

cemoti

**Cahiers d'études sur la Méditerranée
orientale et le monde turco-iranien**

20 | 1995
Médias d'Iran et d'Asie Centrale

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Electronic version

URL: <http://journals.openedition.org/cemoti/1674>

ISSN: 1777-5396

Publisher

AFEMOTI

Printed version

Date of publication: 1 June 1995

ISSN: 0764-9878

Electronic reference

Dimitri A. Sotiropoulos, « The Remains of Authoritarianism: Bureaucracy and Civil Society in Post-Authoritarian Greece », *Cahiers d'études sur la Méditerranée orientale et le monde turco-iranien* [Online], 20 | 1995, Online since 13 May 2006, connection on 19 April 2019. URL : <http://journals.openedition.org/cemoti/1674>

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The Remains of Authoritarianism: Bureaucracy and Civil Society in Post-Authoritarian Greece

Dimitri A. Sotiropoulos

- 1 The dominant view of Greek civil society is that it is weak compared to the civil societies of other West European countries¹. At the same time, the Greek bureaucracy is not as strong as its West European counterparts in the sense that the Greek bureaucracy, even after the fall of the colonels' authoritarian regime, cannot resist the incursions of conservative or populist political elites, which, organized around the parties of New Democracy and PASOK respectively, have alternated in power since 1974.
- 2 The topic of bureaucracy and civil society in contemporary Greece presents a theoretically interesting paradox: the relations between the central Greek state and civil society are shaped by state corporatism, which still thrives, although corporatism's favorable political context, authoritarianism, has ceased to exist since the fall of the colonels' regime in 1974². The case of Greece is taken as an example of state-civil society relations which differ from the West European model. While in the West civil societies have generally been able to limit state action or grow in concert with it, in Greece both the bureaucracy and civil society have been permeated by pervasive party factionalism.
- 3 After the transition to democracy in Greece in 1974, the relations between the state and civil society were modified, as the power of the central state, which had reached a peak under the seven-year long military dictatorship, was balanced by the parties of New Democracy and PASOK, which alternated in power forming single-party governments throughout the last twenty years. Yet the authoritarian quality of the relations between the central government and civil society, which has characterized Greek society since the end of World War II, was not effaced.
- 4 Post-war Greek society bore the legacy of the Civil War between the right and the left (1944-1949), which, until the breakdown of democracy in 1967, meant that organized interests were disciplined by the hegemonic coalition of throne, army and conservative

governments and later by the dictators for a period of thirty years (1944-1974)³. In 1974, 1981 and 1990 the single-party governments of New Democracy and PASOK took turns in first capturing the bureaucracy and then using various institutional mechanisms to monitor civil society and especially so the farmers' movement, the labor unions, and the associations of public employees⁴. It will be argued that under a new democratic regime, such as post-authoritarian Greece, which seems much more open when compared to the "disciplined" and "guided" democracy of the post-war years, a state corporatist arrangement of state-civil society relations has survived⁵.

- 5 The attribution of a state corporatist character to the Greek mode of interest representation, suggested by George Th. Mavrogordatos, is not undisputed in Greek social research⁶. Nikos P. Mouzelis argues that the mode of organization of lower-class interests in Greece is neither state corporatist nor societal corporatist but, as in the rest of the semi-periphery, is "incorporative," i.e. it is characterized by the de facto control of the state over associations, which are weak and subjected to state manipulation. For Mouzelis there are two modes of "incorporation," clientelism and populism, and both of them can be found in semi-peripheral societies⁷. A third opinion, which is not very different from that of Mouzelis, has been offered by Constantine Tsoucalas⁸. Tsoucalas suggests that in contemporary Greece there is "clientelistic corporatism," which entails corporatist arrangements between the state and preferred social groups. The established corporatist arrangements promote the interests of the bourgeoisie and fractions of the urban middle strata through selective distribution of state subsidies and public employment opportunities to governing party loyalists.
- 6 The opinion supported in this paper is that, while organized interests in Greece are to a large extent controlled in the fashion of state corporatism, the consolidated Greek democracy has allowed for the emergence of pluralism in the representation of interests other than purely economic ones, such as the interests of ecological, feminist, cultural, consumer and health and social provision movements. Among other reasons, the existence of strong parties in a highly polarized party system, embedded in the tradition of acute ideological divisions between Venizelists and Anti-venizelists in the first half of this century and between the Right and the Left in the postwar era, has been reflected at the level of interest representation. However, political party struggles are not as intensely reflected at the level of representation of non-material interests, which is still inchoate. Multiple single-issue social movements have flourished after the transition to democracy. These movements are still tiny, fragmented and weak, but as long as political parties do not acquire an interest in them, they are allowed to develop and at the local level even become legitimate interlocutors in negotiations with state authorities.
- 7 The coexistence of two systems of interest representation under a democratic regime, i.e. of state corporatism with regard to the relations between the bureaucracy and organized interests, and of pluralism with regard to the bureaucracy and social movements can be better understood, if the concepts of bureaucracy and civil society are decomposed in this analysis. Indeed, the empirical investigation of the relations between bureaucracy and civil society entails the decomposition of both concepts, if one is to compare the two in terms of their relative strengths and weaknesses.
- 8 There are several approaches to the study of the relations between bureaucracy and civil society. One is to concentrate on particular public policies and examine how bureaucratic initiatives and responses interact with societal interests and affect policy outcomes. Another way is to study the types of contacts between the administrative

personnel of the state and individual citizens turning to the state as a service agency to enjoy offered goods and services. A third way is to look into the interactions between bureaucracy and organized interests, focusing on the overt and covert pressures exercised by various pressure groups on political and bureaucratic elites. A fourth way, which will be pursued in this paper, is to map the civil society and try to evaluate how strong or weak various segments of civil society are when compared to the state apparatus.

- 9 The pivotal concepts of the fourth way are 'strength' or 'weakness' of any given state and civil society and will be defined later in the paper, after a short excursus on 'bureaucracy' and 'civil society'. In the meantime, it must be said that the advantage of the last approach over the previous three ones is that it allows for a bird's eye view of state-society relations, without narrowing the scope of analysis to a single policy, and that it may provide the background for future comparisons between the Greek case and the cases of other semi-peripheral societies, such as those of Southern Europe and the Southern Cone of Latin America.
- 10 Bureaucracy is one of the state structures and is composed of ministries and public enterprises which have a coercive and a service function. Both functions are to be fulfilled under certain legal and constitutional constraints, which vary by time and place⁹. Bureaucracy is usually the largest state institution in terms of personnel and the most differentiated institution in terms of organizational structure. In contemporary democracy, while bureaucracy serves the autonomous interests of political and administrative elites, it may also cater to some powerful private interests, depending on the configuration of state-society relations in a certain space and time. In the process of serving its own and some private interests bureaucracy fulfils the coercive function of the state as a despot through various mechanisms such as bureaucratic aggrandizement and periodic oppression of selected social groups. Bureaucracy also fulfils the second function of the state, which is the provision of services, including infra-structural support to the workings of the capitalist market and welfare safety-nets to those segments of society which are at risk, i.e. particular segments of the labor force permanently or temporarily cast out of the market. In Greece as in other democratic regimes of the late twentieth century bureaucracies are entrusted with the coercive and the social welfare functions of contemporary states, which they fulfil with varying degrees of success depending on the financial robustness of each state, the politics of the governing political party or coalition of parties, and the material interests and ideological orientations of state managers. Of course, the fulfillment of both functions is also constrained by constitutional and legal arrangements, the specific set-up of which depends on the balance of social and political actors at a certain time and space and the traditions and dominant interpretations that guide their actions.
- 11 Having sketched how bureaucracy may be decomposed in its functions, it is instructive to do the same with civil society. Civil society comprises those areas of social life and communication that remain outside the immediate control of the state mechanisms, although they may be to an extent regulated by state legislation (e.g. labor law). Civil society covers the space between household and state, which includes not only the sphere of production and the market, as dogmatic Marxists would argue, but also other spheres, such as non-economic social spheres or arenas inhabited by interest groups, social movements, voluntary associations, cultural and religious organizations, and the public sphere, where the above collective actors interact amongst themselves and the state in

the context of matters of public interest¹⁰. There are instances of civil society which do not assume an organizational form, such as the self-awareness of interest groups of their own needs and rights and the strength of commitment of social movements to their ideology. However, in this paper only organized forms of civil society will be studied, as it is difficult to assess the strength or weakness of non-organized collective action.

- 12 The above conception of bureaucracy and civil society is complemented by the distinction between civil society and "political society," as understood by Tocqueville (and, to a certain extent, Gramsci). Political society is distinguished from civil society, as it is made of purely political associations, mainly political parties, the local government authorities, juries and public opinion¹¹. While interest groups and voluntary associations may also be understood as performing political functions (in a wide sense of the term "political"), it is clear that they participate in politics to influence authority, not to rise to positions of authority as political parties do. In studying contemporary, multi-party democracies it is analytically helpful to distinguish the central state institutions, such as the bureaucracy, the army, the police and the judicial system, from the rest of the political Society, i.e. chiefly from political parties. In the following analysis of contemporary Greece, civil society, political society and the central state bureaucracy are understood as three distinct yet integrating collective entities.
- 13 Typically in contemporary democracies, political parties function as aggregating and integrative mechanisms of collective claims towards the bureaucracy. The constituents of civil society, on the other hand, namely interest groups, social movements and voluntary organizations, aggregate interests without integrating them in a political platform of priorities as parties are supposed to do. Obviously, the process of interest aggregation by political parties differs from one society to another, depending on, among other things, the socioeconomic route to development taken by a certain society over time. For instance, semi-peripheral societies tend to privilege clientelistic arrangements of interest representation, where individuals, instead of forging horizontal ties with other individuals of comparable social class or status, seek personal patrons (and patrons recruit clients) in most aspects of social and political life.
- 14 However, while political parties may function as vehicles of interest aggregation, drawing on claims voiced by various segments of civil society or, in the case of semi-peripheral societies, also acting as collective patrons, the bureaucracy also forms its own relations with civil society, often bypassing the parties. From the standpoint of bureaucracy, the relations between state and civil society may take different forms such as state intervention to plan and steer economic development, provision of welfare services to social strata hard-hit by poverty or unemployment, or coercion of particular social groups which appear to be un-loyal or (semi-loyal) to the dominant socio-economic system. From the standpoint of civil society, the interventions and initiatives of the bureaucracy may be invited or resisted, depending on the relative strength of the central state institutions and the corresponding weakness of the civil society in a particular country over a certain period of time. It can be hypothesized that when the central state mechanisms become stronger, civil society may become weaker, but this is not a necessary outcome of state growth. One may posit that over time both state and civil society may become stronger or both may become weaker than before. Empirical evidence for the applicability of one of the above patterns in the semi-peripheral society of contemporary Greece will be provided in the rest of the paper. Similar

conceptualizations of state-society relations in terms of degrees of strength and weakness have recently appeared in the comparative political literature on modern state¹².

- 15 As Alfred Stepan has noted in his analysis of state-civil society relations in the Southern Cone of Latin America, there are four possible modes of "the reciprocal relations between the power of the state and the power of civil society"¹³. In the first mode, as state power grows, civil society weakens in a zero-sum fashion. In the second mode, both the power of the state and the power of the civil society grow. In the third mode, the strength of the state becomes weaker as does the power of civil society. In the last, fourth mode, the power of civil society increases as that of the state decreases in a zero-sum way.
- 16 The preceding four-fold schema begs the question of the definition and measurement of relative strength and weakness of the central state institutions, particularly bureaucracy itself, and civil society. There are several indicators used to measure the strength of the central state, such as the state's tax-raising capacity, the public sector's share of economic activity and the percentage of the labor force employed in the public sector. All the above indicators do not measure the repressive capacity of the state nor the qualitative aspects of its strength, but only the state's capacity for intervention in the economy.
- 17 The qualitative aspects of the central state's strength may be indicated by the existence of legal and financial mechanisms at the disposal of the central state, with which the central government may attempt to control the mobilization of civil society. Other relevant indicators are the legal framework for the supervision of the activity of trade unions and social movements, the cohesion of the civil service as expressed in its internal organization, the common social background and professional training of civil servants. Of course, the legitimacy of the state is also a qualitative indicator, which is very difficult to assess on the basis of existing opinion data, since those usually refer not to the state per se but to the regime (democracy) or the government (the party or coalition of parties in power).
- 18 The highest the values obtained in the aforementioned quantitative and qualitative indicators, the stronger is the central state and the weaker the civil society, if their relation is a zero-sum relation. If, however, the mode of their relations is not zero-sum, then no conclusion can be drawn about the performance of civil society as long as only indicators of state strength have been used. As already noted, it may be that the strength of the state increases in parallel with the strength of civil society (positive-sum relation) or that the state becomes weaker and civil society weakens too. In both those cases of parallel rise or decline of the central state and the civil society, other indicators are required to measure the strength of civil society and in particular to evaluate the size, mobilization capacity, autonomy of collective action and organizational coherence of interest groups, social movements and voluntary associations. Such indicators referring to the strength or weakness of civil society are the size of the industrial working class, the organizational density of the workers and the employees' associations, the frequency and extent of strike activity, and the number and mobilization capacity of social movements and voluntary associations.
- 19 Data for the estimation of the quantitative and qualitative indicators of the rise or decline of power of bureaucracy and civil society are not always available. Particularly difficult is to assess the development of civil society over time in countries like modern Greece, where adequate time series data on social and political development are missing and native historical research leaves much to be desired (with the exception of the

economic history and intellectual history of modern Greece). A cursory view of the present condition of the Greek bureaucracy and of the development of trade union movements of workers, farmers and public employees in Greece cannot miss striking continuities in the internal organization and control of the bureaucracy and the movements from "above," i.e. from the party-dominated political authority.

20 The Greek bureaucracy is relatively large in size but remains largely inefficient and weak compared to political parties which have alternated in power since the fall of the colonels' regime. The inflated nature of the Greek bureaucracy and of the central government is indicated by a few statistical figures. The size of the Greek cabinet rose from 32 ministers in 1973 to 57 in 1988¹⁴. According to OECD data, government expenditure as percentage of the GDP rose spectacularly from 21 percent in 1976 to 51 percent in 1988 and public sector employment as percentage of total employment increased from 8.5 percent to 10.1 percent in the same period¹⁵. However, according to another estimate by Tsoucalas, which applies to the period of PASOK in power, the number of civil servants increased by 21 percent between 1981 and 1989¹⁶. The fact is that the size of state personnel had already started growing when Nea Demokratia was in power; as OECD data show, in 1970-1975 the average annual growth rate of employment in general government was higher than the equivalent average in 1975-1982 in all OECD countries (including Italy and Spain) except for Greece, where government employment grew faster in 1975-1982 than in 1970-1975¹⁷. From the mid-1970s until the mid-1980s public enterprises proliferated as the New Democracy party nationalized a few debt-ridden private enterprises after the transition to democracy and PASOK created new state-owned companies to intervene in the private sector of the economy. As a result, according to an OECD report, "total employment in the wider public sector (including utilities, firms and banks under state control) accounted for almost 30 percent of total dependent employment in 1990"¹⁸.

21 The increases in all statistical figures cited above belie the reality of weakness of the Greek state. The Greek bureaucracy is rather large for a country which still is at a middle level of economic development and does not yet have a comprehensive welfare system. Yet the same bureaucracy is not strong enough either to make its presence in the economy decisively felt in the sense of a competent state machine which steers economic development) or resist the periodic incursions of alternating political elites and party personnel in its interior.

22 In fiscal terms the Greek bureaucracy is practically unable to impose direct taxes on the population. In 1991 in Greece taxes on personal income amounted to 4.8 percent of the GDP, while the European Union average was 10.9 percent. Taxes on corporate income amounted to 1.7 percent of the GDP of Greece, while the European Union average was 3.0 percent. On both accounts the performance of the Greek state is very low when compared to other member-states of the European Union, including Southern European countries with similar labor force profiles (i.e. with relatively large employment in the sectors of agriculture and petty commodity production). The tax raising capacity of the Greek state has remained almost stagnant between 1980 and 1991 as tax revenues from personal income as percentage of the GDP rose only by 0.5 percent, while tax revenues from corporate income rose only by 0.6 percent between the same years¹⁹. The chronic inabilities of the Greek bureaucracy are also shown by the fact that in 1975 funds collected from direct taxes constituted only 21 percent of total state budget revenues and in 1988 the same kind of funds increased only to 27 percent of the total²⁰.

- 23 In terms of management and re-organization the Greek bureaucracy depends on the whims of the leadership of the two major political parties which have succeeded each other in power, forming single-party governments, for a total of nineteen out of the twenty-one years that have passed since the 1974 transition to democracy. Both parties, New Democracy and PASOK, have inflated the political component of bureaucracy by creating inter-ministerial committees of political appointees and councils of advisers to ministers as well as whole new ministries out of former public agencies or secretariats²¹. Between 1981 and 1989, while PASOK was in power, a total of twelve laws reorganizing the central government and the public administration were passed and in 1990-1993, while the New Democracy party was in power, another five such administrative reform laws were voted by the parliament.
- 24 In contemporary democracies central bureaucracies are often controlled by the governing parties or coalitions of parties in varying degrees. In Greece democracy has been associated with a clientelistic domination of the bureaucracy. Government changes are directly linked to ensuing administrative changes. An extensive ebb and flow of administrative personnel and structures accompanies each succession of parties in power, making the Greek bureaucracy a prime example of a modern party politicized state institution. Although successive majoritarian party governments are not always able to implement fully their policies due to some bureaucratic obstruction, whenever there is a determined minister, supported by competent advisors, there is very little that the Greek bureaucracy can do to counter government plans.
- 25 Greek bureaucrats are usually trained in law or political science, but rarely have additional pre-service or in-service training. They lack expertise in modern methods of management, do not keep up with developments in new technologies and do not constitute an independent cohesive group. Even the higher administrative personnel is fragmented into many "corps," none among which shares an "esprit de corps" or at least a common social background. Change of "corps" is impossible and inter-ministerial mobility of civil servants is very rare.
- 26 The organizational fragmentation of the civil service is complemented by its political factionalism along party affiliations. The parties of New Democracy, PASOK and KKE (the communist party) have put forward their respective labor organizations of civil servants, which struggle for power in ADEDY, the nationwide general confederation of unions of civil servants, and in each ministry or public enterprise²². If at the collective level interest representation is attained through party-led unions sharing power at the national-level confederation, at the individual level career advancement is achieved through the mechanisms of bureaucratic clientelism²³. Essentially, bureaucratic clientelism, a recent phenomenon in Greece, differs from older forms of clientelism in that a party bureaucracy, not a single patron, acts in an organized, bureaucratic fashion to infiltrate the state machine with party devotees and distribute favors to party clients such as initial hiring, quick promotion or favorable transfers to better posts in the civil service.
- 27 The distinction between bureaucracy and governing parties, employed in this paper despite the close association of the central bureaucracy with political power in contemporary Greece, is useful in order to qualify the image of the overpowering Greek bureaucracy. Our main point has been that political parties rule unchallenged over the central bureaucracy, which, because of a long tradition of interest intermediation through patronage mechanisms, has never acquired an independent status in the political system of modern Greece. A political culture evolving around the logic of individual

intermediation with the power-holders, a pluralist but polarized party system, and the vagaries of acutely divisive political conflict throughout the twentieth century have contributed, among other factors, to the subjection of the administrative system to the fluctuations of the political system, making the former wholly dependent on the latter²⁴. If the contemporary Greek bureaucracy seems overgrown, due to the proliferation of administrative structures and the recruitment of new employees, fuelled by party patronage, its inflated size does not correspond to a build-up of bureaucratic strength. If anything, the Greek bureaucracy today resembles a colossus with feet of clay²⁵.

- 28 Continuities with the past can also be discerned in the structure and functions of all the trade union movements in Greece, in the periodic intervention of the central government in the selection of their leadership and in the financial dependency of the peak associations of workers and employees on state funds. Three distinctive characteristics of the trade union movements in Greece are : the coexistence of official and unofficial labor organizations, the institutional and financial dependency of peak associations on the state, the extensive internal fragmentation of the trade union movements at all levels of organization.
- 29 The workers' movement took its present official form of a single confederation of workers' organizations, the General Confederation of Workers of Greece (GSEE), in the wake of World War I and was subjected to state control already in the inter-war period. The same can be said for the farmers' confederation (PASEGES), which was founded in the 1930s. The trade union movement of civil servants was also organized as a nationwide single confederation (ADEDY) immediately after the World War II. The formal confederate organization of the movements of workers, farmers and public employees movement has remained more or less the same since their inception. It is revealing of the "statizing" nature of Greek corporatism that all three labor confederations were founded before independent local labor organizations had matured and that the confederations were either created "from above," by the state (e.g. ADEDY in 1945), or were quickly subsumed under state control (e.g. GSEE in the inter-war period). As Adamantia Pollis has shown, not only the Greek state, but also foreign powers, such as the U.S.A. at the end of WW II, have intervened to make sure that the Greek labor movement does not enjoy an independent existence²⁶.
- 30 However, since the 1960s the informal development of other labor movements, outside the formal structure of the labor organizations of workers, farmers and public employees, has periodically expanded and abated, creating a double structure, an official and an unofficial one, in the Greek trade union movement. The official trade union movement (the GSEE confederation for workers and other wage-earners) has been the arena of factional contests exactly mirroring the political contests of the corresponding political parties. The unofficial trade union movement, working inside and outside the frame of GSEE, has also depended on the strategies of the main parties²⁷. Labor movements unsolicited by any political party have also appeared at the plant or company level, without being able to survive for more than a few years at a time. The double structure of the trade union movement in Greece is its first distinctive feature.
- 31 Its second feature is the authoritarian, licensed corporatism, a variety of state corporatism, present in times of dictatorship and democracy alike²⁸. During the short periods of authoritarian rule (1925-1926, 1936-1940 and 1967-1974) and during the monitored democratic regime of the immediate post-civil war era the grip of the state on the working class was much tighter than in the periods of relatively stable democratic

rule (1928-1932, most of the 1960s and from 1974 to the present). Still, the Greek bureaucracy, dominated by alternating political parties and intermittent dictatorial regimes throughout the twentieth century, has closely controlled the evolution of the trade union movement through a number of invariable mechanisms. Included in those monitoring mechanisms are the appointment of temporary administrations of the major confederations through court decisions favorable to the governing party's will, the perpetuation of economic dependency of the labor unions on the state through the compulsory collection of workers' contributions by designated state agencies and the distribution of state funds to selected, favored unions at the discretion of the Minister of Labor, the exclusion of disfavored, oppositional first-level unions from the congresses of the confederations of workers, farmers and public employees; the imposition by the state of compulsory arbitration in the event of unsuccessful negotiations between the associations of employers and employees²⁹.

- 32 A third feature of the Greek trade union movement is its extensive fragmentation not only in party-led factions but also in first -and second-level organizations. The labor movement is organized in three tiers. The first tier consists of first-level unions, such as local sections of federations of workers exercising the same trade and plant-level unions. The second tier consists of federations of workers from the same trade and of local labor centers which encompass all first-level organizations over a certain geographical region³⁰. The third tier consists of confederations of second-level unions and labor centers, such as the aforementioned General Confederation of Workers of Greece (GSEE), the civil-service confederation (ADEDY) and the confederation of farmers (PASEGES).
- 33 Although the multiplication and fragmentation of first-level labor organizations is not unknown in other European countries, in contemporary Greece the phenomenon has reached extreme proportions. According to one estimation³¹, in 1981 there were over four thousand two hundred first-level organizations of workers in a society in which wage- and salary earners are comparatively few (they constituted only 51 percent of the active labor force in 1981)³². Fragmentation is also evident in the other two tiers of labor organization. At the second tiers of the workers' movement in 1986 there were one hundred sixty four second-level autonomous organizations of workers belonging to a single third-level confederation, the General Confederation of Workers of Greece (GSEE)³³. There is fragmentation even at the third tier, as GSEE is the third-level organization of workers and employees employed at the private sector (including some public enterprises), while there is another third-level organization, ADEDY, only for civil servants working for the central government. Fragmentation may spell pluralism and thus be a sign of strength of the labor movement, but in the case of Greece of the 1970s and the early 1980s we encounter party-led fragmentation which stifles civil society initiatives not sanctioned by the main political parties.
- 34 The organizational (or trade union) density of the Greek trade union movement is slightly lower than the European Community (EC) average and differs by sector. Generally, it has been estimated that in the late 1970s the overall trade union density was between 27 and 32 percent, while the EC average was 42 percent. Today it is estimated that the density is approximately 25 percent, while the European Union average is 37.6 percent³⁴. The trade union density of the Greek civil servants confederation is much higher, reaching 90 percent, as is the trade union density of particular labor organizations of the wider public sector³⁵. For instance, the employees working in the state-controlled banking sector (organized in the OTOE union), in the Civil Aviation

Authority (organized in the OSPA union) and in the electrical power company (organized in the GENOP-DEH union) have put together particularly strong labor federations³⁶. As a Eurostat report shows, in Greece between 1982 and 1991 the number of working days lost through stoppages increased by 21 percent in the industrial sector and by 116 percent in the services sector. Thus the incidence rate in the services sector more than doubled in the span of nine years, mainly due to industrial disputes in the water, gas and electricity sector and in the banking sector. In the same period (1982-1991) in the rest of the European Community there was a downward trend in the industrial sector and only a moderate increase in the service sector in terms of incidence rate of industrial disputes³⁷.

35 The representation of interests in contemporary Greece is also class-biased ("segmentary" in Guillermo O'Donnell's terminology), in the sense that, as it happens in state corporatist arrangements under authoritarian rule, the associations of employers are not as closely controlled. In a country where self-employment is disproportionately large compared to the size of the salaried strata and small employers constitute the bulk of the proprietary strata, the image of state-society relations conveyed by the model of state or statizing corporatism is not complete, if only the plight of the trade union movements of workers and employees is taken into account. For one thing, the peak associations of industrialists and shipowners (SEV and EEE respectively) have never been controlled by the state in the fashion of control imposed on the associations of employees; and the peak association of small businessmen (GSEVE) fell in the mid-1980s in the hands of the Community Party, the left opposition to PASOK government³⁸.

36 Since at least the early 1980s, the Greek salaried strata have borne the double burden of fluctuating inflation and rising unemployment. The inflation rate hovered around the 25 percent mark in 1980 and again in 1985, dropped below 20 percent in 1991 and below 15 percent in 1993, but still remains the highest among the European Union member states³⁹. Between 1985 and 1991 real hour earnings of industrial workers (deflated by consumer price indices) increased in every EC country except for Greece, where earnings decreased on average by 1.6 percent per year during the above period. The official rate of unemployment in Greece went up from 4.1 of the labor force in 1981 to 7.0 percent in 1991, but, according to newspaper sources, in 1992 and 1993 this rate was shortly a little below 10 percent⁴⁰. Although part of the workers registered as unemployed have jobs in the informal economy, there is little doubt that the lower wage-dependent strata suffered a compression of their employment opportunities and their real incomes in the second half of the 1980s and in the beginning of the 1990s. The response of the Greek working class to the worsening of labor market and economic conditions was evident in its increasing striking activity. According to the International Labor Office, over 200,000 workers and employees were involved in strikes in 1983, over 1,200,000 workers in 1987, and over 1,300,000 workers in 1990⁴¹. Newspapers report that the number of striking workers and employees declined below 1,000,000 in 1992 and below 700,000 in 1993⁴². The relative decline of strike activity may be accounted for by the privatisation process in the public sector and the concomitant prospect of lay-offs, which might have rendered workers more acquiescent. Of course, the fact that workers resorted to strikes to an increasing degree in the late 1980s is another indication that other means of pressure, e.g. the formation of neo-corporatist structures of collective bargaining were not available to the working class.

37 To recap, the general picture of the relations between bureaucracy and labor interests in Greece is close to the type of state corporatism, explored by Philippe C. Schmitter, and

to statizing corporatism, suggested by Guillermo O'Donne¹⁴³. In 1990 negotiations between the employers' and the employees' associations that took place without close monitoring by the state led to signing a two-year long collective bargaining agreement. This agreement and the negotiations between GSEE and SEV in 1993 are too recent and inchoate phenomena, but may indicate a more permanent transformation of industrial relations in Greece for the future. The fact is that since the inception of GSEE in the late 1910s organized labor in Greece has long been under control by the state. This does not mean to say that Greek civil society as a whole has been invariably weak compared to the state. Greek civil society has repeatedly felt constrained in its autonomy due to incursions of political and bureaucratic elites into trade unions; yet not all parts of civil society have been tightly strapped to their chairs around the negotiating table with the state. Instances of local or extended family resistance to the state may have existed, but are difficult to assess as they did not assume a more permanent organized form. The associations of employers and small businesses have kept central government at bay. A few independent plant-level organizations have survived without the support or the control of a particular political party for almost twenty years, since their appearance in the wake of the 1974 transition to democracy. (e.g. the plant-level unions of the petroleum company ESSO-PAPAS in Attika and of EVIOP-TEMPO in the city of Chalkis⁴⁴). Recently, social movements in the domains of culture, environmental protection, women's issues, consumers' rights, and health and social provision have flourished in major Greek cities and are leading a life independent of state interventionism and political party factionalism. Without neglecting the continuing and overbearing presence of the central government and political parties over civil society, it is worth registering the recent awakening of civil associations in Greece, in so far as it represents a discontinuity with the recent past.

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- 38 After the 1974 transition to democracy the activity of some new social movements, such as the peace movement or the feminist movement, was fuelled by the three main political parties of the centre and the left (PASOK, KKE, KKE Interior), creating one peace and one feminist front organization each and thus splitting these social movements into three factions from the very beginning of their post-authoritarian existence.
- 39 Independent feminist groups did also exist in the 1970s but their appeal was concentrated only in a few intellectual circles and student unions. Associations and organizations which did not enjoy continuous party support either because they were not originally founded by a certain political party or because they were not later subjected to party control did not survive (e.g. the voluntary association "Polites Kata tou Nefous," which was a citizens' movement against the air pollution in Athens, the feminist group around the journal "Skoupa"- meaning "Broom"). In the 1980s the activity of party-dominated feminist and peace organizations gradually faded, while new, small voluntary associations and non-governmental organizations appeared. Older civil associations, which had been active in the post-war pre-authoritarian period, became active again without the initiative of any particular political party. New social movements made their appearance in the areas of environmental protection, feminism, consumers' rights, culture, public health and social provision. The emergence of new social movements, albeit nascent in form and small in size, may be attributed to the gradual delegitimation of the major political parties as exclusive vehicles of political participation and by the emergence of new problems or the worsening of old ones, such as the deterioration of

environmental conditions in Greek cities and coasts or the spread of drug use among the younger generations. The environmentalist, the feminist, and other social movements, which will be briefly discussed below, have variant social bases and mobilisation capacities. The current state of rulement research in Greece does not allow us to move beyond the point of a simple description of social movement organizations.

40 The environmentalist movement in contemporary Greece is composed of small local groups and voluntary associations and Greek sections of international voluntary organizations. In the past there have been few ecological associations. For example, in the early 1970s, during the seven-year dictatorship, local movements in the towns of Megara and Methana resisted the establishment of new industrial plants in their vicinity. In the same era a scientific ecological association (ERYEA) was created with the support of the Greek Chamber of Engineers (TEE) and some industrialists⁴⁶. Today, local groups engage in concentrated activity which sporadically wins the attention of nation-wide media. Local initiatives include efforts to save threatened species (e.g. the sea turtle in the Ionian sea) and to combat government decisions regarding the location of new industrial plants. (e.g. the plan to establish a geothermal energy unit on the Cycladic island of Milos, the plan to set up a petrochemical factory on another coast). Every summer volunteer groups help to patrol the few remaining forests of the Athens area. Greek sections of international voluntary associations, such as the World Wildlife Fund, seem more persistent and organized in their projects, while Green Peace employs dramatic forms of protest against environmental pollution⁴⁷.

41 On the whole, the environmentalist movement is very fragmented and sparsely staffed, but has escaped infiltration by the major political parties. Currently there are approximately eighty environmentalist organizations, claiming a total membership of 15,000⁴⁸. The political offshoot of the movement has been a small Green party (in Greek Oekologoi-Enallaktikoi) which gained less than one percent of the vote in two general elections in the end of the 1980s (in November 1989 and in April 1990) and won a parliamentary seat. The party lost its single seat in the recent elections of October 1993 after it had split into conflicting factions. Still, the appeal of the environmentalist movement is wider than its electoral performance indicates, as environmental concerns are now echoed in the pre-electoral discourses of the main political parties. The environmentalist movement in Greece cannot claim that it has achieved cohesion or that it has had a significant influence on policy-making. Yet the continuing degradation of environmental conditions in major Greek cities, in conjunction with the multiplication of environmentalist organizations and the decay of the old political class, may favor a shift of allegiance of the urban strata from the major political parties to single-issue organizations concerned with the environment.

42 The women's movement is also relatively new in Greece, but its origins date back to the nineteenth century. Its main difference from the environmentalist movement is that it is partly politicized, owing to the permeation of party factionalism, and partly autonomous of political parties. Associations of women existed already in the nineteenth century and some liberal women's organizations fought to grant women the right to vote after the end of World War II.

43 After the 1974 transition to democracy the three parties of the center and the left (PASOK, KKE, KKE Interior) each created their front women's organizations (EGE, OGE, KDG respectively) subsuming women's issues under the wider struggle to bring about political transformation through accessing central political power. An independent

feminist organization (KAG) was created in 1975 and later several small women's groups, adopting socialist and radical feminist viewpoints, emerged in university departments and city neighborhoods of Athens and Thessaloniki⁴⁹. In parallel, older women's associations, with a liberal feminist profile, continued functioning and mostly remained outside the control of the noted political parties. A well known feminist organization was a coordinating committee of representatives of women's organizations (SEGES), which in the late 1970s unsuccessfully pressed the conservative government of the New Democracy party for reforms in family law. This committee had twelve women's organizations under its umbrella. Law reforms were finally effected in the early 1980s while the PASOK party was in power. Around the same time the feminist press flourished - in terms of periodicals published - and PASOK's own women's organization (EGE) claimed a membership of 15,000⁵⁰.

44 Some progress in promoting the feminist cause was made in the 1980s, mainly due to pressures exercised on PASOK by intellectuals, by independent women's organizations and certainly by PASOK's own women's organization which was led by the prime minister's wife. After the implementation of laws improving the position of women in marriage and family relations, the women's movement has abated. Since the late 1980s the mobilization of party-led women's organizations has slowed down, while some feminist periodicals have closed. However, women's issues seem to concern a wider audience than the organizational strength of women's organizations indicates, as feminist demands have been filtered in political party programs. In the early 1990s in Athens there were at least ten active independent women's organizations, which were not directly tied to any political party. Today these organizations face the challenge of associating themselves with the major political parties, in order to access the centers of decision-making, without, however, becoming in the process mere party appendages.

45 The existence of many voluntary associations of variant nature is not something totally new for Greek society. In the end of the nineteenth century many associations sprang to promote the development of city neighborhoods and local communities all over Greece and to promote multiple material and ideal interests, including the irredentist projects of the political and intellectual elites of the time. Since 1974 new social movements have sprung in the areas of consumers' rights, culture, public health and social provision, but most of them remain embryonic. Many among them have taken the form of non-governmental organizations and volunteer groups. For example, in Athens there are two non-governmental organizations (IN.KA and Enosi Katanaloton), which receive the complaints of consumers and supply them with information on their rights⁵¹. In the area of social provision there is a long tradition of charitable institutions, dating back to the nineteenth century and usually linked to the Christian Orthodox Church. At the turn of the century many voluntary associations were created to take care of the conditions of hygiene in the large cities and to provide care to patients (suffering from tuberculosis).

46 Today, the work of these philanthropic associations has been complemented by the activities of local sections of international organizations, such as "Medecins Sans Frontières," and new volunteer groups preoccupied with the spread of drug use in Greece. In Athens and a few other large urban centers there are approximately fifty voluntary associations offering help to drug users with the assistance of physicians, parents of drug users and former drug addicts⁵². Of related nature are nineteen non-governmental organizations which work on problems of public health and development in the Third World⁵³. Finally, there is a plethora of local cultural clubs, staging drama performances

and music concerts and showing films particularly during the summer months in small towns all over Greece. The activities of local voluntary associations still remain unexplored, although one may hypothesize that they are often linked to the financial resources and the political profile of the local government from which cultural initiatives usually emanate.

47 The tripartite relationship among the central bureaucracy, political parties, and social movements is a complex one. Obviously the state corporatism witnessed in the development of labor movements and the fragile pluralism of social movements are interconnected phenomena. One may speculate that the prevalence of state corporatism in industrial relations is partially responsible for the underdevelopment of new social movements. The chances of new social movements to emerge must have been compromised by the class-biased state corporatism in the sense that political party polarization and endurance of ideological cleavages may have permeated all organized forms of civil society, including the major women's unions and the peace movement.

48 Still, contemporary Greek civil society is not as weak as it is widely believed. Although large segments of civil society, including the official trade union movement and some new social movements, have succumbed to the main political parties, there are segments in other sectors, such as the labor organizations of the wider public sector and the majority of the new social movements, which have preserved their relative independence from the short-term strategies of the political parties which bid for power. At the same time, in the industrial and shipping sectors business associations have managed to avoid the tutelage of any governing party, preserving their interests in an autonomous fashion which labor unions have never been allowed to enjoy.

49 In that respect the Greek system of interest representation shares elements from the state corporatist system and simultaneously the pluralist system. The mixed nature of the mode of interest representation in Greece implies that the state has a class or "segmentary" nature, favoring certain societal interests over others, but overall keeping the powerless segments of civil society under centralized control. The image is more complicated than the dichotomy "state" versus "societal" corporatism would imply, since the Greek state cannot prevent pluralism from existing in two sectors, namely in the representation of business interests, which are powerful enough, and in the sector of single-issue civil associations, which are not yet as threatening as labor unions. Still, if there is no change in the internal party structure and the polarization of the party system, chances are that as soon as a new social movement acquires strength, it will be absorbed by the major political parties.

50 The bureaucracy, on the other hand, is weaker than it is usually thought and it has itself been moulded by parties alternating in power. Although over the last twenty years the size of the bureaucracy has grown, its power vis-a-vis the political elites has not increased in a corresponding way and it may have decreased. Given the extent of permeation of bureaucratic structures and personnel by party factionalism after the rise of PASOK and later by the come-back of New Democracy, it could be that the administrative system has witnessed a decrease in its limited autonomy from the political system.

51 The relation between bureaucracy and civil society in Greece after the transition to democracy is not only different from zero-sum, but also seems to be a spurious relation. The weakness of the Greek bureaucracy cannot be attributed to the strength of civil society or vice versa, but the relative underdevelopment and misgrowth of both should be due to a third, hidden variable, which should by now be apparent to the reader. After

1974 civil society has shown signs of awakening, particularly in the form of civil associations and unions of public employees. Yet this society remains relatively weak, being overrun by the practices of state corporatism which have survived the period of post-war "guided" democracy and the seven-year long military dictatorship. The enduring weakness of the civil society cannot be attributed to the encroachment of the Greek bureaucracy since the latter is itself neither strong or autonomous, but also remains weak compared to the main political party organizations. The Greek case is an example of a "negative-sum" relation between state and society. The value of Alfred Stepan's original schema lies exactly in taking into account the possibility that both state and society may be weak, as it seems to have been the case of contemporary Greece.

52 In concluding, it seems plausible to argue that civil society and bureaucracy are still rather weak in contemporary Greece because they are both under the tutelage of very strong political parties, which constitute the third, hidden variable. The explanation of the emergence of very strong political parties in the first place is a wholly different issue from the issue explored in this paper. Although the influence of social class cleavages on political conflict may not be negligible, the polarized structure of the party system itself and the influence of legacies of acute party conflict in the interwar period and civil war in the immediate postwar have possibly been the prime causal factors behind the extensive penetration of civil society by political parties.

53 It may be that in the beginning of the 1990s the Third Greek Democracy, which was founded in 1974, witnessed an emergence of a civil society stronger than the inchoate one of the immediate post-authoritarian period. Recent studies indicate that employers and employees have started negotiating with each other without the overbearing presence of the central state authorities⁵⁴. In 1990 GSEE and SEV signed a two-year long collective agreement without being directly monitored by the Ministry of National Economy. The same happened in 1992. In the meantime a consulting agency, INE, was founded under the auspices of GSEE and SEV to promote research on labor markets, working conditions and labor relations in Greece. Another public agency (OME) was founded in 1990 to mediate between the associations of employers and employees. However, it is still too early to suggest that there is a transition from state corporatism in labor relations in Greece.

54 It is also early to judge whether Greek civil society has been permeated by party-wide nationalist commotions. A comprehensive study is needed to assess the emergence of the nationalist movement in Greece of the 1990s and the relatively small party penetration of it. Indeed, massive rallies, organized not by political parties but by local community, school and church authorities were held in major Greek cities between 1992 and 1994. In the meantime, one can pass the following judgment about the first twenty years of the Third Greek Democracy (1974-1994): if there was an index of "partyiness" to evaluate the extent to which a certain society was permeated by party politics over a given time period, post-authoritarian Greece would probably rank very high among European democracies as one of the most party-politicized societies in the European Union⁵⁵.

55 I wish to acknowledge the valuable criticism of professors Blanca Ananiadis, Martin Baldwin-Edwards, George Th. Mavrogordatos, Jose-Maria Maravall, Yannis Papadopoulos and Adamantia Pollis. I have also benefited from the criticisms of the faculty and students of the Centre for the Advanced Studies in the Social Sciences of the Juan March Institute in Madrid. Finally, I thank professors Calliope Spanou and Suzannah Verney as well as Frixos Ioannidis and Thanassis Tsakiris for giving me access to information and unpublished work-in-progress.

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