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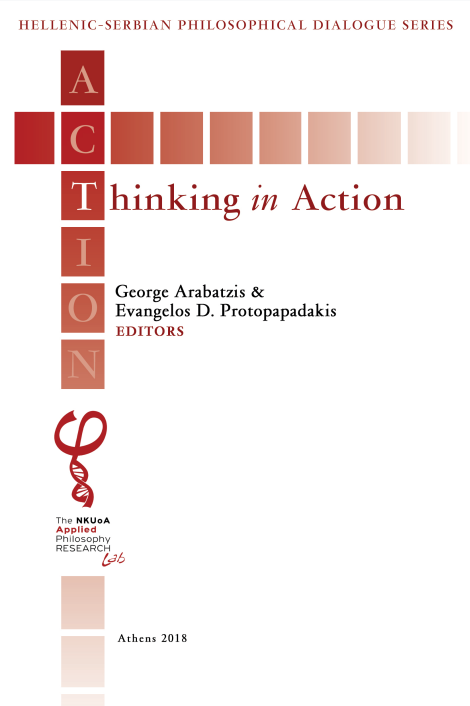


**Chapter**

# Religion, identity, citizenship: The case of modern Greek culture and the European Identity

*Kostas Theologou*

**Thinking in Action**

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# RELIGION, IDENTITY, CITIZENSHIP

## Modern Greek Culture and the European Identity

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**Abstract:** *The ambitious goal of this paper is to make a foreigner to understand the rather complex relationship between the Orthodox Church, the Greek Society and the Hellenic State. It investigates the various historical and political circumstances in Greece after 1828, the official establishment of the Modern Greek-State after a national uprising against the Ottoman Empire, taking also into account the post-byzantine Ottoman occupation of the Hellenic territory (15th - 20th century). Orthodoxy either as a Church mechanism or as a profoundly rooted traditional value code is ubiquitous in Greece, infusing all aspects of public life. Greeks become nominal members of the Church within a year of their birth. Although today it's enough for the parents to fill out a form at the Registrar's Office, only few parents opt for this way. Birthdays are commonly celebrated as in other western countries, but an equally if more important time for celebration is the "name-day", the day when the Church celebrates the memory of the saint the child is named after. The identity formation of the modern Greeks is attributed to various cultural sources and their identity is deeply tradition based. The paper claims that only longstanding processes towards supranational Paradigms, such as E.U., could reform the traditional value established national identities; this can only become effective when time is ripe and only when people are eager to adopt modernity in their quasi-homogenous European environment.*

**Keywords**: *tradition, Orthodoxy, culture, identity, modernity, citizenship, European, modern-Greek, Church.*

### *Prolegomena - The argument*

This paper mainly focuses on the various historical and political circumstances in Greece after 1828, when the first London Protocol officially enacted the Independence of the Modern Greek-State from the Ottoman Empire, a process lasted until 1832. Nevertheless, it takes into account the post-byzantine Ottoman occupation of the Hellenic territory (15th - 19th century). The ambitious goal of this attempt is to make a foreigner to understand the rather complex relationship between the Orthodox Church, the Greek Society and the Hellenic State.

After the establishment of the modern-Greek state (1828-1832) there were various attempts to promote the qualities of citizenship in the Independent Greece

of the 19th and 20th century, while the territorial accomplishment of modern Greece was being expanded from 1828 till 1948, covering a period of 120 years. The long-lasting progress of this unusual phenomenon did have a multi-parameter effect on the modern-Greek i.e. national *homogenization*.

My argument attempts to put forward a cultural explanation of the controversial southern European modern-Greek peculiarity. It takes into account three fundamental premises:

• the modern-Greek identity was developed within the societal and cultural institutions of a post-byzantine era, especially the 18th and 19th century Enlightenment period of the Hellenic nation,

• it is until now continuously irrigated by value systems belonging both to East and West, or to the Oriental and the Occidental cultural spheres,

• the longstanding process of territorial integration of the Greek sovereignty (1827-1947), a period of 120 years.

### *The methodological concepts: Citizenship and Acculturation*

It was T. H. Marshall who introduced the theory of *citizenship* in his treatise *Citizenship and Social Class* (1949). Academic interpretations or even abuses of this illuminating but controversial work abound in the literature. Despite the vivid interest of the research community, it could be argued that no widely accepted theory of citizenship has prevailed in the social sciences over the last 35 years or so.

*Acculturation* is another relevant concept. It refers exactly to the process of mixing people belonging to different cultural *milieux*, who demonstrate behaviours dictated by different cultural protocols.[1] In the world, there is no specific mode of being citizen of a specific country. According to Berry et al. (2002)[2], we' re all human beings, and we express this common humanity in culturally different ways, both around the world and within our contemporary nation states. Thus, not only is immigration a normal process, but so is the resulting cultural diversity within the different countries. These two processes provide novelty and vitality to individuals and communities.[3] One formulation has been widely quoted[4]: "Acculturation comprehends those phenomena which result when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact, with subsequent changes in the original culture patterns of either or both groups…under this

[1] See the lecture by John W. Berry, titled *Acculturation and Adaptation among Immigrants: Learning to Live in Another Culture*, given to the Alumni Association of the Onassis Foundation in 2006 (under publication in Greek in my own translation).

[2] John W. Berry, Y. H. Poortinga, M. H. Segall, and P.R. Dasen, *Cross-Cultural Psychology: Research and Applications* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

[3] John B. Berry, "Acculturation and Adaptation in a New Society", *International Migration* 30, no. 1 (1992): 69-85.

[4] The initial interest in acculturation grew out of a concern for the effects of European domination; see Richard Thurnwald, *Die eingeborenen Australiens und der Sudseeinseln* (Tubingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1927).

definition, acculturation is to be distinguished from culture change, of which it is but one aspect, and assimilation, which is at times a phase of acculturation".[5]

## *The historical background*

### *The post-byzantine period (15th - 20th centuries)*

The Ottoman occupation and rule saw the demise of the byzantine era, but the Orthodox Church was left untouched, preserving its privileges; eventually the power of the Church increased under the ruling system employed by the Ottomans, the *millet system*. People were bound to their millets by their religious affiliations or their confessional communities, rather than their *ethnic origins*, according to the *millet* concept.[6] This system divided the subjugated peoples of the Ottoman Empire according to their religion and the peoples were administered by their Clergy leaders, their religious heads.[7]

Gradually, if not soon enough, the Christian Orthodox Greeks ended up being directly under the ecclesiastical and political authority of the Patriarch, ruling them somehow instead of the Sultan, regardless of specific ethnicity. This held true for other religions like Jews, Christians of other dogmas, etc. Privileges and obligations were connected to religious affiliation. This system enhanced the emergence of *a new élite in Constantinople*, the *Phanariotes*. The *Phanariotes* were Greeks living in the *Fanari* (now *Fener*, means *lantern* in Greek) region of the city who somehow rose in key-roles (which means *in power*) as merchants, clergy leaders, diplomats and dragomans.[8] This meant wealth, education and exposure to western culture and ideas during the critical period of the Renaissance and the Age of Enlightenment.

The *millet* system may appropriately stand as one of the reasons for the establishment of a profound liaison between ethnicity and religion, since the Ottoman Empire did not make the national difference between Greeks, Serbs, Albanians etc. and only saw religion and a specific communitarian structure of the tax-payers of their multi-cultural (multi-national, multi-lingual and multi-doctrinal) Empire; this communitarian spirit merging religious doctrine and political administration survived in a concrete way from the very origins of the fledgling Hellenic State in the first decades beginnings of the 19th century.

The particular formation of the modern-Greek people comprises equally religious and quasi-political features; the "mosaic" produced is rather an one of

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[5] Robert Redfield, Ralph Linton, and Melville J. Herskovitz, "Memorandum for the study of acculturation", *American Anthropologist* 38 (1936): 149-152.

[6] For more on this: Stanford J. Shaw, "Dynamics of Ottoman Society and administration", in *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey*. Vol. 1, 112-165 (Cambridge: CUP, 1997).

[7] Carol G. Thomas in the 8th chapter of her book *Greece* titled "Ottoman Greece: 1453-1821" exposes a concise history of that era. For the era after 1821 see John S. Koliopoulos and Thanos M. Veremis, *Modern Greece* (Chichester: Wiley, 2014).

[8] A dragoman was an interpreter, translator, and official guide between Turkish, Arabic, and Persian-speaking countries and polities of the Middle East and European embassies, consulates, vice-consulates and trading posts. A dragoman ought to have knowledge of Arabic, Persian, Turkish, and European languages.

*believer* than of a *citizen*, and thus this dual nature of the Greeks needs time to adjust to Western structures and traditions, mainly politically or institutionally. The East cultural tradition of Greece refers to its religious cultural origin, which is the Christian Orthodox doctrine, and the West ideological tradition which is interwoven with the Western European thought of the Enlightenment, which particularly indicates an energetic group of French and Scottish thinkers who thrived in the mid-eighteenth century: the *philosophes*.[9]

*The Greek Enlightenment and Orthodox Clergy*

The Age of Enlightenment influenced only partially Greece while the Greeks were still under the Ottomans. With many of the influential Greeks in the Ottoman bureaucracy (mentioned above as the *Phanariotes*) being members of the clergy, the Enlightenment *value of Liberty* was readily absorbed, but its anti-clericalist sentiment was effectively silenced or mentioned in a palatable way. It is indicative to say that the intensely anti-religious and secular works of Thomas Paine or Voltaire are rather missing from the Greek Enlightenment published thought.

*Some notable Greek Enlightenment figures:*

*Methodios Anthrakitis* (1660-1736). He was schooled in Venice (natural sciences) and when returning in Greece he became director of the ecclesiastical school of Kastoria. He wrote on philosophy, ethics and science, and although he did not advocate for the Copernic system, he taught it, while criticizing the higher clergy officers for their behavior; he was also one of the first advocates for the use of the demotic Greek language instead of the archaic one.

*Iosipos Moisiodax* (1725-1800). A monk who became director of the Princely Academy of Iaşi (Romania) and professor of philosophy. He was influenced by John Locke and was an advocate of the western philosophical tradition instead of the Neo-Aristotelian tradition of *Theophilos Korydalleus* (1563-1646) that was widely spread in Greece at the time.[10]

*Anthimos Gazis* (1758-1828). A priest from Vienna who circulated the first Greek periodical "Hermes o Logios" (see his portrait below)[11] and was a central figure in the failed insurrection of Thessaly in 1821.

*Athanasios Psalidas* (1767-1829), was a philosopher, translator and novelist, known for being engaged into issues like the existence of God, immortality and

[9] See http://richard-hooker.com/sites/worldcultures/ENLIGHT/PHIL.HTM.
[10] Theophilos Korydalleus or Skordalos was a severe critic of medieval scholasticism and the religious matters; he was a free spirit thinker, an advocate for rationalism and thus characterized as the first revolutionary thinker in Greek East and as the proponent of free thinking in Southeastern Europe.
[11] For more on Hermes o Logios see Marjolijne Janssen, "The Greek pre-revolutionary discourse as reflected in the review *Hermes o Logios* (1811-1821)", http://cf.hum.uva.nl/natlearn/balkan/athens_janssen.pdf.

ethics.

*Theophilos Kairis* (1784-1853). A controversial figure of the Enlightenment, a priest who taught philosophy and natural sciences and advocated a variety of Deism called *Theosophy*.

*Theoklitos Farmakidis* (1784-1860) Also a clergyman, he continued Gazis' publication of "Hermes o Logios" and was politically active in Hellenic State.

*Rigas Feraios-Velestinlis* (1757-1798). One of the most celebrated figures of the Greek Revolution, he was one of the most vocal supporters of a pan-Balkan revolt against the Ottoman Empire and of cooperation and fraternity between the Balkan national groups. He was arrested by the Austrians while attempting to meet with Napoleon and executed.

*Adamantios Korais* (1748-1833). Korais was a moderate visionary of the national Renaissance, associated with the French Ideologues and an adherent of their analytical theory.[12] Studied medicine in Montpellier, France, and notably worked a philologist and theologian in Paris. He was also a supporter of the use of the *katharevousa* version of - mostly scholar - Greek language, in-between archaic and demotic Greek. From the Greek- Enlightenment figures Korais was mostly significant since he early underlined the priority of distinguishing Church and Polity in the fledging modern-Greek state.[13] He unsuccessfully suggested the immediate independence of the local Orthodox Church in Greece from the Oecumenic Patriarchate and the simultaneous fall of the entire Clergy under the supervision and control of the Greek State.

From the data cited above it is clear that the Church was intensely involved in the pre-revolutionary preparations, including the very ideological fermentation of the national independence idea. During the pre-revolt period apart from several minor revolts the Orloff Revolt 1768-1774 took place in the Balkans; it was a significant attempt just before the main 1821 Greek uprising.[14] Apart from military subdual, the Turks responded with various attempts of wide *islamization* of the Christians, so many people, clergy and laity alike, were being executed for refusing conversion. The quasi-massive martyrdom crystallized the confidence that the Orthodox faith was worth dying for and this belief prevailed in the national uprising narrative. By now it should be rather clear that *unlike the American or the French Revolution*, the Clergy spearheaded the Greek uprising for independence; the

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[12] Anna Tabaki, "Neo-Hellenic Enlightenment, An Introduction", in *The Enlightenment in Europe: Unity and Diversity*, ed. Werner von Schneiders, (Berlin: Berliner Wissenschafts-Verlag, 2003), 45-56.

[13] Anna Tabaki, "Greece", in *Encyclopedia of the Enlightenment*, ed. Alan-Charles Kors, vol. 2 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 157–160. For a detailed account on the relations between Orthodox and Roman-Catholics in the Hellenic territory during the first years of the Revolt, see Konstantinos Manikas, *Orthodoxy and Roman-Catholocism in Greece during the Revolution (1821–1827)* (Athens: Stamouli, 2002). About Korais and the Greek struggle for independence, see: Apostolos Daskalakis, *Admantios Korais and the freedom of Greeks* (Athens, 1965).

[14] For a rather detailed account of the circumstances at the time, see Wladimir Brunet de Presle, *Grèce: depuis la conquête romaine jusqu' à nos jours* (Paris: F. Didot frères, 1860), 393-558.

Orthodox Church accompanied the secular forces and thus enriched the political reasons of the Revolt with religious and cultural dimensions. This resulted to a quest for not merely a national, but also religious liberty and identity and it also gave room for spreading the belief that the Orthodox Church preserved the Greek national identity unspoiled and imperishable.

Up to this point the Church was continuing to accumulate wealth both in gold and in real estate. Money was collected through tax collecting and pilgrimages. The real estate property was achieved mainly through inheritance, especially from those without heirs, who preferred to pass their assets to the Church preventing thus an eventual Turkish ownership.

*The tumultuous 20th century: Middle-war and WWII*

During the first decades of the 20th century, Greece experienced two Balkan Wars (1912-1913), the Great War or First World War (1914-1919) and the disastrous Asia Minor Campaign (1919-1922). The engagement into the wars left Greece with almost twice the territory, but also a huge influx of approx. 1,5 million refugees expelled from Smyrna, the Ionian coast, Constantinople and the Black Sea; there was a coordinated extermination of the majority of the Greek population remaining in the Ottoman Empire region while it was gradually turning into a nation-state, Turkey.

After the Old Greece populations, in 1864 the Ionian Sea population was added to the terriroty of Greece. That population was never in contact with Ottoman rulers, they had European administration by Italians and British. In 1881 Thessaly, with illiterate villeins and serfs, asking for land for farming. In 1913 Macerdonia and Epirus after the Balkan wars, and Crete after a domestic revolution had been annexed to the Greek territory. In 1923 Thrace and NE Aegean islands and in 1947-8 Dodecanese from Italy, as a compensation and reparation from damages during the WWII.

The acculturation processes in all these cases were not ending and constantly demanded for new frameworks. The national identity was also questioned; old Greeks were "more Greeks" than the newcomers; still, in church they were equally fidels. Despite the fact that civilians had a varying degree of "hellenicity", being Hellenes, inside the flock of the christian church they were Orthodox Christians of the same kind.

The refugees were helpless people with no housing and cultivation leading thus the state between 1917 and 1930 to a large expropriation program targeting to the vast monastic properties (*vakıf*). Seemingly, the Church never received more than a low percentage of the amount due and this probably is one of the reasons explaining why the State pays the clergy's salaries up to this day. In 1930 another law was passed for the expropriation of more plots of land owned by monasteries. The monasteries were given in return future securities, but their value evaporated due to

WWII and the German Occupation Loans. The State also took over the salaries of the clergy for as long as the surplus from the liquidation would suffice, although it is thought that it would be forever.

The populations merged in the Greek territory were holding back the country's institutional modernization that was launched by Ioannis Kapodistrias (1776-1831) – an impeccable Governor, considered as a very significant political personality of the beginnings of 19th century, together with Klemens von Metternich (1773-1859) and Charles Maurice de Talleyrand-Périgord (1754-1838).

The rulers of Greece were foreigners and Greece was a nation-state under a monarch of another national origin; that was peculiar or similar to the Ottoman rule, when they were administrated by a political leader (the Sultan) and being congregated by the Clerical personnel, their priests. The image of Europe in the middle war period is shown below:

In August 4, 1936 the Ioannis Metaxas' dictatorship came to power. The regime was patterned after the fascist regimes in Italy and Germany, but without the imperialism and with an emphasis on religion and the restoration of the past glory of the Hellenic civilization. In 1938 the regime intervened in the election of the Archbishop of Athens, in an attempt to control the Church. The Metaxas regime was abolished when the Nazis occupied Greece in April 1941.

The Occupation, a miserable and tragic period in modern-Greek history, proved somehow beneficial for the Church's reputation among the people. Bulgaria was put by the Nazis in charge of Central and Eastern Macedonia and Thrace and the differences that ignited the Macedonian Struggle in the first place (1893-1908) re-emerged[15], as Bulgarians became more confident that they would manage to preserve their possessions after the war. This resulted in a new wave of *neo-martyrs* who did not cooperate with the occupying forces, not only in the Bulgarian zone, but also in the Nazi Holocaust project, the anti-Jewish pogrom.

*Civil War and the Aftermath*

Soon after the German Occupation ended (1944), the Civil War erupted in Greece. The belligerents were the standing Greek Army and the Democratic Army of Greece (ELAS/ DAG the Communist Party guerillas, supported by the Soviet Union). The Church was overwhelmingly in favor of the Greek Government, since the Communists were widely considered as forwarding an anti-clerical and anti-religious perspective, though the ELAS did have a few members of the clergy in its support.

April 21st 1967 marks a major *coup d'état* in modern-Greek history, sever years-long and bloodiest, with various and complicated consequences effecting even the

[15] For an account on Macedonian struggle see: Douglas Dakin, *The Greek Struggle in Macedonia 1897–1913* (Thessaloniki: Institute for Balkan Studies, 1996).

present of modern-Greece. The *Junta* was undoubtedly caused by the Truman Doctrine; the Junta's main goal was to cut off a likely "Soviet invasion" in the country's academia, press and military and its efforts were all put towards rooting out Communists, perhaps with intense fervor, turning the country into a police state.

As with the Metaxas regime, the Junta addressed to the religious public sphere, the Christian Orthodox civilians; it's motto was "Greece for Christian Greeks", while it also borrowed from Christian and pagan mythology, such as "Christ is risen, Greece is risen" and its use of a logo, depicting the phoenix rising from its ashes. The Junta would eventually collapse after the scandalous failed coup against the President and Archbishop of Cyprus, Makarios, which led to invasion of Cyprus by the Turkish army and the continuing occupation of the northern part of the island to this day. It also had the unfortunate by-product of the oppressed Leftists having to coexist with the collaborators of the Junta and those who merely stood by and watched; an issue that still scars the Hellenic society to this day.

*The Charter of the Church of Greece*

The restoration of democracy in Greece and its entry in the European Economic Community (the precursor of the EU) marked the beginning of a major fracture between the Church and the State. For the newly restored democratic government, one of the first orders of business was to settle ecclesiastical matters with a refreshed Charter of the Church of Greece, enshrined into law in 1977.

This shows clearly how entrenched is the Church in legislation and how deep is the entanglement of Church and State.

*The 3rd Hellenic Republic*

In 1981 Andreas Papandreou and the Panhellenic Socialist Movement (PASOK) rose to power, leading to sweeping reforms in family law. The most important change of all was the concept of "civil marriage" which was unknown in Greece up to that point. Papandreou was eventually unable *to completely cancel the legal validity of the religious marriage* (and keep it only as a secondary option for those who wanted it), but was able to have both types of marriage as having equal legal validity. In 1987 PASOK made the final attempt to utilize the remaining real estate in the hands of the monasteries. The "Tritsis Law"[16] - after the name of the minister who brought the law to Parliament - was violently opposed by the Church, which claimed that it's property was being illegally seized. Given its prior exchanges with

[16] YTB Footage from the demonstrations against the law in 1987 on the monastic property. Speakers (timestamps): https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=220&v=7du9OUvqZIE, Archbishop of Athens Serafeim (2'07"), Metropolitan of Florina Avgoustinos Kandiotis (3'29"), Metropolitan of Volos Christodoulos (3'45") future Archbishop of Athens.

the State, they could hardly be blamed. The Church eventually fought against the law, first with popular support (mottos of the era included "hands off the church" and "the land to the people, not the parties") and then legally; the matter was brought before the European Court of Human Rights, which ruled in its favor: the monasteries should either keep their property or be reimbursed. The Government dropped the issue and the law was left inactive.

Orthodoxy either as a Church mechanism or as a deeply rooted traditional morality is ubiquitous in Greece, infusing all aspects of public life.[17] Greeks become nominal members of the Church within a year of their birth. Infant baptisms are the norm; baptisms are public affairs that typically involve many guests and a celebratory meal afterwards. The child's godparents are doctrinally obligated to teach the child the basics of the religion, but today their obligations are limited to gifts on holidays. Up to a few years ago a baptism was the only way for a child to be assigned a name. Today it's enough for the parents to fill out a form at the Registrar's Office, but only few parents chose this way. Birthdays are commonly celebrated as in other western countries, but an equally important time for celebration is the "name-day", the day when the Church celebrates the memory of the saint the child is named after. Since the name and the day of celebration is common knowledge, this a good opportunity for socializing for people who do not know each other well.

"Marriage" in Greece means getting married in church. While the civil equivalent exists since the 80s, people mostly opt for the religious ceremony which is dressed with a large variety of local customs, though a large reception with all the acquaintances of the couple AND the couples' parents are invited. The current economic crisis has now limited the size of receptions and forced many people to get married with a civil ceremony (until they can afford a "proper" religious wedding). The Church, of course, doesn't recognize the civil wedding and considers those married that way "in prostitution" and "adultery". Extra conservative priests also consider this a sign of withdrawal from the church and may even refuse to perform a funeral for such people.

Death is also surrounded with a variety of religious ceremonies and local customs. The funeral is typically followed by at least an offering of coffee and cookies or a meal. Memorial services are then performed three, nine and forty days after the funeral, on the first year anniversary of the death and then whenever the family desires it. Extra conservative priests (apart from the previously cited example) might also refuse to perform a funeral service for a child that was not

[17] In 1992 the dissolution of Yugoslavia and the emergence of the currently named "Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia" caused a major stir in Greece and in the Greek Diaspora abroad. Spearheaded by the Church, major protest rallies were organized, including one with 1 million claimed participants in Thessaloniki. This marks the very first attempt of the Church to actively insert itself in matters of politics and foreign affairs. YTB footage https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5PsXQ_FUF_8 of protests about the name of FYROM and protests on new civilian identities June 21, 2000, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OVy3u3M6WKQ.

baptised and someone who committed suicide.

*Church and the State*

The Autocephalus Church of Greece is the main organized church in the country. Its head is the Holy Synod, which makes all the important decisions, and its chairman is the Archbishop of Athens and all of Greece. He is not the leader of the Church though, neither administratively or spiritually. The Synod makes administrative decisions for the entire country, though each Metropolitan has absolute jurisdiction in his own Metropolis. The Church's spiritual leader is the Ecumenical Patriarch, but he is nowhere near the status of the Pope, since only a Pan-Orthodox Ecumenical Synod can decide on matters of doctrine. The Patriarch is also marginally involved with the Metropoles of the areas annexed by Greece after 1912. Until the era of Archbishop Christodoulos, the church kept its own tail outside everyday politics and minded its own business and its charities. It did make sure to covertly support conservative politicians of what is quaintly referred to as "the Right of the Lord", but nowhere near the level of direct intervention that appeared in the 2000s. During that period political messages from the pulpit became commonplace and still remain today, though the attitude of the new Archbishop has toned them down. Typical examples include the Metropolitan of Thessaloniki (with an interest in the FYROM naming dispute and recently opposing the liberal Mayor and his gestures of friendship to Turks, Jews and homosexuals), the Metropolitan of Piraeus (who often comments on matters of science and atheism) and the Metropolitan of Kalavryta (extra conservative, who was fervently opposed to the current SYRIZA government and made overtures to the Golden Dawn).

It should also be stressed that the Church in general (especially the monasteries) control an impressive amount of wealth, in cash, real estate (transformed from fields to now lucrative city properties in 1952) and precious metals (mainly gold and silver). Given the tax evasion orgies that have been going on in the past few decades, it's impossible to determine what sorts of projects might have been funded by ecclesiastical entities. And while the Church operates many pointedly visible charities, it's doubtful that more than a trickle of the Church's money is actually spent to aid the poor; most of the money come from donations.

*The Greek National Identity*

Two centuries of the tight embrace of the Church and the State and the religious origins of the State of Greece have practically fused Orthodox Christianity and the Greek National Identity in a single alloy, forged in the fires of the nationalism prevalent in the Balkan Peninsula. For the average Greek it's practically impossible to tell where his Hellenic or Greek identity starts and where

his religious affiliation ends. This creates interesting juxtapositions and issues that under normal circumstances would be a major source of cognitive dissonance.

Simply speaking, someone who is Greek is inalienably both Greek and Orthodox. He is convinced he is as purely Greek as were the Byzantines and the Ancient Greeks; to doubt the spiritual, if not genetic, purity of this lineage is a grave insult and borders on the treasonous (the politics in the Balkans have made sure of this). He is also completely Orthodox, but since he gains the title by birthright and has not really earned it, he can spout any sort of gross heretical opinion and it still rings Orthodox to him (e.g. he can believe in reincarnation, doubt the veracity of Scripture and liberally hate his enemies and still feel Orthodox; this becomes even more evident in the diaspora, where churches also double as community cohesion centres). Even observing non-religious customs surrounding religious events are often considered per se religious acts.

Greeks value the Church as an institution and in the same time anticlericalism is quite common, if not fashionable, and usually expressed against the corrupted clergy.

*What to do*

Not all groups and individuals undergo acculturation in the same way; there are large variations in how people seek to engage the process. These variations have been termed as acculturation strategies. The various groups in contact (whether dominant or non-dominant) usually have some notion about what they are attempting to do (e.g. colonial policies, or motivations for migration), or what is being done to them, during the contact. However, through a *deconstructive process* of the concept of national identity of the European citizen, another equally longstanding "synthetic" procedure emerges: *the construction or formation of the supra-national identity*. The "new" citizenship merges and contains the partial fragmental nationalities, i.e. the national identities. A novel collective identity is thus formed through *common life-experience* and *interaction*, sharing myths and collective memories. This quasi-political identity could eventually function towards the integration of the fragmental nationalities and the fragmented national characteristics in a common mould of qualities for the "new" citizenship. The amalgam of identities within a specific social or geographic formation such as Europe produces a rather refined citizen, more tolerant towards "otherness". This citizen fights for social solidarity, access to knowledge, and political rights. Citizenship is probably the most essential ingredient for constructing a "confederation" within the European Union (EU).

Thus, a *unified European identity* could be shaped, based on two groups of actions.[18]

[18] Detailed presentation in Kostas Theologou, *Citizen and Society in the European Union* (Athina: Papazissi, 2005), 136-154.

The first group of actions includes:

- o The unification of the educational system as a mechanism of political socialization.
- o The institutional facilitation for obtaining property in other countries.
- o The broadening of the workers' mobility within the European Union.[19]

The second and parallel group includes innovative actions for improving access to:

- o Public debate: How could one induce a sense of constitutional awareness for the democratic rules, reflection, respect and tolerance for diversity and difference?
- o Public information: How the Internet (or other technological platforms) can be used in order to facilitate access to public information? What should the principles of openness and transparency mean in a European public sphere?[20]
- o Knowledge: How the use of the NT could foster life-long learning, since the well-educated citizen is the best foundation for a democratic society, and the basis for the Europeanization of the civic society? For instance, thanks to the Internet and to other similar tools, the inhabitants of the EU (and the whole planet) are in a position of exchanging messages regardless of distance, and other crucial characteristics.[21]

*Conclusion*

The identity formation of the modern Greeks is attributed to various cultural sources and their identity is profoundly *tradition based*. It seems that only longstanding processes aiming to supranational Paradigms could effectively reform such value established national identities, but only when time is ripe and only when people are eager to take this transition towards… the European modernity. It also seems that legislation and fast track memorandum agreements cannot produce reformations of such a kind.

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