

**Greek Democracy in Transition?
Indications of a Beginning
Functional Disentanglement of
Clientelism and Parliamentarism**

by

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Abstract

Since the mid-1990s, Greek politics have been undergoing changes which point to a significant transformation, and possibly even the beginning dissolution, of the traditional symbiosis of clientelism and parliamentarism: a crisis-prone arrangement which, in varying forms, has characterised the country's political system for the past century and a half. These developments relate most visibly to Greece's accelerated integration into both the European Union and the Balkan region within the framework of the post-1989 international order. However, they also reflect endogenic transformations in the form and functioning of Greek clientelism itself, both within the main political parties and with regard to the state.

After outlining some fundamental contributions to the study of Greek political clientelism in its historical and contemporary dimensions, the paper asks whether recent developments can be seen as indications of an immanent functional dissociation of clientelism and parliamentarism, or merely as signs of a renewed mutation of the existing systemic symbiosis. It concludes that, under present conditions, Greek democracy will no longer be able to function as it used to, and that the imperatives of Greece's European and regional integration will most likely lead to the increasing dysfunctionality of clientelism as a mode of political inclusion within the context of the parliamentary system.

Introduction

Ever since the early days of independence in the first half of the nineteenth century, Greece's political system has been characterised by a peculiar relationship between traditional clientelism and parliamentary government: an intricate and crisis-prone "symbiosis" which, in varying forms, has survived up to the present day. Though there has never been a period when observers, politicians and ordinary people alike have not bemoaned the evils brought upon the country by patronage, corruption and the all-pervading *rousfeti* (spoils) system, the clientelistic phenomenon was never studied in depth – at least not from a political science perspective – until the restoration of democracy in 1974.

Since the mid-1990s, Greek politics have been undergoing changes which point to a significant transformation – and possibly even the beginning dissolution – of the traditional symbiosis of clientelism and parliamentarism. Most visibly, these changes relate to Greece's accelerated integration into the European Union and the Balkan region within the framework of the post-1989 international system. However, they also reflect important endogenic mutations in the form and functioning of Greek clientelism itself. This paper will investigate these various developments and ask whether they are indications of an immanent functional disentanglement of clientelism and parliamentarism, or merely signs of a new mutation of this very old phenomenon. In particular, it will attempt to identify and evaluate those factors which might tend to liberate Greek parliamentarism from its dependence on clientelist structures and practices.

We shall begin our study by highlighting some of the main post-1974 contributions to the analysis of Greek clientelism in its historical and contemporary dimensions. Through this recourse to the literature, it will be possible to identify the clientelistic phenomenon both

analytically and with regard to its transformation over time before turning to a discussion of the present situation.

The genesis, evolution and conceptualisation of political clientelism in Greece: an overview of relevant analyses

In the quarter-century since the fall of the colonels' dictatorship, much attention has been devoted to the apparent "malfunctioning" of Greek democracy: a condition which is generally perceived as resulting from ideosyncracies inherent to the political system itself. One of the first and most influential of such studies was Tsoucalas' (1978a, 1978b) analysis of the origins of Greek political clientelism.¹ Tsoucalas rejects both the functionalist conception of clientelism and the eurocentric bias with which the political deficiencies of the clientage system have often been evaluated. Instead, he concentrates his attention on the specific historical development of the Greek polity during the course of the nineteenth century. His basic argument is that political clientelism established itself as the predominant mode of interest intermediation because of the lack of co-incidence between (a) the country's low level of socio-economic development (i.e. a pre-capitalist economy without an established indigenous ruling class), and (b) the sophistication of its official, post-1864 political institutions (which, though formally a constitutional monarchy, were largely fashioned after models derived from the French Revolution).

Following the deposition of King Otho and his authoritarian "Bavarian" regime (1833-1862), Greece adopted a constitution which provided for a centralised parliamentary system based on universal male suffrage. The liberal "bourgeois" character of these institutions contrasted sharply, though, with the underdeveloped nature of the country's economy. For reasons particular to the situation in Greece following the War of Independence, there emerged neither a landowning aristocracy nor a genuine entrepreneurial class with established mechanisms for appropriating surplus production – that is, a "lawful order" to be guaranteed

¹ Tsoucalas was not the very first to investigate Greek clientelism from a political science or sociological perspective in the 1970s. One earlier study worth mentioning is a Diamandouros' (1973) paper on nineteenth century clientelism, in which he describes the emergence of "a hybrid political system in which indigenous clientelist structures and foreign political institutions attained an uneasy symbiotic existence characterised by periods of alternating ascendancy and frequent breakdowns." In contrast to many later studies, Diamandouros emphasises the pre-independence roots of Greek clientage relations, affirming that extensive clientelistic networks had already begun to proliferate during the eighteenth century as a reaction to Western commercial penetration and Ottoman social/political decay. His analysis of the War of Independence and the independent Greek state focuses on the antagonisms between the pro-Western modernisers (who favoured the construction of a strong centralised state) and the local notables and chieftains (who were anxious to defend the traditional decentralisation of power on which their political influence rested). In the course of this confrontation, the clientelistic parties dominated by the local elites succeeded in "gain[ing] the upper hand by slowly transforming the new institutions to their needs and usages, rather than allowing the opposite to occur." Diamandouros also points to the role of the European powers as the supreme patrons of Greece's clientelistic networks and parties during the formative pre-1854 period – a fact often ignored by later analyses when treating the penetration of Greek politics by the foreign powers and Greece's growing dependence on Western commercial capitalism. He concludes that one may "speak ... of the evolution and consolidation throughout the 19th century of a clientelist polity in which the indigenous clientelist institutions, and the exogenous political institutions attained a fragile and strained symbiosis that could be upset with relative ease in the event of a major crisis of confidence in the system or by the rise of a new political force that did not see itself as fitting easily within the established political system." (Diamandouros 1973:6, 52, 68.)

Diamandouros' analysis is admittedly tentative due to the lack of in-depth research on Greek political clientelism available at the time. His treatment of the clientelistic phenomenon thus remains largely empirical and exploratory, and does not elaborate the notion of symbiosis as an analytical concept.

by the new state. Rather, the post-1830 ruling class, though predominantly rural in origin, founded its social dominance almost exclusively on urban economic pursuits of a non-productive nature and, in particular, on the running of the state apparatus. The specific nature of Greece's pre-capitalist economy and, above all, the lack of a well-articulated civil society made the state not only an instrument of political power, but also – through the imposition of a high level of monetary taxation² – the main social mechanism for collecting and redistributing the country's agricultural surplus. What is more, the state became a sphere of privileged employment in its own right: “an area for the promotion of the highest social strata, for the stabilization of the middle social categories, and for the absorption of armies of semi-literate men” (Tsoucalas 1978b:7). As a result, it soon attained grossly over-inflated proportions. Under these conditions, the new ruling elite swiftly assumed the function of a “state bourgeoisie” which was able to instrumentalise the centralised state apparatus in order to appropriate the country's economic surplus and distribute parts of it to its political clientele on the local level (cf. Tsoucalas 1978a:11-13).³

Though Tsoucalas does not explicitly use the term “symbiosis” to characterise the relationship between political clientelism and parliamentary democracy, he does stress that “the clientage system in Greece is consolidated and flourishes only at the moment when parliamentarianism ... is strengthened and the authoritarianism of the Court retreats.”⁴ (Tsoucalas 1978b:10) The term “parliamentarianism”⁵ used here points to the pivotal role of the individual member of parliament in nineteenth century Greek politics and designates the specific, largely particularistic and personalistic manner in which the country's liberal democratic institutions functioned under the prevailing socio-economic conditions. On the elite level, deputies – generally members of an oligarchy of prominent families (the *tzákia*) – utilised the dispensation of state revenues to their local clientele as a means of constructing personal “fiefdoms” designed to ensure their re-election. They were able to secure these funds because the state's executive employees were wholly dependent on the holders of political power (to whom they owed their jobs) and thus subject to permanent coercion. At the same time, the adherence of a parliamentarian to a particular political party was less the result of ideological conviction or a specific policy orientation than of personal obligations. Defections from one party to another were thus both common and accepted occurrences. Since parliament served as a “marketplace” where each deputy “freely negotiated his opinion and his vote”, parliamentary majorities became “object[s] of daily negotiation” (Tsoucalas 1978b:9).

On the grass roots level, the existence of universal suffrage provided the population with a means of influencing, at least formally, the composition of power within the state. Since the favour of those in power was a prerequisite for participating in the repartition of the economic surplus, a prize for which the various political factions were constantly competing, the vote

² Tsoucalas (1978b:6) notes that until the 1880s, when large-scale infrastructure projects were initiated by Trikoupis government, Greek taxes were channeled almost exclusively “into those elements that constituted the state and parastate mechanisms”.

³ Tsoucalas (1978b:7) draws his notion of a “state bourgeoisie” from studies of the Soviet Union and African polities. He justifies the application of the concept to the Greek ruling class, that is the middle and upper strata which formed around the state apparatus, on grounds of the latter's sheer extensiveness. On the emergence of the political class and “clientelist representation” in Greece see also Tsoucalas 1977:217-226.

⁴ The absolutistic character of the Othonian monarchy was broken in 1844 by a series of reforms which allowed for the creation of a restricted form of parliamentary representation based on the enfranchisement of roughly 85-90% of the male population (cf. Charalambis/Demertzis 1993:227). On the constitution and regime of 1844 see Wenturis 1984:54-58.

⁵ The Greek term is *vouleftokratía* (literally: “rule of the parliamentarian”) which derives from the word for deputy or member of parliament, *vouléftis*.

and political support of the electorate also became negotiable. As formally free and equal citizens, but with neither well-defined class interests nor a clear idea of the rights and duties of the *citoyen*, Greeks of all strata would actively identify themselves with the one or the other party “to which they ‘offered’ their political rights” in exchange for making “a claim to participate in the benefits bestowed by the state” (Tsoucalas 1978b:10). The state apparatus thus became “an autonomous arena where all the social strata competed not to enforce different policies but to reap personal gains. The control of the state did not so much guarantee the protection of the citizens’ interests as it led to their direct entrepreneurial realization.” (1978b:8.)

On the level of collective attitudes, this arrangement gave rise to a series of phenomena which can still be observed today: (a) a lack of distinction between the private and public spheres with regard to socio-political ethics and the practice of interest intermediation, (b) the importance given to “connections” when dealing with representatives of state authority, and (c) an apparent “over-politicisation” of the population, reflecting the importance of access to the state apparatus for personal advancement – a phenomenon which camouflaged the “under-politicised” role which had been assigned to the state in actual fact (cf. 1978b:10-13).

Tsoucalas’ analysis of early Greek clientelism has been enlarged upon by Mouzelis (1978, 1980), who addresses the topic within the broader context of Greek underdevelopment and semi-peripherality.⁶ Echoing Tsoucalas’ criticism of the functionalist approach while at the same time rejecting certain economic interpretations of Marxism, he approaches his subject from a neo-Marxist perspective, emphasising in particular the importance of the historical dimension and the analytical relevance of the concept of class. Mouzelis’ main concerns are the changes in Greek clientelism over time, the relationship between patronage and class, and the antagonism between clientelistic and class-based forms of political mobilisation. In the latter context, he appears to have been the first to use the term “symbiosis” to describe the problematic interrelation of clientelist and non-clientelist structures. However, since he views clientelism above all as a mode of political inclusion (and less as a form of interest intermediation), the symbiotic relationship he examined was not that of clientelism and parliamentarism, but rather the more restricted symbiosis of vertical and horizontal modes of inclusion within semi-peripheral societies (cf. Mouzelis 1978:209/n. 28).

Mouzelis distinguishes two main phases in the development of political clientelism in Greece: the pre-capitalist phase (coinciding essentially with the period examined by Tsoucalas) and the phase in which capitalism became the dominant mode of production (beginning with the influx of 1.2 million Asia Minor refugees in 1922, which effectively constituted the Greek urban working class). In a more recent study (1995), he identifies as a third phase the contemporary period which he dates from the restoration of democracy in 1974. Mouzelis characterises Greece’s pre-capitalist stage (actually its second half⁷) as the

⁶ On the concept of semi-peripherality as applied to Balkan and southern cone Latin American societies – in particular Greece, Chile and Argentina, but also (southern) Brazil, Bulgaria and Serbia/Yugoslavia – see Mouzelis 1986. Following Mouzelis’ (1986:xiv-xv) loose definition, the ‘semi-periphery’ can be understood as comprising those societies with a relatively early history of persistent parliamentary rule (i.e. since their independence in the nineteenth century), but a relatively late (post-1929) history of capitalist industrial development.

⁷ Greece’s pre-capitalist period actually consists of four distinct phases, the first two of which were not discussed by either Tsoucalas or Mouzelis, since clientelism had not yet become an integral element of the Greek political system. These phases are: (a) the revolutionary and Kapodistrian phase (1821-1833), during which numerous unsuccessful attempts were made to construct a modern constitutional republican state; (b) the phase of the Othonian monarchy imposed by the European powers (1833-1864), in which externally oriented proto-parties (the ‘English’, ‘French’ and ‘Russian’ parties) functioned in the absence of genuine parliamentary institutions; (c) the phase of oligarchic parliamentarism (1864-1909), which was characterised by the

phase of “oligarchic parliamentarism” and “decentralised clientelism”, in which a small number of prominent families “controlled lower-class votes by clientelistic or more fraudulent means.” (1978:18.) During this half-century (which corresponds roughly to the reign of Greece’s first constitutional monarch, George I), political parties were no more than “very loose, decentralised coalitions led by potentates, each of whom based his power on regional clienteles whose allegiances were to the person of the patron rather than to the party or its programme.” (1978:18) Since parliamentarism emerged comparatively early in Greece, that is at a moment in which “the capitalist mode of production was peripheral in the social formation,” the country’s political institutions did not function in the same way as those in Western Europe after which they had been modeled. As a consequence, the ruling oligarchy (Tsoucalas’ “state bourgeoisie”) was able to instrumentalise the parliamentary system “as a means, not for overthrowing the inherited Ottoman structure, but for safeguarding as many of its features as possible.” (Mouzelis 1978:144.) Under such conditions, the state proved wholly incapable of “effective collective action,” though, as Mouzelis points out, this was not uniquely the result of clientelism, but also of “the strict limits imposed on internal politics by Greece’s dependence on the great powers and, to a lesser extent, on ... big Greek diaspora capital.” (Mouzelis 1980:242.)

Mouzelis identifies the second phase in the evolution of political clientelism with the period of peripheral capitalist development (roughly 1922-1974) and the advent of mass politics.⁸ In the course of this half-century, “the development of capitalism broke down the political monopoly of [the traditional] oligarchy and made possible the participation, first of the rising middle classes, and later of the working classes in the political process.” (Mouzelis 1978:144.) On the state level, this not only ushered in a gradual decline in the power of the throne (to the advantage of both parliament and the army), but also allowed for an unprecedented expansion of the state’s bureaucratic apparatus during the inter-war period – a development which put a definitive end to the traditional form of patronage where “local notables ... monopolis[ed] all links between villages and the national centre.” (Mouzelis 1980:249) These changes were accompanied on the party level by the transition from decentralised to centralised clientelism, that is from the old-style ‘monopolistic’ patronage of the local oligarchs to a more flexible and ‘open’ state and party-oriented clientelism (cf. Mouzelis 1978:209/n. 28; 1980:260). In the course of this development, “political parties ceased to be mere ‘clubs of notables’ and acquired a more centralised political structure as the national leadership became better able to control the centrifugal tendencies of local bosses.” (Mouzelis 1995:18.) Though most parties still owed their cohesiveness to the charismatic appeal of their leaders, they began increasingly to shift their orientations and resources from the local to the national level as issues of a broader political or economic importance succeeded in transgressing traditional clientelistic structures and particularistic loyalties (cf. Mouzelis 1978:169/n. 153; 1980:249). The rise of Venizelism in the inter-war period

construction of a constitutional monarchy with parliamentary institutions and the predominance of personal parties rooted in locally based clientage relations; and (d) the transition phase of 1909-1922, which spanned the years between the breaking of the oligarchy’s power monopoly and Greece’s defeat in the Anatolian war with Turkey. This final phase witnessed the emergence of the protracted ‘national schism’ between the supporters and adversaries of the Cretan politician Eleftherios Venizelos.

⁸ This phase of ‘centralised’ political clientelism includes both the inter-war and post-war periods of parliamentary government (1922-1936 and 1944-1967), but excludes the years of the Metaxas dictatorship (1936-1941), the German occupation (1941-1944) and the colonels’ dictatorship of 1967-1974. According to Mouzelis, the peripheral character of this stage of capitalist development finds expression in the chronic instability of the parliamentary system (which collapsed twice in little more than 30 years) and the protracted division of Greek society: first as a result of the ‘national schism’ (which pitted Venizelist republicans against anti-Venizelist monarchists during the inter-war period), and then as a consequence of the 1944-1949 civil war (which was followed by the systematic repression of the left by the victorious right).

contributed substantially to this process and broadened the social composition of the political elite by introducing “new men” into active politics. Nonetheless, despite these developments – and despite Venizelos’ attempts to model his own Liberal Party along non-clientelistic lines, that is “along Western European legal bureaucratic principles of organisation” (Mouzelis 1995:18) –, nearly all parties, with the notable exception of the Communist Party, retained their clientelistic, particularistic and personalistic character up to the military *coup d’état* of 1967.

Mouzelis explains the continued existence of clientelism after 1922 with reference to the underdeveloped nature of Greek capitalism.⁹ Although political conflict acquired a more explicitly class character as mass involvement in the political process increased, the peripherality of the capitalist mode of production within the Greek social formation did not favour a decisive shift from patronage to class politics. To be sure, existing clientelistic networks were disrupted by the emergence of new class-based organisations, particularly in the urban areas, and this contributed to the fundamental transformation (and general weakening) of clientelism as a mode of political integration. However, political cleavages were still not “directly linked with the dominant structures of class exploitation” (Mouzelis 1978:65), since “the persistence of large-scale vertical/clientelistic modes of integration ... cut across and prevent[ed] the [substantial] development of horizontal, class-type political organisations.”¹⁰ (Mouzelis 1980:263.) As a consequence, the Greek state remained relatively autonomous with regard to both ‘objective’ cleavages (i.e. those deriving from the socio-economic division of labour) and the pressures of organised class interests, be they bourgeois or lower-class.¹¹ Linkages between the state and Greece’s rudimentary civil society operated to a much greater extent through clientelistic networks than was the case in the metropolitan states of the Western Europe. At the same time, “the combination of extreme particularistic and formalistic practices [made] the state apparatus both too pliable and too rigid for not only the people’s general interest, but also for the general interests of capital.” (1980:265.)

The failure of the dominated classes to organise themselves politically and articulate their interests in an autonomous manner not only inhibited the effective functioning of Greece’s parliamentary institutions, but also led to a situation in which the popular vote could be “manipulated through clientelistic networks controlled by parties of the dominant class” (Mouzelis 1978:65).¹² The inter-war and post-war periods thus witnessed the emergence of an “uneasy coexistence of vertical and horizontal political organisations” (Mouzelis 1980:263) – the symbiosis mentioned above – whose importance alternated “with the fluctuation in the balance of political forces at any specific moment.” (Mouzelis 1978:209/n. 28; cf. also 1978:65.) The fragility, precariousness and weak institutionalisation of both types of organisation lay at the core of an essentially unstable political arrangement which played a

⁹ This topic is treated by Mouzelis in 1978:26-27, 65, 144, 190/n. 51, 209-210/n. 28; and 1980:263-264.

¹⁰ Mouzelis makes a fundamental distinction between dependent and non-dependent modes of political integration, class-based parties being a typical example of the latter. It is not clientelism’s verticality alone, however, that determines its dependent character. Another dependent mode of integration, albeit of a horizontal type, is populism. On the problems of political integration and mass mobilisation in the peripheral state in general see Mouzelis 1980:266-267.

¹¹ Mouzelis (1980:264) cites the military coup of 1967 as an example of how shifts of power could take place within the state itself which were then presented to the bourgeoisie as a *fait accompli*.

¹² One particularly visible means of achieving this aim, according to Mouzelis (1978:144), was the tendency of clientelism “to distort and conceal class differences through legalisatic debates and personalistic feuds”. The intra-bourgeois conflict between Venizelists and anti-Venizelists (‘national schism’), which dominated Greek politics for the greater part of the inter-war period, can also be viewed as a mechanism for preventing the autonomous, non-clientelistic political organisation of the urban and rural working classes (cf. Mouzelis 1980:248-249).

central role in the chronic ‘malfunctioning’ of the Greek parliamentary system. Seen in this light, the *coups d’état* of 1936 and 1967 appear as “dictatorial attempts to depoliticise, i.e. to exclude the masses from active politics”, that is to forcibly suppress relatively autonomous working-class parties once they appeared capable of threatening the *status quo* (1978:190/n. 51).¹³

Mention should be made here of Mavrogordatos’ (1983) study of the inter-war Greek Republic¹⁴, not the least because he implicitly challenges Mouzelis’ assumption that horizontal (i.e. non-vertical or non-clientelistic) organisations are generally grounded in class interests. Rejecting the priority given to the concept of class (and political economy in general) by Marxist theory, Mavrogordatos sets clientelism on a par with other major variables, in particular charisma and social cleavage (but also party identification and ideology), which he sees as “interrelated factors jointly shaping inter-war mass politics” (1983:101). Underlining that clientelism, charisma and cleavages “are not a priori mutually exclusive”, he argued that they “may *coexist* [and modify each other] as distinct aspects of the same political situation” (1983:17), and that they should therefore “be viewed ... as complimentary approaches to the structure of mass politics” (1983:20). As for the more specific relationship between clientelism and social cleavage, he describes this as a two-way interaction and an “inherently precarious balance” whereby “a high incidence of clientelism ... [can be] compatible with deep cleavages and intense conflict, along lines usually (but not necessarily) other than class”, i.e. religious, ethnic, racial, status-oriented, etc. (1983:19, 20).

It is also worth noting Mavrogordatos’ insistence on distinguishing, both conceptually and empirically, between clientelism *per se* (i.e. the traditional patron-client relationship or networks of such personal relationships) and machine politics (in which the role of the patron is occupied by a group or institution such as a party).¹⁵ He is adamant about retaining the essentials of the original anthropological definition of clientelism, though he does affirm that both clientelism and machine politics “belong... to the same broader class or syndrome” for which he proposed the term “patronage politics” (1983:8). Clientelism “may be said to be *transformed* (into machine politics), when the role of individual patrons is taken over by institutions, such as parties or interest groups. ... [It] may be said to be *displaced* when, instead of vertical and personal, *horizontal* and *categorical* interests and loyalties, particularly along class lines, become predominant.” (1983:13.) The latter proposal, as Mavrogordatos (1983:14) himself notes, is disputed by Mouzelis (1977), who argues that in semi-peripheral social formations such as Greece, clientelism is weakened but not displaced by horizontal class-based organisations as capitalism becomes the dominant mode of production.

The notion of a functional symbiosis linking clientelism and parliamentarism

Drawing on the conceptions of political clientelism developed by the authors cited, we can now attempt to define the notion of *functional symbiosis* (or ‘systemic symbiosis’) more precisely. As we have seen, the idea of a symbiosis between various forms of clientelistic and

¹³ Here, Mouzelis grossly overestimates the importance of the Greek Communist Party in the political crises of 1935/36 and 1967.

¹⁴ Mavrogordatos’ excellently researched and methodically sophisticated study has become a standard work on the inter-war period. Yet it does not treat the political-economic dimension in any depth, and his analytical approach is basically ahistorical (in Mouzelis’ and Tsoucalas’ sense), particularly with regard to the relationship between clientelism and class.

¹⁵ For reasons stated elsewhere (Zink 2000:223-224), I consider such a categorical distinction to be analytically counter-productive, especially when considering the attitudinal dimension of political clientelism and corresponding aspects of political culture.

non-clientelistic organisation is summarily mentioned, or implicitly supposed, by several analysts. However, it is nowhere explicitly formulated as a concept. It is nonetheless imperative to examine not only the evolution of Greek political clientelism *per se*, but also to consider more closely how this informal (i.e. non-legal) system of interest intermediation relates to the country's formal (i.e. legal, constitutional) system of government.¹⁶ The type of relationship which, in varying forms, has linked Greece's clientelist networks with the parliamentary state for the past century and a half is termed *functional* because it is essentially utilitarian and pragmatic in nature, stopping short of shared or complementary values, cultural norms or ideological orientations. It is *symbiotic* because it links two separate systemic elements which become interdependent, yet at the same time remain fundamentally antagonistic in character. In other words, a strong interpenetration develops between clientelist representation and parliamentary politics to the point where neither is capable of functioning without the aid of the other. At the same time, the contradictory logic of the two constituent systems results in each inhibiting the full and unrestricted functioning of its counterpart, rendering the symbiosis itself inherently unstable and crisis-prone.

Throughout modern Greek history, the antagonisms generated within the clientelist-parliamentary symbiosis have tended to take the form of protracted power struggles between conflicting socio-political factions and/or organised interests, with the clientelistic element generally remaining dominant. This was the case with the perennial tug-of-war between modernisers and the oligarchic parties from 1825 until 1909, the schismatic confrontation between rival bourgeoisie factions and the challenge of horizontally organised interests from 1909 to 1974, and the less virulent (but still highly polarised) competition of clientelistic, populist and horizontal forms of political mobilisation from 1974 to 1995. (The question of whether developments since 1995 herald the beginning of a functional dissociation of clientelism and parliamentarism will be discussed below.) The aspect of interdependence has expressed itself traditionally in both the dependence of clientelist networks on parliamentary representation (through which these gain access to the state apparatus and appropriate its resources), and in the centralised state's need of such locally-based networks in order to exercise its authority down to the grass roots level and maintain sufficient legitimacy among the population. Finally, there are numerous ways in which the clientelist-parliamentary symbiosis can become seriously destabilised, particularly (but not only) in times of crisis. Chief among these have been radical social change and/or the emergence of new elements in the political arena¹⁷, economic crisis and a resulting scarcity of state resources capable of being distributed to the various clienteles,¹⁸ and shifts of power within the relatively autonomous semi-peripheral state.¹⁹

¹⁶ On the differentiation between clientelist/non-corporate and non-clientelist/corporate groups on the basis of their legal status see Diamandouros 1973:3-4.

¹⁷ The classic example of this is the rise of the middle classes (often designated as the 'liberal bourgeoisie') under Eleftherios Venizelos which, aided by a revolt of young army officers in 1909, succeeded in breaking the traditional oligarchy's power monopoly. A similar process took place after 1974 with the full legalisation of the political left and the rise to power of the Andreas Papandreou's Panhellenic Socialist Movement (PASOK), Greece's first non-Communist mass party. (See Diamandouros 1973:68, Mouzelis 1995:18-19.)

¹⁸ This was an important factor in the crisis of 1935-36 which led to the establishment of the Metaxas dictatorship (cf. Zink 2000:237-238). A further factor, of course, was "the growing discrepancy between the sociopolitical cleavages at the base of Greek society, in which class issues were becoming increasingly dominant, and those articulated within the political establishment", as this "encouraged both political radicalization (horizontal inclusion) and political apathy (non-inclusion) while limiting the problem-solving capacity of Greece's parliamentary institutions." (2000:240.)

¹⁹ A good example of this is the political crisis which preceded the military *coup d'état* of 1967. On this see Mouzelis 1980:263-264.

Transformations in Greek political clientelism after 1974: some current interpretations

We are now in a position to appreciate the changes in Greek political clientelism which took place after the restoration of democracy in 1974. These changes can be understood as adaptations of the systemic symbiosis to the new political reality which emerged after the collapse of the military junta. Much of this new reality was the result of the political and constitutional reforms initiated by the charismatic conservative leader and founder of the Nea Dimokratia (New Democracy) party, Konstantinos Karamanlis. On the other hand, important continuities linking the post-1974 era with pre-1967 politics reveal the limitations and partial failures of this ambitious project. Karamanlis' goal was nothing less than to overcome of clientelism and particularism through a stable system of 'limited pluralism' in which two relatively centrist, catch-all parties would alternate in government. Ideally, "centralised authority [would] harmoniously co-exist with collective participation" on the basis of a shared national political morality which would prove stronger than "private egotistical interests" (Pappas 1999:39).²⁰ One of the main weaknesses of this programme was, of course, that it presupposed an opposition party which shared its author's views on what constituted responsible government.

The most significant new elements of the post-1974 political system can be summarised as follows: (1) The schismatic division of society, which had polarised Greek politics during both the inter-war and post-war periods, was definitively overcome by the legalisation of the Greek Communist Party and the full rehabilitation of the political left. For the first time since independence, all social and political forces were now included within the legitimate political system. While anti-communism ceased to provide the ideological consensus of the political establishment, the extreme right, having been widely discredited by the colonels' regime, was effectively split off from the mainstream conservative camp and subsequently marginalised. (2) Two institutions which had previously given rise to much instability and political division were permanently removed from the political scene: the monarchy, which was abolished by referendum in 1974, and the army, which ceased to be a power factor within the state, ready to intervene whenever the existing order appeared threatened by a real or imagined challenge from below. (3) The traditional clientelist system lost its international dimension due to the fact that Greek politics was no longer subject to direct foreign intervention as it had been, in one form or other, since independence. The country's status as a politically and economically dependent 'client' state was irrevocably terminated by Athens' accession to full membership of the European Economic Community in 1981. (4) With the exception of certain extreme right wing splinter groups, all of Greece's political parties now played an unequivocally positive role in supporting the democracy and maintaining a relatively stable party system. Of the many features which distinguished the new party landscape from that of the post-war decades, the most remarkable was the rise of the Panhellenic Socialist Movement (PASOK), which represented a wholly new type of political force.

In spite of these radical changes in the basic structure of Greek politics, many old practices, particularly on the party level, survived the military dictatorship and the subsequent

²⁰ As Pappas (1999:39) further notes, the principal aims of Karamanlis' political programme as embodied in the constitution of 1975 were: "*first*, the strengthening of the executive and the rationalization of the parliamentary procedure, even at the cost of weakening the legislature; *second*, the advancement of a system capable of supplying responsible leadership while at the same time excluding the people from the immediate political process, thus leading to society's relative depoliticization; and *third*, the encouragement of political moderation with the effective liquidation of ideological divisions and the simultaneous search for fresh legitimacy in areas lying outside the domain of politics proper, such as economic progress or the entry of Greece into what was then called the European Economic Community." For a detailed evaluation of Karamanlis' programme for Greek democracy and its practical application see Pappas 1999:34-45.

reintroduction of democracy. As Lyrintzis (1984:116) notes ten years after the founding of the second republic (and three years after PASOK's momentous first electoral victory), the "familiar interplay between the state machine and party figures in the form of clientelism has not ceased to exist." Moreover, party politics was still very dependent on personalities and on the policies of party leaders since "the major non-communist parties have failed to institutionalise those mechanisms and procedures that would link them to their electorates, elaborate and articulate their programmes and hence guarantee their effectiveness and longevity as social and political forces." (1984:116)²¹ Finally, though the Greek state had lost most of its previous repressive character, it had not ceased to be a "powerful and omnipresent entity" (with substantial capacities to influence both socio-economic and political developments) which could be instrumentalised by the governing parties in order "to consolidate their power and expand their clientelistic networks" (1984:102). Lyrintzis concludes that the extent and nature of the new *elements* introduced in the post-1974 party system did not constitute a profound change, as the *practices* of the country's parties had changed very little.

Nonetheless, Lyrintzis does claim to discern the emergence of a new and distinct *form* of clientelism after 1974, which he terms "bureaucratic clientelism". He defines this as "the systematic infiltration of the state machine by party devotees and the allocation of favours through it. It is characterised by an organised expansion of existing posts and departments in the public sector and the addition of new ones in an attempt to secure power and maintain a party's electoral base." (1984:103.) Though he does not explicitly speak of a synthesis or symbiosis of two largely antithetical systems, he does underline the fact that under the conditions of bureaucratic clientelism, a party in power assumes the function of "a collective patron, with the clientelistic networks based on and directed through an intricate combination of party mechanisms and the state apparatus." (1984:104.) The party's active supporters thus become clients of the state bureaucracy, while the latter "is orientated less towards the effective performance of public service than towards the provision of parasitic jobs for the political clientele of the ruling sectors, in exchange for their political support." (1984:104)²² In order to function, however, bureaucratic clientelism "requires a sufficiently well-organised political formation whose party machine organises and directs the allocation of favours through the state machine." (1984:104.) Although the post-war system of party-directed patronage²³ resembled bureaucratic clientelism in many respects, the ruling parties were still organisationally too weak, and their dependence upon the clientelistic networks of the leading politicians too strong, to allow a genuine system of bureaucratic clientelism to develop. This only became possible after 1974, when parties emerged which were "better organised and less susceptible to the power of their leading members" because of the "increasing importance of the party leadership in allocating favours and spoils" and "the central role played by the state apparatus in the functioning of the clientelistic system" (1984:103).

Lyrintzis' notion of "bureaucratic clientelism" is challenged by Pappas (1999:198-200), who does not consider the phenomenon described to be essentially different from earlier

²¹ According to Lyrintzis (1984:102), the non-institutionalised relationship between parties and their constituencies had been one of the main features of post-war political clientelism: "By emphasising the clientelistic nature of the [post-war] Greek political parties, we intend to stress that at the organisational level it was clientelistic relations through which the non-communist parties mobilized mass support and through which they communicated with the electorate."

²² See also Sotiropoulos (1993:47), who emphasises in this context the organisational weakness and malleability of the Greek state compared with the relative strength of the two major post-1974 parties.

²³ Lyrintzis uses the term 'party-directed patronage' as developed by Weingrod (1968) to designate the specific form of Greek political clientelism during the post-war period (cf. Lyrintzis 1984:117/n. 10).

forms of political clientelism. What Lyrintzis overlooks, according to Pappas, are the deeper modal changes resulting from the radical reversal in the power relationship between political parties and the state.²⁴ Pappas speaks here of a transition from state-controlled parties to a party-controlled state. Whereas political parties in the post-war period had been virtually subjugated to the state (a fact which increasingly prompted voters to transfer their loyalties from individual patrons to the state itself), the democratic state of the mid-1970s had lost its predecessor's "prerogative of arranging society" and thus could no longer control the direct distribution of spoils. Instead, the autonomy and relative strength of the new parties permitted these to 'conquer' and control the state, both politically and ideologically, by permeating the public bureaucracy with their own personnel and by passing new administrative legislation after each change in government. Though the state "still remained the foremost arena of clientelist exchanges, i.e. the location where rewards are promised and spoils extracted," governing parties were now able to "fully monitor and control clientelist exchanges ... to the degree that ... [they] were able to occupy the state." (Pappas 1999:198.) At the same time, the bureaucratic apparatus - the only element of the post-war state which had remained essentially intact - expanded both in size and with regard to activity (though hardly in terms of professionalism and efficiency), this in spite of its instrumentalisation by partisan power interests.

This should not be taken to imply, as Pappas (1999:103/n. 5, 199) stresses, that the traditional clientelist networks had been fully replaced by well-organised political parties, nor that 'vertical' modes of organisation and incorporation did not continue to exist more or less uneasily (or sometimes even harmoniously) alongside of 'horizontal' ones. What it does mean is that a further historical change had taken place in the way in which clientage relationships functioned within the context of the overall political system. Whereas social incorporation along vertical, clientelistic lines had been *random* and *unsystematic* up to the end of the inter-war period, and *segregative* and *systematised* during the post-war period, it became both *formalised* and *systematic* after 1974 due to the increased organisational strength of the mainstream political parties. It was thus no longer the individual patron or gatekeeper on the local or state level, but rather the party organisation as such on which clientelist exchanges now hinged. Earlier forms of patronage had excluded *a priori* all those who did not have access to a local party boss or who were on the wrong side of the socio-political divide. Now, anyone wishing to participate in the distribution of spoils could do so by becoming an active supporter or member (and hence client) of the party in power. This formalised aspect of clientelistic participation and its principle attainability was complimented by its systematisation in the sense that both Nea Dimokratia and PASOK subscribed to similar practices. This made "society's anticipation of rewards to be obtained, and the parties' reliability for delivering them, ... crucial aspects of winning elections for both major parties." Conversely, any party in government which lacked the necessary organisational structure would necessarily have difficulty in "regulat[ing] the flow of clientelistic exchanges" and thus in winning future elections (1999:199).

²⁴ Pappas (1999:70) emphasises the intimate relationship between these political developments and the radical socio-economic transformations which had been taking place in Greece since the early 1960s. Within the space of roughly two decades, an accelerated process of urbanisation and modest industrialisation had succeeded in dissolving the traditional urban-rural divide which had been a prominent feature of the inter-war period. This, he argues, not only drew voters away from their rural constituencies, thereby weakening the power bases of the local bosses, but also helped the political parties develop increasingly national (i.e. non-local, supra-regional) profiles. It furthermore enabled matters of national importance to begin to encroach upon the traditional predominance of local issues while inaugurating a gradual homogenisation of voting patterns on a nation-wide scale. Most important of all, the progressive widening of social horizons from the local to the mass level played an important part in facilitating the transition from oligarchic to mass politics.

Pappas (1999:200) concludes that party organisations have ‘rationalised’ clientelism “by channeling the flow of clients’ demands and state rewards in a regulated and (semi-)methodical way”, and “by providing a coherent and relatively stable systematizing of society into distinct and visible party followings.” For this reason, it would be erroneous to view clientelism as an anomaly within an otherwise homogeneous political system; rather, it should be seen as a major attribute of that system, if not as the system itself.²⁵ Though he admits that clientelism has always been an indication of the weakness and lack of autonomy of Greek society *vis-à-vis* the state, he nonetheless stresses that, like political parties, it is “both a way of social incorporation (however wanting in orderliness) and a mode of political organisation (however lacking in institutional form).” (1999:195.) This leads him to assert that under certain political conditions, such as those prevailing in Greece today, party organisational structures and clientelist operations may be not only compatible, but also complimentary to one another. If, however, the growth of party organisation is not necessarily antithetical to political clientelism, then one can contest the widely held assumption that clientelistic relationships must necessarily decrease in direct proportion to an increase in party organisations.²⁶

Pappas’ basic assessment of post-1974 clientelism is close to that of Mouzelis (1995:19), who emphasises the importance of PASOK’s emergence as the first non-communist mass party with a nation-wide organisation reaching down to the local level. “Clientelistic bosses gradually saw their control over local votes being undermined by a populistically controlled, centralised party structure, which replaced traditional patrons with better-educated party cadres who derived their authority from above (that is, from Papandreou’s charisma) rather than from the grass roots level.” Still, despite increased centralisation and the further extension of active political participation, the personalistic and particularistic politics of the post-war clientelistic parties was simply replaced by the same phenomenon based on populist mobilisation and organisation.²⁷ PASOK under Papandreou was just as antagonistic to any form of legal or administrative constraint upon its leader’s arbitrary power as it was to the relative autonomy of the traditional clientelistic networks. Hardly democratic, the party’s organisational structure was rigidly hierarchic and served as a transmission belt for Papandreou’s control and as a means of “provid[ing] his charismatic authority with a plebiscitary facade of intra-party legitimation.” (Pappas 1999:181.)

Lyrantzis (1984:116) notes that PASOK’s strong reliance on charismatic leadership, populist ideology²⁸ and tactics, and organisational activism during its rise to power “could not

²⁵ Here Pappas (1999:200) compares Greek clientelism to what has become known as *sottogoverno* in Italy: “a generalised (and abusive) system of patronage in the state administration, operated by the political parties and based on political jobbery and the exchange of reciprocal favours.” It should be noted, though, that Pappas does not draw a clear distinction between the *political system* as such (i.e. parliamentary democracy) and various aspects of the *party system* (in particular the structure and organisation of the major parties).

²⁶ Pappas (1999:208/n. 13) takes issue with Mouzelis’ (1980:263) contention that strong “horizontal, class-type political organisations” must be developed in order to eliminate clientelistic dependencies. He also questions the widely held view, at least when applied to contemporary politics, that clientelist relationships “flourish in the absence of modern political institutions operated along rational, impersonal, and bureaucratic lines” (Pappas 1999:174).

²⁷ Populism can be understood as a form of non-autonomous mass political inclusion in which there is a “plebiscitarian relationship between leader and led” based on an anti-elitist ideology which appeals directly to the “people”. On the organisational level, there exists a “direct and unmediated rapport between the leadership and the rank and file” which, in contrast to traditional forms of political clientelism, does not allow for a large degree of autonomy at the local and intermediary levels of the party (Mouzelis 1986:90).

²⁸ PASOK was the only party outside the communist left to propagate a definite, if not entirely coherent ideology. This consisted of a mixture of nationalism and socialist rhetoric which, though often demagogic, became progressively less ‘socialist’ (and also less radical) after 1980 – in deference, as Clogg (1992:180)

effectively integrate the masses into party politics, and ... could not ultimately develop the means to cope successfully with clientelism and with the problems related to the role and nature of the Greek state machine.” In fact, once in government, PASOK occupied and instrumentalised the state even more effectively than had Nea Dimokratia before it, at the same time subjecting the organisations of civil society (trade unions, farmers’ associations and other interest groups) to an unprecedented degree of political control (cf. Mavrogordatos 1993). Under this arrangement, it was the party *per se*, and not the individual member of parliament, through which patronage was dispensed to the local clientele. PASOK was thus the first party since independence to establish patron-client ties with its electorate outside the confines of established clientelistic relationships. The rise of PASOK prompted Mouzelis (1995:19-20) to see the close of the twentieth century as the end of a long-term historical transition from oligarchic clientelism to populism: “As all the parties are becoming more centralised, and as political participation keeps broadening, clientelistic modes of incorporation, although partially displaced, coexist uneasily with populist and plebiscitarian ones - both modes entailing a vertical, authoritarian integration of an extremely weak civil society, with none of its constituent groups capable of effectively checking the authoritarian or despotic tendencies of the huge state bureaucracy and the self-serving, particularistic orientations of the major parties. This means that the logic of the political prevails over any other logic that might emanate from different institutional spheres. Whenever there are clashes of interest between those who control the means of domination and those who control the means of economic and cultural production, the former systematically prevail over the latter.”

This last point was taken up by Charalambis and Demertzis (1993), who emphasise the continuity of pre- and post-1974 clientelism. Noting that all historical forms of Greek clientelism have prevented the articulation of autonomous social interests, they observe that, given the largely underdeveloped nature of the Greek market economy, the “new sort of party clientelism” which emerged after 1974 still lacked the “distinctive rationality of negotiation between the social partners within the organised context of a capital market”. Instead, “[d]emands are forwarded to the party/government/state, and the government arranges various salaries and wages by patronising its clients.” (1993:229.) The connection between market development and political clientelism is explained with reference to the failure of private property to emerge as the “primary institution” of Greek society during the course of the nineteenth century. Since this precluded the evolution of a “clearly defined logic of the market”, a truly autonomous private economic sector was never able to develop. Rather, “the very constitution of the private sector depended on the public distribution of various resources” (1993:228) in accordance with the preferential logic of clientelism and patronage. This accounts to a large extent for the traditional inability of both the political elites and the general population to recognise a fundamental difference between the public and private spheres. It also means that, for a large part of the nineteenth century, the economic basis of the population could only be secured via “the multiple preferential distribution that was decided upon by the political élites” who “managed and controlled the flow of economic surpluses to the state.” (1993:228)²⁹ In a similar sense, the institutional rules of the democratic system (including the legitimacy of the system itself) have, until very recently,

points out, to the large number of self-employed among the Greek electorate. Promising its voters ‘change’ (ἀεὐαῖα), PASOK defined its constituency as the mass of ‘non-privileged Greeks’, or simply ‘the people’, for whom Papandreou was regarded as both the spokesman and, ultimately, the deliverer.

On the populist character of PASOK’s ideology during the Papandreou era cf. also Mavrogordatos 1993:47-48.

²⁹ Charalambis and Demertzis (1993:229) point out in this connection that “the state, in order to avoid a legitimisation crisis, has depended since 1974 not only on internal surplus but also on foreign aid”– that is, on foreign loans.

“not represent[ed] either a predictable or a commonly accepted public normativity”, being “subjected [instead] to a preferential clientelist relationship between the central authority and its citizens.” (1993:228.)

The condition of political clientelism in Greece today

The choice of the literature reviewed above is, of course, to a certain extent arbitrary and in no way exhaustive. In addition, due to the different approaches used by the authors cited, the cumulative picture gained from their analyses is not wholly consistent. It should, however, suffice to identify the major factors which have been involved in the evolution of Greek clientelism from the War of Independence up to the present day. Bearing in mind that many important socio-political dimensions of this phenomenon have not been able to be discussed, it is nonetheless possible to examine the present condition of the *functional symbiosis of clientelism and parliamentarism* in the light of recent developments with a view to assessing the prospects for its future transformation. This will be done by highlighting individual characteristics of the system and looking for significant changes in their functional prerequisites. We shall begin by presenting a short (and necessarily simplified) overview of the historical development of the systemic symbiosis which will serve as a frame of reference for our subsequent observations.

The symbiosis of clientelism and parliamentarism: three evolutionary phases

From an historical macro-perspective, we can divide Greek clientelism into three main evolutionary phases, each of which can be further divided into two sub-phases. The three principal phases are: the period of decentralised, oligarchic clientelism (1825-1909), the period of centralised clientelism (1909-1974), and the period of party-directed or ‘bureaucratic’ clientelism (since 1974). Each of these phases displays a characteristic mode of clientelistic exchange, a specific symbiotic interrelationship between the clientelistic and parliamentary elements of the system, and a fundamental antagonism lying at the centre of this interrelationship.

In the first phase, clientage relations were primarily a local or regional matter with the state serving as a reservoir for the favours and spoils to be distributed to the various local clienteles. The system rested on the symbiotic relationship between locally-based clientelist networks and the centralised state, with the local notable-turned-parliamentarian acting as mediating instance. Its inherent inefficiency (judged by modern developmental standards) derived from the protracted antagonism between locally-based “traditionalists” and foreign-inspired “modernisers”, in which the former generally retained the upper hand. This phase comprises the period in which foreign-oriented proto-parties constituted the main form of political organisation (1825-1854), and the following period in which very loose party-like organisations developed around prominent political personalities (1854-1909).

During the second phase, parties with a more centralised structure emerged which grouped together local and regional clientelistic networks and organised the dispensation of patronage from the state level down to the various local clienteles. Here we see the emergence of a more structured, i.e. less anarchic symbiosis between clientelistically based national parties and the state, the latter having developed an extensive military and bureaucratic apparatus which was now a locus of power in its own right. On the surface, this era appeared dominated by the schismatic confrontation of opposing power blocs - actually coalitions of otherwise quite heterogeneous interests - for the control of the state and its apparatus. Thus, during the inter-war years, Venizelist republicans stood pitted against anti-Venizelist monarchists in a

protracted struggle for power and hegemony. In the post-war era, it was the conservative right which, having prevailed in the civil war of 1944-1949, systematically suppressed and excluded the (largely communist) left from participation in politics.³⁰ On closer scrutiny, however, we find that the antagonisms underlying the systemic symbiosis actually articulated themselves in a growing confrontation between the 'vertically' (clientelistic) organised representation of particularistic interests and the 'horizontal' organisation of interests defined along mass, class or other lines of social cleavage. Though the great majority of Greeks could still be 'contained' within the bounds of the mainstream clientelistic parties, certain portions of the population began to articulate their collective interests through autonomous, horizontally structured organisations such as the trade unions and the Communist Party. The threat posed to the existing (symbiotic) system, at least potentially, by such non-clientelistic forms of mass mobilisation contributed twice, in 1936 and in 1967, to the breakdown of democracy and the establishment of an authoritarian regime. The civil war and the left-right schism of the post-war decades can thus be understood as expressions of the fundamental conflict between clientelistic and non-clientelistic forms of political organisation. On the other hand, the "national schism" between Venizelists and anti-Venizelists took place wholly within the confines of clientelist power politics and had only marginally to do with the intra-systemic antagonisms considered here.

The transition to the third phase reflects the profound changes which took place after 1974, in particular the consolidation of Greek democracy and the organisational strengthening of the country's political parties. Having been purged of its anti-democratic elements and institutions, the post-1974 state was no longer capable of functioning as an autonomous centre of power. It could thus be occupied by the parties, whose newfound strength rested on their increased centralisation, organisational sophistication and inclusionary mass character. Though all major parties were now unequivocally committed to democracy, their politics (at least up to the mid-1990s) still remained essentially personalistic and particularistic in nature. The co-existence of clientelistic and populist forms of mobilisation, a new situation brought about by the rise of PASOK, testified to the widening of political participation after the fall of the junta, but was also indicative of the continued weakness of civil society *vis-à-vis* the parties and the enormous state bureaucracy.³¹ Under such conditions, clientage relations came to hinge on a close symbiotic connection between the governing party and the state apparatus. Party supporters and activists now became clients of the parties themselves rather than of local patrons, whose influence had been greatly (though as yet not decisively) curtailed by the central party leaderships. Since parties could instrumentalise the state once they were in power in order to control clientelist exchanges, patronage was dispensed directly through the

³⁰ It is an ideosyncrasy of modern Greek history that, with the gradual emergence of mass politics, both the labour movement and most horizontally organised popular interests came to be monopolised by, or at least identified with, the Communist Party. This allowed all forms of mass mobilisation outside the clientelistic parties (and even by the left wing of the Centre Union during the 1960s) to be portrayed by Venizelists, conservatives and the extreme right alike as a communist threat necessitating vehement repression.

³¹ The political control of organised interests via the state, especially as practised by the PASOK government of the 1980s, led Tsoucalas (1986:92-95, cited in Sotiropoulos 1994:4) to speak of a shift towards a more group-oriented (and possibly less crisis-prone) form of patronage politics which he termed 'clientelistic' or 'patronage corporatism'. According to this mode of interest accommodation, preferred social groups (particularly trade unions and professional associations) tend to replace individuals as the primary agents of civil society enjoying differential access to the networks of politicians and civil servants within the state apparatus. Although it is debatable whether group patronage has really taken precedence over individual patronage - and also whether such an arrangement would constitute a genuine form of corporatism (since the basic patron-client character of state-civil society relations remains unchanged) -, it is clear that the system of party-directed clientelism did not stop short of incorporating interest associations into its sphere of operations, particularly during the 1980s. On the control of interest groups by the PASOK government during this period see also Mavrogordatos 1988, 1993.

state apparatus, often in the form of posts in the state bureaucracy. The result was a corrupt and inefficient civil service and a public policy still dominated by particularist interests and practices. The antagonisms which had previously divided groups within the political elite, and later entire segments of the population, now shifted to within the parties themselves, giving rise to recurrent bouts of factional infighting. Despite their undeniably personal overtones, these conflicts have revealed a growing and fundamental divide within both major parties between traditionalists (i.e. adherents of old-style clientelist and populist politics) and modernisers (i.e. proponents of a non-clientelistic approach to politics).

Such was the picture of political clientelism in Greece that presented itself to the analyst at the close of the twentieth century. Recent developments, however, point to the prospect of a radical change in the relationship between clientelism and parliamentarism as the twenty-first century gets underway. The developments in question appear, on the surface, to be primarily a reflection of the present government's efforts during the past half-decade to secure participation in European Monetary Union (EMU). But on a more fundamental level, they can be seen to relate to Greece's accelerated political integration into both the European Union (EU) and the more immediate Balkan region under the conditions of the post-1989 international order. The ultimate questions here are: do these developments tend to encourage new, less clientelistically mediated forms of political inclusion, or increased political abstinence and atomisation as witnessed in many European democracies today? And do they promise to contribute to more or less democratic stability as the parliamentary system attempts to free itself from its congenital dependence on clientelistic modes of organisation and mobilisation? In order to address these questions, we must look at how such 'external' developments are interacting with and influencing the 'internal' evolution described above.

The impact of European integration

Turning first to the process of European integration, it should be stressed that the extent to which EMU has influenced the course of Greek politics during the past five years has been considerable. If accession to full EU membership in 1981 was the single most important factor enabling Greece to overcome its long-standing dependence and underdevelopment, then EMU can arguably be considered the most far-reaching aspect of this process to date. The requirements and constraints entailed by EMU have thus been paramount in shaping the economic and social policy of the PASOK government since Kostas Simitis, the leader of the modernisers' faction, succeeded Andreas Papandreou as prime minister in 1996.

The conditions for participating in EMU were set forth in the Maastricht Treaty of 1992 and comprise a catalogue of strict 'convergence criteria' regarding the public debt, the budget deficit, the rate of inflation, interest rates and relative currency stability.³² Simitis' arguments for submitting to these measures were straightforward: either Greece will become a fully integrated member of the European Union and an integral part of the 'developed' West, or it will soon find itself marginalised within the EU.³³ Though the middle and longer-term costs

³² In order to be eligible for participation in EMU, an EU member must have fulfilled the following economic criteria during a given reference year: (1) the public debt must not exceed 60% of GDP, (2) the yearly budget deficit must not exceed 3% of GDP, (3) the rate of inflation must not be more than 1,5% over the average rate of the three EU countries with the lowest inflation rates, (4) the long-term interest rate must not be more than 2% over the average rate of the three EU countries with the lowest interest rates, (5) the national currency must have participated in the European Monetary System for at least two years without strong fluctuation.

³³ On the eve of Greece's acceptance as the twelfth member of EMU, Simitis underlined once again that "globalisation has ... made it necessary for Greece to belong to a group that can set conditions for the evolution of a more prosperous, more democratic and more just society." (*Athens News*, 16 June 2000:7.)

of remaining outside EMU were considered greater than the short-term costs of fulfilling the Maastricht criteria, the latter have proved to be hardly less formidable than the expected benefits. Placing financial considerations above all else, EMU does not address social, cultural or ecological issues and is conspicuously silent on the question of employment. In keeping with neo-liberal orthodoxy, such matters are considered to be less the responsibility of national policy than of the market, and it is economic stability – in particular price stability – which is seen as the prime guarantor of the market's optimal functioning. Accordingly, large areas of Greek domestic policy have been directly or indirectly ‘occupied’ by the tight macro-economic strategy required by EMU. There is, in fact, very little difference between the policy options open to conservative and socialist governments within the bounds set by Maastricht: its constraints almost automatically subject whatever government happens to be in power to the accusation of pursuing a policy of social demolition and of turning a deaf ear to the problems of the unemployed. What is more, any government committed to fulfilling the EMU criteria (or to achieving ‘real convergence’ after EMU has been attained) must necessarily run the risk of alienating a sizeable portion of its clientele by not being able satisfy their demand for patronage.³⁴

These conditions affect the core aspect of party-state relations as they evolved after 1974: the occupation and instrumentalisation of the state apparatus by the governing party for clientelistic purposes. Of course, the influence of economic liberalism in Greece did not begin with the Maastricht treaty. Tight macroeconomic policies had already been implemented, though with little success, by the conservative Mitsotakis government between 1990 and 1993. It was not until the EMU convergence criteria had become binding as policy guidelines within the EU, however, that liberalisation began to have noticeable effects on the functional prerequisites of what we have called the symbiosis of clientelism and parliamentarism. Charalambis and Demertzis observed as early as 1993 that Greece’s system of “clientelist statism” and the “personified and preferential character of various policy implementations” stood in the way of the country’s prospects within a unified Europe. In their estimation, the imperatives of EU integration would not permit the old “preferential system of political regulation” to continue, but required “the reconstruction of ... market rationality” in order to surmount the “impasse created by state intervention” (Charalambis/Demertzis 1993:229, 230). In this sense, the requirements of economic liberalisation within the EU no longer permit a governing party in Greece to utilise the state as an inexhaustible reservoir of patronage with which to satisfy its electoral clientele. Specifically this means: (a) to the extent that the Greek state will be expected to function as a modern, Western European-style administration according to EU standards (respecting, for example, the principle of meritocracy), parties will no longer be able to occupy and instrumentalise its apparatus in order to distribute posts, favours and surplus; (b) to the extent that both EU regulations and practical necessity compel the state to shed or streamline many of its previous functions (privatisation of state enterprises, reduction of the public bureaucracy), the state will no longer possess the means to provide patronage to large clienteles; (c) to the extent that the

³⁴ This soon became evident to the Simitis government which, as a result of its tight budget and restrictive labour policies, had to contend with massive strikes and protest actions on the part of its hitherto most adamant supporters: farmers, the trade unions, seamen and various categories of civil servants. Faced with the potential defection of a large portion of its traditional clientele, the government had little choice (and, in all fairness, little other inclination) but to turn to non-clientelist, that is policy-oriented methods of attempting to maintain its electoral base. In effect, it staked its reputation on the success of its efforts to bring Greece into EMU, emphasising the benefits this would bring to all strata of society. Upon realising this objective in June 2000, the government immediately announced its next major goal: achieving ‘real convergence’ with the rest of the EU by the end of the decade.

state can no longer be instrumentalised for clientelistic purposes, parties will no longer be able to secure their electoral base by means of state-mediated clientelistic mobilisation.

This should not be understood as implying some sort of mechanistic relationship that will automatically do away with clientelism and corruption now that Greece is a part of EMU. It does, however, suggest that there is a basic incompatibility between the continued existence of political clientelism and Greece's further integration into the structures of the European Union. On the one hand, it is to be expected that Brussels would react to a wholesale re-emergence of state-mediated clientelism by blocking Greece's further EU integration until it had complied with European standards. On the other hand, it is very likely that the current wave of liberalisation, despite all its ambivalencies, will itself prove an important factor in rendering clientelism increasingly dysfunctional and, as a final consequence, perhaps even obsolete. If this is so, then Greece's accession to EMU might turn out to be the first step in a slow but progressive disentanglement of clientelistic interest accommodation and parliamentary representation. Such a 'devolution' would, in due course, help strengthen not only the functional autonomy of the parliamentary system, but also its normative basis within an equally fortified and more autonomous civil society.

There is one adverse aspect of the EMU process which deserves brief mention here. The imperatives of economic liberalism emanating from the EU have not only tended to render the clientelistic mode of interest accommodation dysfunctional, thus contributing to the erosion of a long-standing obstacle to non-particularist parliamentary representation. They have also tended to inhibit the emergence of a genuine issue-based opposition culture: a factor lacking in Greek tradition and which, ideally, is no less essential to the functioning of parliamentary democracy than the overcoming of clientelistic particularism. This problem is not unique to Greece, but it does have particular ramifications in a country with a strong history of personalistic politics. As mentioned above, Maastricht and EMU have restricted the latitude of choice offered any party in matters of socio-economic policy to the point where there is little difference between the options open to a party in government and those available to the opposition. The only way out of this dilemma would be to oppose EMU outright, a position nobody but the communists have thus far seen fit to adopt. While the other opposition parties no longer seem capable of offering a genuine alternative to government policy, the ruling party is only marginally able to distinguish itself from an opposition which is fundamentally in agreement with the goals and spirit of the Maastricht process. The problem here is less that the main parties agree on the basic conduct of EMU-related policy, but rather that they have little choice but to do so, be it out of ideological persuasion (as in the case of the neo-liberal wing of Nea Dimokratia) or in simple recognition of the reality of the situation (as in the case of the PASOK government).³⁵ The middle-term danger to Greece is that personalities and, at the most, side-issues might once again come to dominate the political scene as governing and opposition parties tend to agree more and more on the essentials of domestic and foreign policy.

The effects of Greece's reintegration into the Balkan region

The second externally-induced change in the context of Greek politics is the country's progressive reintegration into the Balkan region. This has had less visible effects on the

³⁵ Simitis has hinted at this fact on several occasions during the past years: if Greece did not meet its economic convergence goals, then "the drachma will be devalued, inflation will climb, foreign borrowing will increase, while employment and prosperity will plummet ... We will have dealt ourselves a national defeat, with social and economic consequences [at home] as well as for our international position. The government does not have any room to accept such a prospect." (*Athens News*, 15 May 1997:3.)

substance of clientelistic relations than EMU, but it is nonetheless worth mentioning because of its influence on an important aspect of what can be termed the ‘political culture of clientelism’. The end of bipolar confrontation and the ensuing process of market globalisation brought about a radical transformation of Greece’s regional environment, in particular the ‘opening’ of the Balkans to Greek political and economic influence after 40 years of relative isolation. The reconstitution of the Balkans as a single region with specific, newly emerging (or re-emerging) patterns of co-operation and conflict has provided Greece with a new political role in the area, and with an expanded field of activity for its industrial and financial resources. Though it was slow to realise these opportunities at first, reacting to the new situation with a policy of “reflexive nationalism and insecurity” (Coufoudakis et al. 1999:424) during the first half of the 1990s, it has since developed a remarkably pragmatic engagement in Balkan affairs. While Athens has become active in attempting to promote Balkan stability in the interest of its own security, Greek investments have sought to make use of the country’s competitive advantages in order to establish a strong, if not dominant economic presence in the region as a whole.

The dissolution of the Soviet bloc has also prompted a redefinition of American interests in both the Balkans (stabilisation, democratisation, market integration and economic development, eventual NATO enlargement) and the Middle East (strategic importance of Israel, the oil-producing countries and NATO ally Turkey - cf. Iatridis 1999). This, in turn, has led to a reassessment of the role of NATO’s ‘south-eastern flank’ with important implications for Greece’s position in the Balkan, Aegean and eastern Mediterranean areas (cf. Papacosma 1999). Athens has expressed its willingness to act a ‘bridge’ should a further expansion of NATO include some or all of the other Balkan countries, and similar considerations have been voiced with regard to NATO’s strategic presence in the Middle East. The disappearance of a ‘common Soviet threat’ has, however, also raised the question of the balance of power between Greece and Turkey within the alliance, and this has led Greece to fear that Ankara might receive preferential treatment from Washington as a result of its enhanced geostrategic significance. The uncertain nature of American interests regarding Turkey contributed initially to a deterioration in relations between Athens and Ankara, allowing the two countries to come to the brink of war in 1966. In recent years, though, the Greek government has – with American backing – made concerted efforts to reach a *modus vivendi* with its arch-rival, and is presently defying large segments of public sentiment by attempting to resolve mutual differences on the basis of bilateral negotiations.³⁶

Greece’s economic and political interests in the Balkans are tightly intertwined and derive not only from the fact that it is geographically a part of the region, but also from its membership of the EU and NATO (cf. Larrabee 1999:331-332). Both organisations have substantial – though seldom identical – interests of their own in the area,³⁷ and both are

³⁶ Ever since Turkey’s occupation of northern Cyprus in 1994, there has been a widespread consensus in Greece that Ankara poses the greatest single threat to Greek security and territorial integrity. After armed conflict was only narrowly averted in 1996, Greece sought to gain a pledge from the EU that it would assume collective responsibility for the protection of its external borders. Reactions on the part of the EU were ambiguous, though, while NATO did not interpret its responsibilities as including the settling of quarrels between its members. This left Greece with little choice but to seek to resolve its differences with Ankara through bilateral negotiations (with, at the most, third-party mediation) before multilateral security arrangements could be considered. Such a bilateral solution could prove advantageous in the long run, since Greece’s efforts to help forge a system of collective security in the Balkans, of which Turkey is a part, cannot but include some sort of arrangement *with* (and not *against*) Turkey, whether this be within the context of the EU or adjacent to it. Time will tell whether such arguments will suffice to convince public opinion of the wisdom of the government’s strategy before a visible reduction in Greek-Turkish tensions is achieved.

³⁷ The differing interests of the EU and the United States became particularly apparent over the handling of the Bosnia and Kosovo crises (cf. Coufoudakis et al 1999:427). On the fundamental interests of the United States

considering expanding to include an as yet unspecified number of southeast European states. Having recognised that, as a small country in a potentially unstable region, its economic and security interests require some form of collective safeguard, Greece has been seeking to coordinate and harmonise its Balkan policies with the rest of the EU, with other European organisations, and also with NATO. It has, in fact, begun to view its Balkan policy as part of a larger (though as yet nonexistent) EU and NATO strategy³⁸, seeing itself in the unique position to act as intermediary between the two organisations and the other countries of the region.³⁹ Its concept of regional integration is thus based on pacification, stability, democratisation and economic development in the short term, and on Balkan integration within the context of the EU and NATO in the longer term. In supporting the maximum enlargement of these organisations, Greece is pursuing the two interests which lie at the heart of its Balkan policy. On the one hand, it reckons that a regional system of collective security will be the best way, with the least cost to itself, of insuring that its northern (and eastern) borders will not remain zones of destabilisation or potential conflict. On the other hand, it is seeking to protect its substantial Balkan investments which it hopes will stimulate the productivity of its own economy and enable it to achieve a position of regional dominance in the not too distant future.⁴⁰ This requires that Athens not only make an active contribution to the resolution of Balkan conflicts (as it has done in Albania and Kosovo), but that it also refrain from entangling itself in useless political confrontations which, at best, serve to appease nationalist sentiment at home.

The point here is that Greece's active participation in the economic and political restructuring of the Balkans has begun to influence not only the dynamics, but also the substance of its foreign policy. The Simitis government's pragmatic and multilateral approach to Balkan politics represents a fundamental break with the more nationalist and unilateralist policies pursued by the Mitsotakis and Papandreou governments between 1989 and 1996. Though Greece obviously still seeks to defend what it sees as its 'national' interests in the area, this no longer implies engaging in confrontational alliances or attempting to establish competitive spheres of influence (cf. Couloumbis 1997). Moreover, the sensationalist exploitation of foreign policy issues for party political gain, a time-honoured tradition closely linked to clientelist and populist mobilisation strategies⁴¹, is gradually beginning to be

and the major western European countries in the Balkans, particularly with regard to Greece's status in the region, cf. also Fakiolas 1998:101-103.

³⁸ According to Coufoudakis et al. (199:426), the lack of a unified EU and NATO strategy has compromised the leading role that Greece might otherwise be playing in the Balkans. Aside from the ongoing rivalry between the United States and the EU in this area, the EU has never succeeded in developing a coherent Balkan strategy of its own, so that its individual members have tended to favour bilateral rather than multilateral policies in the region.

³⁹ Athens has, for example, been playing an active mediatory role in Serbia ever since the Kosovo crisis by utilising its traditionally friendly ties with Belgrade.

⁴⁰ That Greece will be able to assume a leading role of its own in the Balkans, be it economic and/or political, is by no means an uncontested fact. Fakiolas (1998:71-72), for example, argues that although the distribution of power between Greece and its Balkan neighbours is indeed in Greece's favour, this "structural opportunity" is restricted "by several systemic imperatives and domestic constraints: the strong economic and diplomatic presence of the great powers, the significant political penetration and strategic importance of Turkey, the political disputes with FYROM and Albania, and the serious problems of Greek economy." Fakiolas sees too many domestic constraints and conflicts of interest with the United States and the other EU members for Greece to be able to achieve and sustain a position of "regional primacy" at present. What is needed, therefore, is a more modest and realistic strategy that will enable Greece to play "a pragmatic but active role [as a partner in leadership in the New Balkans,] commensurate with its structural position and real political and economic weight, as well as with its elites' and people's expectations." (1998:103-104.)

recognised as detrimental to Greece's own interests. Accordingly, the largely counter-productive conflict with the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) over the country's name, which had previously been instrumentalised by all Greek parties for their own political advantage, has been kept at a low profile in the interest of a pragmatic solution and improved relations between Athens and Skopje. This new realism (which represents a weakening of the clientelistic element in the approach to foreign relations) does not yet seem to have been accepted by all leading opposition politicians, nor by the oppositional populist wing within PASOK, but it has become standard practice in the present government's dealings with its Balkan and Aegean neighbours.

The price of this more integrative approach to Balkan policy has been a certain restriction in Greece's foreign policy options, dictated both by its obligations to the EU and NATO and by its own, mainly economic interests in the region. Nonetheless, it shows that Greece has overcome much of the immobility and isolation which previously characterised its foreign relations: a condition which was no less due to the instrumentalisation of foreign issues for domestic gain than to the country's traditional impotence in the international arena. As mentioned above, Greece's accession to full European Community membership in 1981 brought to an end the era in which parties and governments would seek the protection of a patron power while assigning to Greece the role of a client state. Now that the country's national interests have become so closely linked with both global market and regional collective security imperatives, it appears that the second externally-oriented aspect of Greek clientelism – the demagogic practice of exploiting foreign policy issues for purposes of popular mobilisation – has begun to prove dysfunctional as well.

Developments within the political parties

Clientelism is, of course, a domestic political phenomenon. This does not mean that international developments cannot exercise a powerful and, at times, even decisive influence on the mutation of clientelistic formations within a specific polity. Such has often been the case in Greece, where clientelism and the official political system are so closely intertwined and functionally interdependent. Nonetheless, if indications of a beginning disentanglement of clientelistic and parliamentary structures are now becoming apparent, then these must necessarily be rooted in the political system itself. Without wanting to deny the importance of political culture and normative orientations (neither of which can be discussed here) for the functioning of clientelist systems, we shall now focus our attention on developments within the political parties and, by extension, on their relationship to the state and civil society.

Why the parties? As indicated above, the functional symbiosis of clientelism and parliamentarism was characterised from the outset by an inherent, protracted and often schismatic antagonism between the beneficiaries of existing clientelistic arrangements ('traditionalists' of one sort or other) and the proponents of 'modernisation' (a notion representing different things in different periods). Interspersed with occasional dictatorial interludes, this antagonism has seen local oligarchs pitted against the advocates of a centralised bureaucratic state, representatives of the upcoming entrepreneurial bourgeoisie attempting to contain the emergence of class-based popular interests, and the political right combatting and disenfranchising the entire political left. After 1974, however, these

⁴¹ The archetypal example of this was the *Megáli Idéa*, the Byzantine-inspired doctrine of irredentism which dominated Greek foreign policy from the establishment of the monarchy in 1833 up to the expulsion of Asia Minor's Greek population by Turkey in 1922. But even in the early 1990s, "populist politicians played up the specter of a 'Muslim Arc' extending along Greece's northern and eastern frontiers to a population susceptible to Turkey's threat, and promoted policy alternatives for an isolated Greece along an imaginary common 'Orthodox Axis', extending from Moscow to Belgrade and Athens." (Coufoudakis et al. 1999:424)

antagonisms lost their overtly *social* (i.e. inter-group) character by becoming entrenched *within* the political parties themselves. This development went hand in hand with a tremendous growth in the power of the parties relative to the state and civil society. It also witnessed the gradual disempowerment of local bosses and autonomous political personalities in favour of ‘modern’ party leaders and cadres. The question of whether the antagonistic union of clientelism and parliamentarism will soon become obsolete, yielding to an increased autonomy of both civil society and the public sphere, therefore has a lot to do with how the political parties see their future role. If Greece’s major parties can bring themselves to cease instrumentalising the state and civil society for particularistic ends, whether by way of political conviction or as a wise reaction to altered circumstances, then clientelism might indeed become a relatively marginal phenomenon by the end of the present decade.

Though it is still too early to make definite prognoses, changes have been taking place within nearly all political parties since the mid-1990s which could prove decisive in this regard. The most striking of these changes have been (a) a gradual process of factional realignment and ideologisation within both PASOK and Nea Dimokratia, and (b) indications that a “two plus” party system (PASOK, Nea Dimokratia and the Communist Party) might presently be evolving. Though one might be tempted to speak of late ideologisation in an increasingly post-ideological era, these developments do seem to represent a definite (though admittedly retarded and not necessarily final) break with the tradition of political personalism. Increasingly, parties and factions alike are projecting public images which reflect general policy orientations and ideological principles rather than highlighting personal loyalties or charismatic leaders. This process of ideologisation (or, better perhaps, “objectification”) has been facilitated by the passing of the two great figures of post-1974 Greek politics, Konstantinos Karamanlis and Andreas Papandreou, whose strong charismatic personalities left little room for ideological or policy-oriented dialogue within their respective parties.⁴² Especially since Simitis’ succession of Papandreou as prime minister in January 1996, the political forces within PASOK and Nea Demokratia have tended to gravitate towards one of two poles which can be interpreted as intra-party reflections of the changing political landscape in Greece as a whole. On the one side there has emerged within each party a more traditionalist and populistically oriented wing, generally including the old-guard supporters of

⁴² Charisma has traditionally been a central element of Greek politics, and it played a particularly important role in mobilising the masses behind Nea Dimokratia and PASOK during the 1970s and 1980s. Pappas sees the recent disappearance of the charismatic factor as contributing to the growing indistinguishability of the two main parties and, by extension, to the probability of Greek society undergoing a rapid process of depoliticisation in the near future. Since he also considers the traditional left-right cleavage to have become meaningless, both ideologically and with regard to economic policy, he sees little room for genuine political competition and thus no real future for the existing party system. “[U]nless other parties manage to convincingly emerge at the flanks of the party system, there are only two possibilities: either a precarious and pathogenic survival of the old party system, or its complete replacement with an entirely new one.” (Pappas 1999:206.)

Pappas’ evaluation appears to have been strongly influenced by developments which have taken place in Western European democracies during the past decade (main party convergence, deideologisation, political apathy). Perhaps this is why he does not seem to take into full account the specificities of the Greek tradition of clientelism and personalism. Not only does the momentary absence of charismatic leaders contribute to the possibility of overcoming the remnants of that extreme form of personalism which has typified Greek politics ever since independence. It also opens the prospect of political competition taking place less on the basis of a candidates’ personal appeal, and more on the basis of party programmes and policies – at least to a much greater extent than was ever possible in Greece before. Socio-political tendencies which have manifested themselves in Western European societies with very different political(-cultural) histories can, but must not necessarily, come to the surface in Greece with the same intensity as in their countries of origin.

Pappas’ two other propositions – that the political significance of “left” and “right” has become obsolete, and that, by implication, alternative (i.e. non-neo-liberal) economic policies are no longer possible in today’s globalised world – have been the subject of innumerable long and controversial debates which cannot be taken up here.

the original party founders, which is more prone to using old-style methods of securing political support (clientelism, patronage). On the other side, both PASOK and Nea Dimokratia have developed a more technocratically oriented wing which, emphasising policy above personality, has become particularly sensitised to the challenges of liberalisation and globalisation as mediated by the processes of European and Balkan integration. Although these divisions are still quite personal in their outward appearance, particularly in the case of Nea Dimokratia, the infighting which periodically erupts within both parties does reveal a noticeably stronger ideological content than the factional conflicts of earlier periods. There has also been much talk recently about “restructuring” both PASOK and Nea Dimokratia, and although no concrete proposals have as yet been forthcoming, one can assume that the modernisers in both parties are thinking of more Western-style democratic structures that will break the remaining power of the old-school “political barons”.

The close results of the April 2000 parliamentary elections⁴³ seem to support the thesis that PASOK and Nea Dimokratia are in the process of evolving into barely distinguishable, centrist, catch-all parties to the detriment of the smaller and splinter parties.⁴⁴ Such a ‘main party convergence’ scenario is conceivable, but not yet certain. It is still an open question whether Nea Dimokratia and PASOK will succeed in consolidating their forces around the political centre, or whether they will split in the middle term. It is also far from clear whether the various splinter parties (such as the right-wing Political Spring, the left-populist DIKKI, and even the formerly ‘euro-communist’ Left Coalition) will disappear after their recent series of electoral defeats, continue to exist as marginal formations, or integrate themselves – wholly or in part – into the larger political parties or camps. All that can be said is that at the moment, four broad political-ideological tendencies appear to be emerging which promise, in one form or other, to dominate the Greek political landscape during the coming years. First, there is the traditional democratic right, represented principally by the old ‘statist’ conservatives within Nea Dimokratia, and possibly including some farther-right elements which are currently at odds with party leadership’s more tactically motivated centrist course. Second, there is the new centre-right, as yet without definite contours, but presently occupied by the neo-liberal conservatives in Nea Dimokratia⁴⁵ and the ideologically less definable centrist tendency led by party chairman Kostas Karamanlis. Third, there is the centre-left, represented mainly by Simitis’ social-democratic technocrats in PASOK, but also including, potentially, various break-away factions from the smaller left-wing parties such as the ‘modernists’ who recently split off from the Left Coalition. (It is imaginable that the centre-left and centre-right might at one point move close enough together so as to appear, ideologically at least, as a single broad political centre, but this is still conjecture.) Finally, there is the wholly disunited left, encompassing the populist opposition within PASOK, the remaining two factions of the Left Coalition, the remnants of left-wing splinter groups such as DIKKI, and the Communist Party.

While the parties of the left have never been clientelistic, the forces of the traditional right, given their personal composition and political orientation, will most likely be the last to

⁴³ Due to the system of ‘reinforced’ proportional representation, PASOK was just able to renew its mandate to govern with 43.8 % of the votes (158 seats). Nea Dimokratia came in a very close second with 42.7% (but only 125 seats), while the communists polled a mere 5.5% (11 seats). The Left Coalition barely managed to enter parliament with 3.2% (6 seats), while the left-populist party DIKKI, which had won 9 seats in 1996, failed to overcome the 3% barrier.

⁴⁴ See again Pappas (1999:205), who finds that Nea Dimokratia and PASOK “have grown increasingly indistinguishable in terms of the social groups they represent, the ideological tenets they support, and the policy platforms they propose.”

⁴⁵ This group also includes several liberal politicians who were expelled from Nea Dimokratia for acting contrary to the instructions of the party leadership.

separate themselves from old-style ideas and practices. This leaves the centre as the political space where change is most possible and likely. The prospect of an evolution towards non-clientelistic forms of political integration is supported by the existence of a new generation of political elites within both PASOK and Nea Dimokratia whose power is rooted not in traditional clientelist networks and personal loyalties, but within the party organisations themselves.

Simitis, for example, was a former party dissident and a proclaimed opponent of both political clientelism and Papandreou-style populism. Having set out to modernise and restructure both PASOK and the state bureaucracy, he has been surprisingly successful in consolidating his leadership and gaining support within the party for his pragmatic policies. Although his election as party chairman was accompanied by the inevitable intra-party power struggles, the emergence of a 'technocratic' (right) and a 'populist' (left) wing within PASOK has proved less divisive in the middle term than might have been expected at the time.⁴⁶ Since then, Simitis has attempted to redefine PASOK as a 'reform socialist' party, setting his policies of 'adjustment with a social face'⁴⁷ against the hard-core neo-liberalism propagated both by the business community and from within Nea Dimokratia. Though he had originally hoped to win the support of the Left Coalition, and possibly also of DIKKI, for a broad centre-left alliance, he has subsequently seen himself compelled to vie with Nea Dimokratia for the all-important centre-right vote (to which he owed his comfortable electoral majority of 1996). He has thus had to walk the tightrope of modelling policies which appeal to the political centre, while at the same time attempting to hold the loyalty of PASOK's traditional constituency on the left, all the while courting the risk of running afoul of both labour and business interests.⁴⁸ Until now, despite the mass of social protest it has had to confront, his government has succeeded in retaining sufficient popular support (and sufficient support within the party) to continue in office. Most important of all, it has done so not by resorting to the distribution of favours and spoils, but by the merit of its policies and political achievements, the latest of which has been Greece's acceptance as the twelfth member of EMU.

Compared with PASOK's relative strength and stability, Nea Dimokratia is at a disadvantage in several respects. Having been in government for only three and a half years since PASOK first assumed power in 1981, the conservatives have very few younger members with political experience, and many higher party offices are still held by politicians of the elder generation. In addition, the party is far more disunited than PASOK has ever been since Papandreou's death in 1996. During the six months leading up to the election of Kostas Karamanlis (the nephew of the party founder) as chairman in March 1997, Nea Dimokratia was shaken by factional infighting which brought it to the brink of rupture. Although outwardly focused on personalities more than on policies, this confrontation revealed, for the first time, the existence of a fundamental ideological divide between the party's traditional,

⁴⁶ The populist opposition within PASOK generally accuses Simitis of betraying the legacy of party founder Papandreou and of alienating the party from its popular base. Despite minor confrontations over various issues, though, the old guard seems to pose little danger to Simitis' leadership at the moment. If there is to be a challenge to his position in the foreseeable future, then this will most likely come from ambitious cabinet members within his own inner circle, some of whom have already begun to build up independent power bases within the party.

⁴⁷ Simitis' efforts to secure Greece's entry into EMU without endangering social cohesion required a precarious balance between fiscal discipline and social spending. In pursuing this aim, his government attempted to salvage some of the non-market prerogatives and social policy instruments which the state has been under pressure to renounce.

⁴⁸ All in all, the business community has shown itself to be much more supportive of Simitis' socio-economic policies than has labour or any other social group.

state-oriented conservative faction and its neo-liberal wing. The so-called ‘loyalists’, political heirs to party founder Konstantinos Karamanlis, are advocates of a limited but nonetheless significant role of the state as a regulatory instance in economic affairs, and are also more firmly rooted in the tradition of old-style clientelism and patronage.⁴⁹ The neo-liberals, for their part, espouse a radical free-market philosophy, and have since voiced an unmistakable claim to the party leadership. In a manner similar to Simitis’ ‘technocrats’, but for different ideological reasons, they are essentially non-clientelistic inasmuch as the ‘lean state’ they envisage would be unable to provide the spoils and favours needed to bind a sizeable political clientele. The importance they attach to the rationality of the market also puts them at odds with both clientelistic particularism and the practice of political protection, at least to the extent that this would interfere with the free play of market forces. The crisis within Nea Dimokratia was temporarily defused by Karamanlis’ election as party chairman, but since he was a compromise candidate without a power base of his own, his leadership soon began to be put in question: by the conservative right-wing faction who oppose the party’s drift towards the centre, and by the neo-liberals who criticise his lack of experience and leadership qualities. The accession of a younger generation of neo-liberals to the party leadership now seems a realistic possibility, and this would presumably alter Nea Dimokratia’s political character even more radically than was the case with PASOK after Simitis succeeded Papandreou. Of no less consequence, though at the moment less likely, would be the split of Nea Dimokratia and the formation of an independent, neo-liberal, only marginally clientelist right-of-centre party which would enter into direct competition with PASOK for the middle-of-the-road electorate.

Summary and concluding observations

Clientelism is a broad and complex subject, and many of its important facets could not be touched upon here. Still, what has been said should suffice to elucidate the core aspects of what constitutes Greek clientelism today. The concept of a ‘functional symbiosis’ of two essentially antagonistic systems (also referred to as the ‘systemic symbiosis’) was introduced in order to emphasise both the functional interdependence and principal instability of the relationship which has developed between clientelism and the parliamentary system during the past two centuries. It also intended to highlight the fact that Greek clientelism does not, as some earlier anthropological studies might seem to suggest, exist independently of the political system, but that it is also not simply a part of it – as Pappas (1999:200) appears to imply with his proposition that, in order not to “consider clientelism as a mere anomaly in the political system”, it be regarded as “as a major systemic property (or, in a sense, as the system itself).” Furthermore, by tracing the historical evolution of modern Greek clientelism, we

⁴⁹ It is interesting to note that Nea Dimokratia’s conservative wing has never embraced populism as a political strategy. It acquired a populist taint, however, when the party’s former leader, Miltiadis Evert, attempted to outflank Simitis on the left after PASOK captured parts of Nea Dimokratia’s traditional centre-right constituency in the 1996 parliamentary elections. Evert’s populist posturing made him unpopular among the business community and also alienated him from large portions of the party’s grassroots. Although he controlled the party machine (and thus the primary means of distributing patronage to the party’s clientele), a group of influential loyalists succeeded in pushing him aside in favour of Karamanlis, whom they considered a more generally acceptable candidate for the 1997 elections to the party chairmanship. Though Karamanlis had long been considered an Evert protégé, both factions pledged him their support in a bid for party unity. His election was welcomed by the business community, who expressed the hope that he would abandon his predecessors’ pro-state economic policies and, with the aid of competent advisors, formulate an explicitly market-oriented policy devoid of Evert-style populism. Karamanlis, however, is not a neo-liberal by persuasion, and his image has suffered greatly because of his inability to develop a political profile or formulate a coherent policy.

have been able to identify many of the system's ideosyncracies and develop a more precise notion of the present trajectory of its development.

In particular, it has become clear in historical perspective that several socio-political prerequisites of the original systemic symbiosis have either ceased to exist or been transformed to the point of marginal relevance. For example, urbanisation, socio-geographic mobility and, more recently, television have undermined traditional village and family/clan structures to the extent that localism, at least as a parameter of interest definition, is largely a thing of the past. Similarly, the basic needs of the population have become progressively generalised and 'socialised' as a result of Greece's economic development (for example, the emergence of regional and national labour markets) so that it is proving increasingly difficult for ordinary Greeks to define their needs in a purely particularistic manner. Though large portions of the electorate still tend to react very traditionally to political phenomena – "the influence of political tradition is still strong ... and the political system's running and organization are widely accepted" (Charalambis/Demertzis 1993:230)– it is obvious that the material basis of the population's needs and interests has changed radically since the heyday of the local notables and political bosses.

The prospect of a 'disentanglement' of clientelistic and parliamentary structures derives from the specific interaction of internal and external factors in the present historical situation. On the one hand there is the evolutionary process which has made Greece's political parties the central element of clientelistic relations (and also of political power) in the contemporary period, and on the other there are the challenges posed by the processes of EU and Balkan integration. The new external situation (in particular the legal, political and structural requirements of EU harmonisation) have created imperatives which, in conjunction with the internal conditions of the Greek polity (in particular the highly asymmetric party-state power relationship), make the continued existence of political clientelism an anachronism. Not only does EU integration demand non-particularistic approaches and solutions to common tasks, but also an efficient public administration and the retreat of the state from areas which previously permitted it to accumulate surplus and dispense it in the form of patronage. In addition, the demands placed on Greece's foreign policy no longer permit this area to be instrumentalised for purposes of partisan mobilisation at home. The country's future status in Europe and in the more immediate Balkan region will largely depend on whether Athens' foreign policy will be able to preserve its newly acquired autonomy from nationalist pressures and demagogic manipulations.

In view of their key position within the existing systemic symbiosis, it is the political parties, and the parties alone, which will be in a position to deal clientelism the definitive *coup de grace*. As Diamandouros (1997:30) observes, "despite powerful opposition [in particular from within the state-controlled sector], the forces favoring reform and identifying with alternative, universalistic logics of social change are gradually gaining momentum." Such a reform will require nothing less than the establishment of a new, non-hegemonistic relationship of the parties to both the state and civil society. This implies not only a thoroughgoing reform of the state (affecting both the quality and functional autonomy of its various agencies), but also the relinquishment of control over civil society so as to enable it to develop its own autonomous organisations independent of the identities fabricated by the parties and the ideological discourse they project. It also presupposes a progressive democratisation of internal party structures, both within PASOK and Nea Dimokratia, so that the new generation of political elites will possess the necessary intra-party legitimation to be able to undertake reforms of such magnitude.

Most of the more recent studies cited here conclude by pointing to the inability of clientelism to cope with the tasks facing Greece today, in particular that of pursuing the

country's further integration into the European Union. At the same time, they all appear convinced that overcoming clientelism is not only a necessary, but also a feasible undertaking, however difficult its realisation may prove in practice. Pappas (1999:202) raises the point that clientelism cannot constitute adequate means for rational (i.e. generally beneficial) economic and social policies, since its particularist nature automatically excludes certain segments of the population from state benefits. He argues that economic rationality must finally take precedence over political expediency, this being the only means of overcoming clientelism's endemic corruption and propensity for crisis. In a similar vein, Charalambis and Demertzis (1993:230) stress that the personified and preferential character of policy implementation typical of "clientelist statism" must necessarily prove disadvantageous to Greece within the context of the European Union. They consider the market rationality imposed by EU integration as the most effective solution to the kind of administrative crises under which Greece has repeatedly suffered in the past. Diamandouros (1997:34-37) goes even further and argues for radical structural reforms in practically all sectors of Greek society, noting that otherwise the international competitiveness of the country's social and economic structures – and also the legitimacy of the political system – will not be able to be guaranteed. Such reforms "should be regarded as a one-way policy option, the reversal of which would have extremely adverse implications for Greece's future." (1997:30) In particular he proposes: (1) a radical shrinking of the state bureaucracy (professionalisation, meritocracy) and the state-controlled economic sector (deregulation; privatisation); (2) reforms in the areas of education, the media, and with regard to the mass of the self-employed (who have been traditionally dependent on the state for survival); (3) initiatives on the part of the political parties to promote the democratisation of their internal structures; and (4) measures to enable civil society to alter its traditional patterns of interaction with the state and achieve a new degree of autonomy.

Though I agree with the basic tenor of these arguments, namely that there is no alternative to ridding Greek politics of its remaining clientelistic elements, I would like to push this line of reasoning to its logical conclusion. Barring a major crisis in the process of European integration or in European/Balkan security, it is hardly conceivable that Greece's present course of development will *not* lead to a marginalisation of political clientelism in the relatively near future. This should not be taken to mean that utopia is just around the corner, but simply that clientelism should slowly be coming to the end of its road. Of course, Greece is still beset by elements of economic and political underdevelopment (relative to the requirements of its parliamentary system), and these are reflected *inter alia* in the weakness of civil society and the lack of a normative consensus regarding the nature of the public sphere and the *citoyen*. In contrast to the West, where the Enlightenment spawned such ideas as human rights, individual freedom and the social contract – ideas which subsequently sought, and then found, practical realisation (1776, 1789) –, normativity will have to follow function and political necessity in Greece. However, given the reality of political development in both Greece and Europe today, the only conceivable way clientelism could maintain its symbiotic relationship with parliamentary politics would be at the price of a chronic functional crisis of the system, and this would certainly be unacceptable to all segments of society save a waning minority of residual vested interests.

It is still too early to judge to what extent Greece's political development will begin to mirror that of the 'established' European democracies, in its negative as well as its positive aspects. As Greece becomes more and more a part of the larger European socio-political system, it will certainly experience some of the same less encouraging phenomena that can be observed in other, so-called 'more advanced' European polities: political apathy and cynicism, possibly at some point the danger of low voter turnouts (though this is at the moment not the case), a general disenchantment with political parties (if the convergence

between them does indeed become too great), and the danger of a return to Papandreou-style populism if other meaningful forms of political participation are not developed. In the closing years of the Papandreou era, Charalambis and Demertzis (1993:231) foresaw a significant intensification of political cynicism and a renaissance of reactionary, extreme right-wing ideologies to the degree that the “economic and administrative crisis (deindustrialisation and the limitation of distributable resources, undermining clientelism)” could no longer be compensated by the accustomed level of economic welfare. The resulting insecurity promised, in their view, to plunge Greek society into “a condition of immobility (the ‘no way out’ mentality) that fuels cynicism and the acceptance of authoritarian measures by the state, paralleled by the continuation of clientelist party-politics.” This assessment resembles closely the worst-case scenario I outlined five years later (Zink 1997:34-35): “[T]he radical liberalisation of the Greek economy, particularly if carried out by a Nea Dimokratia government less mindful of social issues [than the present PASOK government], could provoke a serious upsurge in unemployment while simultaneously eroding the country's shaky welfare system. ... [N]eo-liberalism views increased productivity in a deregulated economy as a more solid basis for general welfare than traditional state-centred programmes and institutions. However, it is doubtful if Greece's private sector, still structurally backward and relatively unproductive, would be equipped to compensate for the rapid withdrawal of the state from its present social responsibilities. It can be assumed that such a move would weaken the cohesion and stability of Greek society as a whole, and this would not only tend to reinforce existing forms of particularism and increase the risk of corruption, but could also be detrimental to the legitimacy of the country's democratic institutions. To the extent that democracy were perceived as no longer being able to ‘deliver the goods’, it is conceivable that new forms of particularism [c]ould emerge alongside the old, and that some of these (as in parts of Eastern Europe today) would be clearly outside the scope of legality.”

Happily for Greece, neither of these predictions has been borne out by subsequent developments, at least not yet. This is due in part to the Simitis government's unexpected degree of success, both in retaining the support of the electorate during years of austerity and in achieving its goal of Greece being accepted for EMU membership in January 2001. But it is also due to the fact that Greece's starting point on the road to liberalisation and EMU was considerably different than that of the other EU members. For example, the traditional “over-politisation” of the Greek population is a direct result of clientelistic particularism, so the progressive emergence of ideologically motivated and/or issue-oriented politics, even under conditions of main party convergence, could very well appear to Greece's voters as an *increase* in concrete political choice. (This would be in contrast to the rest of Europe, where both ideologically defined and issue-oriented politics are not new and have provided the electorate with substantially more choice in the past). At the same time, it should be remembered that cynicism, political alienation and resignation have a long tradition in Greece, bred by the experience of particularism and the preferential implementation of state policies. This, however, never gave rise to a crisis of legitimation or motivation because it was precisely through political participation that the large number of politically interested ‘clients’ ensured that their economic needs would be met (cf. Charalambis/Demertzis 1993:230). Accordingly, an apparent increase in political disinterest or cynicism in Greece might well conceal a wholly different phenomenon than in western Europe, namely the crisis of clientelistic spoils distribution and the consequent disappearance of the “over-politicisation” syndrome. There are factors that speak for and against the likelihood of a serious crisis of political motivation in Greece, and too many elements are presently in flux to allow for concrete predictions. All that can be said with a fair degree of certainty is that, under present conditions, Greek democracy will no longer be able to function the way it used to, symbiotically linked to an increasingly restrictive and dysfunctional clientelist inheritance.

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