] See the interview of the Archbishop of Athens Christodoulos in *Eleftherotypia*, 15/6/2000
[28] However, the popularity of the Church did not allow to any of the post-1974 Greek Governments to proceed to radical measures such as "disestablishment", or to permanently solve the issue of the Church property, despite the fact that there were relevant discussions among academics and politicians during the two constitutional reforms of 1986 and 2000.
[29] Pettifer, J., (1996:21-22)

Three years ago, when the socialist government attempted to make one more step towards secularization, and abandon the requirement for the Greek citizens to state their religion in their identity cards, the Church fiercely reacted and asked for the carrying out of a referendum to decide on the issue. The government refused, and Christodoulos started a struggle against the government's decision, which included street demonstrations attended by hundreds of thousands of people, interventions in the media, and the collection of signatures in favor of a referendum. Although there are no official data for the exact number of those who signed for the illegal 'referendum' of the Church (we can only rely on the data given by the Church), virtually no one disputes that the Church managed to collect more than three million signatures (around 33% of the voters).[30]

From a legal point of view, the Church was clearly wrong. Both the independent **Personal Data Protection Authority**, and the superior constitutional court of the Greek state, the **State Council**, had ruled that even the optional inclusion of religious attachment in identity cards is unconstitutional.[31] However, the Archbishop, through the use of a clearly populist discourse (as it will be shown in following section), managed to convince the people that he is carrying out a "holy war" against the alienation of Greece from her tradition. In addition to that, the Church enjoyed the support of the major opposition party of Greece, the center-right **New Democracy**, and the almost unconditional support of the whole spectrum of the Greek right. Finally, the legal status of the Orthodox Church as the "established Church" of Greece gives it special privileges and allows it to intervene in public affairs.

The present constitution of Greece cannot dictate to the Church its views. It cannot prohibit the ethnocentric fundamentalist doctrines espoused by the Church hierarchy. In fact it gives Orthodoxy the role of the 'established' Church. Article 3 of the 1975 constitution (even after the last revision in 2001) recognizes the Christian Orthodox religion as 'the prevailing religion in Greece'. More specifically, Article 3 reads as follows:

> 1. The prevailing religion in Greece is that of the Eastern Orthodox Church of Christ. The Orthodox Church of Greece, acknowledging our Lord Jesus Christ as its head, is inseparably united in doctrine with the Great Church of Christ in Constantinople and with every other Church of Christ of the same doctrine, observing unwaveringly, as they do, the holy apostolic and synodal canons and sacred traditions. It is autocephalous and is administered by the Holy Synod of serving Bishops and the

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[30] According to the Church data, 3,008,901 signatures. Cited in Stavrakakis Y., (2002)
[31] It appears that there is a significant consensus among legal theorists, academics and jurists towards the view that the statement of religion in identity cards is unconstitutional, and violates the principle of personal data protection. See Manitakis, A., (2000), Dimitropoulos, P. (2001), and Venizelos (2000).

Permanent Holy Synod originating thereof and assembled as specified by the Statutory Charter of the Church in compliance with the provisions of the Patriarchal Tome of June 29, 1850 and the Synodal Act of September 4, 1928.
2. The ecclesiastical regime existing in certain districts of the State shall not be deemed contrary to the provisions of the preceding-paragraph
3. The text of the Holy Scripture shall be maintained unaltered. Official translation of the text into any other form of language, without prior sanction by the Autocephalous Church of Greece and the Great Church of Christ in Constantinople, is prohibited.[32]

That said, we should also emphasize that freedom of worship and belief are typically protected by the constitution in accordance with the Western standards. Article 13 of the Constitution reads as follows:

1. The freedom of religious conscience **is inviolable**. The enjoyment of civil and individual rights **does not depend on the religious conviction of each individual**.
2. Every known religion is free and the forms of worship thereof shall be practiced without any hindrance by the State and under protection of the law. The exercise of worship shall not contravene public order or offend morals. Proselytizing is prohibited.
3. The ministers of all religions are subject to the same obligations towards the State and to **the same state supervision as the ministers of the established religion.**
4. No person shall, by reason of his religious convictions, be exempt from discharging his obligations to the State, or **refuse to comply with the laws.**
5. No oath shall be imposed without a law specifying the form thereof.[33]

The conflict between the Church and the State on the issue of the identity cards finally ended in August 29th 2001, with the decisive intervention of the President of the Republic, Konstantinos Stephanopoulos, who refused the demands of the Church for the carrying out of the referendum, on the basis that this was an unconstitutional action. This intervention "led to the suspension of most politicized activities" of the Church at least for the moment.[34]

Nevertheless, the period starting with the enthronement of Christodoulos in 1998, until the final resolution of the issue in 2001 was admittedly a period of heavy politicization of the Church discourse, and produced a considerable amount of academic literature on the subject. As we can note, the last years of confrontation between the Church and the governments of PASOK marked a radical change in the role of the Church, which, nowadays, challenges the

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[32] http://www.mfa.gr/syntagma/artcl25.html#A3
[33] http://www.uni-wuerzburg.de/law/gr00000_.html, emphases added
[34] Stavrakakis, Y., (2002: 8).

legal and political dominance of the state over ecclesiastical authority, and assumes the role of an autonomous political agent. [35]

Before finishing this brief contextualization of the place of religion within Greek political culture, it would be useful for the reader to provide a background regarding the political party system of modern Greece. Greece has been formally a constitutional democracy since 1864, though democratic politics has been interrupted twice in the past by dictatorial coups and foreign occupation (1936-1946 and 1967-1974). Since 1915, when a 'national schism' was brought about as a result of the disagreement between the King and the Prime Minister regarding the position that Greece was to take during the 1st World War, Greek party politics is characterized by the presence of a right and an anti-right coalitions (or, before that, liberal/conservative, and even before that, republican/royalist). The allegiance of the parties of the centre in this conflict varied in different historical periods. The right/anti-right distinction became even sharper during the consolidation period of the Third Greek Republic (1974-1996), when many supporters of the left shifted their support to the center-left PASOK. [36] Since 1996, the use of the 'right/anti-right' discourse has been limited.

While the Church has been traditionally a supporter of the right, both the centre and the left had never been unequivocally hostile to the Church, and this is partly because of the wide and cross-class appeal of Orthodoxy in Greek political culture. However, even the slightest secularizing measures, which are necessary for the protection of basic human rights, have been perceived by the Church as direct threats to its position in Greek politics, and it is in part because of this Church attitude that there is a continuous tension in the relations between the official Church and the parties of the left until today.

I will now turn to the analysis of the Church's nationalism and populism during the first years of Christodoulos in office. The following analysis of Christodoulos nationalism will be carried out through the deployment of the techniques of discourse analysis. The term discourse analysis has become quite fashionable in the field of social sciences lately, and it has been used in a variety of different ways. In other words, there are many different methodological approaches which have been labeled as "discourse analysis". In this paper, the term is used to denote the "Essex School" approach to the study of politics. [37] Discourse analysts "treat a wide range of linguistic and non-linguistic material- speeches, reports, manifestos, historical events,

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[35] Ibid. p.162
[36] PASOK's founder, and three times-elected PM of Greece, Andreas Papandreou, managed to gain the support of the left, with the talented use of a populist discourse, in which he claimed that he represented all the democratic and 'anti-right' forces of Greece, and that he supported the claims of the "unprivileged".
[37] i.e. E. Laclau, Ch. Mouffe, A. Norval, D. Howarth, Y. Stavrakakis, J. Glynos, J. Torfing, et al.

interviews, policies, ideas, even organizations and institutions- as 'texts' or 'writings' that enable subjects to experience the world of objects, words and practices".[38] Discourse analysis is therefore a 'creative catachresis' of the concept of 'discourse' which is now used in a much wider than its original linguistic sense. It is a technique for studying any meaningful social practice, and thus any human practice, since, for discourse analysts, any human practice is meaningful. Discourses are therefore systems of meaning that are bound together be particular signifiers and make the social world intelligible to subjects. These systems of meaning are contingent ideological structures which are subject to change, since a discourse can neither close the horizon of social meanings nor represent the 'real'.[39] Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe have developed a conceptual framework for analysing the construction, stabilization, and deconstruction of discourses.

## III. The Political Discourse of Archbishop Christodoulos

The first rhetorical strategy that the Archbishop uses in order to articulate his nationalist discourse is the construction of the **logic of equivalence**. "The logic of equivalence constructs a chain of equivalential identities among different elements that are seen as expressing a certain sameness".[40] In the case of populism, the political spectrum is simplified by the populists, to the extent that is perceived as being formed by two opposing camps: the people and its "enemies".[41]

> Populism, characterized by the identification of all social groups as "the people" and by the masking of individual and corporate demands as "popular demands", affects political practice and shapes the manner in which social and political reality is perceived and understood.[42]

In this case, the Archbishop refers to the "people" as a unified and undivided entity. He then constructs a set of ideological and political frontiers between the people and its enemies. The imaginary 'will of the people' is the supreme will in a society according to the Archbishop:

> The history, and the will of the people are above the Constitution and the laws…when the people do not want the laws, then they are not implemented, they become useless

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[38] Howarth D., (2000:10)
[39] Indeed, if we define the real as everything which is extra-discursive, then the real is **almost** inaccessible, since subjects can only experience the world through discourses.
[40] Torfing, J., (1999:301)
[41] Lyritzis, C., (1987:671)
[42] Ibid., p. 683

and, in reality, they cease to exist. The consciousness of the nation about what is right and what is not rejects them.[43]

In the above passage, one can see a direct challenge to constitutional democracy in the name of the people. And, since heterodox and atheists in Greece are less than 4% of the population, the Church assumes the role of the representative of the people, or at least of the vast majority of the people.[44] However, it is clear that even if Orthodox Christians comprise the vast majority of the population in Greece,[45] it does not follow that all the Orthodox Greeks have chosen the Church as their representative in political affairs; nor does it follow that their Christian identity leads them to challenge the political Constitution of Greece. Nevertheless, the Archbishop claims to speak both in the name of the people (and not in the name of Orthodox Church), as well as in the name of God, since he is the head of the Holy Synod. These claims provide his discourse with an unusual status of infallibility. Speaking in the name of the people is a typical practice of populist movements.[46]

Another emblematic example of populist practice is Christodoulos' tactic of presenting himself as a direct and unmediated representative of the people, one who rejects the modern unpopular bureaucratic procedures, and his words appeal to the nation as a whole, independently of party attachments. He acts like a media star, his speeches are deeply emotional (and therefore illogical), his vocabulary is extravagant, and sometimes includes the argot of the youth. Like most of the populist movements, contemporary Greek populism is characterized by the presence of a charismatic leader.[47] This empirical observation seems again to be consistent with Laclau's theoretical framework for the analysis of populism. As it is noted by Lyritzis, in his Laclau-based study of Greek populism,

> Even where populism is expressed through a strong grassroots organizational base, the latter seems to maintain a direct relationship with the leader, weakening the intermediary administrative levels between the top and the rank and file. Intermediaries are distrusted and are seen to impede the direct and immediate rapport between leader and led…Populism is thus often characterized by a plebiscitarian-charismatic leadership, which acts as a substitute for a strong and effective organization in achieving necessary political cohesion and a common identity.[48]

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[43] Christodoulos, in *Eleftherotypia* (in Greek), 15/6/2000
[44] Stavrakakis, Y., (2002:24)
[45] However, according to the last census of 2001, the number of immigrants in Greece has increased to more than 800,000 (more than 7% of the total population). Only 52.7% of those immigrants are baptised Christian Orthodox. See VPRC (2002: 191)
[46] Laclau, E., (1997:165-174)
[47] Sofos, S., (2000:141)
[48] Lyritzis, C., (1987:671)

The question, which now emerges, is what does the Greek populism of Christodoulos involves. The first crucial observation is that "the people" in Christodoulos' discourse is defined in racial terms. In his *From Earth and Sky* (1999), he argues that, during the nation-building process, we (the Greeks) "unfortunately" lost the identity that the Church had assigned to us: our racial identity.

> Against the conqueror [the Ottoman Empire], we had a religious as well as a racial difference. We were the Race [γένος]. We kept our racial identity until around the 17th century when the ideas of the British philosophers about the Nation [έθνος] were spread among the Greek intelligentsia…Since then we lost the identity that the Church had given us, we ceased to be a race and we became a nation.[49]

In another passage of his book, Christodoulos even more boldly states: "The other man, the one who has a country, and a family and values, this man is today useful to the Race. And this is the type of man that Orthodoxy shapes and supports: the man with self-consciousness and identity".[50] Apart from the clear indications of the development of racial ideas within the contemporary Church discourse, other authors have also emphasized the existence of strong Anti-Semitic ideas. The bishop of Corinth Panteleimon (an honorary Doctor of Philosophy of the Theological Faculty of the University of Athens!) has written in his book *Jewish and Christians*:

> [The Jews] are natural enemies of Hellenism, because Hellenism is based on the correct placement of mind, on rational thinking, on the correct positioning of the human in his real dimension, while Judaism leads him to irrational and utopist dreams of material dimension.[51]

The political identity of "the people" in Christodoulos' discourse is constructed through the articulation of the social antagonism between the people and its enemies; and the enemies are everywhere according to Christodoulos: Among the enemies of the people are "the Islamic menace", the Vatican, Turkey,[52] the E.U, the intellectuals, or even the conscientious objectors (!).[53] The common aim of all these 'enemies' is to alienate Hellenism from its tradition and culture.[54] Hellenism is an "endangered culture",[55] and the Church is the only political and

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[49] Christodoulos, (1999:220). As it has been argued earlier in the text, the meaning of the word «γένος» is ambiguous. However, in the cases above, I would contend that it clearly has a racial connotation.
[50] Ibid., p. 233
[51] Cited in Zoumboulakis, S., (2002:82)
[52] Christodoulos, (1999:100)
[53] Ibid., p. 242
[54] Ibid., p. 173
[55] Ibid., p.219

spiritual agent available in Greece, which is able to carry out the Messianic role of saving Hellenism from assimilation into a global culture.[56] In a rather clichéd manner, Christodoulos criticizes the decadence of modern ethics, and argues that Greeks "have been infected with the malicious tumor of alienation".[57] Christodoulos' political positions, as they are presented in his *From Earth and Sky*, may be summarized into two demands: **firstly, in order to combat the ethical decay of modern Greek society, the social role of the Church should be protected and enhanced. Secondly, in order to contain the "Muslim Curtain" in the Balkans, Greece should pioneer in the establishment of an "Orthodox Axis" in the Balkans.[58]**

The Church considers itself as the only institution, which is eligible to speak in the name of the "people" and express such views, since it regards itself as representing 97% of the Greeks who are baptized Christian Orthodox. In this sense, it articulates an image of national identity that derives from the Byzantine theocratic culture. By linking Greekness with Orthodoxy, the Church has managed to convince a large part of the Greek population that secularization measures in Greece are irrelevant and illegitimate. In other words, the ideas of the West and the Enlightenment are only acceptable as long as they do not come into conflict with the Greek Orthodox 'tradition'.

Furthermore, the Church's discourse aims to undermine the Greek government. The Church argues that it is the only agent available to protect Greek national identity, since the state is becoming increasingly detached from the idea of the nation. Therefore, membership in the E.U is potentially dangerous for Greek national identity in the absence of a strong Church, which will be able to protect the Greek tradition from the corrupting influence of the heterodox.[59]

The issues that Christodoulos addresses during his public appearances are not theological, but political (or national, as he calls them) in nature. In his demonstration speech against the new identity cards legislation in Athens, Christoudoulos was waiving the flag of *Ayia Lavra*, a symbol of the 1821 War of Independence. This was not accidental. This move intended to demonstrate that when the Church is 'under threat', then Greekness is also under threat. A large part of the Greek population was convinced by Christodoulos' arguments that secularization would be a step towards the alienation of Greeks from their tradition.[60]

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[56] Ibid., p.153
[57] Ibid., p. 77
[58] Ibid., pp. 20-31
[59] Dimitropoulos, P., (2001:158)
[60] The abovementioned views of the Church, and especially of its Archbishop, seem to be very appealing to the Greek public. According to a recent public opinion poll conducted by the Greek public opinion agency "MRB" (published on 03/07/2002. Cited in http://www.ego.gr/pegasus/articles/article.jsp?artid=71913&pubid=85872) the

## IV. Why Orthodoxy? An account for the development of Helleno-Christianism

### IV.i. Existing Accounts

Nationalism is undoubtedly one of the most significant social phenomena of modernity. However, the academic study of nationalism has only been seriously promoted since the 1960s, while the decade of the 1990s experienced a substantial growth in the literature in this field. We may broadly distinguish between five competing approaches to the study of nationalism: Primordialist, perennialist, modernist, instrumentalist, and ethno-symbolic. Of course, this is an ideal-types categorization and probably downplays the importance of substantive differences among individual authors.

Primordialist perspectives on nations and nationalism emphasize the significance of individual emotional ties to the nation, as well as of 'primordial' traits that demonstrate the uniqueness of the nation. These qualities may be the result of biology (see for example the sociobiological approach to nationalism put forward by Pier van den Berghe), belief in biological decent (Geertz), or of cultural environment (see for example the romantic views of the nation put forward by Herder). Romantic views on Greek identity have been articulated by New-Orthodox and Neo-Romantic Greek thinkers,[61] who idealise the communal nature of Greek Orthodox culture, and argue for the superiority and uniqueness of 'Greekness'. Nations, for most primordialist authors, exist since time immemorial, and nationalism is essentially an extension of kinship ties characterizing pre-modern ethnic communities, which arise from natural 'givens' of human history (race, language, region, etc.).[62]

Perennialist thinkers also hold that nations (or at least some nations) existed before the emergence of nationalism. However, unlike primordialists, perennialist authors hold a historicist, instead of an organic view of the nation.[63] Through exhaustive historical research, these 'historians of nations', are at pains to demonstrate the existence of ethnic and/or national affiliations well before the modern era.

Modernist conceptions of the nation constitute indisputably the orthodoxy in the field, while the majority of the analyses of Greek nationalism are influenced by modernist paradigms. Most well known scholars of nationalism subscribe to the modernist paradigm (e.g.

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Archbishop's popularity remains very high- 68%, while in the past it has been as high as 74.6% (Vernadakis, Ch, 2002: 366)
[61] See for example, Zouraris, K. (1999) and Giannaras, Ch. (1999)
[62] For an excellent account of the primordialist perspective on nations, see Smith, A., (1998: 145-151), and Smith, A., (2001:51-56)
[63] See for example the work of Hastings, A. (1997), and Armstrong, J. (1982)

Kedourie, Gellner, Hobsbawm, and Anderson). Although there are major dissimilarities between the different modernist approaches to nationalism, essentially the basic assertion of modernism remains unaltered: "Nationalism…is a product of modernity, nothing less…But it is not only nationalism that is modern. So are nations, national states, national identities, and the whole 'inter-national' community".[64]

Perhaps the most famous modernist/structuralist theory of nationalism has been articulated by Ernest Gellner (1983). He argued that nationalism has been the product of the modern capitalist state, which used its "educational machine" in order to produce a class of literate clerks who could meet the administrative needs of modern bureaucratic politics. Nationalism has spread throughout the world due to the effects of combined and uneven development and revolution. Though Gellnerian approaches to Greek nationalism are not dominant in the literature, we may still trace some examples of them. Anna Koumandaraki for instance, emphasizes the role of the Greek state in fostering Greek nationalism and national homogeneity, and downplays the importance of the Greek Church in the production of national identity.[65]

Benedict Anderson, on the other hand, views nationalism as an 'imagined community'. "Rather than thinking of it as fabricated, one should understand national distinctiveness in terms of its style of imagination and the institutions that make that possible" (e.g. print-capitalism).[66] Anderson's concept of 'imagined communities' is well-received in analyses of Greek and Greek-Cypriot nationalism, and has been the basis for one of the most authoritative conceptualizations of the place of Orthodoxy in nation-building by Paschalis Kitromilides.[67] Kitromilides argues that the 'Orthodox commonwealth' was one of the most powerful imagined communities in the Balkan region during the Byzantine and Ottoman eras. Orthodoxy had been outspokenly hostile to the nationalist ideals of the Enlightenment due to the ecumenicity of the Orthodox dogma, as well as because of the institutional interests of the Constantinople Patriarchate. The nationalization of the Orthodox Churches throughout the Balkans and Eastern Europe replaced the Orthodox imagined community by national imagined communities.

Before continuing with this review of theories of nationalism, it would be useful to point out that, apart from Kitromilides, other authors have also noted the antithesis between Orthodoxy and nationalism. Gregory Jusdanis, in his *Necessary Nation*, argued that there is a

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[64] Smith, A., (2001:46-47)
[65] Koumandaraki, A., (2002:39-51)
[66] Hutchinson J. & Smith A., (1994:48)
[67] Kitromilides, P., (1989: 149-194)

fundamental antinomy between the ecclesiastical conceptions of knowledge, time and progress and the nationalist ones in Greece.[68]

To return to our exposition of theories of nationalism, a large part of modernist scholars of nationalism adopt an instrumentalist view of nationality. This is particularly the case with Marxist and Neo-Marxist thinkers (e.g. Eric Hobsbawm), and rational choice theorists. For Hobsbawm, nations are 'invented traditions', used by elites to legitimize their authority. These traditions are invented, or constructed, through national education, national symbols, national monuments, and national ceremonies. In general, Marxist thinkers have been exceptionally hostile against nationalism.[69]

Perhaps the most seminal Marxist analysis of the relation between religion and nationalism in Greece has been carried out by Apostolis Harisis.[70] Harisis argues that the conflation between religion and nationalism in Greek political culture is the result of particular dynamics and configurations of power in Greek capitalism, and arises as a result of the manipulation of farmers, petty-bourgeois and 'luben' classes by capitalist elites. Structural-Marxist theories of Greek nationalism, though useful in identifying structural features of Greek political culture tend to reduce nationalism to a feature of the capitalist dynamics at a particular historical juncture.

Finally, ethno-symbolic approaches to nationalism (Anthony Smith, Jon Hutchinson) accentuate the significance of pre-modern ethnic symbols and cultural resources for the construction of national identity. Elites may be able to produce nationalism, but their efforts are constrained by the cultural environment in which they operate. Ethno-symbolism shifts the focus of analysis of nationalism from economic, political, or socio-biological factors to the importance of ideas, myths, memories, symbols, and traditions.[71] As I will be arguing in the following section, ethno-symbolism is probably the paradigm which provides us with the most fruitful conceptual resources for studying the complex dynamics of Greek and Greek-Cypriot nationalism. This is mainly because ethno-symbolism may offer theoretical solutions to the major flaws of the modernist paradigm on nationalism and offer answers to questions yet unresolved. These flaws can be summarized with reference to two points: first of all, modernist theories of nationalism fail to account for the immense role of the pre-modern past for the popular legitimization of nationalist movements, and the subsequent amalgamation of tradition

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[68] Jusdanis, G., (2001: 109)
[69]Especially classical Marxist thinkers like Rosa Luxemburg (1997:295). However, even among classical Marxism, there were voices (e.g. Lenin, and Otto Bauer) that saw nationalism as essentially an anti-imperialist (and thus progressive) force. See Ishay M. R. & Goldfischer D., (1997: 386).
[70] Harisis, A. (2001)
[71] Smith, A., (2001: 59)

and modernity in nationalist ideologies. This failure is basically the result of the overemphasis of many modernist scholars on forces of production (e.g. print capitalism- Anderson) and relations of production (e.g. unequal development- Gellner), which downplay the importance of the realm of ideas. Secondly, modernist theories of nationalism tend to exaggerate the role of the elites in manipulating the masses into nationalism, and thus contain "conspiracy theory" undertones (e.g. Hobsbawm) which are unable to account for the durable effects of nationalist feelings in the human psyche. In other words, modernism fails to explain how ideology communicates with the "masses" and affects individual identifications.

The above portrayal of some of the main theoretical arguments regarding nationalism was not by any means an exhaustive review of the bourgeoning literature around the subject. Besides, the study of theories of nationalism at an abstract level is beyond the scope of the present enquiry. The purpose for exposing the reader to some of the major theories of nationalism was to place this work within the wider context of academic debates regarding nationalism and national identity and to give a picture of the views on Greek nationalism already being conveyed.

This thesis will seek to challenge the aforementioned theorizations of Greek nationalism by putting forward an alternative angle of analysis. It will also aim to challenge the dominant theoretical scheme on Greek political culture, which has been offered by Nikiforos Diamandouros. Diamandouros perceives Greek society as an arena where two political cultures are at conflict with each other: the first one, "the underdog culture", is anti-western, parochial, clientist, and statist in outlook (religious nationalism has sprang from this culture), and the other one is the culture of the "modernizers", inspired by the Enlightenment and its liberal ideals.[72] Diamandouros believes that the latter political culture will eventually prevail within the milieu of the E.U. However, I would contend that this is a reductionist and oversimplified approach to political culture, which may partly reflect the differences among Greek academics, but definitely underestimates the complexity of Greek society.

First of all, the ideological horizon of Greek politics has been a great deal more fragmented than Diamandouros believes, and the intellectual and social struggles during the first years after independence cannot fit into a one-dimensional spectrum which would divide the political map of Greece between two opposing camps.   A discourse analysis twist in Diamandouros' theory would suggest that what Diamandouros describes in his 'cultural

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[72]Diamandouros, N., (1993:3-5); see also Diamandouros, N. (2000:41-50). Other Greek authors also share similar views. See for example, Mouzelis, N., (1995:17-34).

dualism' theorem is in fact an antagonistic struggle between two discursive formations. Even then, unlike what teleological thinkers may believe, social antagonisms are a constitutive feature of every society and they are unlikely to be resolved with a complete prevalence of a particular discourse. Antagonisms are the outcome of the essential contingency of subjective identities and the consequent impossibility for total closure in the horizon of social meanings. Identities are always partially fixed and essentially contested due to the discursive nature of the social, and therefore no discourse can ever achieve total hegemony. To put it in Laclau's words:

> …The social only exists as a partial effort for constructing society- that is, an objective
>
> and closed system of differences-antagonism, as a witness of the impossibility of final
>
> suture, is the 'experience' of the limit of the social.[73]

Furthermore, unlike what Diamandouros believes, the boundaries between discourses are not always clear resulting to what some authors have described as 'the perpetual crisis of the Neo-Hellenic identity'. For example, on the one hand, many Greeks are enthusiastic supporters of Christodoulos, and, in opinion polls, Christodoulos is among the three most popular public figures, and on the other hand, 68% of the Greeks are supportive of E.U. membership (E.U. average 54%).[74] In addition to that, even though the Church is a fierce critic of the E.U., it is a beneficiary of its budget. Consequently, when we make the distinction between 'modernizers' and 'traditionalists', we should bear in mind that subjects' identities are not completely coherent. Individuals hold multiple and often self-contradictory views and self-images, which cannot always fit in a concrete theorization between two opposing ideologies. A final point that demonstrates that the boundaries between the two opposing discourses of 'tradition' and 'modernisation' are blurred is that modernisation cannot exist outside a tradition. Modernisation presupposes a tradition,[75] and this is most evident in nationalist movements in which the past is 'recruited' in order to legitimize the present and the future.

Despite the existence of the abovementioned theories of Greek nationalism, we should note that **most** of the literature of the 'academic left' on Greek political culture disregards questions about the emergence of religious nationalism and the reasons for its persistence. It just assumes that the Church is and has always been nationalist, and develops polemical arguments against this nationalism. Although this study will expose racist and nationalist elements in the political discourse of the Greek Orthodox Church, the aim is to proceed further

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[73]Laclau, E., (2001:125).
[74] *Standard Eurobarometer*, vol. 56, p.20
[75]Demertzis, N., (1997: 118).

than that. On the other hand, New-Orthodox academics view through rose-tinted glasses the role of the Church in Greek and Greek-Cypriot political culture. Sofia Mappa evaluates the current state of affairs in Greek social science work related to Orthodoxy, as follows:

> With very few exceptions, Orthodoxy today constitutes the object of praise of the 'faithful' and the new-Orthodox…and the object of rejection… of those who are supposed to be pro-western and 'modernizers'…Both the former and the latter spend most of their time reaffirming themselves and fighting each other, rather than reflecting or deliberating.[76]

The majority of studies, which have addressed the issue of the political function of the Church of Greece, have been mainly concerned with the legal aspects of the problem.[77] Especially the works of Alivizatos and Dimitropoulos have been very helpful in delineating the constitutional aspects of the complex relationship between the state and the Church. However, legal research is inept to account for the dynamics of an issue, which is so closely related to political culture. Moreover, the vast majority of legal works (in particular the works of Venizelos) reduces the complexity of the subject matter to an issue of constitutional (dis)establishment. A plethora of examples from around the world points out that constitutional separation between the Church and the state does not necessarily confine religion to the private sphere nor it does produce a 'secular ethos'. This is particularly the case in the U.S.A. and Turkey for instance.

The effectiveness of the liberal theorem of secularization has often been challenged. William Connolly, in his *Why I Am Not a Secularist* (1999), contended that "secular models of thinking, discourse and ethics are too constipated to sustain the diversity that they seek to admire",[78] in the sense that they seek to hegemonize the public space with a singular view of public reason  (like the one presented by Rawls[79]), which excludes alternative pictures. However, my reading of Connolly leaves me with the impression that he has not yet managed to produce a concrete alternative to secularization, and that his "ethos of engagement and pluralization" is a vague scheme. Moreover, the principle of secularization has managed to

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[76] Mappa, S., (1997:20)
[77] See Alivizatos, N. (2001), Venizelos, E., (2000), Dimitropoulos, P, (2001), Manitakis, A., (2000).
[78] Connolly, W., (1999:6)
[79] What Rawls's liberal political project proposes is that people should use their public reason, independently of religious doctrinal adherences, and conform with the basic principles of justice as they are laid out in democratic constitutions. Rawls also believes that societies should convey three characteristics in order to be stable and **well ordered**: a) their citizens should agree upon the same principles of justice, b) their institutions should fit together in a fair system of cooperation, and comply with these principles, and c) their citizens should comply with the rules of these institutions and regard them as just. Reasonable comprehensive doctrines (i.e. systems of belief that define what is of value in human life), whether ethical, philosophical or religious, should not challenge the basic institutions of a democratic society, or else social cohesion is threatened. See Rawls, J. (1993. See especially pp. 35, 58-59)

gain the acceptance of both the **neo-liberal** right as well as that of the democratic and radical left and there is not a concrete alternative legal framework, which will ensure the equal treatment of religions in a democratic society. The contribution of Connolly to the recent discussions about disestablishment is to be found in the fact he drew our attention to the reality that secularization and disestablishment may be essential (not sufficient though) for the protection of the rights of minorities in a multicultural society, but they are not a panacea.

Besides, Durkheim maintained that there is no such thing as a 'nonreligious' society, since there can be no society without symbols, rituals, and beliefs that bind it together, or without some form of distinction between the sacred and the profane.[80] For Durkheim, religion performs similar functions as nationalism performs for Smith. Even sociologists who predicted the eventual withering away of religion, like Marx or Weber, accepted that at least in the modern era and before that, religion has been a primary source of social meaning.[81] These functions of religion remain relatively unexamined in Greek historiography of the Orthodox Church.

Expectantly, this review revealed that there are indeed some gaps and inadequacies in the literature regarding the production of nationalism by the Greek Church, which necessitate the conduct of further research. In the following section, I will attempt to propose a novel theoretical framework for the study of Helleno-Christian nationalism.

## IV.ii. Combining ethno-symbolism and discourse analysis to explain Helleno-Christian nationalism

As it became evident from the above literature review, nation and nationalism are essentially contested concepts. Their nature, principles, as well as their causes are subject to ongoing debates. I would identify three main reasons which may explicate the fundamental disagreements among the academia regarding nationalism: nationalism has been a 'universal' social phenomenon within the milieu of modernity. It has arisen during several historical phases of modernity, and in all the continents of the globe, and tended to hypostasize in different forms under different social contexts. Secondly, nationalism is both a political project/movement, as well as an ideology. This fact complicates attempts to explain the phenomenon. Thirdly, there is no single canonical text, or a single founding theorist of

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[80]Edles, L. F., (2002:32). For a detailed account of the 'functions' of religion, see Durkheim, E., (1965).
[81]Marx believed that religiosity will disappear with the eventual win of proletariat over capitalism. Weber thought that bureaucratic legitimization will replace divine legitimization of societal arrangements. See Edles, L. F., (2002:23-55)

nationalism who would outline the main principles of the ideology.[82] Therefore, a general theory of nationalism, which would grasp all of its manifestations, has not yet been realized. A deliberation over the validity of the propositions of all the aforementioned paradigms would be beyond the scope of this paper. My emphasis will be placed on the relevance of the above debates on nationalism for the Greek case.

The debate about the era of the birth of nations has not yet been resolved. Modernist, perennialist, primordialist and ethno-symbolist theories of nationalism give different and competing answers to the question of "when is the nation". Despite these continuing debates, we may still argue that even if there were "nations before nationalism", there are at least qualitative differences between pre-modern and modern nations. This thesis treats the 'Greek nation' (at least in its present form) as a modern phenomenon.

This paper also rejects any primordialist, essentialist (e.g. Marxist-determinist), and sociobiological perspectives on modern nations and nationalism. Instead, it is closer, at an ontological and epistemological level, with those approaches/theoretical traditions that view modern nations as discursive constructions of nationalism. **Nationalism is viewed as a way of imagining political community and communitarian fullness**.[83] The fact that nations and national or religious identities are discursively constructed does not make them any less "real". Conversely, discourses are materially effective in the sense that they determine political subjectivities and constitute subject positions within a society, and they are "materialized in specific types of institutions and organizations".[84]

As it has already become evident, there are two paradigms which inform the approach of this paper. These are **discourse analysis and ethno-symbolism**. Both these idioms of social analysis shift the focus from economic and/or sociobiological dynamics in their study of political culture, and emphasize the importance of the symbolic domain (or the superstructure, to use a Marxist term). While ethno-symbolism is a paradigm exclusively used in the analysis of nationalism, discourse analysis is more often used in other fields of sociology, psychoanalysis, and political theory. Moreover, a study which will attempt to 'blend' these two paradigms *has not yet been attempted*.

As it was mentioned above, I do not claim that the theoretical strategies used in the present paper may be applicable to any single case of nationalism. However, I would contend

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[82] Halliday, F., (1997: 361)
[83] Torfing, J., (1999:193)
[84] Howarth, D., (2000: 94, 108). For an excellent explanation of the materiality of discourses see Laclau, E. & Mouffe, C., (1985:108)

that ethno-symbolism, with its emphasis on the relation between culture, ethnicity, and nation, is the most appropriate approach for the specific case study.

The working definition of nation that will be used in the present work will be the following: **Nation is a mode of conceiving the political identity of a population, based on the re-interpretation of pre-existing cultural material and symbolic resources in this referent population by nationalists**. In other words, it is the ideology of nationalism that defines what is the nation, and not some 'objective' criteria. A subjective definition of the nation has been chosen over an 'objective' one, since the use of 'objective' elements (geography, history, religion, 'race', ethnicity, citizenship, etc.), and their articulation within a particular system of meaning which describes 'what is the nation' differs from case to case and ultimately depends on the handling of symbolic resources by nationalists. Thus, **nationalism is an ideology which constructs the "*nation-as-this* and the *people-as-one*."**[85] Moreover, this definition places emphasis on the existence of pre-modern communal affiliations and allegiances ('pre-existing cultural material') in the nationhood-construction process. Hence, **it attempts to explain the peculiar intertwining between tradition and modernity within nations**,[86] while it hopefully avoids the essentialism of 'objective' definitions. Finally, this definition pre-supposes that an image of the nation may exist in the minds of nationalists well before the people who are supposed to constitute the nation have internalised a national identity.

While the definition of the nationhood is idiosyncratic to each case of nationalism, it would not be hyperbolic to suggest that the political aims of the nationalist project are to some extent 'universal', meaning that they do not significantly vary among different cases of nationalist movements. "These generic goals are three: national autonomy, national unity, and national identity, and, for nationalists, a nation cannot survive without a sufficient degree of all three".[87] The core themes of nationalist ideology as they are presented by Anthony Smith are the following:

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[85] Torfing, J., (1999:193)
[86] Nationalism combines tradition and modernity when it constructs nations. This is another reason for which Diamandouros' binary opposition between 'modernizers' and 'traditionalists' fails to grasp the complexity of national identity construction.
[87] Smith, A., (2001:9)

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**Table 1: The Core Themes of Nationalist Ideology**

1. Humanity is naturally divided into nations.

2. Each nation has its peculiar character.

3. The source of all political power is the nation, the whole collectivity.

4. For freedom and self-realization, men must identify with a nation.

5. Nations can only be fulfilled in their own states

6. Loyalty to the nations overrides all other loyalties

7. The primary condition of global freedom and harmony is the strengthening of the nation-state.

*Source*: Smith, A., (1983: 21), as cited by Halliday, F. (1997: 362)

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These 'core themes of nationalist ideology' are widely accepted as the founding rules of legitimacy of the modern interstate system. They are reflected in the basic texts of contemporary inter*national* law,[88] inter*national* politics,[89] and inter*national* political theory.[90] When, and if, a nationalist movement achieves a 'sufficient degree' of its abovementioned 'generic goals', it follows that a nation has been constructed and a significant part of what is perceived by nationalists to be the national population has internalized a national identity.[91]

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[88] See for example Article 1, §2 of the U.N. Charter, which states that among the basic purposes of the U.N. is "to develop friendly relations among nations based on respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples…". This principle of national self-determination was later 'promoted' to a human right in international law. See for example the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights* (1966), the *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights* (1966), *The Helsinki Agreement* (1975), the *Vienna Declaration* (1993), etc.

[89] Especially among the dominant realist school of international relations (e.g., K. Waltz). However, even liberal-institutionalism nowadays accepts these principles, while Neo-Marxist schools of autonomous development (e.g. I. Wallerstein) contain nationalist overtones.

[90] Even liberal political theorists, who are supposed to have cosmopolitan principles, accept the basic themes of nationalist ideology. For example, in 1861, John Stuart Mill wrote: "Where the sentiment of nationality exists in any force, there is a *prima facie* case for uniting all the members of the nationality under the same government, and a government to themselves apart". Mill, J., S., (1997:282)

[91] I use the term identity with caution here. Unlike Enlightenment, naturalist, or theological conceptions of identity, which assume the existence of an autonomous and unified individual, my use of the term 'identity' draws on post-structuralist and psychoanalytic insights into the study of subjectivity. These schools of thought emphasize the social construction of identities and their inherent contingency. They also contend that identities are never permanently fixed, but always subject to change and reconstruction. Furthermore, subjects occupy numerous subject positions within a social structure. These subject positions constitute, in a sense, 'mini' fragmentary identities. A subject may therefore have a 'Muslim', a 'middle class', a 'black', and a 'woman', identities at the same time. The different subject positions of individual agents may at times conflict with each other (e.g. someone may be a 'leftist bourgeois' or a 'nationalist-socialist'). In this case, different identities prevail under different circumstances. My only critique against this account of the human subject is that its emphasis on 'contingency' tends to exaggerate the unsettledness of identities which tend to be more stable than many post-structuralist scholars would accept The point here is that there is no such thing as a 'concrete individual'. The myth of the unified individual has come under attack at an even more fundamental level: the level of the human psyche, which is divided, according to psychoanalysts, into three interacting parts: the ego, the super-ego, and the

National identity is constructed on the basis of different criteria by different types of nationalism. In the case of Greece, national identity was constructed according to the logics of cultural nationalism, which stress the importance of the organic unity of the nation, and its cultural uniqueness. [92] To be more specific, the Orthodox Church in Greece formed the primary cultural material for the construction of national identity, and became a **national religion**, meaning **a religion which advances a national identity and legitimizes a nationalist project**. The presence of a national religion in Greece made Greek nationalism a moral as well as a political project. In addition to that, the Church remained the only pre-modern institution which retained its importance throughout the modern era in Greece and Cyprus. As a result, it managed to 'relocate' pre-modern cultural material into the modern nation-state environment, thus enhancing national identity. This possible function of churches is outlined by Jon Hutchinson:

> In spite of significant differences between pre-modern and modern societies, long established cultural repertoires (myths, symbols and memories) are 'carried' into the modern era by powerful institutions (states, armies, churches) and are revived and redeveloped because populations are periodically faced with similar challenges to their physical and symbolic survival.[93]

In the case of Greece there was no pre-modern army and no pre-modern state, and therefore cultural repertoires were carried out by the only important pre-modern institution that was able, and indeed did so, to carry out cultural repertoires into the modern era was the Church.

National identity, like all types of identities, is relational and socially constructed. It is constructed upon the opposition between insiders and outsiders. "National identity is the form, *par excellence*, of identification that is characterized by the drawing of rigid, if complex, boundaries to distinguish the collective self, and its other".[94] By pointing out the relational nature of individual and collective identities, discourse analysts underline the importance of antagonisms in constituting the social. One of the reasons that "Helleno-Christianism" has been so successful was that it could establish an antagonistic relationship between Greek identity

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id. For the relevance of (Lacanian) psychoanalysis to politics, see Stavrakakis, Y., (1999), and for a psychoanalytic view to national identity see Stavrakakis, Y. (forthcoming, 2004)

[92] Though a distinction between 'cultural' and 'political' nationalism is useful for analytical purposes, one should bear in mind that each nationalist movement combines both cultural and political elements; it is just a question of emphasis. For more on the dynamics of cultural nationalism, see Hutchinson, J. (1994).

[93] Hutchinson, J., (2000:661) as cited by Smith, A., (2001:77)

[94] Norval, A. J., (2000:226)

and its 'constitutive outsides', the Ottoman Empire/Turkey, and the surrounding Slavic and Balkan populations.

This becomes particularly evident if one looks back in the formative period of Greek nationalism. Unlike what is usually believed, this period is not characterized only by the presence of two opposing blocs: the modernizers and the traditionalists. Rather than that, it may be argued that multiple- and equally nationalist- paradigms of Greek national identity were articulated by a plethora of agents: from an extreme republican and atheist nationalism (*Kairis et. al.*), to an extremely theocratic conception of the nation (*Oikonomou, Fanariots*, and *luben Orthodox*). Between these two extremes, there were less radical, but equally nationalist views (*Farmakidis, Enlighteners, Bavarians*, etc). Other nationalist views also existed, which cannot easily fit to a "religious/ non-religious" ideological spectrum (e.g. the *Helleno-Ottoman position*). All of these nationalisms shared some common nodal points in their discourse: They all believed more or less to the superiority of the Greek nation and the Greek language at least in the Balkan Peninsula and Asia Minor, the need to hegemonize the Balkans with an educated class of Greek speakers, and the need to expand the Greek state. It is quite interesting that, during this period, there were three major political parties in Greece: the Russian party, the French party, and the English party, each with a different view of the "nation's destiny". The Church was also ideologically divided. While the patriarchate in Constantinople was usually in the Russian side, the Holy Synod in Greece was controlled by and expressed the views of the Bavarian government. However, even the patriarchate changed its position several times as a response to Russian policy, and appointments of new Patriarchs. The point here is that there was not at any time in Greece, during this period, a significant cosmopolitan, non-expansionist, and progressive political movement of modernizers. Such views would not even be imaginable by the majority of people, let alone legitimate, in the newly founded Greek state. Moreover, there was not a unified Church policy, or a single source of an 'underdog' Eastern oriented culture. Concepts, such as "the East", "Orthodoxy", "the West", "Byzantium", "nation", etc. acquired different meanings and place within different discourses. The most peculiar example of such discursive ambiguities can be found in the word "*genos*", which came to denote, under different discourses, anything from "race", to the "Hellenic Volk", and from Greek speaking populations, to the Orthodox Christians of the Ottoman Empire. Within this context of political, social and discursive struggles, a particular national imaginary attained a hegemonic position in Greek society. This hegemonic form of nationalist discourse was structured around a series of nodal propositions: A) there is a unified history of *one* Greek nation starting from the pre-Homeric era, through to Classical Greece, the Hellenistic epoch, the Byzantium, and

continuing in modern Greece. B) The nation is bound together by geography, history, language, and *religion*. C) Being Orthodox Christian is an almost necessary pre-condition for being Greek. D) The Greek nation is superior to almost any other nation in the world since Greeks are the heirs of almost all the great civilizations of the West (Ancient Greek, Hellenistic/ Alexander the Great, Eastern Roman/ Byzantium). This Helleno-Christian nationalism managed to transcend party and class differences, to legitimize government policies, to constitute political orthodoxy and to define publicly accepted social behaviours.

Furthermore, I would argue that the legal arrangements of this period affected later Greek Church political culture in a controversial manner. Despite the fact that the legal status of 'semi-separation' has been widely perceived as a progressive measure which restricted any theocratic aspirations on the part of Church officials and admirers, we may argue that the recent confrontations between the Church and the State in Greece are partly the result of the Church's legal status. The legal regime of 1833 in essence legitimized the intertwining between secular and ecclesiastical authorities. It also assigned the Church an 'ethnarchic' role. Contemporary Church policy may be perceived as an attempt of the Church to 'stick' to its role as it has been drafted out during the first years after independence, despite the fact that it has originally reacted to this role.[95]

In other words, the Church has acted throughout the course of Modern Greek history as a secular political institution and as an ideological mechanism, which has been gradually converted to the values of Greek nationalism (not always willingly as Kitromilides has demonstrated) and assumed the role of a national religion. Given that both agents and institutions hold relatively stable identities, the Church is finding it difficult to confine itself to a lesser political role.

Since the restoration of democracy in Greece, the state has attempted to change the legal status of the Church and the ideological position of Orthodoxy in Greek society. The stance of the Church during the "colonels' dictatorship" may have contributed to boost attempts for secularization in post-authoritarian Greece. We may note that historical 'shocks' can be used in this case as independent variables which may explain the sudden dislocation of the Church-state-nation equivalence in Greece (dependent variable).

We have already seen in previous section how the Church has reacted to secularizing measures and how it successfully continues to produce nationalism in out epoch. The legal and social arrangements of the first period after independence may partly explain why the Church

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[95] Its reactions were suppressed (sometimes violently) by the Bavarian regime.

remains a nationalist institution in our era. The Greek Church seeks to protect the role which has been assigned to it during the nation building period. To use Zoumboulakis' metaphor, the Church feels like a 'betrayed wife', who offered its support to the state for as long as it was needed, and now it is set aside.

Moreover, the present political discourse of the Greek Church signifies a structural change in Greek politics, whereby the Church emancipates from the political influence of the state, and assumes the role of an autonomous political agent. Within this climate of antagonism between the Church and the state, a new series of competing nationalist doctrines is developed, which have indeed provoked a debate over the "renegotiation" of Greek national identity. However, religious nationalism remains the hegemonic form of nationalist ideology in Greek political culture and public discourse, and this can be partly explained on the basis of the tradition that the 1830-1865 historical developments produced. Instead of a weakening of religious nationalism in Greece, we may empirically observe a revival of "Helleno-Christian" ideas (among political parties, intellectual elites, and the Church) in the face of liberal globalisation.

## V. Conclusion

To summarize the argument so far, despite the efforts of the state and some intellectuals and, at some stages, of the state to generate and proliferate a secular political nationalism in Greece, the 'Helleno-Christian' thesis (i.e. a primarily cultural form of nationalism, which accommodates some elements of political nationalism) prevailed for three reasons: a) it was more appealing to the people, since it drew on pre-modern and pre-national existing communal ties. This type of nationalism was compatible with many of the other identities (familial, communal, religious, linguistic, ethnic, and citizen identities) that subjects were holding during the periods under investigation, since it was based on myths, symbols, traditions and memories with which large parts of the population were familiar with. Helleno-Christianity was therefore ideally constructed in order to replace a previous symbolic order with mostly familiar symbols, but within a new nationalist ideological framework. Contingent and otherwise unrelated practices acquired meaning within this new symbolic order. Speaking an archaic Greek dialect, going to the Church, and disliking the Turks for instance were practices which were bound together in a particular system of meaning which was later called Helleno-Christianity and these practices were experienced by individuals as aspects of the "Greek Way of life" b) The legal and political position of the Church of Greece facilitated the birth and eventual dominance of 'Helleno-Christianism'. Moreover, despite the fact that the Church was

politically subjected to the secular authority of the state, it managed to retain an extensive degree of autonomy at a **cultural level**, and thus was able to use the mechanisms that its legal position provided it with, in order to disseminate its distinctive cultural nationalism c) As an ideology, 'Helleno-Christian' nationalism was able to construct rigid boundaries between insiders and outsiders, Greeks and non-Greeks, and thus provide the newborn nation with a solid collective identity. For example, other forms of nationalism that were emphasizing the religious element of Greek identity were unable to offer adequate grounding for a firm distinction between Greeks and the other Orthodox populations of the Ottoman Empire. The Helleno-Christian thesis managed to do so, by emphasizing the 'Hellenic' element of Greek identity. On the other hand, 'Hellenized' conceptions of the nation were unable to communicate with the masses that formed the Greek nation. These masses were divided into ethnically, linguistically, and culturally fragmented groups, very few of which could understand the 'language of Plato', despite the fact that they were mostly using Hellenic dialects. Therefore, Orthodoxy was a cultural resource with which they could easily identify (at least more easily than they could identify with Ancient Greece)

Pre-existing cultural material and symbolic resources posed obstacles and created complexities in the modernization/secularization process in Greece. While formal western-style representative institutions were established in Greece from the early period of independence, their interaction with the local Orthodox tradition influenced their functions to the extent instead of having a Western polity with traits of an Eastern political culture, we have an Eastern/Orthodox political culture operating within a milieu of western formal institutions (at least during the period before 1974). Therefore, the functioning of western-type institutions in Greece has not always been harmonious, if not always problematic. Within a context of ineffective bureaucratic politics, the Church has been the only institution with a long tradition and continuing presence in Greek pre-modern and modern social life with which people could identify. In general, the Greek case is an example which illustrates that modernity is not a linear process towards rationalization and secularization of society, and that pre-modern institutional structures and political culture impede modernization waves. It also illustrates, that the forces of Westernization and European integration do not automatically dilute the forces of nationalism in Europe. Finally, the prevalence of Helleno-Christianism demonstrates the importance of drawing political, social, and cultural frontiers between 'us' and 'them', in constituting individual and collective identities

This paper has not by any means been an exhaustive investigation into the dynamics of Greek nationalism. It should be better perceived as a research exercise which hopefully illuminated the analytical validity of ethno-symbolism and discourse analysis as heuristic tools for the study of national identity. There are three main areas in which further research is required in order to draw safer conclusions regarding the theoretical framework which has been used in this paper: a) the nationalism of the Greek diasporas and Cyprus and its relation to Orthodoxy and mainland Greek nationalism, b) comparative analysis of the role of the Church in producing nationalism, between Greece and other Orthodox countries, and c) comparative analysis between Greek nationalism and other nationalisms of the Balkan and Southern-Eastern European regions where cultural attitudes towards the West are also ambivalent.

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