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Leandros, Panayota

University of Piraeus

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# The Greek Economy and European Integration

Dr Panayota Leandros

## Abstract

*The process of European integration involves the accelerated socio-economic convergence of member countries. But the weight of a country's cultural characteristics can weigh heavily on its development. Thus, the social division of labour in Greece reveals quite exceptional characteristics, among them the survival of a small, fragmented peasantry, the large incidence of independent forms of work, and the persistence of overburdened public employees. It is therefore normal that, in this respect, the convergence of the country with the European norm encounters socio-cultural resistances. The construction of Europe is an unprecedented historical process. This is an unprecedented social experiment aimed at the sustainable integration of several independent countries into a new common economic and political space. We are therefore faced with a project that has major, even radical, consequences. It is true that the fundamental social principles of the member societies are not called into question. But the creation of the new common space supposes the establishment of truly original institutional and ideological forms. The original and unpredictable nature of this process is therefore obvious.*

This is the first time in history that it is planned to gradually integrate democratic countries with democratic means into a new democratic entity. Thus, the construction of Europe goes through a political process that must continue in stages in the context of a 'democratic gradualism' that must be invented and reinvented. Insofar as the historical sensibilities of the national components of the new ensemble will have to be respected, this consensual gradualism is undoubtedly necessary.

But it is precisely this that consists of the congenital ambiguity of the current experience. The exceptional historical peculiarity of this process of integration therefore consists in the inescapable fact that the 'original social contract' of the new European society is not given and promulgated once and for all, but is subject to constant consensual renewal. In this historically unprecedented context, the issue around the modes and implications of this integration is all the more crucial because it cannot go through constraining central interventions. Nevertheless, this does not imply that member countries will always be subject to determinations freely chosen by the representatives of their inalienable political sovereignty. It is the very opposite that is true, as evidenced by the emergence of the new contradictory conception of a 'two-scale democracy'. This is not, of course, without effects: in a context where the deep meaning of concrete forms of sovereignty has not yet been established, the common progress, the goal of all democratic politics, must be defined before that the new collective subject is definitively crystallized. The known is thus diluted in the unknown. In this respect, therefore, the change is necessarily brutal: the prospective cohesion of Europe can only go through a series of radical breaks with regard to the fundamental representation of the imaginary subject of general interest. This can only lead to changes affecting all the ideas that underpin the political phenomenon.

This being said, it becomes clear that the absolute priority assigned to the integration process imposes a significant shift in collective representations regarding the meaning and strategies of continuous social intervention. From now on, all the reforms put in place by the national political authorities must be presented as tending to the construction of an entity that remains imaginary. The implications of this are important: there can no longer be any question of a political will that has freely and sovereignly opted either for a particularistic national evolution or for a simple automatic reproduction of social

structures, values, models of behavior and traditional social regulation norms. Hence the emergence of the new key concept of 'convergence' of all the national components, not only on the institutional and economic level, but also and perhaps especially on the ideological, normative and symbolic level, in short 'social' level. In this context and by necessity, the collective representations of political time and social priorities seem in their turn profoundly modified.

Inevitably, the political and economic deadlines of the Community are decided on a common calendar. Thus, the decisions taken in the countries concerned are subject to the constraints of a "temporal externality" that is almost inexorable. Confronted with the requirements of convergence, the internal political authorities therefore seem more and more incapable of defining their tactics according to changing circumstances. This implies that, from now on, a whole series of crucial decisions can no longer afford the luxury of being deferred in time. In this respect, therefore, the process of European integration is like a race against time, which, while imaginary, is nonetheless invasive.

Hence the tendency of the political authorities to resort at all times to the deadlines imposed by external community logic. Hence also the emergence of a new type of techno-political authoritarianism that aims precisely to thwart any inertia and resistance to the process of integration. Hence the fact that most social issues are increasingly present as objectively induced from external 'integrationist' constraints. Europe as a whole must accept the risks and perils of a rapid leap forward in the single path of homogenization.

The urgency of a radical convergence therefore seems unavoidable. The essence of "community discipline" is in fact on this incredible 'integration radicalism'. In this context, all other considerations now seem to have to bow to the binding priorities of institutional reforms. The so-called 'democratic deficit', of which there is more and more question, manifests itself in the first place through this 'community emergency', which is less and less negotiable by the parties concerned. This is the first time that old societies have been subjected to a desire for change that can no longer take into account their historical peculiarities. This entails a whole series of displacements in the meanings. I will mention only one which seems to me fundamental. Indeed, the dominant political discourse now establishes a radical and operative distinction between 'social' and 'cultural'. Everything about the first one should be submitted immediately to the external requirements of convergence. In sharp contrast, national 'cultures' should be able to evolve autonomously. The projected homogenization of companies does not extend to the forms of a subsystem that is now conceived as independent of the social infrastructure.

Thus, at a single stroke, a series of fundamental meanings, internalized over a long history, is questioned. A distinction that hitherto seemed impossible and idealistic takes center stage in the dominant political discourses: paradoxically, the creation of a common social community can only be thought of in to the extent that we accept the safeguarding of a 'particular national culture'. Ironically, if the Volksgeistherderian was once used to found the will for unlimited national independence, it is now the historical relativization of this independence that is rationalized by the idealization of the conservation of national cultural genius. The fantasies of radical social autonomy that stemmed from the recognition of unique nations thus seem otherwise out of date, at least out of place. In this sense, while constantly intervening more and more in the structure of the social for the purpose of convergence, States must at the same time insist on the conservation of national cultural particularities.

But politics is thus stolen from some of its most effective weapons. In terms of essential national particularities, on the other hand, it is stolen from the possibility of negotiating under the circumstances with the fragile balance between stability and change in the "socio-cultural" area. The "social" now becomes a "sphere" erected as an explicit object of urgent political intervention. It is, therefore, an

evolution which seems to deny the usual liberal principles: it is a fact that the construction of a single Europe seems to require a radical intervention in the elementary forms of social organization. However, this political priority attributed to convergence at any price can only lead to unpredictable, random, sometimes even "perverse" social effects. In its eternal cunning, history always tends to distort any form of political voluntarism, be it simplistic or sophisticated. Especially since among all thinkable forms of intervention, those that deal with the deep structures of the social seem the least controllable. It is a fact that, in any case, the formal democratic consensus on the major political options can not in any way affect the direction of the evolution of cultural and symbolic practices: the sociological gravities and the ideological immobilisms never disappear in the deadlines predictable. Thus, even if, from now on, the notion of "society", as it has been known for two centuries, seems deprived of some of its immemorial symbolic attributes, there are still considerable margins of "resistance" to the above. Living societies evolve not in spite of but because of history; but that does not preclude their insistence on progress not because of reason, but in spite of their appointed planners.

Especially since, in the current situation, the concrete imperatives that seem to stem from community emergencies are not the result of political choices that have been the subject of systematic negotiations between the parties concerned. After a first period marked by fierce controversy, the Directorate-General for European Construction now seems to be in place. Indeed, it is becoming increasingly clear that priorities are largely subject to the uncontrollable developments of the international system. The dominant free trade auspices thus seem to have sealed not only the general meaning of the common European policy but also the concrete modalities and rhythms of the current integration. There is no doubt that the main explicit concern of the architects of the European Community is the promotion of the economic competitiveness of the new space in the global environment. At least since Maastricht, the idea of a social Europe that took into account the peculiarities, sensitivities and immobilisms of the partner countries seems to have literally evaporated. It is therefore not a coincidence that Community constraints and emergencies focus first and foremost on the protection of economic and monetary stability. From now on, any divergent social considerations should therefore bow to the decisions promulgated in Frankfurt. The internal social policies of the member countries will have to adapt to the omnipotent reality. These external constraints obviously concern all countries participating in the common European construction (Kirrane, 1994). But they do not concern them all to the same degree. From the outset, we have already insinuated, the priority of "convergence" at any price leads to the possibility of "adverse effects". And this is especially true in countries that already have significant differences from the average. In this context, the very notions of "divergence" and "convergence" are not without ambiguities. The performative "criteria" of Maastricht refer primarily to the nominal quantitative convergence of economic, monetary and fiscal criteria. However, the economy cannot function otherwise than in a continuous interpenetration with the social fabric. In this sense, even if the process of economic integration is conceived at first sight on the basis of measurable indices, real convergence could only be consolidated through the modification of a whole series of ideological, social and cultural traits. Some of the most important, long-lasting and interesting ones are sometimes those that resist quantification.

In this perspective, the performance of the Greek economy, which is quite honorable, should not overshadow the fact that the evolution of certain aspects of the country's social, ideological and cultural structure is still particularly divergent with respect to developments in other European countries. It is from some of these spectacular peculiarities of Greek society that the following text will be discussed. No doubt, the question is of fundamental importance. The well-founded hope of the Greeks to reduce or even eliminate the "welfare gap" that separates them from nationals of other European countries has not only been achieved by accelerating economic performance indices in the short and medium term. .

On the contrary, whether "desirable" or not, the long-term evolution of the integration process should depend mainly on transformations of productive social activities, prevailing norms and values, common aspirations and patterns of behavior. In short, practical repercussions of the evolution of a collective imaginary that is as complex as it is inconceivable.

The essence of the analysis that follows will therefore be to try to identify some of the most important significant structures. Let us say from the outset that there is obviously no question of following in a few pages the social history of a country with geographical and cultural features that may seem unique in the European area. Indeed, located as it is in the Balkan space, modern Greece is a predominantly orthodox country without belonging to the Slavic cultural and linguistic area. In addition, the millennial Greek language currently survives only among Greeks, and their Cypriot counterparts. It should also be remembered that the bitter memories of the Ottoman past only exacerbated the millennial cultural and national opposition of Greek Orthodox Christianity to the infidel world of Turks and Muslims that dominates the Levant. Finally, the geographical and cultural distance separating Greece from Western Europe can not diminish the ideological relevance of the permanent but nevertheless contradictory symbolic links which are supposed to unite the "cradle of the European idea" with the appointed representatives of this "transhistorical" Western civilization. To these historical and cultural peculiarities, one should also add a more recent "accident of course" which has sealed the destiny of the country since the middle of the last century: indeed, from the end of the civil war of 1946-1949, Greece was the only non-communist country in southeastern Europe.

Installed now in the "Western" liberal capitalist system, Greece will evolve in a direction imposed not so much by its internal social and cultural dynamics but rather by its particular geostrategic role. This fact only contributed to the exacerbation of the internalisation of Greek "exceptionalism". Thus, from now on, to the traditional cultural incompatibility which juxtaposed the country to all its immediate Balkan neighbors, was added an unconditional political and ideological opposition. Certainly, after the fall of the Berlin Wall, the Balkan space has been reconstituted within the general framework of the liberal globalized capitalist system. But this did not contribute to closing the huge social and economic gap that separated a "developed" and "westernized" "Greece" from those formations that are still in their "transition state" painfully uncertain. It is therefore not a coincidence that the Greeks still think of themselves in terms of a "nation without brothers".

In view of all this, the fact that the development of Greek society has followed the particular paths seems perfectly normal, if not inevitable. In this respect, therefore, I will concentrate mainly on the evolution of the social division of labor, by isolating some salient features which seem to me particularly exemplary. I think that this choice is entirely legitimate: even if the division of labor in any society answers a whole series of causes and determinations that are necessarily deeper, it can nevertheless reveal, if only in an indicative way, the particular features of a social ensemble as regards the modes of reproduction of its daily material life, indicating in passing certain aspects of its class structure. This is the reason why, at least in modern societies, the taxonomies of forms of social work acquire a fundamental importance. From this perspective, which is therefore necessarily limited, I will focus on three main aspects:

Despite its profound transformations over the last half-century, Greece continues to be a largely agricultural country. It is true that the proportion of farmers in the entire working population, still in the majority until the 1950s, reached 40% in 1970, and is now reduced to less than 20%. Thus, just as it was the case in most of the previously agricultural countries in Europe, mass rural exodus was the most important structural social mobility movement in Greece in the second half of the twentieth century. Indeed, by leaving rural areas in large numbers, it was the rural people who were at the base of the

rapid growth of the urban population, and especially of the Athenian agglomeration (Burgel, 1974), which has quadrupled its inhabitants since 1950, today grouping more than 40% of the entire population of the country. It is also they who provided the bulk of the enormous wave of emigration abroad, and especially to the Federal Germany of the *Wirtschaftswunder* – a wave that in the space of twenty years has affected almost 40% of young farmers.

However, that does not prevent that, compared to all the other countries of the Europe of 15, the Greek peasantry remains by far the most numerous in relative terms. The notion of "end of the peasants" announced by Henri Mendras (1984 [1967]) about France, but also more and more relevant as regards Italy, Spain and Portugal, does not seem to be able to apply in Greece, at least for the moment. So, in spite of the continuing rural exodus and the spectacular growth of agricultural productivity, traditional family structures are still omnipresent in a campaign that could still be considered as "overpopulated" and "traditional". Thus, and apart from the multiple and complex reasons which explain its still visible "resistance", Greek family farming is still dominated, as it has been for a long time, by small parcel properties dispersed in space. Despite its rapid mechanization, and in sharp contrast with most other European countries, agricultural production in Greece has not advanced in the path of concentration and capitalization. At least with regard to the dominant structure of export units, the system seems to have reproduced itself on the basis of its traditional features.

The recent evolution of the non-agricultural labor force presents even more striking peculiarities. On this level too, I will first of all stress a very exceptional structural feature. Indeed, more than any other European country, Greece seems to distinguish itself by a general "resistance" to all forms of wage-earning. Despite demographic trends similar to those prevailing in Western Europe, despite the rapid growth of the urban population and irrespective of rapid and sustained economic development, the proportion of wage earners in the total population. Currently, the percentage of employees seems to be "stabilized" at a very low level (Burtless, 2002, pp. 478-479). By way of comparison, it should be noted that even a quarter of a century ago, there was not a single European country in which the non-agricultural payroll rate did not exceed 75% of the labor force, the average being between 88 and 92% (OECD, Historical Statistics). Henceforth, a conclusion is necessary: to the extent that it accepts that the dominant model of the highly "developed" developed countries constitutes a general characteristic of the process of "modernization" and "rationalization" of production, the employment structures in Greece are still insufficiently "developed".

In addition, it should be noted that these trends "generally resistant" to salaried employment seem to be found in all branches of activity, without exception. Indeed, while it is completely normal for self-employment, including caregivers, to represent almost all (in this case more than 97%) of those employed in fragmented farming still organized on traditional bases, On the contrary, it is quite remarkable to note that self-employed self-employed persons continue today to represent 30% of assets in manufacture, 36% in construction, 56% in commerce and 54% in the hotel industry (Eurostat, on the database provided for the years 1999 and 2000 by the Greek Statistical Office). Everywhere, therefore, in industry as well as in services of all kinds, the share of small individual and family enterprises is still particularly high. It is even likely that, in reality, the "self-employed" are even more numerous: in fact, given the prevalence of undeclared and underground economic activities, estimated in the 1980s to produce one-third or so of gross national income. And also taking into account the fact that the official rates of reported male activity appear to be very low, it may be thought that a significant fraction of the undeclared working population organizes its survival activities. in the context of "quasi-family" underground enterprises in which the available labor force is thus incomplete. Not having led to a significant reduction in the absolute number of family businesses (Damianakos, 1999: 78), the rural exodus, although massive, did not result in a definitive break in the links of the former

peasants. agricultural production. Thus, in a sense, the process of urbanization appears in some respects to be incomplete and even reversible in the short term, at least in terms of the individual microstrategies of the self-employed. This testifies to the persistence of an "agro-urban continuum", organized and reproduced around the family apparatuses which, as we shall see later, continue to play a fundamental social role in the dominant strategies of the self-employed.

Finally, a third unusual feature of the Greek employment structure is the central importance of public employment. On this point also, the origins of the phenomenon are old. Throughout the nineteenth and early decades of the twentieth century, Greece saw its structures develop around a vast state apparatus which, given its limited resources, seemed utterly disproportionate in comparison with other European countries. This trend was even reinforced after the First World War, the public employment offer having served to stabilize a population threatened by the massive nature of an economic and social crisis exacerbated by the sudden influx of one million and a half of refugees from Asia Minor after the Greek-Turkish war of 1922. A generation later, during and just after the civil war, the social role of state employment was accentuated even more: it was quite normal that in the face of total political and social insecurity, the authoritarian nationalist state use excessive devices under his immediate control in order to consolidate his direct political domination over the employees who depended on them for their survival. In fact, it was precisely during this period that a significant part of the wealthy strata destroyed by the war could have stabilized and even strengthened its social position through the privileged occupation of the new positions opened in an administration already characterized by the swelling of these higher echelons (Langrod, 1965). From then on, it would seem that the subsequent evolution was traced in advance: after 1950, one after the other, successive governments, including the military junta, knew how to use the weapon of mass public hiring to extend or consolidate their political and electoral influence. Inevitably, despite the dramatic transformation of the country, political dependencies were quickly reconstituted and even strengthened, thus sealing the particular type of "political culture" that will be the subject of countless studies on the phenomenon "clientelist"). This does not prevent that, under the given conditions, the structures of power have acted in all logic. By keeping under their direct control not only the administration, but also the educational apparatus, hospitals, health services, energy, transport, communications and a large part of the banking system, the summits of the Authoritarian state have transformed public-owned apparatus into vast political mechanisms of hired massive u. In fact, the direct control of a large part of the economic surplus offered the political authorities enormous power to control the populations. As a result, at least in the cities, and even more so in Athens, the preponderance of public employment has become almost total.

It was exactly in this context that the "statolatry" characteristic of contemporary Greek society was consolidated. The dependence of a significant part of the population, and especially its most educated fraction, on state favors seems to be a "structural constant" of the post-war social evolution. For a long time, only the state seemed to be able to guarantee the beneficiaries of its selective "benevolence" long-term security, favorable working conditions, almost certain advancement, and even a modest, secure old-age pension. In the long run, however, the most significant effect of quantitative swelling continues state employment is that the "public labor market" now imposes its imaginary terms on the entire labor market. Even though, in a first phase, it was developed in the face of persistent stagnation of the private sector, state employment has had long-term effects on all employment structures.

Indeed, it was in the face of this massive employer state that the generalized fantasies of possible access to stable and protected jobs against and against any social and economic situation were crystallized. The public labor market thus tended to juxtapose itself radically with the norms typical of a private capitalist market. Instead of functioning as a mere component among others in the depersonalized process that determines the general meeting of demand with the supply of the labor force, the "public labor market"

has been completely empowered in this way which concerns not only the imposed forms of "work ethic" but also individual strategies.

Therefore, it is normal for the standards of behavior and the values of the "privileged" public employees to be formed in a context that results from the representation of this job as a personalized "situation" pension to which one could legitimately aspire while patiently playing the game of political clientele. On the level of the collective imagination, and with the obvious exception of the nationals of the ruling class, the attraction exercised by a "clientelist" employer-state, which seemed largely indifferent to the productivity of its employees, was therefore almost universal.

I summarize: the most distinctive features of the evolution of the working structures of Greek society are the preservation of a still large fraction of the traditional small peasantry, the spectacular "resistance" of so-called "independent" urban the numeric, but above all the ideological and cultural importance of public employment in the broad sense of the term.

If only in a negative way, one conclusion is necessary: the productive wage-earners of the private sector, that is to say of the category which is supposed to offer capitalist societies their inimitable dynamism, remain relatively underdeveloped. The recent history of Greece is therefore marked by a largely atypical employment structure. The following table summarizes the trends just mentioned. On the basis of the foregoing, the dynamics of the social structure seem to be trapped in patterns that are literally counter to the evolutions that have taken place in most capitalist countries developed for at least fifty years. But that's not all. In "horizontal" social divisions, one should add a "vertical" aspect which seems to have played a fundamental role in this dynamic. These include the school system, and the general function of education, which in Greece also has quite unique aspects. Indeed, at least in some respects, even more than the general division of social work, it is the modes of constitution of the ruling classes which are at the base of collective representations. Thus, it is important to note that while the relative share of public employment in relation to the general labor market is already significant, its dominance becomes truly enormous within the particular market of candidates with study qualifications. In the 1980s, the state in the broad sense employed between 70% and 90% of tertiary graduates, depending on the branch which, moreover, explains the already mentioned fact of a hypertrophied administration, especially at its higher echelons. If we take into account the fact that, during the post-war period, the student population has skyrocketed, reaching, in the 1980s, rates similar to those of the major European countries, this attractiveness of the public service was total.

However, if, as we have seen, the statist destination of the general flow of intergenerational mobility is at the base of the statolatric characteristic of the country, its specific provenance testifies to the penetration of the fetishization of public employment in the country. a population still predominantly peasant. In these conditions, it is normal that the real, but above all imaginary, access to higher education has been of a very extraordinary symbolic importance. In this respect, the developments in Greece are atypical compared to other advanced capitalist countries: at the end of the 1980s, the category of higher education graduates includes, in astonishing proportions, nationals of the "lower" social categories, and more particularly the fragmentary peasantry. It is therefore clear that the phantasy of access to secure public employment does not concentrate, as in other countries, among the nationals of a petty bourgeoisie threatened with extinction. On the contrary, the general cult of education seems to be accentuating in the social strata which are most pushed towards mobility at any price. It is therefore certainly not a coincidence that the difference between the various social categories as regards their chances of having access to higher education seems to be, in Greece, much less pronounced than elsewhere. If the distant origins of Greek "ideological egalitarianism" are perhaps to be found in the lack of a feudal past, this phenomenon has only been repeated and reinforced through



the particular social role of an education, which opened to the lower classes vast prospects of vertical mobility.

Admittedly, the phenomenon is not new: from the nineteenth century, the opening of innumerable positions in the Mediterranean periphery dominated by the Greek petty bourgeoisie had contributed to the fact that higher education is distinguished by particularly "democratic" modes of recruitment. 19, at a time when, in general, the role of direct reproduction of class relations by school apparatus was rarely questioned.

In this sense, the generally "open" dynamics of the Greek social structure seem to be at the root of a whole series of collective behaviors manifested by the limited incidence of the typical forms of "class fatalism" that are often found in more crystallized class societies. It is certain that the structures of the imaginary are never formed arbitrarily. In the final analysis, family planning for intergenerational mobility could only be based on realistic aspirations.

But there is more: aspirations for public employment explain the special structure of educational and professional specializations. Until very recently, the Greek university continued to be dominated by law and humanities studies, which corresponded to the qualifications generally required for open positions in public administrations of all kinds. The dominance of public employment thus seems to have been responsible for the generally "unproductive" orientation of the majority of candidates. It is therefore not a coincidence that this "statist" orientation marks especially the students who come from the less privileged layers. It is quite normal that prevalent forms of social mobility determine educational options on a massive scale especially among those for whom public employment was an end in itself.

In this sense, the fundamental role of family planning in intergenerational mobility seems to have had contradictory effects. On the one hand, the real or imaginary debouches open to the lower classes and especially the small peasantry led to a real fetishization of a formal education which seemed to open the way to the quasi-ensured social promotion. This is why private investment in education has reached almost unheard-of proportions in Greece (Lambiri-Dimakil, 1974).

In all social classes, M families seemed, and seem always ready to sacrifice everything to finance the education of their children, if any abroad. On the other hand, this same process has led to a significant "distortion" of much of the "human capital" that might otherwise have functioned as a lever for "normal" capitalist development. The combination of the importance of self-employment and generally unproductive public employment has therefore led to a relative scarcity both for the "production lieutenants" needed to set up large productive units and highly skilled technicians in modern science and technology. Although the situation seems to have changed in recent years, it is a fundamental social problem that still needs a solution.

On the basis of what has been said, Greece appears to have been endowed with employment structures quite resistant to the current forms of capitalist development. This makes it all the more surprising its nominal "economic and social" performances, which, at least until the mid-eighties, seemed to be truly miraculous. Indeed, there is no doubt that, barely a quarter of a century after the end of the civil war, the image of the country has been completely transformed, at least as far as the ostensible level of everyday life is concerned. From the outside, therefore, Greece seemed to have escaped the misery of underdevelopment in the immediate aftermath of the war. In this respect, some figures are really impressive: between 1961 and 1977, the cumulative growth in private consumption per capita was of the order of 142%, by far the highest among the European countries. The process was also

uninterrupted: while the military junta had led to the brutal end of democratic political life, economic and social development remained spectacular.

Especially since the leap forward in daily life as it appears from the official data could fish on the side of underestimation. Taking into account the income generated in the underground economy, estimated, as we have seen, at 30 or 35% of the national product, it is easy to explain why the consumption capacities of a significant fraction of households skyrocketed (Karapostolis, 1975).

We cannot dwell on the factors, obviously too complex, that underlie these spectacular first-sight performances. Let us once again mention the importance of the social safety valve represented by the massive emigration flow of the 1960s. Let us also note the fundamental role of tourism receipts, remittances from emigrants and merchant marine revenues that have one part allowed to redress a balance of payments balance still in deficit, on the other hand to substantially increase private liquidity of external origin which in turn led to the reinforcement of a host of dependent or independent microactivities. Finally, let us remember the fact that, in this exceptional context, the social repercussions of economic evolution still seemed controllable if not globally positive: despite the exacerbation of income inequalities (Karayiorgas, Pakos, 1986: 273), in the 1960s and 70, the endemic unemployment of the immediate post-war period had almost disappeared and the traditional absolute poverty seemed reduced to controllable pockets (Germidis, Negrepointi-Delivani, 1978).

But that does not prevent that after a brief phase of industrial expansion in the 1960s, productive development seemed to reach its limits, especially after the crises of 1971, and even more so in 1973. From then on, the overall dynamic Greek social formation seemed to be running out of steam, so much so that one could speak of "growth without development". It was becoming increasingly clear that the country needed profound structural changes. It was precisely in this ambivalent context that the social protection measures that followed the takeover of power by the PASOK of Andreas Papandreou intervened. As early as 1981, the new socialist government enacted a series of measures aimed at the more egalitarian redistribution of income and the gradual establishment of a welfare state.

In a climate of general optimism, Greece's social development seemed finally to be able to adjust to the visible state of its economic growth. From now on, social justice, which had been totally neglected by all the right-wing governments that have been successful since the end of the civil war, was at the center of political concerns.

It was only a mirage, however. It soon became clear that under the new conditions the relative stability of the economic growth rates of the 1960s and 1970s could no longer be sustained. Once again, history has been tricky: by revealing the political conditions necessary for the creation of the social state only from the moment when economic conditions were no longer met, the dice of a history still eventful seemed immediately loaded. Especially since the effects of the unfavorable world situation were being felt at the very moment when the country was facing the most important challenge in its history: that of its integration into a European system, which seemed, too, to have to face the growth crisis. In this context, then, the painful structural adjustments seemed necessary. Greece's European perspective was to control rising inflationary pressures, stabilizing public finances as a permanent deficit and reducing a threatening public debt in many respects. Under these conditions, the unfavorable development of economic constraints operated in the same direction as the implicit and even explicit pressure of the European authorities. Redefinition of priorities in economic policy could not wait long.

Thus, the economic and fiscal austerity measures introduced in 1985 herald a change of course which was found to be a definite expression in the even more draconian policies introduced in 1995. At the same time, the growth of posts in the civil service was limited.

Thus, macroeconomic trends were quickly reversed. Indeed, in recent years, inflation has been controlled, public finances cleaned up and external debt reduced. At the same time, despite the downturn, we are witnessing a significant recovery in growth rates. At first glance, the immediate goals of the clean-up operation therefore seem largely accomplished. Even in extremis, Greece could boast of conforming to the severe economic and financial criteria adopted in Maastricht (Kirrane, 1996). Thus the country has been integrated into the monetary system of the European Union as a full member. Revived since the 1960s, the ancient dream of the Greeks to be recognized as partners in the "civilized" and developed European space has finally come true.

Nevertheless, the take-off of economic indices does not mean that Greece has become a "modern" capitalist country like the others. Indeed, if it is sometimes possible to improve the performance and the quantitative indices of development after systematic interventions in the daily operations of economic life, the "society" is always more resistant to any inclination reformist. Even though they are supported, modernizing efforts are unable to transform, at least in the short or medium term, dominant values, current behaviors and individual strategies often based on past experiences. Thus, despite the fact that the slogan of "modernization" seems to have penetrated the discourses of almost all Greek political staff, its meaning and its social implications remain less clear. Especially since the improvement of the economic performances was accompanied by a clear deterioration of a social situation which did not present until then insurmountable contradictions.

Whether or not it was "necessary", the modernizing austerity policy has had predictable overall effects. It is no coincidence that for the first time in 40 years, the unemployment rate now seems to be stabilizing between 10% and 12%<sup>24</sup>. It is also normal that, at least for the last ten years, a large part of wages in both the public service and the private sector have stagnated and even declined in real terms, as the remuneration of labor has not generally been able to productivity gains. Nor is it surprising that the recent government project on the general reform of the social insurance system and on the change of the old-age pension system has led to an unparalleled popular mobilization for at least twenty years. In short, income inequality, which had declined slightly in the 1980s, appears to be worsening to the point where it has reached unprecedented levels. Finally, one should consider the ideologically destructive effects of the sudden onset of almost one million "economic immigrants" from decaying neighboring countries. It is not surprising that despite appearances, the majority of Greeks seem to be less and less assured of its future.

Thus, to summarize, current social developments seem at first sight contradictory, paradoxical and in some respects opposite to the preceding period. Not long ago, there was still talk of the viability of almost miraculous growth without development, which was largely due to the economic opportunities offered to a still anachronistic society with regard to its employment structures his work practices. In this exceptional context, the phantasy of the cultural "synthesis" between the West and the East seemed to be able to materialize on the social level by a no less fantastical compatibility of a social structure directly derived from the exceptional situation of the immediate afterlife. -war with the new, ruthless constraints of a globalized capitalism of liberal obedience.

In sharp contrast, in the current situation, it would seem that employment structures, dominant forms of social mobility, internalized behaviors and individual and family strategies still operate against the constraints of external objective constraints. By "taking revenge", so to speak, of an economic system

that has been able to reproduce for a long time without visible harmful effects, society seems to be in permanent imbalance: a considerable fraction of the peasantry, the self-employed and the job-holders. The public does not seem to have survival solutions other than those of clinging to their former situation.

Especially since the type of development currently prevailing focuses on productivity growth rather than an increase in the number of employees. It is thus unlikely that a considerable expansion of private enterprises could lead, in predictable terms, to the spectacular increase in demand for labor, which, moreover, is still insufficiently qualified. A significant part of a whole generation of workers may therefore be caught in a spiral which seems to lead either to further degradation of their means of life or to even greater social and economic marginalization. And this at the same time that the youngest, even the most educated, seem to find more and more difficulties to integrate into a changing labor market.

In these circumstances, the question asked at the beginning concerning the modalities of accelerated convergence of European countries appears in a different light. Indisputably, in the long term, the social dynamics of each country will be determined by the ability of the new generations to rise to the challenge of new challenges in a world that seems, at least for the time being, to be in line with the demands of the world, a globalization based on the unbridled antagonism of all its national and regional components. This is why reform of education systems seems to be at the center of all national political concerns. From this point of view, the possible prospects for Greece could have seemed relatively favorable. Indeed, if they managed to reproduce in this entirely new context, the particular "traditions" in this field could prove of paramount importance. A country which, as we have seen, has for a long time invested everything in social promotion through access to training devices could well continue along the same path. Nevertheless, nothing is less certain. It is normal that the current restriction of career prospects has a direct impact on aspirations. Indeed, a whole series of partial indices suggests that we are witnessing a profound transformation of collective representations with regard to both individual and family strategies. The fact that the imaginary outlets are either abroad or in the public services are compromised cannot fail to have serious repercussions on the development of strategies and mentalities. All indications are that Greece is in a deep crisis of "adaptation" not only to its "economy" but also to society as a whole.

Thus, in the short and medium term at least, the augurs do not seem favorable. Greece is currently in a pivotal situation, which can be summed up in the increasingly acute contradiction between the urgent external constraints imposed by the process of European integration and the effects of its own on the one hand social and ideological immobilisms. It therefore seems obvious that even if the Greek political authorities have no other option than to increase their systematic interventions in the social sphere, these interventions may come up against growing resistance. Of course, the necessary reforms would have been easier if they were accompanied by new job opportunities. It is precisely this preoccupation which underlies a whole series of measures which concern both the forms of organization of employment and the modes of regulation of work. However, the necessarily short deadlines imposed by the European calendars pose problems that seem difficult to solve in the immediate future.

Thus, the political dilemmas seem unavoidable: if we want to avoid the real threat of uncontrollable explosions, the implementation of radical reforms should be accompanied by measures that take into account the complexity of a conjuncture that presents itself largely like a flight to the unknown. But this question is not only about Greece. Indeed, it is precisely in this context that the political and social options of Europe as a whole should eventually be subject to a more general revision. In so far as the long-term social and symbolic integration of the European area seems to be the necessary condition for the success of the current historical experience, it is necessary to take into account the destructuring

and sometimes perverse effects of a policy which imposes brutal interventions in social tissues. We can therefore think that, in the long run at least, the dream of a social Europe, which could provide a new example to a world that is increasingly torn apart, can only be achieved by redefining centralized community operations in favor of less burdensome, less bureaucratized and more open to the social reality of member countries.

Otherwise, it is likely that relentless resistance to traditional social fabric with modernizing constraints will be reproduced on larger and larger scales. If it is therefore generally accepted that, at least symbolically, Europe cannot be built otherwise than by respecting the inimitable "cultural" particularities of its members, it should also be understood that, if it aspires to be alive, "culture" can never be established as an independent parameter: in fact, the national cultural traditions, which one would like to safeguard at any price, are, at least in part, only the mediated reflection of the historical particularities and social that we would like to make disappear under the acronym of "convergence". This is not the least of the contradictions of the evolution of a European integration that does not seem to know yet on which foot to dance.

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