Barbara Syrrakos
Department of Political Science
And Committee for Historical Studies
The Graduate Faculty
New School University
65 Fifth Avenue
New York, NY 10013
bsyrrakos@yahoo.com

Methodological and Conceptual Problems Concerning Analysis of Political Participation of Greek Farmers

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bsyrrakos@yahoo.com

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Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to delineate some of the problems encountered in formulating a critical model for assessing the political participation of farmers in Greece. In as much as Greece has embarked on an economic modernization project at least since the devaluation of the drachma in the middle 1980s, followed by an upswing in the service sector, it nonetheless retains elements of its economic past that relentlessly trouble its future. The persistence of the family farm and the smallish composition of agribusiness put Greece squarely in the category of countries – unlike Ireland or France and like Romania and Poland – which are under-transformed and strong agriculture labor countries. Though efforts are being made in the countryside to render it more efficient and to attract young farmers, under both EU auspices and Greek auspices, it is clear, in the midst of higher than 3% GDP growth over the last three years and a history-making cultural splash in the international arena best represented by the Olympiad of 2004, that Greece still struggles with its agrarian identity, its agrarian past and its agrarian political predicament, which is to say there isn't one.

Where are Greece's farmers politically today? How does one make sense of a scholarly literature on Greek farmers that is scant and the opinions of four Greek experts in the areas of political economy, political history, agricultural research and, law, who when asked the question of whether farmers matter politically in Greece today, registered the following answers: "Oh yes"; "It is not my area of expertise"; "Ah, they're all PASOK"; and, "Do you mean *agrotes*? There is no issue." This absence can only mean one thing: That farmers do matter, but in what way?

In the course of research to frame an issue that has no real fixed contours, I turned to existing historical, anthropological, political-economic and political science models of farmer – or, indeed, peasant – analysis, for they are not the same thing. What I will try to lay out in the following pages is the journey I took, the conditions that make Greece a unique case, and the solution I found to "measure", we might say, the political role – or "demand-making role" – of Greek farmers.

Overview of Operational Themes

`"The most dramatic and far-reaching social change of the second half of this century, and the one which cuts us off for ever from the world of the past, is the death of the peasantry," wrote Eric Hobsbawm about the twentieth century.[i] While this clearly is a historical observation, there are political implications too compelling to ignore. Hobsbawm's declaration of the ongoing decline of farming as an occupation -- and a way of life -- in the industrialized world revealed a simple truth. While farmers were once dominant in numbers, their access to social and political power was both limited and facilitated by their class. The case is obviously different today, but not everywhere. Alongside the shrinking numbers of people who work the land there has evolved, though unevenly, a disproportionate elevation in their political and social power – and, more so, access to wealth. One reason for this, in the "old world", is the concerted interest among unified European states since the 1950s to protect their farmers with incentives to growth or stability.

There are two main universes therefore within which we can assess Greek farmers, the first in the national domain, and the second in the "Europeanized" domain of the European Union. Greece has the most farmers as a percentage of the active workforce among the member states of the European Union excluding those who joined in May 2004. Inasmuch as one can say Greece is therefore an upper classman to the newcomers, the experience of Greek farmers may be instructive for farmers in some of the new EU countries whose farming sector is much larger, and less "developed", than Greece's. There are enough socio-economic attributes among farmers, after all, which ring true universally. Similar to their brethren in other fast-changing economies, Greek farmers straddle the dueling destinies of growth and decline. Greece's full membership in the European Union since 1981 has brought farmers into the fold of its subsidy regime, and they are therefore members of the club that affords them privileged access to opportunities for efficiency and modernization, but not for all of them. Paradoxically, nearly a quarter century after membership, most of Greece's farmers remain small-scale subsistence farmers, who are marginal to the market and therefore receive few if any of the benefits the EU offers commercial farmers or those with larger holdings.[ii] And despite a creeping downward trend, Greek farmers produce the largest share of GDP relative to population among all EU-15 countries.[iii]

It stands to reason that as a sector, farmers have much to gain and little to lose by organizing in voluntary associations and by engaging with the market.[iv] That the Greek state, and farmers themselves, have both helped and hindered these endeavors underscores the uneven status farmers hold as political actors and economic contributors. Both pluralist and corporatist impulses in Greek society have linked political parties and governments with farmers' groups, yet Greek farmers have traditionally not had the political clout of their counterparts in, for example, France, a founding member of the EU, or in Poland, a newcomer to the EU.[v]

Because farming subsidies once granted by the Greek state were largely replaced by subsidies originating from the EU after 1981, the production structure in the agriculture sector across the two periods has shown to be stable. Despite efforts to maximize labor productivity and reform land holdings, subsidies have contributed to overproduction and inefficiencies in the farming sector since protection isolates farmers from market competition.[vi] This is slowly being changed with the January 2005 implementation of a reformed agriculture policy emanating from the European Union, decoupling subsidy payouts from production. Nonetheless, without advocating a strict political-economy theory, one could argue that disincentives therefore exist for farmer activism or political party courtship of the farming sector, since their relationship is overridden by policies originating in EU concertation. And one could further argue that farmer politics at the national level in Greece are in disarray because of EU-level competencies which affect the farmer's daily life more than do Greek national competencies.[vii]

Greek Agriculture in Historical Context

Unlike land tenure patterns of northern Europe or Latin America for whom large estates have defined much of their social, political and economic histories, Greek land holdings have tended to reflect the Greek ideal of enabling every denizen the right to hold private property, with a view not of large estates or latifundia, which were common only briefly in the regions of Macedonia and Thrace in the north and in Attica, but of small plots. This was a terrestrial version of a chicken in every pot policy designed to afford landless peasants the object of their agitation. Land distribution began in this vein in 1871. After Greek independence from the Ottoman Turks, which began in earnest in 1821, land seizure took the form of a national acquisition, the results of which became recognized internationally as "national lands." Arable earth therefore was the state's to give away, with plots averaging one hectare in size, granted to some 80% of the rural population.

Under the Lausanne settlement of 1923 authorizing the exchange of populations between Greece and Turkey, Greece, underpopulated but with a high level of land stress and limited arable land, repatriated some 1.5 million refugees. Coutsoumaris has noted that "without risk of major deviation," it is safely assumed, based on Greek official statistics and other secondary accounts, that most of the Greek refugees settled in the countryside. For the 20-year period between 1920 and 1940, taking into account natural increases in "farm people" of about 1.2 million from a1920 stock of 3.7 million, and a rural outmigration of about 450,000 persons, refugees brought the farm population in 1940 to 4.6 million.[viii] Allotted parcels were larger, averaging 4-6 plots per family or sometimes 10-18, but they were not contiguous and rarely in the same general region. This land grant system created a patchwork of holdings, making family land management inefficient and unnecessarily labor intensive, if only for the time involved in traveling from one plot to another. Greek agriculture today, with its emphasis on the family farm as the core of agricultural production, is the direct heir of policies designed in times of crisis, some 80 and 150 years ago.[ix]

During the same epoch of the population exchange, the southern region of the Peloponnese organized a national party representing the peasants. Agricultural cooperatives there formed the Panhellenic Agrarian Congress which in turn formed the Greek Agrarian Party in 1923, a victim, ultimately, of the polarization in Greek society at the time between the Venizelist Liberal Party and the People's Party of the royalists, and a lack of harmonizing, ideological vision for the farmers' cause. It was, all told, a wayward fish in the parting sea of Greek partisanship, with its highest membership at 20,000 in 1936, and garnering, in its moment, 6.17% of the vote and 11 of 250 parliamentary seats, a performance similar to that of the Communist Party of Greece today.[x]

In the post-war period, there was an enormous rural exodus of approximately 1.5 million persons, a number nearly equal to the influx of refugees a quarter century earlier. Many of the post-war generation found work in Germany, which was receptive to guest workers, and others settled in Greek metropoles including Athens. This phenomenon signaled the need to reform the countryside, and between the 1960's and 1981, when Greece became a full member of the EU, the national agriculture policy adopted price supports designed to reduce economic class and regional divisions and to generally raise the standard of living in the countryside. In the thirty years however between 1961 and 1991, continued outmigration reduced the agriculture population by more than half, from 45% to about 17%. Nevertheless, the Greek farming sector remains the largest in the EU, with the family farm dominant and the "self-employed" category in agriculture increasing over the years, to 68% in 1991. Yet this marks a change from family-run farms to farms run by individuals, meaning that yield that once required a family to produce is now produced by fewer individuals. Nonetheless, 39% of the total income of households in Greece comes from agriculture. Agribusiness includes about 22,800 manufacturing establishments, employs about 131,000 persons (in other words, agribusiness is *not* labor intensive), about 20% of the employment in the manufacturing sector. The food industry is the largest industry in the agribusiness sector at 80% of employment.[xi]

There are many cross-cutting demographic and labor characteristics among farmers and regions in Greece that pose methodological problems. For example, the Northern Aegean and Ionian Islands, Epirus (northwestern Greece), Attica, and the Peloponnese, have a high ratio of older farmers. Macedonia and Thrace, in the north and northeast, and the Southern Aegean Islands are populated with younger farmers. In Epirus, Thrace and Macedonia is a larger concentration of farmers whose farm work occupies more than 75% of their time. Regions specializing in high-value production such as cash crops, fruits or early vegetables under cover have the highest share of gross domestic product. Such regions include Thessaly, the Peloponnese and Crete. Those three regions happen to have the largest percentage contribution of agriculture to regional output. And the largest share of farm mechanization, as measured by number of tractors per thousand households, is located in the north, from Macedonia to Thrace.[xii] Agribusiness operations include the production of maize, cotton and sugar beet in Thessaly, peaches in Macedonia, horticulture in the Pelion area, in east central Greece, oriental tobacco in Thebes, and superb quality olives on Crete and in the Peloponnese.[xiii] In the olive sector alone, oil is extracted in more than 3000 small or medium outfits in addition to more than 90 factories producing canned olives.[xiv]

Political Crossroads: Farmer vs. Farmer

Two scenarios may help illustrate the dilemma of Greek farmer politics now, based on the most superficial of demographic characteristics listed above: “old” vs. “young” farmer. While a secure and viable pension might be the overriding concern for an ageing farmer, the interest set of younger farmers might comprise environmental issues or subsidy payouts over pensions. These two examples of farmer interests tap into different governmental and legislative pools: In the case of the older farmer, his priorities lie with the national government of Greece, as it retains sovereignty over pension policy decision-making. In the March 7, 2004, national elections, the older farmer would have had a choice between the two main competing parties of New Democracy, whose farmer pension plan promised 330 Euros per month secured until 2008, or PASOK’s pension plan which promised 300 Euros per month secured for the following four years. As there were no real differences between the two platforms, whether the older farmer voted for the former or the latter had no real bearing on his pension future. Enough Greek polls at the time reported that Greek voters were tired of one long-serving regime and simply voted for change, replacing the left-centrist party with the right-centrist party. The older farmer could have thumbed his nose at the major players altogether and cast his vote for the Communist Party, whose platform remains dedicated to traditional Marxist worker (not farmer) interests, or one of the smaller fringe parties, though the effects of such a vote would have privileged symbolism over pragmatism.

In the case of the younger farmer, his interests in the environment and in subsidies fall within the decision-making competency of European Union institutions, which govern the common agricultural policy, or CAP. So his vote in the national elections likely would have been determined by issues other than his immediate farm-related issues, unless he chose to vote with his farmer interest group out of solidarity. And yet, solidarity with whom? Subsistence farmers, agribusiness entrepreneurs, or large-farm holders all are conceivably members of different socio-economic classes. Where, then, does the farmer stand as an interest group in Greece, given the variety – and disparity -- of interests and given the equally many choices in fora where farmers can express their demands?

Inasmuch as Greece retains a lively subsistence farming subsector as well as midrange commercial farmers and agribusinesses, empirical and theoretical research must address both categories of rural cultivators -- peasants *and* market farmers. In the late 1990's one observer noted that particularly among Mediterranean countries, "the central issue for the immediate future is the fate of the unreformed [agriculture] sectors,"[xv] and this is no less true today.

Interlude: Two Models

Peasant Studies…

Whether scholars, or societies, view the decline in the primary sector as an incidental epiphenomenon accompanying industrialization's expansion, or whether they mourn the intended whittling away of the traditional economy, depends on the variegated ideal types of the peasant available to us in scholarship and in other cultural forms. Evocations might be the homely peasant as depicted in Van Gogh's "The Potato Eaters", an emblem of dimly lit village life, in contrast to mechanization and the aggressive tools of modernity.[xvi] Historical icons include the insurrectionist revolutionary peasant of, for example, Mexico in the early 1900s or China in the mid 1900s, legendarily demanding land reform from monopolizing landholders. Scholarly characterizations of the peasant include the backward looking, conservative little man of history, the "class of low-classness"[xvii]; or the collectivized or pre-enclosed peasant, who shared in a communal network. There is also the farmer of the mid-20th century or the 21st century, more likely to express "special interest" than be a member of a discrete peasants' or agrarian party whose platform would represent farmers as a class.

The vast majority of *peasant* studies today is concentrated around geographic areas to which industrialization arrived after the early period or which have not yet completed their industrialization. These areas include, not surprisingly, India, Ecuador, Colombia, Peru, China, Africa, and southeast Asia.[xviii] Developed European countries are typically not the subject of peasant studies. The reason for this is self evident: though one is not hard pressed to locate a peasant -- defined in the classical minimalist sense as someone who is a rural cultivator -- the task grows more difficult with the layering of other attributes that most scholars apply, such as the following: the derivation of subsistence from a family economy, social subordination to a rural dominant class, or collectivity as a social feature, often linked to cultural distinctiveness.[xix]

The underlying burden for investigators into peasant life writ large, whether at the sociological, anthropological, historical or political level, spelled out 30 years ago in the lead article of the charter issue of *Journal of Peasant Studies,* was, and perhaps remains, the following:

> [b]eyond a certain point in the socio-economic differentiation of the agrarian population the term 'peasantry' is no longer applicable. *That point itself is often difficult to establish*….[emphasis added][xx]

One of the leading and still controversial approaches to peasant studies concerns the theory of "moral economy".[xxi] The perspective of moral economists privileges the subsistence level of peasants -- to what extent livelihood is threatened routinely -- as a key determining factor in the style of political engagement to which peasants, individually or collectively, might subscribe. By definition, the moral economy approach also addresses the moral disposition of the peasant, commonly characterized by his pre-capitalist, small-scale economy, in contrast to the forces of capitalism or modernity that threaten his existence.

Recent challenges to moral economy have included a prominently placed appeal to re-introduce both the theories and tools of economics to political-scientific analysis,[xxii] while another critique addresses the commodification of *social goods* as a replacement variable for the focus placed by moral economists on pre-capitalist or non-capitalist peoples. This view stresses the historical timelessness and variable economic applicability of a social good as a category of possible catalysts to social change. It also addresses the collectivity as a variable, rather than the individuality stressed by classical moral economists. Proponents of this view argue that legitimacy for political practices can be shaped by a people's political identity in relation to nested social goods.[xxiii] Finally, within the broad framework of peasant studies, is the transitional phase between the family-economy farmer and the large landholder or mechanized farmer considered alongside land tenure and land reform agendas, with a view toward a presumed transformation of political interests on the part of people who work the land in one form or another.

…And Corporatism

There are two main types of farmer groups in Greece: *cooperatives*, which by law are economic organizations, and *agricultural associations*, which are theoretically concerned with "associational, syndicalist and professional actions and with struggles for the general improvement of prices, incomes and living and working conditions in rural areas."[xxiv] The cooperative movement grew throughout the 1960s, '70s and '80s, and by 1984 there were 7,817 co-ops with 929,927 members (roughly half the agricultural workforce), averaging 119 members per co-op. The cooperatives largely became the bureaucracy through which the state and the Agricultural Bank of Greece channeled funds to agriculture. [xxv]

Today, the strongest association for farmers in Greece is the Panhellenic Confederation of Agricultural Cooperatives (PASEGES), a non-political organization which represents Greece at the EU level in COPA of COPA-COGECA (Committee of

Agricultural Organizations and General Committee for Agricultural Cooperation in the European Union). GESASE and SYDASE, two farmer "trade union" organizations, represent Greece under COGECA , though the differences among these three unions is vague to the outsider. PASEGES currently represents about 750,000 farmers, more than 6,000 agricultural cooperatives, and more than 100 unions of agricultural cooperatives, with a permanent staff of 62, including 10 agronomists and seven economists, an administrative staff of 28, an elected general assembly from all the cooperative organization members of PASEGES and an administration (presidium and general directorship) which are comprised of experienced unionists. [xxvi] It receives financial support from subscriptions from member organizations, the Ministry of Agriculture, the Agricultural Bank of Greece, and the Agricultural Insurance Organization. Other larger cooperatives exist for specific products, including, for example, KYDEP for cereals**,** KSOS for sultanas, SYKIKI for dried figs, EDK for tobacco, and ELEOURGIKI for olive oil, one of the more recognized cooperatives outside of Greece.

Studies of past decades have pointed toward the corporatist and state-heavy influences over Greek agriculture, leaving little room for autonomy among farmers' organizations.[xxvii] Dimitris Perlepes has shown in an unpublished dissertation that

> [t]he state was … fundamental in sustaining and reproducing the [farmers'] co-operatives which are, to a large extent, beset by organizational problems….The activities of co-operatives were restrained and the small farmers had little or no bargaining power in their dealings with merchants, who supplied farm inputs or purchased farm products.[xxviii]

The corporate arrangements had two consequences with similar results: On the one hand, farmers, were reluctant to join associations that were steered, or comanaged, by the state, leaving farmers as a group fragmented and underorganized and therefore in a weak position to negotiate political or economic issues of common interest. On the other hand, those agricultural workers who did participate in economic or political associations suffered from a lack of autonomy within a wider civil society. It is unclear, however, based on data available concerning the Greek case whether an autonomous, pluralist arrangement yields a more receptive path for Greek farmers to channel their demands or whether it is in their better interest to remain closely related to state governance and directed by state institutions.[xxix]

The case of French farmers – who are activist and prone to incidences of effective collective action -- is instructive to the Greek case. Where corporatism was once correlated with the strong arm of authoritarian regimes demanding a top-down organization of groups by the state, John T. S. Keeler showed in his 1987 study that the Fifth Republic (1958) ushered in a partnership between French farmers and the state through the right-centrist government's oversight of the *Federation Nationale des Syndicats d'Exploitants Agricoles*, granting it a monopoly over farmers' interests. Under this monopoly, infrastructure and capital in the countryside developed and modernized, and farmers enjoyed a full and thriving enfranchisement. This marriage of interests became threatened, however, in what Keeler called an "anti-pluralist revolt". In the early 1980s, farmers militantly rose up against the incoming socialist regime of Francois Mitterand, whose Minister of Agriculture Edith Cresson announced the government's plan to dismantle the corporatist structure in the countryside and pluralize and widen opportunities for membership in a variety of farmers' associations.[xxx]

Keeler argued that the Gaullists at the national level in negotiation with a variety of interest groups came to calculated agreements about arrangements that would be mutually beneficial to them. Thus the French brand of neocorporatism developed in an "ad-hoc, uneven way" through the agency of those "above" and those "below".[xxxi] Not surprisingly, between 1970 and 1980, the membership density of France's largest farmers' union was much higher than that of all labor unions, at 44-65% and 23% respectively.[xxxii]

Corporatism was a much less defined variable in Suzanne Berger's earlier study of French *peasants* in Brittany in the 1970s. In this case, peasants were trying to get to the state, to hear and be heard in the national political arena, but they were shut out by their marginality to the market, their geographic isolation, the syndicates' undifferentiation of peasant interests, and exploitation by traders and other middlemen. Though participation in regional syndicates in the countryside was high, the organizations' inability to draw other social groups to their interests and form alliances left them in the provincial lurch, without access to Paris. .[xxxiii] France's centralization was not insignificant to the problem. Wrote Berger:

> Peasant organizations were handicapped not only by their social origins, but also by the political world into which they were born. The one great advantage agricultural organizations should have enjoyed in politics was the electoral strength of the peasantry, but, in order to exploit this resource, they needed political parties willing and able to transmit rural demands into the centers of national decision for electoral strength is not automatically translated into political power….Agricultural groups could not use the parties to arrange alliances of interests; they had either to negotiate by themselves or to find means of self-defense.[xxxiv]

The Greek case is different, though in some ways Greek farmers are today where French farmers were 20 years ago. In his 2001 study of Greek convergence with EU policy implementation, Paraskevopoulos argued that intergovernmental relations in Greece are *constrained* by a neocorporatist structure with inhibits institutional accommodation of collective action which, free to thrive, in turn would facilitate policy implementation in the countryside. Paraskevopoulos demonstrated that the state's reluctance to de facto decentralize and make efficient the civil service bureaucracy, regardless of regime, perpetuated the longstanding dependence of what he called the periphery, or the subnational levels of government in the municipalities and communes, on the core, or the prefecture, regional and national levels of government, since, he argued, "the various bottom up features are abrogated by the final control of the central state."[xxxxv]

The Greek agriculture portfolio is administered by the national government and the prefecture councils primarily, with limited functional participation at the regional council level (usually concerning strategic regional planning), and very little to no policy decision making at the local, or municipality, level.[xxxvi] The Lesvos Farmers'

Association illustrates the byzantine intergovernmental hindrances in implementing EU agriculture policy. Located on the island of Mytilene in the North Aegean Island prefecture, it is the second most important private-interest institutional actor in the prefecture, having been established in 1931, with approximately 13,500 current members, most of whom are olive-oil producers. Members cite, however, a lack of communication and collective action at the local level as a primary hindrance to the association's role in the adaptation process of structural reform in the agricultural sector.[xxxvii]

Though liberalization initiatives in voluntary associations were encouraged in the 1980's under the socialist regime of PASOK, the lobbying strength of Greek agriculture remained constrained not only by the long-held corporatist/clientelist political culture, but by a lack of cohesion, networks for collective action and "entropots" within the various levels of governmental to access the system. PASOK's democratization of the unions in the 1980's, bypassing legislation (Law No. 1541/85) that regulated the structure and internal workings of the interest groups, including the enforcement of proportional representation as the system for association elections (which simply mimicked the national elections) backfired dramatically with the government's intervention through the courts when union elections strayed from the mandated formula. What this meant was that the government was not only tinkering with union membership but was, through standardization and liberalization, reinforcing its own power at the "voluntary" level. By the 1990's, PASOK was no longer able to control the main unions, though it retained influence over the civil service associations and PASEGES, the farmers' association while PASEGES nonetheless was controlled by New Democracy. These contradictions in influence in the agriculture movement need to be explored and understood.[xxxviii]

Farmers Tangled in the Centrist Net

It is hard to tell at this precise moment where Greek farmers stand as a political force in Greece. The elections of March 7, 2004, brought to power the right-centrist party of New Democracy (ND), after some 15 years of rule by the Panhellenic Socialist Movement (PASOK). The PASEGES agricultural union reported after the elections that the shift of allegiances in the countryside amounted to 1-2.5% whereas in the urban areas it was as high as 10%, so it is doubtful that a rural decamping helped bring New Democracy to its 5% advantage, though it must be borne in mind that one percentage point separated the PASOK victors from ND in the national elections four years earlier. Most of the voter districts which carried PASOK are heavy agricultural areas. They include the whole of Crete and Achaios region in the Peloponnese.[xxxix] The caveat is however that other regions identified by Damianos et al as being strong farm economies, such as Trikala, Grevena, Magnesias, Larissa and most of the Peloponnese, were carried by New Democracy. The Communist Party had a small but expected showing at 5%, with about 10% in the strong farm economy regions except on Crete where the communists carried about 5% of the vote. There is therefore no pattern that would allow us to correlate farm voters with one party of the other, except to suggest possibly that the center-right ND has recaptured some of its former base since the national elections of 1981, 1993 and 1996.[xl] The more likely explanation might be simply a pendulum effect between the two major parties. The pressure of the farmer on politics appears to move nonlinearly – it both swells and contracts

After the elections, farmer cooperative leaders of PASEGES, the General Co-federation of Agricultural Unions of Greece (GESASE), and the Co-federation of Democratic Agricultural Unions of Greece (SYDASE), pledged full cooperation with the new center-right government. Opposition leader George Papandreou has wasted no time condemning the government for its "betray[al]" and creating a sense of "insecurity" in Greek farmers. But his rhetoric also targeted the EU, suggesting that the times now demand that Greek farmers take matters into their own hands and "make our own decisions."[xli]

The Majoritarian Tradition

Let us proceed under the hypothesis that there is no farmer political identity in Greece today. Whom do we blame – the parties, the party system, farmers themselves, the cooperatives, or EU competencies in the agricultural sector?

Diamandouros et al., have argued that the polarization of Greek political parties in the latter part of the twentieth century, with a durable majoritarian tradition under a proportional representation system, reflects a similar polarization at the start of the twentieth century, though today, they argue, any voter cleavages that once existed have been eroded by EU membership. This is to say that centrism, not without the company of minor fringe parties, has captured the electorate's imagination. The farming sector, it seems, is awash in this centrist phenomenon. The process by which latter-day Greek politics has come to mirror some of the more bland dynamics of other democratically consolidated nations is not, however, without its own unique story.

Greece has been majoritarian since the end of the Civil War (1946-1949). All except three post-civil-war elections have yielded a single-party government. The consensus in the literature points toward the reinforced proportional representation electoral system (in use since 1958; 3% threshold) as the main force behind Greece's post-war stability, engendering as it has the emergence of large parties and the discouragement of multipartyism. Greece has thus been dominated by two parties both before and after the seven-year divide of the junta, between 1967-74. The Ethniki Rizospastiki Enosis (National Radical Union, ERE) on the right, and the Enosis Kentrou (Center Union, EK) near the center, dominated the issues in the pre-junta period. Extreme leftism in the form of the Kommunistikon Komma tis Ellados (KKE, Marxists; Euro-communism emerged after the junta) was left out the mix due to its illegality since the period of the civil war (1947). The monarchy, however, and the military exercised extraparliamentary power and meddling before the junta, and, quite dramatically, at the moment of the junta.

Upon restoration of democratic institutions after the dictatorship in 1974, two new parties emerged, New Democracy, the party of the right, and the Pahnellenic Socialist Movement (PASOK), the dynamic populist party of the anti-American left. Both parties were founded by charismatic figures, in 1974, Constantine Karamanlis and Andreas Papandreou, respectively. Karamanlis had earlier also founded the National Radical Union. PASOK and ND's joint average share of the electoral spoils was about 84.6 percent, almost the mirror image of the spoils shared by the two pre-junta parties of ERE and EK.

Majoritarianism has strengthened in the post-junta period. The polarizing partisanship that defined the post-war period was virtually wiped clean with the legalization of the KKE, the communists, in 1974, and by intragovernmental cooperation between PASOK and ND, particularly in the 1980's when Karamanlis (ND) served as the president in the government of Papandreou (PASOK). As well, the traditional monarchicial-republican cleavage of the past was obliterated with a referendum outlawing the monarchy in 1974. In a most striking symbolic and pragmatic interlude in the majoritarian system, observers of Greek politics note the short-lived coalition government in 1989 between New Democracy, the party of the right, and a left coalition of traditional and Euro-communists as giving closure to the widest and most damaging cleavage of the past.[xlii]

At the regional level, of which there are 13 in Greece (NUTSII Level), Eastern Macedonia and Thrace, the Peloponnese , and Crete have the highest percentage of agricultural workers per population (at 43%, 45.5% and 45%, respectively, according to the 1991 Census).[xliii] In consideration of potential political cleavages among regions, Gunther and Montero have found the Greek population, unlike its Mediterranean counterparts in the EU, to be homogenous in terms of wealth and religion and to have an "absence of a significant regional cleavage." Taking this finding as a given could allow for a methodological control for regional difference in voting patterns and hold the variable as insignificant for the time being. Further research may bear this finding out or it may be disproved or challenged, but this finding surely warrants further testing.[xliv]

Greece in EU Context

Two years after the founding of the European Economic Community, the initial entity of what is now called the European Union, Greece applied for associate membership in the union, submitting its proposal on June 8, 1959, in accordance with Article 238 of the Treaty of Rome.[xlv] It was signed into being in Athens on July 9, 1961, and enforced as of November 1, 1962, under ratification by the six existing members of the Community and Greece. This association membership was the first of its kind, designed to promote continuous and balanced trade and economic relations between the Community and Greece while encouraging accelerated development of the Greek economy and living standards. This was to be accomplished through a customs union (tariff reduction), affecting industrial imports and exports first, and through policy harmonization and making financial resources available to Greece to encourage economic growth. Symmetry in customs unions between Greece and the Community were not guaranteed under associate membership. Since CAP was not fully in place in the early stages of the Community, agricultural policy harmonization vis-a-vis Greece was flexible but slow. Greece argued for full institutional harmonization that the Community was hesitant to grant since its own six full members were divergent enough in their demands to endanger ongoing negotiations, and the financial burden to be borne by six full members in support of an associate member was not readily forthcoming.

In the meantime, Greece's strengthening post-war democracy suffered a setback when, on April 21, 1967, a military junta installed itself through a NATO maneuver, undemocratically occupying the country for seven years. Greece became an isolated nation in the world held afloat by a regime condemned. Not surprisingly, the association agreement between Athens and the Community was frozen by the Commission based on a recommendation from the European Parliament, normal relations between the two contract holders thereby indefinitely stymied.

The resumption of EEC-Greek relations occurred within a swift dejuntification context in 1974, after a smooth, constitutional transfer of power from the junta to Constantine Karamanlis, who returned to Greece from his Parisian self-imposed exile to be sworn in as the new Prime Minister. Remarkably, and with the expertise of a statesman fully cognizant of Greece's precarious international standing and unresolved partisan patrimony, Karamanlis did all the right things to give Greece another chance. He reinstated all political parties, including the communists (outlawed since 1947), put the monarchy question to referendum, and got to work applying for Greece's full membership in the European Union, with a determined objective of bringing the West – and modernity with all its trappings-- to Greece's door. The formal application was submitted June 12, 1975, and Greece became the 10th member of the European Union on January 1, 1981. One observer noted that "[a]ccession was expected to have a number of important implications for Greek agriculture; they involved the patterns of production, the volume and pattern of trade, the income of farmers, agricultural structures, and budgetary flows. [But]...budgetary considerations tended to overshadow all others and hence distort their relative weight."[xlvi]

Greek Farmers in EU Context: Where They Matter

European agriculture since the late 1950's witnessed the inception of the Common Market and a common agriculture policy, whose objectives, established in Paragraph 1, Article 39 of the Treaty of Rome of 1957, were designed to counteract the vagaries of climate affecting annual yields. The purpose was also to maintain and protect agriculture as a necessary sector alongside the sunset secondary, or manufacturing, sector. French agricultural growth and output far outpaced that of other Europeans in the post-war period. With France's historical competitor and nemesis, Germany, lagging behind and fearing a glut of French imports, it was in the interest of at least these two founding nations of the customs union to implement pricing guarantees as a measure to approach equitability in market share and profit margins between France and Germany.[xlvii]

Since CAP has relied to a great deal on price support systems, since 1993, a combination of market intervention and direct pay-outs, and sionce the latest 2002-2003 reforms, implemented January 1, 2005, a decoupling of production and payouts, more people have been kept working the land throughout the European Union than would be the case under a less regulated, laissez-faire system.[xlviii] Recent statistics show that on average among the EU-15, 42% of total land is used for agricultural purposes, with the UK at the high end with 70.4% and Sweden and Finland at the low end with 7.5% and 7.7%, respectively[xlix]. And yet a smallish percentage of the EU-15 population is employed on this near majority of land: in England, 1% of the labor force of 29.7 million; in Germany 2.8% of a labor force of 41.9 million; in France, Austria and Denmark, 4% of the labor forces of 26.6 million, 4.3 million, and 2.8 million, respectively; and in Greece, 20% of a labor force of 4.3 million.[l] Greek arable land measured at 26% in 1953 has remained unchanged at the same ration today.[li]

The overall profile of select EU-15 countries lends credence to reasonable conclusions that where industrialization outpaced agricultural growth earlier in the epoch of modernization, the percentage of the total labor force that is gainfully employed in the primary sector is smaller than in those countries that experienced industrialization at a later period or which are still considered emerging markets or developing economies. There is no question that Greece qualifies as a "late-late" industrializer.[lii]

The internationalization of farmers under the auspices of COPA-COGECA at the EU level leaves open the question of to what degree national farmers in turn have the capacity to influence agriculture policy. John Peterson and Elizabeth Bomberg note that since the EU Council (made up of member state representatives) fixes most CAP pricing, farmers have been most likely to lobby their national capitals rather than Brussels, while Grant has argued that the influence of the farm lobby has been exaggerated[liii]

Greeks appear receptive to EU agricultural policies and yet Greek civil society – customs, pathways, citizen-government relations – seems to pose barriers to political change, or at least to citizen involvement outside acts of collective action, which Greeks generally are prone to. Consider two sets of data:

a) Greek responses to a Eurobarometer poll about the common agriculture policy showed a marked upward trend compared to 2004 on the questions of whether they are in favor of CAP, whether the CAP supports organic production, if the CAP encourages product diversification, whether CAP helps farmers adapt their production to consumer expectations, and whether CAP improves life in the countryside.[liv]

b) A recent multi-center study comparing so-called cohesion countries (countries whose GDP is less than 90% the EU average and who receive EU monies for regional and structural growth; Portugal, Ireland and Greece) with two newcomer countries (Poland and Hungary) in the area of institutional learning found Greece lacking in the areas of development of civil society and social partnership[lv] Greece was found to have a mostly barrier-inducing infrastructure for political change and implementation of policy, with a high degree of clientelism, a poor administrative tradition, lack of decision-making consensus, weak civil society, low citizen involvement and limited awareness by the public of their rights and obligations, low level of participation by non-state actors, lack of social capital (trust, norms and networks), limited NGO participation, poorly informed and fragmented trade unions and a centralized Greek state that has militated against successful adoption to EU regional policy.

Conclusion

The pressures of EU membership, and demands for political, economic and cultural readjustment, have been documented for decades and there is an appreciably large body of literature attendant to the issue. National political experiences notwithstanding, the union of political interests as reflected in the EU body designed to encompass and recast national interests into European interests writ large, namely the EU Parliament, is the institution which will no doubt feel the effects of a freshman class of nations whose farming sector far outpaces in numbers those of the existing 15 EU nations. It is telling that of the 83 members of the current Committee on Agriculture of Europarliament, Poland holds eight seats, as much as Italy, and one more than the UK, both early members of the EU. France and Germany each hold 11 seats, and Greece and the Netherlands each hold three.[lvi] The farmers of Poland and Romania combined amount to 7.5 million, almost as many as the EU-15, at 8.2 million, and more than three times as many as the other eight combined.[lvii]

Having said that, where are we left with the dilemma of analyzing the political participation of Greek farmers today? Let me offer this conclusion: If we can assume the phenomenon of the Greek majoritarian system in combination with centrist parties whose once differentiated ideologies have lost their symbolism and leave little choice for the farmer given their similar agricultural policies, which are largely constrained by EU agricultural policies, leaving voting patterns at the national level unremarkable, it would appear more rewarding to examine the political participation of farmers at the EU level, where competencies in the area of agricultural policy are wider and more determinative of outcome.

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Endnotes

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[i] Hobsbawm 1994, 289 and ff. He writes, "By the 1980s even the ancient strongholds of peasant agriculture in the east and south-east of the continent had no more than a third or so of their labour force in farming (Romania, Poland, Yugoslavia, Greece), and some had considerably less, notably Bulgaria (16.5 per cent in 1985)" (p. 291).

[ii] The average farm size in Greece is the smallest in the EU, at 4.3 hecatres, compared to the EU average of 16.4, and the UK, the largest among EU countries, at 67.3 hecatres. (Damianos et al, Fig. 2.1, 65)

"The European Community has not claimed responsibility for total Community welfare as the Treaty of Rome avoided any commitment for the achievement of economic and social cohesion among member states. In Greece, structural adjustment and change has been slow. For various reasons, farmers have been able to stay in agriculture by accepting lower farm incomes at a time when structural change in northern member states has already taken place to a great extent." (Damianos, et al. 161-162)

[iii] The primary sector in Greece contributed an estimated 8.3% to GDP in 2001, compared to an EU average of less than 3%. Agriculture-based products account for the largest proportion of exports among the EU 15, at 23.4% in 1997, the last year for which the Greek Central Bank had figures (The Economist Intelligence Unit online, "Economic Sectors: Agriculture and Fishing", http://db.eiu.com.

[iv] Eugen Weber, in his review of Suzanne Berger's study of French peasants in Brittany, reiterates the conclusions Berger drew for her subjects: that economic engagement means political engagement. "The organization that had long tried to protect its members from politics," Weber wrote, "now seeks to protect them through politics." See Weber, below.

[v] France is the largest agricultural producer and exporter in the EU. An astute assessment of the clout of French farmers is as follows: "One of the constant surprises of the past thirty years has been the ability of the narrow political interests of a relatively small number of French farmers to overcome the obvious national interest of France in exploiting its competitive position" (Ockenden et al. 29). Nowhere is this more evident than in the recent (May 29, 2005) "non" vote against the EU's draft constitution, where some 70% of French farmers voted against ratification of the document, according to *The New York Times*, "French No Vote on Constitution Rattles Europe," May 31, 2005, A1, A10 jump.

[vi] Zestos, 273.

[vii] While studies of farming communities in Greece are not uncommon among anthropologists (see Delamont), there is an underrepresentation of studies that investigate the nexus where political interests meet rural cultivation. Given Greece's high level of agriculture-based output – in that it has not undergone the structural adjustment that northern EU states have undergone -- the Greek case may offer comparative clues to the political behavior of farmers in other countries, particularly those which are new to the European Union and which have, by comparison, still sizeable farming sectors (i.e., Poland, at 27% of the labor force (CIA World Factbook Online).

[viii] Coutsoumaris, 32.

[ix] Damianos, 8-9; Mouzelis, 77-79; Close 50.

[x] Perlepes, 232-234.

[xi] Damianos, 9-13, 30, 40.

[xii] Damianos et al., 21, 24, 30-31, 32, 52.

[xiii] Vizantinopoulos interview.

[xiv] Damianos et al., 43.

[xv] Ockenden, et al., 33.

[xvi] Jansen, 623.

[xvii] Shanin (1966) as quoted in Hobsbawm (1973), 5.

[xviii] This finding is the result of numerous computer database searches including the following: Columbia Libraries holdings CLIO, search keywords "political parties Europe"; CLIO keywords "Europe, Eastern—Politics and Government—1989—", " Political Parties—Europe, Eastern"; CLIO keywords "Poland Peasantry", "farmers", "farmers Europe", "peasants" "peasants Europe 20th century"; CLIO keywords "European Agriculture", "agrarian parties". The most substantively relevant and extensive yield came from an online Social Science Citation Index search of Jim Scott's *The Moral Economy of the Peasant* (1976), now a classic for pre-capitalist or transitional peasant studies, for the years 1998-2003. Hundreds of hits came up for these four years alone, most of which were for studies of the sort described above. Confirming this trend is the "Select Bibliography" of Leonard and Kaneff (2002) in their introductory chapter, 39-43. Their edited volume, while stressing anthropological work along the lines of identity, is nonetheless generous in reviewing the literature on peasant studies more generally across disciplines and geographical areas. Finally, as in all good initial research searches, one thing does lead to another rather quickly, and my eventual cursory review of the accumulated efforts of the writers included in *The Journal of Peasant Studies* leads to the same general conclusion. Of noted exception to all the searches conducted is the applicability of the term "peasant" to contemporary Eastern and Central Europe, particularly as it describes specific political parties in Poland.

[xix] See Shanin 1987 for an impassioned defense of the continuation of peasant studies. "[T]he analysis of peasants has broader significance for a number of other contemporary problems, especially those concerning family economies, from capitalist family-farming in the US to the 'second economy' of contemporary Italy or Hungary." Furthermore, writes Shanin, "because peasants are still half of mankind, and if we add the peasants' sons, a large majority of the population of the globe." (473).

See Hobsbawm (1973) who authored the lead article in the charter issue of *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, where he includes in his definition of a traditional peasantry those peasants involved in some expression of both formal and informal collectivity (social, economic). This is an added feature to the peasant who is defined normatively in economic terms, as a smaller social unit of family organization. Hobsbawm extends the realm of "peasant analysis" to include the peasant who is at the juncture where family economy begins to give way to social and economic class differentiation, i.e., as it moves toward a market economy, passage to the metropole, or a variant of technological change or advancement (pp. 4-5ff). In this regard, Berger's study of rural organization in Brittany is one such example.

Marcus J. Kurtz, in "Understanding Peasant Revolution: From Concept to Theory and Case" (*Theory and Society* 29: 93-124, 2000) lays out four principal dimensions used to define the term "peasantry" and five definitional categories for "peasantry" as culled from the literature on peasant revolutions.

[xx] Hobsbawm 1973, 4.

[xxi] Scott 1976.

[xxii] Levi 2000.

[xxiii] Arnold 2001

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[xxiv] Perlepes 254-255.

[xxv] Perlepes, 276, 272. The Agricultural Bank of Greece was founded in 1929 under law 1332/1929, as an autonomous banking organization to distribute credit and technical advice to farmers, though its board of

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directors **is** appointed by the government. The Agricultural Bank of Greece was commercialized in 1986 and acquired by the Bank of Nova Scotia (Greece) in 2000 (Pagoulatos 227, 189).

[xxvi] PASEGES online, http://www.paseges.gr.

[xxvii] Close, 51, 173, 258; and Perlepes, 277 specifically. Perlepes' 1989 dissertation discusses the state's historical involvement, through financing, bureaucratic administration, national banks and outright steerage, in Greek agricultural organizations, preventing them from functioning effectively and autonomously in the political arena and in the market.

[xxviii] Perlepes, 277.

[xxix] Philippe C. Schmitter's distinctions between pluralism and corporatism are as follows (from Philippe C. Schmitter, "Still the Century of Corporatism?" *Review of Politics*, 36:1, January 1974, 96, 93-94, as cited in Keeler, 7): Pluralism is "a system of interest representation in which the constituent units are organized into an unspecified number of multiple, voluntary, competitive, nonhierarchically ordered and self-determined (as to type or scope of interest) categories which are not specifically licensed, recognized, subsidized, created or otherwise controlled in leadership selection or interest articulation by the state and which do not exercise a monopoly or representative activity within their respective categories."

Schmitter defines corporatism as a "system of interest representation in which the constituent units are organized into a limited number of singular, compulsory, noncompetitive, hierarchically ordered and functionally differentiated categories recognized or licensed (if not created) by the state and granted a deliberate representational monopoly within their respective categories in exchange for observing certain controls on their selection of leaders and articulation of demand and supports."

Molina and Rhodes, arguing that corporatism has changed in process and outcome but not in spirit, suggest that corporatist concertation has become "*less formal, less institutionalized*, and less predictable" and therefore … "structures and actors should be understood in terms of *networks*; their logics in terms of the processes that underpin them; their fate in terms of the evolution of integration and the changing 'currency' of exchange", 326 [emphasis added].

[xxx] Keeler 3-5. Thanks to Clifford Rosenberg for providing me with the bibliography on French farming consulted for this study.

[xxxi] Keeler, 12.

[xxxii] Keeler, 264.

[xxxiii] Berger, x, 30, and 32.

[xxxiv] Berger, 8.

[xxxv] Paraskevopoulos, 71.

[xxxvi] Paraskevopoulos, 73.

[xxxvii] Paraskevopoulos, 140.

[xxxviii] Puhle 312-313. I cannot corroborate the findings of Puhle regarding the dual influences over PASEGES. The literature on the state and farmers in Greece is so scant with only passing references in more general treatments of Greek politics that I am at a loss to explain how one party can control a union while another heavily influences it. This question alone warrants field research and conversations with those who know the official and unofficial stories. See also a report by Pavlos D. Pezaros, Greek Director for Agriculture Policy, Ministry for Rural Development and Food, entitled "The Greek Experience in Relationship with the EU and the Role of Greek Agricultural Civil Organization in Influencing EU Policy –

Successes and Failures," representing his personal views, not the Ministry's, which I downloaded from the internet.

[xxxix] *Agrotikos*, March 2004 issue, page 7.

[xl] Kalyvas, 90.

[xli] George Papandreou statements: Athens, January 25, 2005; Athens, January 28, 2005; Tegea, Arkadia, February 5, 2005; and Athens, February 9, 2005. Transcripts obtained from George A. Papandreou's personal website.

[xlii] The foregoing section on consolidation is culled from Braneau et al., and Legg et al.

[xliii] Paraskevopoulos, 99.

[xliv] Gunther and Montero in Diamandouros et al., 147.

[xlv] Turkey also applied for associate membership two months after Greece, on July 31, 1959, granted December 1, 1964, despite Greece's protestations. Turkey required a longer preparatory stage preceding the transitional stage, which became effective on January 1, 1973. Turkey's membership was frozen due to its own military takeover on September 12, 1980. Though once the dictatorship ended and relations normalized with the November 1983 elections, the priority of Turkey's membership took a back seat to the Union's enlargement in the Mediterranean in the 1980's. where it remains today (Tsalicoglou 14).

[xlvi] Tsalicoglou, 115. I also consulted Tsalicoglou for parts of the foregoing section on Greece's entry into the EU, particularly pages 9, 10, 12-18, 29, 103, and 115.

[xlvii] "The CAP is thus the product of the uneasy post-war alliance of the French imperative of agricultural expansion with the German desire for food security," writes Gardner, 16. On the other hand, Elmar Rieger has written that "the much repeated assertion that there was a political bargain between the industrial interests of Germany and the agricultural interests of France should be laid to rest. The record provides no evidence for this, nor would it have made much sense economically" (Rieger, pp. 183-184).

[xlviii] Ockenden, 2-3 and Gardner 13.

[xlix] European Commission: European Economy No. 5, 1997, p. 52, Table 3.

[l] Adapted from Central Intelligence Agency World Factbook Online. According to the 1991 Census, the Greek population was 10.26 million, similar to that of Austria or Denmark, whose work forces number about the same as Greece's (*Statesman's Yearbook 2003*, pg. 748). The data for Greece is corroborated by the *Yearbook of Labor Statistics 2002*, International Labor Office, Geneva, pg. 21. *Key Indicators of the Labor Market*, International Labor Organization, 2003 (3rd edition), shows a constant though incremental decline over time by both men and women's participation in the agricultural sector, as shown by the percentage of the total population in agriculture, as follows: 1990, 23.9%; '93, 21.3%; '94, 20.8%; '95, 20.4%; '96, 20.3%; and '97:19.8% (Table KILM4, pp 193-194). The 2001 Greek Census accounts for a total workforce over age 15 at 4,101,949; 311,259 are employed in fisheries and agriculture; 717 EU non-nationals were employed in agriculture, and 26,255 non-national, non-EU workers were in agriculture. 2001 Greek Census Online http://www.statistics.gr/eng_tables/S1100_SAP_5_euro15.htm.

[li] Coutsoumaris 32; Pezaros 2.

[lii] Pagoulatos, George*: Greece's New Political Economy: State, Finance, and Growth from Postwar to EMU*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003, 12.

[liii] Peterson and Bomberg, 139.

[liv] Eurobarometer 221, “European and Common Agriculture Policy” 2005 survey. Europa.eu.int/comm..agriculture/survey/2005/rep_en.pdf.

[lv] Paraskevoooulos, Christos: “Final Report/Executive Summary: EU Enlargement and Multi-level Governance in European Regional and Environment Policies: Patterns of Institutional Learning, Adaptation and Europeanization among Cohesion Countries (Greece, Ireland and Portugal) and Lessons for new members (Hungary and Poland)”. Hellenic Observatory of the European Institute of the London School of Economics, November 2003.

[lvi] Europarliament website, wwwdb.europarl.eu.int/.

[lvii] Tangerman and Swinnen, 186.