

Strategic Environmental Assessment for the Greek Plans and Programmes

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Abstract

The role of SEA is closely connected to the idea of sustainability since it was recognized as a mechanism for the success of sustainable development. Strategic Environmental Assessment constitutes a motive and at the same time a challenge for all the EU member states in order to promote a more sustainable way of assessing the impacts of plans and programmes. Applying SEA to Greek programmes and plans, as well as to all the other countries of the EU the sustainability of the countries could be strengthened and confirmed.

Key Words: Sustainable Development, Strategic Environmental Assessment, Environmental Impacts, Environmental Evaluation, Environmental Impact Assessment

1. INTRODUCTION

Recently there has appeared an increase in the interest for the environmental issues, the sustainability and the better management of the development, always taking into account the environment. The new legislations, coming from national and international sources (i.e. EU), are related to the rise of awareness on the environmental issues. The European Union, through its legislation, programmes and directives is affecting nowadays the relationship between the environment and the development [1]. Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) belongs to the field of the environmental protection and restoration within the European Union and is an important attempt of the European Union for the strategic environmental assessment of the impacts of the development plans and programmes within the European territory.

2. THE NEED FOR STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT OF PLANS AND PROGRAMMES

2.1 The SEA

SEA is an international process for the environmental assessment, evaluation and management of the environmental impacts of human activities. In Europe the SEA was born in the '80. SEA is an attempt of incorporating the environmental issues into the development plans and programmes. It can also be considered as a process of supporting the evaluation process, especially when it is applied during the development or formalisation of a plan.

According to Therival R. et. al. [2] SEA is a formalised, systematic and comprehensive attempt for the evaluation of the environmental impacts of programmes, plans and policies with a written report, which will refer to the results of the evaluation and the conclusions for the public participation, as well as the use of those actions mentioned above for the final form of the approval decision. Even

though the definition that Therival has introduced is very popular for the majority of the evaluators it is worthwhile to mention that since the international scientific inquiry for the strategic environmental assessment has become so excessive new definitions on SEA have appeared and were attributed to different authors. Sadler and Brooke [3] presented SEA as the only one among a great number of policy tools aiming to ensure the fact that the environmental thought is taken into consideration during the policy making.

Verheem and Tonk [4], define SEA as a structure, an ex-ante process for the empowerment of the role of the environmental issues into the strategic decision making. Also, characterizes SEA as a systematic attempt for the support of the decision for evaluation of the possible important environmental impacts from the possibilities that are offered in the development processes, the policy, plans and programmes, starting from previous possibility, including the written report and the public participation throughout the whole process.

2.2 The SEA as a tool of ensuring sustainable development.

The role of SEA is closely related to the concept of sustainable development [2] since it was recognised as a mechanism for the effective and the successful establishment of sustainable development [5]. The added value of the SEA for the environment is that it can evaluate the economic and the social effects of the plans and programmes in order that special plan or programme to become sustainable. All these SEA requirements are those that ensure the sustainability of plans and programmes [6]. Therefore, in order to apply the principles of the sustainable development the environmental assessment should not only focus on natural and physical issues but also to extend onto issues of social wellbeing and economic development [7].

2.3 Public's participation

Public's participation can constitute an effective tool for planning and it is a general principle in the European Union. The public participation constitutes a vital part of the social justice and at the same time is a very important factor for ensuring sustainable development. People have the right and the obligation to participate in all the procedures that are likely to affect their lives [8]. Participation allows people to express their ideas and views, it helps them to promote negotiations and finally to empower certain groups of people.

SEA is procedural equipped in order to deal with ambiguous normative challenges for the insurance of the sustainable development. Under this purpose, the environmental justice is called to lead the conduction and the evaluation of the SEA. Additionally, the environmental justice is used as the rhetoric basis on which there can me analyzed and examined critical questions regarding how can someone be sure if SEA were conducted properly and correctly. According to the criteria of the environmental justice a 'good' SEA takes into account the consequences of the evaluation approach, always guided from the acknowledgement of the fact that certain groups tend systematic to 'lose' from distribution of the environmental benefits and costs. Therefore, the role of a good SEA is to arrange these imbalances or at least to settle 'fair' procedures which will not aggravate and protract the environmental injustices [9].

2.4 The benefits of SEA

SEA ensures a better co-operation between the bodies in charge that shoulder the responsibility for the environmental impact assessment of plans and programmes [10]. Undoubtedly, the SEA creates the fundamental leagues between the different levels of policy and hierarch into planning. Additionally, the SEA can perform as catalysts for further institutional and organizational changes. SEA gives the capability for provision of consultation among different governmental organisations and bodies, as well as empowers the public participation into the evaluation of the environmental and social aspects of policies, plans and programmes.

SEA, through the methodology that follows, affect positively the planning (e.g. environmental, economic and social impacts for the promotion of the sustainable development) [10]. SEA introduces the environmental issues on time, during the decision-making, well before the decisions about the scale and the location. Further more, SEA allows to the decision makers to prioritise the environmental effects of the strategic decisions before they become integrated projects. Compared to the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) the SEA can take into account a broader scope of alternatives and negotiation measures.

SEA can add to the effectiveness of EIA when the proposal that is covered by the SEA aims to concrete projects. Therefore, SEA can lead to the effectiveness of the assessment, since SEA allows different levels of detail or specification of the environmental assessment shifting from a primer wider stage towards a confined and limited stage [11]. Under this sense whoever prepares an EIA for certain projects can avoid to repeat analyses for objectives that where covered satisfactory from SEA (which where conducted for a plan or programme of a previous wider level, before the detailed level of that the EIA requires).

It is also very important to mention that the SEA empowers and leads the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA). First of all this happens with the incorporation of environmental aims and issues into policies, plans and programmes. Secondly, it is elaborated beforehand recognition of the impacts and at the same time there is information. Thirdly, SEA manages strategic issues and proposes alternatives when the solution of an objective is not easy and obvious. SEA plays an important role into the public raising awareness for the environment. A quite important part of the process of SEA is the one that has to do with the information and mobilization of the public for the environmental impact assessment. [10]. Since SEA can operate as advocates for the environment, affecting the policy and the planning, the role of the NGOs is empowered. After all, the SEA process ensures that information and consultation is an open process, therefore the NGOs can undertake their role as environmental sustainable development advocates more actively, efficiently and effectively.

The main aim of SEA, which in fact is actually the benefit of the SEA process, is the improvement of the whole environmental effects of the proposed plans for spatial development, as well as the improvement of the environmental effects of the multiple private projects [6]. At the same time SEA forecasts the possible environmental impacts from the application of a plan and its rational alternatives, always trying to avoid and diminish the negative effects. Using SEA can improve the forecasting of

the potential effects of some future plans (eg. in protected or environmental unsustainable areas).

Applying SEA at an earlier stage in the decision-making process and including all the studies of a certain type or of a certain area, can ensure the fact that the alternatives and the cumulative effects are taking into account, the public is informed by the experts and the decisions that are related to and the private projects are performed in such a way that it is ensured the prevention of potential impacts instead of their evasion [1]. Additionally, SEA is the central step in order to be ensured the performance of sustainable development.

3. THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN SEA AND EIA

SEA and the EIA have a lot of different points and actually SEA is a completely different evaluative methodology in comparison to the EIA methodology. It is very important to notice that the SEA are not introduced to replace or to abolish the EIA but to supplement the EIA wherever there is a void, as well as to support the EIA through the tools that the SEA commands. Additionally, it is important to underline the fact that SEA should not only be considered as solution that appeared to occupy the empty space that the EIA has left, but also to overcome the difficulties of comprehending and applying the EIA into projects. EIA should better not be left aside because EIA contributes to the improvement of the quality of the decision making [12].

SEA adopt ex-ante operations such as the identification and the comparison of the alternatives, the assessment, based on technical and public known criteria, reports, public participation as well as ex-post operations such as the mechanisms that control the quality and the ex-post evaluation [7], all with a systematic and coherent way, ensuring an open and strategic decision making and contributing to the improvement of the quality of the additional decisions, including the EIA projects. Finally, the SEA is broadening the EIA from the project level to the policy, plan and programme level.

The development action can be targeting on a project, on a programme, on a plan or a policy [1]. Until today the EIA was used mainly for the private projects. Nevertheless, the programmes, the plans and the policies of the EIA bear a great interest within the European Community and the rest of the world.

4 .THE CASE OF ASSESSING THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS IN GREECE

4.1 The inadequacies of the environmental impact assessment in Greece

The Community Directive 97/11/EC “about the impact assessment of public and private projects on the environment” was incorporated into the Greek legislative framework with law 3010/2002 (FEK 91 A’/25.04.2002) «Harmonization of the law 1650/1986 with the Directives 97/11 E.C. and 96/61 E.C., process of bounding and adjustment of the issued for the water streams and other arrangements».

Unfortunately in Greece, in many cases, the methodology on the Environmental Impact Assessment has not always functioned satisfactory and efficiently. Therefore, there were not pursued or there were displaced the real impacts on the environment due to bureaucracy, insufficient information of the public services, law quality

projects for the project-makers, lack or insufficient function of controlling and monitoring measures.

First of all, there are many cases where the legislative procedure for environmental permission is by-passed after governmental interventions. In specific cases of projects, the allocation of projects and the construction permission were approved of special laws, which subtract the right of participation and intervention into the process. A very representative example is the one of the location of the Olympic projects in Athens 2004, where in order to eliminate the reactions of public participation and interference there were issued special legislative framework for these locations.

Additionally, the competent services for environmental permissions are not always equipped with the specialised staff or lack of staff. As a consequence, it is not always possible the performance of quality controls in the EIA and the compliance with the environmental rules. The Special Service of Environmental Investigators, a body that was enacted only in 2001, with basic activity the conduction of environmental controls and the enforcement of penalties, is not until today sufficiently equipped with the appropriate staff. According to Karavasili M. [13], «the controls are usually conducted during the process of permission and after serious accusations and not after programming, while the number of annual controlled projects and activities is extremely insufficient. It seems that there is no system of registering the current and/or new (under permission projects and activities and there are not registered issues related to the results of the controls according to Directive 331/2001/EC»

At the same time, the project makers that are undertaking the conduction of EIA follow the common practice of copying. In many cases the project makers copy whole parts of previous EIA that was already presented to the prefecture or to the region authorities, indifferent to the quality of their EIA. In the majority of the cases the greater part of the study is a long description of the wider physical space where the project is going to be located, without a thorough and deep analysis of the special impacts from the location of the project in the physical space of the area.

4.2 Challenges and opportunities and problems from the application of the Strategic Environmental Assessment in Greece

The incorporation of the European Directive 2001/42/EC, about SEA, into the national law was achieved only recently, in September 2006, even though, Greece should had already incorporated it since July 2004. The incorporation process was very quick, during the summer period of 2006 because Greece endangered to present to the European Court for the delay. After the Common Ministerial Decision of the Ministry of Environment and Planning and the Minister of Finance and Economics on the 6th of September 2006 there was issued by the Governmental Newspaper with number 1225 the paper ‘about the Strategic Environmental Assessment of several plans and programmes’.

Until today in Greece there elaborated, approved and materialized a great number of plans and programmes in sectors such as industry, energy, agriculture, transport, tourism, land us, management of the water resources, waste management and urban planning. Nevertheless, Greece was lacking the process fro the assessment of the environmental impact during the preparation as well as during the elaboration and the

control of the application of these plans and programmes. Undoubtedly in the past there have been quite enough attempts to assess the environmental impacts of certain large-scale projects such as the environmental impact assessment of the river Acheloos dam.

Greece had never before experienced the process of assessing plans and programmes. Therefore, this allows the country to be able to assess plans and programmes such as regional, spatial and urban plans and programmes. This will help the developers, the planners, the authorities and the public to be able to recognize the probable direct or indirect impacts on the environment and on the sustainability. The only SEA that has been conducted and published in Greece is the SEA for the Renewable Energy Resources and the SEA for the employment. The SEA for tourism and industry is currently expected to be given to publicity.

Nevertheless, since SEA is a new entry in the Greek planning and practice, quite a few problems and many not so 'clear' points accompany it. First of all, SEA is not embodied in existing spatial and urban plan processes. This creates on the one hand a greater cost and on the other a lack of economy of time and of human resource. Additionally, in order not to appear overlapping SEA should have been differentiated in relation to the level of accuracy that each plan or programme has, which unfortunately is not ensured with the Greek law. Also, the negotiation process is the same for all occasions whether it deals with plans and programmes that refer to the whole of the national territory or those that refer to regional or local level.

Finally, the Greek law about SEA faces a problem with the terminology that uses. The terms have been transferred and translated exactly as they were used in the Community Directive without any editing. Therefore, the law is confusing and the result is to become an insecure legislation for the administrators, the planners but also for the investors. Although SEA was originally aimed to create a more secure environment for planning and business activities, it might create insecure conditions and function appealing. Therefore, one might forecast that many legislative papers will follow to clarify the incoherence.

5. CONCLUSIONS

Strategic Environmental Assessment is an integrated process for evaluating the impacts that plans and programmes have on the environment. Through screening, monitoring, public's participation and the identification, prediction and evaluation of effects, SEA will contribute to the empowerment of the sustainability for the plans and programmes. Additionally, SEA gives the capability for provision of consultation among different governmental organisations and bodies, as well as empowers the public participation into the evaluation of the environmental and social aspects of policies, plans and programmes. The role of a good SEA is to arrange these imbalances or at least to settle 'fair' procedures which will not aggravate and protract the environmental injustices. In Greece Strategic Environmental Assessment is a relative new issue of application and thought therefore the field for drawing conclusions is limited until today, nevertheless it is expected to offer an added value to the sustainability of the country as far as planning, negotiations, decision-making and public participation is concerned.

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THE LONDON SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS AND POLITICAL SCIENCE

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THE SAGA OF ICT POLICY IN GREECE

BY:

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THE 3RD HELLENIC OBSERVATORY PHD SYMPOSIUM ON CONTEMPORARY GREECE:

STRUCTURES, CONTEXT AND CHALLENGES

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ABSTRACT

The paper explores the history of policies and actions on Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) of the Greek state for the last two decades, during which orchestrated action has taken place. The narrative highlights the dominant role of the European Commission in providing the funding and the strategic direction for the types of investments pursued, as well as the inability to make sense of an indigenously meaningful way to ICT-enabled development. It is argued that in order to take advantage of the potential of ICT to bring about socio-economic change, active engagement is required so as to be able to seek context-specific and historically-sensitive ways to appropriate them.

INTRODUCTION

Intuitively there is a widely held belief that investment in ICT is something that cannot be avoided in today's globalised conditions. Whether it is the private sector which takes the lead or the state that guides the direction of investment, it can hardly be argued today that inaction is appropriate when it comes to ICT. International and supra-national organizations, such as the OECD, the UN, the World Bank, the IMF, the EU, have embraced ICT for their developmental potential and have actively promoted their adoption by their members as a way to achieve socio-economic development. National strategies and actions have come to supplement the private initiative, where it was not enough to bring about the desired effects. In this context, understanding in a history-aware fashion what ICT policy and ICT-enabled development is for the nations that are on the receiving end of this relationship is of crucial importance.

The literature on ICT policy is highly fragmented. Firstly, micro research of specific projects or policy initiatives gives detailed case studies, which fail to link to the wider forces or the historical path dependencies. Another stream of research is imbued by an economic rationality and attempts to understand the macroeconomic effects of policies, thus providing useful macroeconomic indications, which are, however, stripped of contextual meaning. Finally, a vivid stream of critical research has developed, with an agenda to expose the ideological baggage of policies as rhetoric instruments. However, focusing on policy as discourse takes no account on the material arrangements that make these rhetorical devices work. The extant literature on ICT policy fails to take into consideration the cases where powerful international agents influence the conditions of local appropriation of ICT.

This question is pursued by some researchers in the area of ICT and development, who stress that, unless actively engaged in a process of local appropriation so as to adopt ICT in ways that are congruent with the value systems and historical idiosyncrasies, ICT will not bring about the heralded socio-economic changes. This argument comes in stark contrast to the arguments posed by the majority of researchers in the area of ICT and development, who either hail in a technologically deterministic manner the possibilities of ICT to revolutionize the contexts where they are introduced, or argue that the structural constraints already in place are too deeply debilitating to be overcome through the use of ICT.

The purpose of this paper is primarily to present the narrative of ICT policy on Greece, by putting forward a subset of the recently collected data. The narrative will start in 1987, with the first orchestrated effort to invest in ICT with a developmental outlook through the European Community (EC)-funded Integrated Mediterranean Program for ICT. The story will go on until the present, with

the negotiation of the latest operational program with the Community. On the basis of this narrative, an initial discussion will be attempted on the findings of the case study, so as to highlight important elements of the situation. An attempt to make theoretical extrapolations in this stage of the research is judged to be premature.

The paper is structured as following. To begin with, a short introduction is made into the literature review of the field of policy on ICT, to show the linkages with existing work. Also, a short review of the literature of the field of ICT and socio-economic development is used to provide the reader with the arguments commonly found in the literature about the developmental potential of ICT. The main body of the paper is comprised by the narrative, which traces the actions of Greek governments in policies and public investment in ICT from 1987 to 2007. Finally, a short discussion concludes the paper presenting the initial ideas of the researcher about what the history of policy-making on ICT with a view in socio-economic development signifies. These constitute the initial reflections of the researcher just coming out of her fieldwork.

LITERATURE REVIEW

ICT POLICY

ICT policy constitutes a very fluid area of study. Although research has been going on for the past three decades, it is still difficult to define what ICT policy is and how it can, or should, be researched. ICT policy is a broad term that is used here as an umbrella under which a number of more limited in scope terms fall. Although research in the policy regarding ICT has been taking place for several decades (Land 1983), its focus has normally been the hot issue of the time. The focus of ICT policy research shifts from time to time: from policies regarding the development of national competitive advantage micro-electronics production (English and Watson Brown 1984; Evans 1992), to telecommunications liberalization (Mosco 1988; Dutton 1992; Mansell 1993), to national information infrastructures (Kahin and Wilson 1997; Mosco 1998), and software outsourcing (Forbes and Wield 2002; Carmel 2003). The latest 'hot topic' is the information or knowledge society (Mansell and Wehn 1998; Mansell and Steinmueller 2000; Steinmueller 2002; Berleur and Galand 2005).

Three types of studies are usually found in the literature. The overwhelming majority of the research in the area has as its focal point particular policy initiatives, decisions or plans and aims to identify either how these were created, or what their outcomes were after they were implemented (La Rovere, 1994; Gil-Garcia, 2004; Quereshi, 2005). These analyses, although sophisticated, review a specific set of policies as standalone entities, as if problems and solutions were suddenly brought to light, or discovered. There is no attempt to identify historical interdependencies, historical continuities and discontinuities, or the mechanisms by which these policy initiatives came into existence.

Another approach to studying ICT policy is to assume a wider perspective and study the effects of broader set of decisions or changes in ICT policy on development objectives, such as economic growth or societal development and cohesion. In this respect, a number of researchers approach the issue of the effects of ICT policy from an economic rationality, either with the direct aim to create prediction models, or assuming a more holistic approach in order to understand the effects of broad ICT policy decisions indigenous capabilities, growth and employment (Tigre and Botelho 2001). The grounding of a number of these studies on economic rationality offers an interesting change of perspective, even though the tendency to take into consideration short time frames may lead to both overestimations and underestimations of different sorts of impacts, and may not allow for trickle-down effects or spin-offs to be observed (Mueller 2004).

A third significant group in this literature consists of studies that have an ideological approach to ICT policy. The basic premise is that decisions and policies about ICT are rarely the outcome of rational

deliberation, but rather serve other ideological purposes. Ideologies become an integral part of policymaking not only because they provide a useful lens through which a new and uncertain situation can be interpreted, but also because they come bundled with acceptable and legitimate courses of action (North 1990; Galperin 2004). Studies in this stream usually take as their object of study a policy document or declaration. Their intention is to uncover the hidden ideological assumptions that are embedded in the policy discourse and which shape the form and goals of policy itself. Such research has examined ICT policies of national governments (Garnham 2000; Selwyn 2002; Diso 2005; Kuppusamy and Santhapparaj 2005). Interestingly enough for this research, this kind of critique has been addressed towards the European Union's policies about the information society (Garnham 1997; Goodwin and Spittle 2002), the argument being that however commonsensical the rhetoric of the EU appears to be, it upholds economic facets of the information society and downplays social and cultural considerations, thus leading to the creation of an one-sided new society. One critique against this type of research is that studying policy declarations does not equate studying ICT policy. Ideologies do not exist in a vacuum, nor do they diffuse without active human intervention. Instead, they form part of a material arrangement which sustains them and thus it makes much sense to study it (Galperin 2004; Kumar 2005).

This research has not taken into consideration the often-encountered phenomenon of ICT policy being led by external, usually supranational organisations which communicate the visions and control significant sources of funding. Exploring such a situation can bring forward different interpretations of the reasons why ICT policy is pursued and the conditions under which this is done and the effects it has on the socio-economic fabric of society.

ICT FOR DEVELOPMENT

There is a burgeoning literature on the impact of ICT on socio-economic development. The argument goes as follows. ICT have transgressed the economic fabric of economy, particularly in developed countries of the West. Because of the break they offer with other technologies that were the basis of previous economic cycles (railway, electricity, and heavy industry) which required high set-up investments, the benefits of ICTs can be reaped with a much lower cost, thus offering a unique opportunity to accelerate development and close the divides. In order for the less developed countries to be able to achieve similar development, investment in ICT is necessary. In certain cases, the private sector can take on this role, but in the majority of the cases, state action is required to spur social mobilisation and to trigger the market functions (Mansell 1999).

On the other hand, it has often been argued that countries that have not followed the traditional path of development through industrialisation might now have a second chance to achieve development bypassing the stages of development that Western countries followed. Thus, bridging the digital divide is often pictured as a way to counter-balance the divides in other aspects of social and

economic life. This is the argument of leapfrogging, a prevalent argument which is often quoted both in academia and in political discourse.

Of course, there are counter-arguments in this line of thinking, which question the ability of ICT to spur development and argue that the same structural constraints that hampered the development of certain nations in the industrial economy will preclude their development in the information economy and will hinder their utilisation of ICT in a fashion similar to that of developed nations (Heeks and Kenny 2002; Wade 2002). The argument is that ICTs are Western-made technologies, which embody Western rationalities and values. This makes their appropriation by default much more difficult in nations that do not share the same value systems. Also, existing deficiencies such as illiteracy and economic backwardness will conspire to lead to another sort of divide, the digital divide.

What this stream of literature fails to take into account is the inherent malleability of ICT which make it a good candidate for experimentation and appropriation in different ways than the ones originally intended by the creators. Indeed, there are multiple examples detailed in the literature of cases of active experimentation on the part of the users. There is also literature pointing to the ability of nations that have followed different paths to development to use ICT in innovative ways as an enabler of socio-economic change along with structural reforms (Avgerou 1998; Madon 2000; Wilson and Heeks 2000).

In the backdrop of this extant literature, we go on to examine the history of efforts to use ICT in Greece, in the national level, since the state has always played a major part in the formation of social and economic life in the country.

CASE STUDY

In order to ensure that the reader is familiar with the terminology of European Commission structural funds, a small note on the terminology is deemed necessary. A Community Support Framework (CSF) constitutes a developmental plan agreed between the Community and the member state. An operational program is a binding contract between the Commission and a member state, which specifies and materialises the developmental goals of the CSF in a specific region or sector. The operational plan is further specified by the programming complement, a document approved by the Commission which includes a break-down of the targets into implementable sets of actions, along with the tables with the projected financial data.

IMP for ICT - CSF I

The case study starts with the events that took place in the year 1987. The selection of this date is advised by the facts. This was the year when the first official and concerted effort to invest in ICT took place. It took the form of the Integrated Mediterranean Program for ICT (IMP) and which formed part of the first Community Support Framework (CSF I).

It is easily understood that selecting a date to mark the start of a phenomenon is a quasi arbitrary decision. Ad hoc decisions on ICT at a state level had been made before 1987. On the one hand, telecommunications policy was done, although due to the state monopoly in this industry it took the form of subsidies to the national telecommunications carrier (OTE) so as to provide basic telecommunications services to all citizens. On the other hand, a number of big data centres were created to cover four major areas of public administration (taxes, insurance contributions, agricultural cultivations, vehicles' and drivers' register) and computerise the back-office data storage.

Despite this, the IMP for ICT was the first time that ICT was being discussed within a developmental agenda, as a necessary tool which could not be disregarded. It was also the first ever cross-sectoral program which covered actions in ICT transgressing different sectors, and it was not region-specific. The idea for an ICT-specific program was conceived and promoted by a member of the European Commission, and was funded through the Structural Funds. A number of sub-programs were created: the first one was for telecommunications, which was again used by OTE for its development plan. The second targeted the public sector and aimed to introduce end-user computing to civil servants through the bulk provision of PCs to equip civil service agencies. The third sub-program was suggested, and later implemented, by SEV, the Federation of Greek Industries; it was targeted to businesses and aimed to support innovative research in ICT, which would result into fully developed commercial products, thus creating a new market, the IT market.

The IMP for ICT lasted for six years, during which it was being managed by a Steering Committee, comprising of representatives of both the state and the Commission, who jointly decided which projects should be incorporated and which should be abandoned due to insufficient progress. This was the country's first orchestrated attempt to adopt ICT in the public sector and to create an IT market. It was also the first time the state mechanism was called to manage a Community framework. As such, the IMP for ICT is often characterised as an experiment and, although its impact has been admittedly limited according to the participants' judgements, since no evaluation was ever done, it is understood to have been a necessary step to make the country more skilful in handling Community frameworks of this sort.

There is a remarkable paucity of available information regarding the IMP for ICT. Written information, such as the program itself, interim and post hoc evaluation reports, is scarce, and only the testimonies of selected individuals remain. Methodologically, this constitutes a considerable handicap, as there is hardly any basis for triangulation and confirmation of the recounts of that period. Indeed, the vast majority of the information comes from oral recounts of participants. One of the important problems is that because of the fragmentation of the field, participants were familiar with, and involved in, only one facet of the IMP for ICT. They, thus, have a distorted view of the reality, which is then reflected in their recounts. This issue was addressed by identifying and tracing as many of the actors involved as possible, so as to ensure exposure to as many different views as possible.

Kleisthenis - CSF II

After the end of CSF I, CSF II was initiated in 1994 and ended in 2000 with a mandate to assist the creation of infrastructures. Numerous regional and sectoral (e.g. education, employment, tourism, social security, health) operational programs were created, which included actions on ICT. CSF II included a telecommunications operational program for the establishment of an optical fibre network as well as the change of the legal framework for the liberalisation of the market. However, the operational program that received the highest visibility was Kleisthenis, a program aimed at the modernisation of the public sector through the use of ICT.

Under Kleisthenis, the implementation of numerous information systems, whose primary purpose was to computerise operations back office operations, was funded. The rationale of the Community was that the information infrastructure of the Greek public sector had to be created. The modernisation of the public sector was understood and talked about in terms of computerised infrastructures, and although in rhetoric organisational reform was also part of the vision, no organisational reform was ever attempted.

As with CSF I, CSF II was also jointly managed by representatives of the Commission and representatives of the Greek state, and it required that a consensus is reached between the two sides so as to decide to include projects or on the other hand release funds from projects that were stalling. This allowed for two-way manipulation: on the one hand, the Community was in a position to shape the operational program according to its own priorities; on the other hand, the Greek state could exercise political pressure in order to ensure that investments which were deemed important were funded, even if they were beyond the scope and the rationale of the CSF. It would be the last time the management of CSFs would take place through joint responsibility.

A number of problems became apparent during CSF II as far as the ICT projects were involved. On the one hand, the actions for ICT which were included in the regional and sectoral operational programs failed to demonstrate adequate absorption of funds, and as a result the relevant funds were used to cover other needs. Thus, although a considerable intervention was planned in the regions, implementers in the public administration appeared unable to design and implement information systems and the associated reforms within a developmental agenda, thus appropriating the funds in more familiar ways, such as constructions or to cover their standard operating needs. On the other hand, Kleisthenis also encountered a number of problems when it came to materialising the plans for ICT-enabled modernisation. Numerous projects failed to implement, thus leading the Steering Committee to withdraw them from the Operational Program and direct the funds to other areas where greater absorption could be achieved, e.g staff training.

White Bible

These issues did not go unnoticed and there were indications that the Commission would be reluctant to commit funds for ICT in the next CSF, the negotiation for which began in 1997. CSF III was to be a much more coherent and tightly administered effort with clear development targets, strict regulations and sole management responsibility on the part of the member state. In the light of this possibility, an informal group was formed, headed by a Greek economist formerly involved in science and technology policy in OECD, who was appointed advisor in the Prime Minister's cabinet office. The group was comprised of people in the public administration, most of who were in some way involved in CSF II. The group of eight created the first strategy for the country's role in the information society, the White Bible, taking as inputs relevant EU documents, such as the Bangemann report and The Information Society for All, as well as the national strategies of other countries, such as Denmark, Korea and the UK.

The White Bible was created in an inwards-looking and exclusive manner, solely by the members of this group. The group was kept informal, and no publicity was given that a information society strategy was being drafted, so as not to disturb the political balance. After its completion in 1998, the White Bible was presented by the Prime Minister to the Ministerial Council, where it was accepted

but never discussed. Thus, the majority of the political world as well as the public administration mechanism remained uninvolved.

Nonetheless, the White Bible was highly regarded by the Commission, as an indigenous initiative to “get serious with IT” and reap its potential to spur socio-economic change. Thus, the Commission fervently supported the proposal of the Greek representatives to create one horizontal operational program for the information society (OPIS), and to give then otherwise dispersed actions for the creation of information systems and information skills a clear identity and purpose, perhaps aspiring to better absorption of funds and better results.

Operational Program Information Society - CSF III

The idea of the creation of one cross-sectoral, unified OPIS was not as well received by the Greek political cycles as it was by the Commission; the plan to manage all ICT-related funds by one central authority than by each ministry separately was greatly resisted. To be exact, the decision for the creation of OPIS was never actually made by the Ministerial Council; it was rather the serendipitous result of certain conditions. Indeed, the document of OPIS was written by a small group of people, most of them belonging to the White Bible group, and spearheaded by one senior public administrator, who sent off the document to the Commission the day before the national elections, without the approval of the Ministerial Council. The socialist party remaining in power after the elections, the composition of the Ministerial Council somewhat changed and OPIS already sent to the Commission, the new Ministerial Council could do little but accept it as the status quo. As a way of avoiding political friction, two ministries took on the leadership of OPIS, the Treasury and the Home Office, with the former being effectively in charge.

The budget of OPIS was determined in an equally ambiguous way, through the creative layout of information in an Excel spreadsheet. The Ministerial Council never explicitly approved a budget for OPIS; it approved the segregated budget per sector and not per operational program. Indeed, when the Prime Minister was presented with the budgets per operational program, and not per sector, he found it hard to understand how the budget for investment in ICT had increased tier-fold from the last programmatic period of CSF II, and how this tier-fold increase had passed from the Ministerial Council.

OPIS had a clear mandate: it was to assist the funding of services to citizens, which would be built on the infrastructures that were created during CSF II. The Community was adamant that it would fund only projects of extroversions, which would link the government directly to the citizens. Any lack of the necessary infrastructure would have to be funded through national funds.

CSF III started in 2000 and had a six-year horizon, although implementation could extend to 2008. The Commission withdrew from all operational management of operational programs and instead required that formal structures be established to take over the management and implementation.

For OPIS, a Special Secretariat, placed under the Treasury, had the overall strategic guidance. It included the Managing Authority which decided on which projects should be funded, conducted checks on the progress of the projects, and was financially accountable to the Commission.

To bypass what was understood by both the Commission and the Greek negotiation committee as the inability of the public sector to implement information systems and, perhaps more importantly, its inability to absorb funds, a state-owned company was established to take over project management for those public sector agencies which were deemed immature to take responsibility for an IS project. InfoSoc S.A. was established as a middle layer between the public sector and the IT companies and, although not a profit-making institution, it has an interest to see projects finishing independently of whether they are according to the Commission's directions. Although both the Treasury and the Home Office have stakes into the company, it is thought to be owned by the Home Office, so as to counter-balance the subordination of the Special Secretariat to the Treasury.

Thirdly, the Observatory began its operations in 2004, having as its purpose to gather data in order to analyse the status quo, and to make recommendations which will feed back into the policy process. Although it has served its purpose to gather data on the "as is" situation well, it has exercised its role as an agency to inform policy much less. Questions are still raised as to whether institutional, and not just personal, links have been forged, so as to allow the transfer of policy suggestions from a research body to a strategic unit which will act upon them.

The three agencies were created so as to be complementary; however research on the field has shown considerable role conflict, especially between the Managing Authority and InfoSoc S.A., due to the different purposes each of these agencies serves and to the different ownership. Indeed, the Managing Authority has an interest to ensure that Community funding is spent according to directions and regulations, so as to make sure that all expenses can be claimed back by the Community and do not have to be paid by the state. On the other hand, InfoSoc S.A. has an interest to see projects finishing, independently of whether they comply with the Commission's directions. Moreover, the fact that they belong to different "owners", who are themselves in institutional conflict, creates a culture of segregation rather than co-operation, thus distorting the initial intentions.

The supreme authority is the Monitoring Committee, which includes a broad range of stakeholders, such as representatives from ministries, public sector agencies, and InfoSoc S.A. Representatives of the Community are also present in the meetings of the Monitoring Committee, without the right to vote, although they exercise significant influence through their critique.

The insistence of the Commission to only fund services to citizens, i.e. e-government projects, through OPIS resulted in a number of problematic situations. Most importantly, in the absence of the necessary infrastructure that would allow the creation of citizen-centric services, significant manipulation would take place. National funds were not made available to fund the necessary infrastructures; instead projects to implement infrastructures were included in OPIS, masked under ambiguous and vague terminology. For this reason, there is now considerable uncertainty as to how many of the projects will actually be eligible to claim the funding from the Community.

Digital Strategy 2006-2013 - CSF IV

In 2004, after a change of the party in power, an ICT Committee was created, a quasi-symbolic move to demonstrate that ICT has moved up in the list of political priorities. The ICT Committee is comprised by the Special Secretary for the Information Society, the CEO of InfoSoc S.A, as well as the general secretaries of three ministries (Home Office, Treasury, Ministry of Development), all of whom are politically appointed. The ICT Committee had a mandate on the one hand to create a new strategy and on the other hand to speed up the implementation of projects which were stalling for too long and hindered the absorption of funds. Although the ICT Committee acted efficiently as an ad hoc mechanism to tackle the problems at hand, its effectiveness as a permanent mechanism destined to help with long-term solutions to long-standing problems is questioned.

The new strategy, called Digital Strategy 2006-2013 came out in 2006, as the negotiations for CSF IV began. It highlighted the country's potential to achieve a "digital leapfrog in productivity and quality of life" through ICT. There was a clear impression among Greek policy-makers that without a new strategy, as a proof of the country's renewed effort to use ICT for development, a new operational program for ICT would not have been approved by the Commission

The Digital Strategy was created again in an introvert fashion, by a small group of individuals in the Special Secretariat, who decided on the overall vision and then called on other stakeholders to provide feedback. An effort was made so that this vision is transferred to other facets of the social and economic life, i.e. education, health, employment, industry. The strategy being in effect a roadmap this time, it has also gained the support of the local IT industry, which expects a steady stream of projects and funding over the next years.

The Digital Strategy being part of the developmental plan of the country, a new Operational Program called Digital Convergence has been in effect agreed with the Commission. What is equally interesting is that a second operational program for the Improvement of the Capacity of the Public Sector has been already been approved, under the auspices of the Home Office, with the aim to reorganise the public sector. With e-government being the focal point of the discourse in the last

programmatic period, Business Process Reengineering (BPR) is the motto of the new programmatic period.

The graphic below attempts to demonstrate in a concise way the 20-year period of ICT policy in Greece.

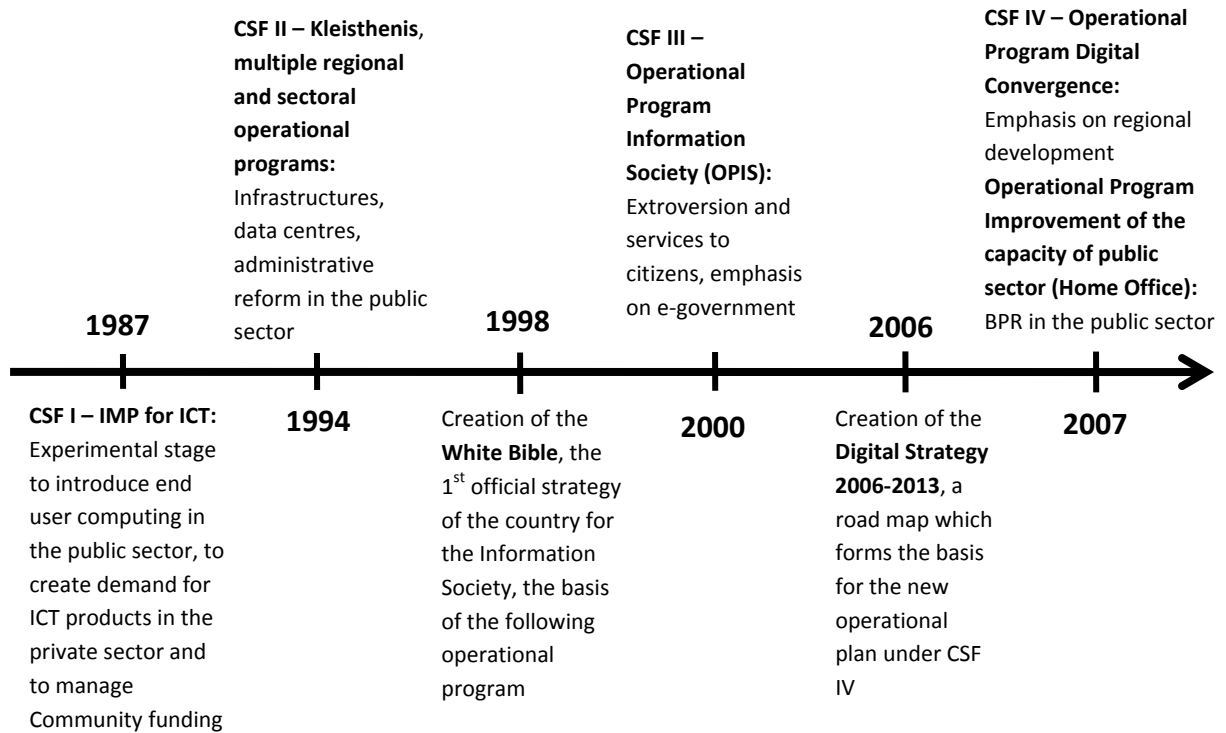


Figure 1 - The timeline of ICT policy in Greece

DISCUSSION

Having presented an overview of the case study, we will now proceed to a short discussion, which constitutes a provisional argumentation of the researcher just coming out of one big round of data collection in the field.

The data seems to suggest that there is a distance between what the literature argues in terms of ICT and development and what takes place in the Greek case. Indeed, there has been considerable academic research as well as grey papers on the potential of ICT to spur development. The literature is fraught with examples of how ICT, invested with a technical-economic rationality, can be used to “leapfrog” the stages that Western states have followed in order to achieve their current levels of economic growth and social prosperity. This notion of staged development which will lead the state through the use of ICT to greater prosperity is often invoked by EU officials in order to promote the ICT-enabled reform. It is also often quoted by Greek policy-makers, and it seems to constitute a very powerful rhetoric. However, there is contradicting evidence as to how much this rhetoric is acted upon in a locally meaningful way.

One thing that is quite striking is the degree to which all Greek efforts to appropriate ICT in national policy have been directed to a very large extent by the corresponding decisions and actions of the Commission. To be exact, the telecommunications sector has been the one where indigenous policy has been taking place in part independently from the Commission. However, because of the state monopoly in the telecommunications sector until very recently, it can be understood that the national telecommunications policy coincided with the incumbent’s (OTE) own strategy.

Apart from very few exceptions, all policies and actions related to ICT have been in one way or the other directed, promoted or induced by the EU. All Greek policies and actions on ICT have followed the Commission’s programmatic periods, i.e. cycles of funding. Although this has ensured a steady influx of funding, it has also created complacency, as to how much indigenous effort must be dedicated so as to achieve the proclaimed developmental goals. Indeed, very few investments in ICT have been financed through the Program of Public Investments (PPI), i.e. the plan detailing all actions to be taken during the next years and to be funded through the national budget, so as to achieve the desired developmental targets. The majority of ICT projects, however large their developmental potential, have been included in the CSFs, even if substantial distortion and concessions had to be made in order for the projects to be eligible, i.e. to look as if they were congruent with the types of investments funded by the Commission in the different stages.

Another indication of the low perception of ICT as an enabler of socio-economic change has been the preoccupation with “absorption”. Although there is an increased interest on absorption of funds when it comes to Community funding in all the different areas, it raises exponentially when it comes to ICT public investments. A number of web searches were conducted both in the records of the European Union, and in the records of the Greek Parliament, and what has come up is that the information society and ICT public investments in general were only ever discussed in terms of the low absorption of funds of the respective operational programs, never in terms of their potential to make qualitative changes in the economy and social life of the country.

Absorbing the available funds has been and still is an end in itself. Any indication of low absorption is translated as a problem of mismanagement or insufficient work done, and is followed by fervent claims that “the country should not lose money”. It should be noted that unlike structural reforms, there is no penalty for failing to appropriate the funds of CSFs. So, being exact, when there is low absorption of funds, the country is not losing any money, it is merely not taking advantage of funds that are being made available to it.

This constitutes one of the concerns and pending questions of a number of Greek policy-makers who were interviewed. It was a dilemma often put in terms of absorption of funds versus quality and impact of projects. It was often described as a tug-of-war, since opting for investments that would make a significant developmental impact would have to mean that time should be spent to tackle long-standing problems, such as the obsolete and entangled legal framework. During that time absorption of funds would be minimal, which would restart a vicious cycle of outrage on the part of both the parties in opposition, and the press of the ruling party’s inability to make use of the money, as well as of disappointment on the part of the Commission, with perceived possible repercussions on future funding.

These considerations seemed to create an irrational context where the technical rationality of ICT as a universally beneficial instrument for development would be invoked to justify their actions to do ICT policy, but in the same time this same perception of ICT as developmental tool would be negated in practice through the permanent obsession with absorption of funds over the developmental potential of the projects (Sein and Harindranath 2004).

The researcher is still in search of a suitable conceptual framework that would allow to fine-tune these still rudimentary observations and reflections on the case, and to shed some light on other aspects of it.

CONCLUSION

In this paper we have in essence attempted to tell a story. It is the story of the effort of the Greek state to foster the adoption of ICT in different facets of the social and economic life through relevant policies and action programs. The story is placed on the backdrop of the existing literature on ICT policy and ICT for development, and has highlighted the often encountered phenomenon of ICT policies being led and promoted by international and supranational organisations.

The literature on ICT policy remains oblivious of this phenomenon and has directed its efforts towards either micro, macro studies or critical studies. On the other hand, the literature on ICT and socio-economic development is divided between an over-ambitious, technologically-deterministic view of ICT as universally developmental and a structurally-deterministic view according to which structural inequalities will hamper any potential for ICT-enabled development. Finally, a socio-technically informed stream emphasises the pressing need to follow unique, locally meaningful and historically aware paths to spur ICT-enabled change.

We have provided a narrative of twenty years of ICT policy in Greece, from 1987 to 2007. We have attempted to demonstrate the important stages, the types of priorities and developmental targets each time, the implementation and funding mechanisms. We aspire to have demonstrated the extent to which this policy field had been dominated by the presence of the Commission, which has been the sole source of funding, and arguably one of the most important sources of strategic direction. Despite all these efforts, the country is still lagging far behind when it comes to ICT adoption.

What this story has revealed is that despite the often stated argument in the literature of the possibility of ICT to act as an enabler for development, limited such indigenous initiative has existed in practice, with the whole effort orchestrated by the funding and directions coming out of the European Commission. The fact that a locally-meaningful path to foster innovative ICT adoption for development has never been pursued, or even conceived of, may prove to be the reason why despite all efforts to place ICT in a developmental agenda, little of this vision has grown roots in the ground, with most of the discussion still revolving around funds absorption. Thus, it is hardly surprising that little progress in that respect has taken place.

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Everyone's House, A Social Approach to Domestic Architecture in Patras, Greece 1976-2006

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This study focuses on contemporary Greek domestic architecture, while investigating the intellectual associations that can be established between a historiography of architecture and the social sciences. The first part of the study discusses the structure of the proposed methodology, i.e. the conception of the general theoretical framework with references to a selected literature from the science of history, the social sciences, anthropology and architectural theory. Within this interdisciplinary theoretical framework, the study explores the proposed methodology that combines analytical tools borrowed from architectural theory and criticism, history and the social sciences. The second part of the paper briefly presents a case-study, used as a testing ground for our methodological hypothesis: the evolution of single-storey houses in the city of Patras, Greece, over the last three decades (1976-2006).

I.

In *Neo-Hellenic Architecture*, a reference book on the historiography of Greek architectural production, D. Philippides draws a distinction between *Formal* architecture and *Mass* architecture:

...we first have to classify architectural production into two basic categories: architectural production that refers to the “elite” and can be called *Formal* and architecture for the lower and the middle classes that can be named *Mass* or *Anonymous*.¹

Formal architecture is further divided into *Avant-Garde*, *Official*, and *Prestige Architecture*: *Avant-Garde* is the radical, experimental architecture produced by enlightened pioneers and closely related to current international trends, *Official* is the architecture designed by prominent architectural firms for the state and for public or private institutions, and *Prestige* is the more conservative architectural production for higher incomes.² As examples of *Formal* architecture Philippides mentions the *Holiday House in Anavyssos, Attica, 1961-62*, designed by the renowned architect Aris Konstantinidis³ and a tower building in Marousi, Athens, designed by Ioannis Vikelas⁴.

On the other hand, according to Philippides, *Mass* architecture involves 95% of the built environment in Greece⁵. *Mass* architecture refers basically to the most common apartment building, *polikatikia*⁶ in greek, and the suburban residential development⁷. In Greece, *Mass* architecture is not produced solely by architects. Because of an ongoing confusion as to the legal rights of the various technical professional sectors, a building in Greece can be designed by an architect, a civil engineer, or by other engineers having basic technical training.

It is well known that the production of *Formal* architecture in Greece is very limited. First of all the Greek state did not succeed in implementing large public domestic projects, similar to those encountered in Central Europe and the United States of America, often designed by prominent architects. This fact should be interpreted in conjunction with the country's

¹ Demetres Philippides, *Neo-Hellenic Architecture (Νεοελληνική Αρχιτεκτονική)*, Athens, Melissa, 1984, p. 425, (in Greek).

² Ibid p. 425-426.

³ Ibid p. 424.

⁴ Ibid p. 428.

⁵ Ibid p. 426.

⁶ Ibid p. 428.

⁷ Ibid.

particular socio-economic and political development. The Greek contemporary city was mainly built under the so called *antiparoxi* system - a legislative framework of “land concession in exchange of apartments” - that propped up the bustle of private house construction in Greece during the second half of the 20th century. According to the *antiparoxi* system, an owner of a plot agrees with a constructor on the erection, at the latter’s expense, of a building on the said plot. The owner of the plot undertakes to transfer to the constructor –or to persons designated by him– an agreed number of flats, while maintaining the ownership of the remaining ones. The main reasons for the extended application of this particular system were: small landownership, limited state resources and small-scale construction businesses. Small landownership in Greece is a historical fact that should be interpreted in association with sociopolitical developments that occurred in the Ottoman era and during the early years of the independent Greek state. According to Dertilis, the disappearance of the Byzantine aristocracy, the imposition of the Islamic legislation that denied the right to landed property and the early establishment of the parliamentary system that gave political power to the lower and middle classes, were some of the reasons that resulted in large scale land fragmentation and the early –in comparison to other states– land reform of 1871⁸.

Construction practices produced under those conditions defined the built environment in contemporary Greece and resulted in an architectural practice which was quite different from the standard one prevailing in the other Western European countries or the US. The definition of the role of the architect in the construction system in Greece, and the re-evaluation of the architectural design in the building process are the major issues of an ongoing debate waged between Greek architects until nowadays. Unfortunately, Greek architects are not yet aware of the complex socio-political reasons that led to their present seclusion from the building practice in Greece. Furthermore, the majority of Greek architects, especially numerous academics and the most renowned architectural firms, don’t seem willing to deal with the complexity of the phenomenon, and are still committed to a particularly limited production of *Formal* architecture, designing buildings for the state, for other institutions or for an enlightened intellectual minority.

Understanding the socio-political developments that have defined the building practices in Greece in their historical context is a goal to be met. Interpreting and re-evaluating the built environment and particularly the domestic architecture in Greece as a complex cultural phenomenon is also a challenge to be faced. If this task is undertaken, Greek architects will be able to participate in the building practices in a much more self-confident and thus creative way. To this end, it is important reconsidering the historiography of the Greek architecture, daring a shift from the historiography of the limited and socially secluded *Formal* architecture to the study of *Mass* architecture. In any case, this methodological shift in architectural historiography is dictated by the international developments in the science of history. Political and social changes on an international level have influenced the historiographical production and have established its intellectual communication with the other social sciences within a framework of inter-disciplinary dialogue. Over the last decades, the dominance of economic and social history and the history of the mentalities, namely the discourse of the “New History” of the *Annales*, determined a shift from the so-called history of great men and events to the history of every-day people, of the masses and how *they* shape history rather than their leaders.⁹

This methodological shift can already be detected in the international architectural historiographical production. While Kenneth Frampton wrote his acclaimed survey, *Modern*

⁸Georges Dertilis, *History of the Greek State, 1830-1920*, (*Ιστορία του ελληνικού Κράτους, 1830-1920*), Athens, Estia, 2005, p. 71-75, 696, 762 (in Greek).

⁹ For the history of the *Annales* see François Dossé, *New History in France. The Triumph of the Annales*, Urbana and Chicago, University of Illinois Press, 1994.

*Architecture: A critical history*¹⁰, (1980) focusing on various recurring figures such as Frank Lloyd Wright, Le Corbusier and Mies van der Rohe, Gwendolyn Wright, wrote a book on the relatively neglected field of domestic architecture for the masses, *Building the Dream, A social history of Housing in America*(1981)¹¹. Wright belongs to a new generation of architectural historians and focuses her studies on the analysis of the social context and the implications of building design, while showing the social and political controversies surrounding the different kinds of housing at the time each was first adopted and later generally accepted. Almost ten years later, Monique Eleb and Anne Debarre published one book on the history of private life and the house, entitled *Architectures de la vie privée, Maisons et mentalités, XVIIe-XIXe siècles*¹², (1989) and another on the history of the modern house, *L' invention de l' habitation moderne, Paris, 1880-1914*,¹³(1995) focusing on everyday life, society, technological innovations and architecture. Presently, a growing interdisciplinary interest in domestic architecture can also be detected internationally. Daniel Miller, has edited the studies of his postgraduate students in the UCL Department of Anthropology in a book called *Home Possessions, Material culture behind closed doors*¹⁴,(2001) and developed a number of new perspectives for research in the domestic sphere, based on the methods of traditional anthropological ethnography. Jordan Sand wrote the book *House and Home in modern Japan, Architecture, domestic space and bourgeois culture, 1880-1930*,¹⁵ (2003) studying the ways in which westernizing reformers reinvented the Japanese home and family life in the twentieth century, addressing the problem of the transformation and cultural understanding of daily life, through a history of the home. The books mentioned above are just some examples of a continuously expanding literature on the subject.

The study of the selected literature and the general theoretical framework already discussed, pointed out to the fact that the proposed methodological shift in the historiography and theory of Greek domestic architecture should follow analogous shifts that have taken place in the social sciences and the science of history. This preliminary theoretical position also suggested that the basic analytical tools to be used should be borrowed both from architectural theory and criticism and from the social sciences. Moving from the limited examples of avant-garde architecture to the study of mass architecture, leads us to an ambiguity concerning the exact object of research. For a valid definition of the object of research, sampling techniques developed in the social sciences, and particularly in the so-called qualitative social research, have to be used and justified in conjunction with the theoretical assumptions of specific architectural research. To handle the large amount of data under study, classical analysis of architectural drawings has to be combined with computer based techniques. Finally, qualitative interviews have to be used for the interpretation of architectural production within its social and cultural context.

II.

We will now discuss in brief the case-study used as a testing ground for our methodological hypothesis: the evolution of single storey houses in Patras, the third largest city of Greece,

¹⁰ Kenneth Frampton, *Modern Architecture: A critical history*, [1980], London, Thames and Hudson, 1992.

¹¹ Gwendolyn Wright, *Building the dream, A social history of housing in America*, Cambridge (Massachusetts), MIT Press, 1981.

¹² Monique Eleb, Anne Debarre-Blanchard, *Architectures de la vie privée, Maisons et mentalités, XVIIe-XIXe siècles*, Bruxelles, Archives d' Architecture Moderne, 1989.

¹³ Monique Eleb, Anne Debarre, *L' invention de l' habitation moderne, Paris 1880-1914*, CEE, Archives d' architecture moderne, Hazan, 1995.

¹⁴ Daniel Miller, (ed), *Home possessions, Material culture behind closed doors*, Oxford, New York, Berg, 2001.

¹⁵ Jordan Sand, *House and Home in modern Japan, Architecture, domestic space and bourgeois culture, 1880-1930*, Cambridge (Massachusetts), London, Harvard University Asia Center, 2003.

during the last three decades. The part of the study which will be discussed concerns the layout, use and decoration of the parlor, *saloni*, versus the kitchen, in the houses of the '70s. Discussion will be based on a deeper understanding of the particular way of thinking and living of the dwellers. The study includes a diagrammatic analysis¹⁶ of architectural plans from local archives, a research undertaken during the summer of 2006 and a series of qualitative, semi-structural interviews with 9 engineers who have worked in Patras from the '70s until today. The interviews were conducted during the first months of 2007.

The houses of the '70s are compact, solid masses. The outer boundaries of the houses tend to be simple squares. There is a main entrance situated in the middle of one side of the square, the main façade of the house. Usually there is a central corridor that crosses over the inner space of the house leading to different rooms. The houses have six different types of rooms. There is an entrance hall, a parlor called *saloni*, a dining room when there is enough space, which is called *trapezaria*, a kitchen –*kouzina*–, a bathroom –*loutro*–, and two or three bedrooms –*koitones*. The layout is quite common in all of the houses. As one of the interviewees' reports:

Io: In these days you used to place the main entrance in the middle of the house and then on the one side was the *saloni*, on the other side was the bedroom. The kitchen was at the back of the house.

All rooms are separated and divided with built partitions - brick walls. Every room has a door and circulation between different rooms is possible through the main corridor of the house. What is quite interesting in the houses of the '70s is the explicit difference in the way the parlor and the kitchen were decorated and used throughout the day. The *saloni* is a room which is not used everyday and remains closed most of the time. The *saloni* is always furnished with the most expensive furniture of the house, *kala epipla* (good furniture). In the *saloni* there is usually a couch, two armchairs, a coffee table and a side-board for displaying and storing the valuable objects. In the *saloni* the family keeps all of her treasures, wedding gifts, and memorabilia.

This room should be always kept clean and tidy. The door of the *saloni* remains closed throughout the day, so that dirt won't enter this particular room of the house. The furniture and the *bibelot* must be kept intact and look always like new. The women of the house, i.e. the wife and mother and the grandmother of the family, forbid small children to enter the *saloni* for fear of breaking the fragile pieces of decoration. In the *saloni* everything is under control, in perfect condition, still and quite. The *saloni* is usually situated on the north side of the house and the windows are closed throughout the day so that the sun may not spoil the fabric of the furniture. This is why the room is always dark, compared to the other rooms of the house. The *saloni* is usually a little bit damp and chilly, because fresh air and sunlight are avoided with great care.

Some of the engineers describe the *saloni* as follows:

Vi.: They always asked for the *saloni* to be an enclosed room...so that kids could not enter and spoil everything... We used to place the *saloni* on the north because it is *kalo* (good) and you don't use it everyday.

Za.: If you told them the *saloni* should be an open space they would say "no, there's going to be *hamos* (a mess)"...they always wanted the *saloni* to be clean and tidy, *stin enteleia* (in perfect condition)...the *saloni* was a separate room in the house, always closed, it smelled like mould.

Di.: The *saloni* was a closed, cold room.

¹⁶ With the aid of computer based techniques the plans of the houses were analyzed into different layers and were superimposed to produce analytic diagrams that give us an insight on certain basic similarities between them.

The *saloni* is the formal room of the house, used during special events, mainly for celebrating the name-days of the family members. In this case the family opens the doors of the *saloni*, the lights are turned on, and the room becomes the center of the house. The *saloni* is also used for hosting the visitors of the family, usually called *xenoi* (foreigners). In the *saloni* the *noikokira* (the housewife) serves home-made *glikia* (sweets) and drinks. The *saloni* constitutes the public space of the house, the show-place of the family's formal face that should always look tidy, unspoiled, proud and self-controlled.

Vi.: The *saloni* is the *kalo domatio* (the good room), you don't always open it. It's only for the *giorti* (celebration-reception).

Za.: The *saloni* should be an enclosed space, what if someone knocked on your door when you least expected a visitor? You would have to clean and keep it tidy all the time. It's not easy.

Outside of the *saloni* the house is always noisy and busy in the hustle-bustle of everydayness. The kitchen at the back of the house is the most vivid room of the family. There is always someone doing something, all the usual tasks of everyday life. In the kitchen, the women of the family cook, clean, repair things, talk or drink coffee. In the kitchen the family dine, that's where the parents meet, that's where the older members of the family spend their days, that's where the kids play. This room is quite large, in order to provide enough space for all these activities taking place.

Di.: I used to design the kitchen as a large room, with a fireplace, with a dining table, sometimes with a *divani* (small bed) for the grandparent.

The kitchen is situated on the south of the house in order to have plenty of sunlight during the day. The room has a back door leading to the garden and a large window.

Vi.: The kitchen is situated always on the south in order to be sunny. That's where people spend their entire day.

In the kitchen things are never in their proper place. Pots and saucepans may be on the cooker, there might be boiling water in the *briki* (a special pan for Greek coffee), a drawer might have been left open. Even the chairs around the dining table are not usually in place. A chair might have been used as a helping stair to reach a cupboard, the plastic basin filled with clean laundry could be placed on another one or a third could have been used and forgotten in another room of the house. The woman is the queen of the kitchen. The engineers remember how important it was for them to show the kitchen to the wife in order to get her final approval of the layout of the house.

Vi.: I always used to ask him to bring his wife in order to see the kitchen...if it was functional...our task was to make the house functional, comfortable, cozy, the way she wanted it to be.

In the kitchen it's always noisy. Kids here are free to shout or cry, adults can fight or laugh loudly, and the younger kids can run up and down the place. The *noikokira* wants the kitchen to be able to close, so that she may keep her children under control.

Za.: A lady came and told me "I have three kids, I won't be able to control them unless the kitchen is enclosed".

The kitchen is a room always plenty of smells, because of the food prepared here. The ingredients for the cooking, vegetables, fish or meat, the steam from the pans, the oil boiling in the saucepans, the laundry, or even the rubbish render the air of the room thick. But all of this smelling, the sign of bodily human reality, is negatively evaluated by the inhabitants, as something that has to be confined. The door of the kitchen must remain closed during the preparation of the food, as if the rest of the house is at risk because of these greasy steams.

Vi.: In the kitchen you cook. When you cook or fry and you don't close the kitchen's door, the whole house stinks.

Ki.: More traditional *noikokires* used to say that "when I fry fish I don't want the rest of the house to smell". That's why they wanted their kitchen door to be able to close.

In the kitchen the furniture is not expensive and is definitely much cheaper than that of the *saloni*. The kitchen furniture may be a little worn, the pans may be scratched, the glasses may be broken, even the chairs and the table may be worn on the edges. The kitchen must not be in perfect condition, as the *saloni*. The world of everydayness enclosed in the kitchen looks dirty, untidy, worn, informal and this is why the door of the kitchen closes, in order to hide it from the eyes of the visitors, of the *xenoi* (foreigners). The enclosed kitchen, negatively evaluated by the dwellers themselves, is always situated at the back of the house, behind the *saloni*, away from the main entrance, hidden as much as possible from the gaze of the visitor.

Ki.: I always thought that the kitchen should be hidden, this room should not be directly visible. The door of the kitchen closes so that the *noikokira* is not obliged to always keep it perfectly clean and tidy, *stin enteleia* (in perfect condition).

Domestic space as well as domestic life in the house of the '70s is articulated through these binary oppositions. On the one hand there is the *saloni*, a show-off place, in the front part of the house, formal, silent, clean, under control, out of use, artificially perfect and on the other hand there is the kitchen, hidden at the back of the house, busy, informal, noisy, evaluated as dirty, always in a mess but so much related to the real everyday life. The house of the '70s with the traditional arrangement of rooms and the absolute, strict differentiation of their various functions is the proof that the family life is determined by elements of etiquette and manners. Social behaviors are deeply structured by hierarchies between what is supposed to be considered of value and what not, what should be highlighted and what hidden, what makes the family proud and what ashamed.

Describing the house of the '70s an engineer highlights the point:

Io.: The *saloni* and the kitchen were closed rooms...When I started working as an engineer, I tried hard to persuade people to open up these rooms. That was exactly the case with my parents in law. When I tried to change the layout of the house, to demolish some of the inner walls they were shocked, they thought "what is he doing? Is he tearing our house down?" I was newly married at the time, and I went to a house where everything was closed, the kitchen, the *saloni*, the dining room, everything closed... People back then were not used to enjoy their everydayness...That was their mentality. As a young engineer I was trying to persuade them to see things differently. I used to tell them not to have the best rooms of the house closed. Live in your entire house everyday, I used to tell them, enjoy it!

This layout of the house, strictly divided into separate enclosed rooms in accordance with an everydayness divided between informal and formal ways of living, cannot but bring us in mind the analogy between a house and a society used by Arnold Van Gennep in his famous work on the rites of passage:

Every society may be considered as a house, divided in rooms and corridors with walls being less thick and with wider open doors as much as the culture of that society resembles ours. In the case of the semi-civilized people, on the contrary, these compartments are isolated with great care and in order to move from one to the other, formalities and ceremonies are necessary, formalities that have a great resemblance to the rites of passage we mentioned beforehand.¹⁷

¹⁷ Arnold Van Gennep, *Les rites de passage*, [1909] Paris, Picard, 1981, p.35.

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The 3rd HO PhD Symposium on Contemporary Greece:
Structures, Context and Challenges

**HELLENIC CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS IN SEARCH OF
IDENTITY: THE CASE OF THE NATIONAL GALLERY-
ALEXANDROS SOUTSOS MUSEUM**

Eleonora VRATSKIDOU
&
Panayotis PROTOPSALTIS

London, June 2007

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INTRODUCTION

Museums are defined today as the "non-profit-making, permanent institutions in the service of society and its development, and open to the public, which acquire, conserve, research, communicate and exhibit, for purposes of study, education and enjoyment, material evidence of people and their environment"¹. Museologists use various criteria to distinguish different types of museums. On the basis of their content, they usually distinguish between national museums, that is, museums of national cultural, as opposed to those of global culture and encyclopaedic museums as opposed to specialised ones². A further important distinction is that on the basis of their ownership, between public and private museums.

The identity of the museum is usually defined by its creators upon its institution. However, museums are not static institutions. Their identity is shaped and reshaped over time. It is the role of their management to constantly assure that the museum responds to its means and capacities, to its history as well as to the changing conditions and societal needs it is destined to cover. Art museums in particular, are part of the cooperating institutions that form the *art world*³. They constitute one of the distribution systems of artworks. By choosing to show or to purchase a work of art, museums give to it the highest kind of institutional approval. Although the functioning of the art world relies on mutually understood conventions, each of the cooperating participants acts in pursuit his own interests, which may or may not coincide with the interests of the others. In the case of the museums, the interests of their management, of curators and art historians, of patrons or sponsors and finally of the artists may significantly diverge. This nexus of powers of the art world is also bound to influence the identity of the museum. Finally, museums are made for and exist through their public or, more precisely, their different publics. Although museums try to shape their publics, inevitably, they also adapt their orientations in accordance with the public's expectations.

Museums arose from the transformation of private, namely royal and aristocrats', collections into public collections of profane character in the late 18th century Western Europe⁴. In South Eastern Europe, however, this condition was

¹ *ICOM Statutes*. Adopted by the 16th General Assembly of ICOM (*The Hague, The Netherlands, 5 September 1989*) and amended by the 18th General Assembly of ICOM (*Stavanger, Norway, 7 July 1995*) and by the 20th General Assembly (*Barcelona, Spain, 6 July 2001*), art. 2, in : < <http://icom.museum/statutes.html#2>>; see also: < http://portal.unesco.org/culture/en/ev.php-URL_ID=15553&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html> (visited on 13.5.2007).

² *Running a Museum: A Practical Handbook*, ICOM – International Council of Museums, 2004 pp. 2-4.

³ The art world is the cooperative social and economic network, whose primary function is to continually define, validate, and maintain the cultural category of art and to produce the consent of the entire society in the legitimacy of the art world's authority to do so. [Becker H.S., *Art Worlds*, Berkeley, Los Angeles, London, University of California press, 1982].

⁴ Poulot D., *Patrimoine et musées. L'institution de la culture*, Paris, Hachette, 2001.

not met. Orthodox dignitaries, ecclesiastic or secular, ignored the concept of private collection. Thus, the creation of museums in these countries was relatively delayed. With the exception of Russia, Greece was the only orthodox country to create a museum in the early 19th century⁵. The Museum of Aegina, founded by Capodistrias in 1829, focused only on antiquities - the ultimate legitimacy pole of the newly established Greek state- which were to constitute the main priority of Greek cultural policy. Nevertheless, Capodistrias provided also for the creation of a national collection of paintings⁶. The creation of a Fine Arts Museum in Greece was first planned at the beginning of King Otto's reign, while further initiatives were taken during the reign of King George I⁷. The National Gallery was officially founded only in 1900 and was subsequently, in 1954, merged with the Alexandros Soutzos bequest and re-named National Gallery – Alexandros Soutzos Museum⁸. However, the Gallery found suitable premises only in 1976. Although the A.Soutsos bequest provided the necessary funds for the construction of the museum and despite the efforts of its directors, the construction of the current building of the Gallery begun in 1964 and was completed twelve years later. Until that time, the museum enriched its collection through donations and, to a lesser degree, through purchases. Its collection was, however, only on occasions publicly exhibited. Thus, the inauguration of its building constituted in reality the beginning of the Gallery's life⁹.

Both the contents of the collection and the subjects of the exhibitions since then show that the Gallery was never confined to a Greek orientation or to a specific historical period. It is unclear, whether it wishes to play the role of a national or global culture, contemporary or past art museum. Although these roles are not

⁵ Pomian K., "Le musée émanation de la société. (Europe centrale et Europe orientale)", in : Fohr R. (ed.), *Le rôle de l'Etat dans la constitution des collections des musées de France et d'Europe*, congress proceedings, Paris, Direction des musées de France, 2003, pp. 198-202.

⁶ Kokkou A., *Η μέριμνα για τις αρχαιοτήτες στην Ελλάδα και τα πρώτα μουσεία*, Athens, Hermis, 1997, pp. 61-68 ; Mouriki D. (ed.), *National Technical University of Athens 150 years: Western European Paintings in the National Gallery from the Former Collections of the National Technical University of Athens*, Athens, National Technical University, 1987, p. 13.

⁷ The Royal degree of 1834 was the first to provide for the establishment in Athens and in the capitals of each prefecture, among others, a collection of icons and a collection of etchings. [Νόμος περί των επιστημονικών και τεχνολογικών συλλογών, περί ανακαλύψεως και διατηρήσεως των αρχαιοτήτων και της χρήσεως αυτών, 10/22 May, 1834, art. 1]. Subsequently, the Royal degree of 1897 established a "Museum of Fine Arts". In 1878, the National Technical University of Athens opened to the public a small collection works of Greek and European artists, originally conceived as an educational annex to the School of Arts. These works which were later donated to the Gallery and formed a first nucleus of the Gallery's collections.

⁸ "Περί κανονισμού της εν Αθήναις Πινακοθήκης", Royal degree of 28th of June 1900, introduction; "Περί συστάσεως Νομικού Προσώπου Δημοσίου Δικαίου υπό την επωνυμίαν «Εθνική Πινακοθήκη και Μουσείον Αλ. Σούτσου»", Law 2814/1954, art. 1. For a list of the principal laws regulating the activities of the Gallery, see *infra Primary Sources*.

⁹ For an overview of the history of the Gallery, see Lambraki-Plaka M. (ed.), *National Gallery. 100 Years, Four Centuries of Greek Painting from the Collections of the National Gallery and the Euripidis Koutlidis Foundation*, National Gallery and Alexandros Soutsos Museum, Athens, 1999, pp. 19-33; See also, Kalligas M., *Εθνική Πινακοθήκη. Προσπάθειες και αποτελέσματα*, Athens, 1976 ; Papastamos D., *Εθνική Πινακοθήκη και Μουσείο Αλεξάνδρου Σούτζου. Ελληνική ζωγραφική από το 1614. Η ιστορία και η οργάνωση της Εθνικής Πινακοθήκης. Κατάλογος έργων Ελληνικής Ζωγραφικής*, Athens, 1976, pp. 17-48.

necessarily mutually exclusive, it is uncertain to what extent the museum may successfully perform simultaneously all of them. The museum seems to lack a well-defined orientation therefore a specialization, a lack that may influence the quality of its services.

Based mainly on empirical research, we propose an approach to the question of the Gallery's identity from an historical perspective. The various laws that regulated over time the operations of the museum since its creation outline its objectives and contain only some broad guidelines on the deployment of its operations. As a result, the law assigned the management of the museum, in reality its director, with the task of definition of the orientations of the museum and consequently of its identity. In the first part we will attempt a macro-scale analysis. We will examine the objectives and mission of the Gallery as defined by the law and their transformation into operational policies by its directors in the light of the various criticisms developed on its activity. Our analysis will concentrate on the exhibition policy of the Gallery during the last three decades. The second part focuses on a specific moment of the Gallery's history, the 1992 exhibition *Metamorphosis of the Modern. The Greek experience*, in order to examine, through a concrete example, the interaction of the museum with other participants of the Greek art world and the subsequent tensions concerning its orientations.

A. THE NATIONAL GALLERY: LEGAL FRAMEWORK AND EXHIBITION POLICY

I. The legal framework of the Gallery's operations.

The legal definition of the objectives of the museum evolved along the 20th century. The first discussions on its creation at the end of the 19th century envisaged the museum as an instrument of support of the contemporary Greek artists through the exhibition of their works¹⁰. However, the law never subscribed to this idea. The Royal degree of 1900, which first created a Gallery in Athens, provided for the objectives thereof to be “*the development and promotion of the sense of beauty through the acquisition and the exhibition in common view of creations of the visual arts as well as in particular the instruction and study of those engaged in fine arts*”¹¹. The Gallery was then functioning mainly as an annex to the School of Fine Arts, its first director Georgios Iakovidis being as well the director of the School. The special mention of the artists' education was omitted in the subsequent law. Law 1434/1918, which first regulated the organization of the National Gallery of Athens, refers only to “*the development and promotion of the sense of beauty through the collection and exhibition in common view of the works of visual arts*”¹². The Gallery was henceforth to address the wider public. Indeed, the same year the then director, Zacharias Papantoniou, “*initiated daily visiting hours with free admission to the public*”¹³. Both the Royal degree of 1900 and the law of 1918 provided also for the enrichment of its collections and for the conservation of their contents¹⁴.

The subsequently adopted Law 2814/1954 established the legal entity of the National Gallery and Alexandros Soutsos Museum and reformulated its aims¹⁵.

¹⁰ Papastamos 1976, p. 20. Mentzafou-Polyzou O., “Ο Γεώργιος Ιακωβίδης Διευθυντής της Εθνικής Πινακοθήκης”, in: Mentzafou-Polyzou O. (ed.), *Ιακωβίδης, αναδρομική*, exhibition catalogue, National Gallery-Alexandros Soutzos Museum, Athens, 2005, p. 81.

¹¹ “Σκοπός της εν Αθήναις ιδρύσεως Πινακοθήκης είναι η παρ’ημίν ανάπτυξις και προαγωγή του αισθήματος του καλού δια της προσκτήσεως και εκθέσεως εις κοινήν θέαν δημιουργημάτων των γραφικών τεχνών, ειδικότερον δε η εν αυτή διδασκαλία και μελέτη των εις τας καλὰς τέχνας ασχολουμένων” Royal degree of 28th of June 1900, art. 1].

¹² “σκοπόν έχουσα την ανάπτυξιν και προαγωγήν του αισθήματος του καλού δια της συγκεντρώσεως και εκθέσεως εις κοινήν θέαν έργων των εικαστικών τεχνών” [“Περί οργανώσεως της Εθνικής Πινακοθήκης”, Law 1434/1918, art.1].

¹³ Lambraki-Plaka 1999, p. 25.

¹⁴ Royal degree of the 28th of June 1900, art. 8 ; Law 1434/1918, art. 8. and art. 9.

¹⁵ “*Aim of the National Gallery-Alexandros Soutzos Museum, the collection of important paintings and works of art in view of their exhibition in a manner that promotes the artistic life and assures their conservation, the purchase of paintings and works of art, their exhibition and everything else that contributes to the promotion of artistic education*” [“Σκοπός της Ε.Π.Μ.Α.Σ. είναι η συγκέντρωση αξιολόγων πινάκων και έργων τέχνης επί τω τέλει της εκθέσεως αυτών κατά τρόπον προάγοντα την καλλιτεχνικήν ζωήν και εξασφαλίζοντα την συντήρησίν των, η αγορά πινάκων και έργων τέχνης, η έκθεσις τούτων, και παν ό,τι ήθελε συντέλει εις την προαγωγήν της

However, it was Law 1979/1980, in force today, which introduced the most comprehensive definition of the aims of the museum. The Law reads: “*Aim of the National Gallery is the cultural, artistic and esthetical education of the people on a national scale through visual arts in general and the related to them expressions, the promotion of the artistic character of the work of Greek and foreign artists, the furtherance of and the assistance to scientific research on issues of art history as well as the preservation and the conservation of our artistic treasures*”¹⁶. The Law makes explicit for the first time that it is at the education of the *people* on a national scale that aims the museum. However, the main evolution in the legal framework on the second part of the 20th century is the assignment of a scientific mission to the Gallery.

Further to the above, the laws contained guidelines with respect to the scope of the Gallery’s collections and the financing of its operations as well as to its management. The definition of the scope of the content of the museum’s collections also evolved in the course of time. The first Royal degree on the creation of the Museum of Fine Arts in 1897 provided for its collection to include works of Byzantine and Christian art, copies and prints and other icons of eminent western artists and paintings of foreign artists as well as of Greeks of recognised European reputation¹⁷. The Royal degree of 1900 contains a similar list in its definition of the sections of the Gallery¹⁸. Subsequent Law 3558/1910 extended the scope of the collections of the Gallery to ancient works of painting and all works of painting donated or purchased¹⁹. Pursuant to Law 1434/1918, the collection of the Gallery is to include paintings of ancient Greek and Byzantine art as well as paintings, sculptures and prints from the renaissance to the present including works of modern Greek painters, works of decorative arts and moulds of important works of all centuries. Additionally, the Law provides for the acquisition of works of art from abroad²⁰. Curiously, even though the Archeological Museum was already founded in 1893 and the Byzantine and Christian Museum in 1914, the Gallery was intended to include ancient Greek and Byzantine works of art. On the contrary, Law 2814/1954 refers merely to “important paintings and works of art”²¹, while Law 1079/1980 refers to works of Greek and foreign creators and provides for the purchase of works from Greece and from abroad²². It seems therefore that laws progressively enlarged the scope

καλλιτεχνικής μερφώσεως”, “Περί συστάσεως Νομικού Προσώπου Δημοσίου Δικαίου υπό την επωνυμίαν « Εθνική Πινακοθήκη και Μουσείον Αλ. Σούτσου »”, Law 2814/1954, art. 2].

¹⁶ “Σκοπός της Ε.Π.Μ.Α.Σ. είναι η δια των εικαστικών τεχνών γενικώς και των συγγενών προς αυτές εκδηλώσεων πολιτιστική, καλλιτεχνική και αισθητική αγωγή του λαού εις εθνικήν κλίμακα, η προβολή του καλλιτεχνικού χαρακτήρα του έργου των Ελλήνων και ξένων δημιουργών, η εξυπηρέτησις και υποβοήθησις της επιστημονικής ερεύνης επί θεμάτων Ιστορίας της Τέχνης, ως επίσημοις και η διάσωσις και η συντήρησις των καλλιτεχνικών μας θυσαυρών” [“Περί Οργανισμού και λειτουργείας Εθνικής Πινακοθήκης και Μουσείου Αλεξάνδρου Σούτσου”, Law 1079/1980, art 2.1].

¹⁷ “Περί ιδρύσεως «Μουσείου των Καλών Τεχνών»”, Royal degree of 18th of September 1897, art.

1.

¹⁸ Royal degree of 28th of June 1900, art. 3.

¹⁹ “Περί της Εθνικής Πινακοθήκης”, Law ΓΦΝΗ (3558)/1900, art. 2.

²⁰ Law 1434/1918, art. 7 and art. 8..

²¹ Law 2814/1954, art. 2.

²² Law 1079/1980 art 2.1.and art.10.1.

of the content of the Gallery's collections, the last one imposing no limits whatsoever.

The Gallery was established as a State institution to be financed through public funds, in other words through taxpayer's money. However, all laws envisaged also the use of private means. The laws provided for the collections to come from two main sources: donations and purchases. Although the laws seem rather reserved to donations of works of art for fear that donators would cram the museum with works of low quality²³, the nucleus of the collection was established through this mean. Donations still today play an important role in the enrichment of the Gallery's collection. Additionally, the National Gallery and A.Soutzos Museum, established by virtue of law 2814/1954, is the outcome of a merger of a public institution with the A. Soutzos bequest²⁴.

The functions of the Gallery as defined by the laws include the education of the public through art exhibition, the collection and preservation of the works, the promotion of scientific research and, finally, the promotion of arts. The Gallery may exercise those functions with respect to both Greek and foreign art. However, the law places both on equal footing and may thus accommodate both a national and a global culture museum. Furthermore, the wide definition of the scope of the content of the collections of the Gallery, deprived of any chronological limits may accommodate both a purely historical and a contemporary art museum. As a result, the law provides for a general art museum with no precise definition of its character. Finally, although the Gallery is a public institution, both by virtue of donations and bequests as by virtue of participation in the museum's management, private initiative plays a role in the definition of the museum's orientations.

The generality of the prescriptions of the law leaves a substantial margin for manoeuvre to the management of the Gallery with respect to the orientation of its activities. Earliest laws provided only for a director and defined with precision his profile, in most cases photographing those finally appointed²⁵. According to Law

²³ Indeed, the Royal degree of 1897 required the previous opinion of the Commission of the Museum of Fine Arts for the introduction in the museum of works donated [Royal degree of 18th of September 1897, art. 6]. The Royal degree of 1900 contained a similar condition and provided for the sale at auction of unimportant works donated to the Gallery [Royal degree of 28th of June 1900, art. 5]. So did Law 1079/1980 [Law 1079/1980, art 9.2].

²⁴ In 1896, Alexandros Soutzos, lawyer and art patron, donated his fortune to the state for the creation of the museum of painting. [Lambraki-Plaka 1999, p. 22. ; Kalligas 1976, pp. 13-16].

²⁵ This was the case of the Law ΓΝΦΗ (3558)/1900 which provided for the appointment of an artist, "*of unanimously recognized reputation, who was studied painting in Europe and excelled in this activity*" in order to accommodate the appointment of the painter Georgios Iakovidis. Similarly, the Law 1434/1918 provided for the director of the Gallery to be either an artist with studies and career in Europe or an art historian who taught at the School of Arts or finally "*a distinguished man of letters having the capacity to criticize art proven through publications and capacities in painting proven through his participation in art exhibitions and management capacities proven through previous public service*", a provision describing in reality the second director of the Gallery, Zacharias Papantoniou. [Malama A., "Ο κριτικός λόγος του Ζαχαρία Παπαντωνίου", in: Hadjinicolaou N., Matthiopoulos E.D.(eds.), *Η ιστορία της τέχνης στην Ελλάδα*, Irakleion, University publications of Crete, 2003, p.177]. Since its creation in 1900 the Gallery has

2814/1954 the Gallery is managed by a Board of directors with permanent members appointed as provided by the A. Soutzos will and non permanent ones appointed by the Minister of education²⁶. On the contrary, this Law did not provide for the staff of the Gallery and therefore the earlier law continued to apply. During the Regime of the Colonels, the Law was amended for the needs of the appointment of Andreas Ioannou²⁷. Finally, the Law 1979/1980 which replaced all previous ones maintained the same composition of the Board but the non permanent members were now to be persons from the world of arts and appointed by the Minister of culture²⁸. The new law provided also for the director to be chosen among the curators of the Gallery²⁹. Subsequently, in order to serve the renewal of the appointment of Papastamos, the law was amended and provides henceforth for the direct appointment of the director by the Minister of Culture³⁰. Interestingly, it looks as if it were not the persons who fitted to the requirements of the law but rather that the law was adapted to the profiles of the persons appointed as directors. Indeed, since the creation of the Gallery, the person of the director has always been a governmental choice, an approach which did not remain uncriticised³¹. Finally, the Law 1979/1980 established for the first time an Artistic Commission composed of the director of the Gallery and of the non permanent members of the Board mandated to opine, among others, on the exhibitions program and the purchase of works of art³².

On the contrary, the Law does not define the precise functions of the director other than that the Board may transfer to him some of its powers³³. Furthermore, it makes no reference to the internal organisation of the Gallery. The current director complained that, without a right to vote in any of the administrative organs of the Gallery, under the present legal framework, her powers are

changed 8 directors. With the exception of the painter G. Iakovidis and the jurist A. Ioannou, all other directors were art historians. Furthermore, three of them, Iakovidis, Papantoniou and Lambraki-Plaka, were professors at the Athens School of Fine Arts. For a list of the Gallery's directors, see annex 1.

²⁶ Law 2814/1954, art. 3.

²⁷ Kalligas 1976, p. 9.

²⁸ Law 1079/1980, art 6.1.B. During the brief parliamentary discussion for its adoption, the opposition claimed that the Law did not assure the democratic control of the organisation and operations of the Gallery and requested the institutionalisation of the participation of the representatives of the artists and of the art critics. [Hellenic Parliament, *Πρακτικά τμήματος διακοπών*, Θέρος 1980, p. 1214-1215, 1217].

²⁹ Law 1079/1980, art. 13.

³⁰ M.M., "Παπαστάμος για 5 ακόμα χρόνια", *Eleftherotypia*, 7.2.1989.

³¹ The present director M. Lambraki-Plaka, although she benefited from this situation for three successive renewals of her appointment, did not hesitate to criticise this method of choice of the director, proposing "*an open competition with the participation of the curators of the Gallery who know how the institution functions and have the relevant experience*" [Chaimanta S., "Η Εθνική Πινακοθήκη με « ξεναγό » τη Μαρίνα Λαμπράκη-Πλάκα", *Ta Nea tis Technis*, n. 7, April 1992, p. 11. Some curators had previously expressed similar ideas [Kardoulaki A., "Κριτική επανεξέταση των προβλημάτων της Εθνικής Πινακοθήκης", *Ta Nea tis Technis*, n. 53, Dec. 1996].

³² Law 1079/1980, art. 9.

³³ Law 1079/1980, art. 8.2.

seriously undermined³⁴. However, several efforts to regulate the internal organisation of the Gallery have failed³⁵.

Nevertheless, successive governments seem to have placed the burden of the management of the museum to its director. This approach is confirmed by a governmental official who claimed that “*all important museums are identified with their directors*”³⁶. The current director admits that “*museums are nowadays identified with the persons who lead them*”³⁷. This perception prevails also in the articles of the press on the activities of the Gallery.

II. The exhibition policy of the Gallery and its criticism.

In an attempt to trace the history of the Gallery’s orientations, we explored its exhibition policy, with respect to both permanent and temporary exhibitions, in the light of the relevant criticism. Criticism served to legitimise the Gallery as the leading institution of the Greek art world, while, at the same time, addressed the main issues on the question its identity. Criticism is found mostly in the daily press; art journals were not only scarce in number, but they also rarely commented on the Gallery’s activity. Criticism came mainly from art critics and art historians, curators as well as journalists, while university professors were underrepresented.

We focus on the exhibition policy for three main reasons: first, because the exhibition policy defines most visibly the character of a museum; secondly, because it was the exhibition policy that public criticism targeted the most, and, finally, because of the abundance of the documentation material on exhibitions. Our analysis covers only the three last decades, in other words, the years following the inauguration of the building in 1971, which is the real starting point of the Gallery’s life. We distinguish three main periods corresponding respectively to the directorships of Marinos Kalligas, Dimitris Papastamos and Marina Lambraki-Plaka, which were the most influential ones.

The Marinos Kalligas period (1949-1971):

Kalligas was appointed in 1949, that is, long before the construction of the museum’s building. However, he was the one to inaugurate its front part. Kalligas

³⁴ “Νέο θεσμικό πλαίσιο απαιτείται για τη λειτουργία της Εθνικής Πινακοθήκης”, *Ta Nea tis Technis*, n. 50-51, Sept.-Oct. 1996, p. 3.

³⁵ Chatzigiannaki A., “Η Πινακοθήκη νοικοκυρεύεται”, *Eleftheros Typos*, 30.5.1990; “Εκσυγχρονίζεται και αναβαθμίζεται η Εθνική Πινακοθήκη”, *Avriani*, 17.01.2005.

³⁶ “Εκσυγχρονίζεται και αναβαθμίζεται η Εθνική Πινακοθήκη”, *Avriani*, 17.01.2005.

³⁷ Zenakos A., “Μαρίνα Λαμπράκη-Πλάκα. Έχουμε δημιουργήσει ορίζοντα προσδοκίας”, *To Vima tis Kyriakis*, 3.12.2006.

inherited a collection formed by donations and purchases made by his predecessors³⁸. As a matter of fact, in the early years of the Gallery most of the works of its collection came from donations. These donations comprised mostly western European works of art, reflecting the tastes of the Greek collectors of the 19th century³⁹. As a result, the character of the earliest collection was greatly influenced by the donors' predilections. Subsequently, directors also purchased paintings of European art, as well as of Greek artists, namely of Gyzis and Parthenis. The *Concert of angels* of Theotokopoulos was the largest monetary purchase of the Gallery in 1931⁴⁰.

Until the construction of the building, part of the Gallery's collection was displayed at the Zappeion Megaron, where some temporary exhibitions were also organised⁴¹. At the inauguration of the front part of the new building of the Gallery, on May 1970, a first presentation of the permanent collections was proposed. According to the press, it was intended to show the development of art history both in Western Europe and in Greece while most of the works exhibited were recent acquisitions⁴². Information on this first presentation comes mainly from the press and is therefore relatively incomplete. On the ground floor, in a first section were exhibited Byzantine icons of the Cretan School, the works of Theotokopoulos and some works of western European art classified by national schools of painting: Flemish art, Italian and French Renaissance. A second section of the ground floor presented Greek art from the 19th century and 20th century, excluding living artists. The mezzanine was dedicated to the engravings collection, from Dürer to Picasso. Finally, on the basement were exhibited 220 works of Nikolaos Gyzis on the occasion of the 70th anniversary from his death. This latter exhibition was the first contact of the larger public with the original works of the artist and was intended to reveal the then still relatively unknown Gyzis, now considered as one of the most important 19th century artists. Finally, some Modern Greek sculptures were exhibited in the garden⁴³.

The press welcomed the beginning of the operation of a museum promised to Greeks since the Royal degree of 1834. Nevertheless most of the relevant articles on this inaugural exhibition remain on a rather descriptive level. It is the art historian Veatriki Spiliadi who offers a critical approach. She criticizes the lack of systematic method of presentation of the works on the ground floor which presupposes a certain familiarity with the history of art, making the exhibition difficultly accessible to the lay viewer. She also regrets the exclusion of living artists and notes that eminent Greek artists like Nikephoros Lytras are

³⁸ Lambraki-Plaka 1999, pp. 25-26.

³⁹ Therefore, it is not surprising that in the first catalogue of collection of the Gallery published in 1906, only 6 of the 128 paintings were of Greek artistes, namely of N. Lytras, G. Soutzos and I. Rizos [*Εθνική Πινακοθήκη εν Αθήναις, Β. Διάταγμα Οργανισμού. Κανονισμός. Κατάλογος Πινάκων. Σχέδιον Αιθουσών*, Athens, 1906, p. 11-17]. In a later catalogue, published in 1915, the Greek representation was larger [National Gallery of Athens, *Κατάλογος*, Athens, 1915].

⁴⁰ Lambraki-Plaka 1999, p. 25.

⁴¹ Kalligas 1976, pp. 22-23.

⁴² Nisiotis M., "Εγκαινιάζεται σε λίγες μέρες η Εθνική Πινακοθήκη", *Eleftheros Kosmos*, 25.2.1970.

⁴³ Linardatos L.D., "Απόψε εγκαινιάζεται η Εθνική Πινακοθήκη", *Ta Nea*, 14.5.1970 ; Nisiotis M., "Εγκαινιάζεται σήμερον το νέον κτίριο της Εθνικής Πινακοθήκης", *Eleftheros Kosmos*, 14.5.1970.

underrepresented. In her view, all halls should have been dedicated to Greek art, in order for the Gallery to be properly a “national” one. As she explains, “*we need to turn to the sources of our modern civilisation, our own sources. One may travel aboard to see the great moments of Art. The modern Greek artists however can only be seen in our country*”. Finally, she notices that even the foreign public would be interested in local art rather than the western European, which can be seen in the “*great European Museums*”⁴⁴.

Veatriki Spiliadi comments mark the beginning of a wider discussion that will follow the Gallery until the 1990s. Her criticism focused on two main points. The first was the question of choice between a properly “national” and an internationally orientated museum. Kalligas seems to have envisaged the Gallery as a museum of neo-Hellenic art. This may be seen in both his acquisition policy and his orientation on the Gallery’s research activity. Along with his acquisition priorities aiming at the completion the gaps in the history of Greek art since the 18th century, he wished to turn the Gallery into a research centre on Greek art. To that end he catalogued the collections according to the methodology of his time, cleared them from forgeries and organised an art history library. Last but not least, he established archives on Modern Greek art on which were based most scientific studies on the subject⁴⁵. His choice to exhibit foreign art was apparently dictated by the very existence of such works in the Gallery’s collections as well as by his desire to bring the less informed Greek public in contact with western art⁴⁶. One must also take into consideration the reception horizon of the Greek public, rather reluctant towards Greek art. Indeed, in a letter addressed to the journal *Ta Nea* Kalligas regrets the contempt of the Greek public towards Gyzis, “*just because he is Greek*”⁴⁷. However, Kalligas seems also to subscribe to the ideology of Europeanism, cultivated in Greece since the post-war period of reconstruction to become the dominant ideology from the 1960s on⁴⁸. In an interview given just before the end of his tenure he stresses that “*the main goal of the Gallery is to relate, on an artistic level, the Greeks with the achievements of Western Europe, in view of contributing to the common European understanding*”⁴⁹. His orientation must be understood also in the context of the official national policy aiming at the accession of Greece in the European Union.

The second point of Spiliadi’s criticism was that of the exclusion of living artists from this inaugural presentation of the Gallery’s collection. Kalligas first attributed

⁴⁴ Spiliadi V., “Εθνική Πνακοθήκη. Η μαγεμένη βασιλοπούλα που κοιμόταν 100 χρόνια ξύπνησε το μάη του 1970”, *Gynaika*, 1.7.1970, pp. 28-32.

⁴⁵ Kalligas 1976, p. 19; Linardatos L.D., “Απόψε εγκαινιάζεται η Εθνική Πνακοθήκη”, *Ta Nea*, 14.5.1970; Kafetsi A., “Μαρίνος Καλλιγάς, ένας διευθυντής της Πνακοθήκης”, *Ta Nea*, 13.11.1991.

⁴⁶ “Φιλοδοξεί να είναι σχολείο...”, *Gynaika*, 11.3.1970, p. 10.

⁴⁷ “Οι Έλληνες επισκέπτες ονομπάρουν τον Γύζη, Επιστολή του Μαρίνου Καλλιγά”, *Ta Nea*, 8.12.1970.

⁴⁸ Matthiopoulos E.D., “Η ιστορία της τέχνης στα όρια του έθνους”, in: Hadjinicolaou, Matthiopoulos 2003, p. 466.

⁴⁹ Kontogiannidis G., “Εθνική Πνακοθήκη. Γέφυρα του ευρωπαϊκού καλλιτεχνικού πνεύματος προς την Ελλάδα”, *To Vima*, 6.6.1971.

this omission to the lack of space⁵⁰. However, in the letter aforementioned, he seems to try to defend the historical orientation of the museum while expressing the fear that the exhibition of living artists could turn the Gallery into an annex of the Pan-Hellenic exhibition⁵¹. On the other hand, Kalligas never neglected the purchase of such works, notwithstanding that, in his view, these works are easier to find and the Gallery should rather care for the older ones, still dispersed⁵².

The Dimitris Papastamos period (1972-1989):

Shortly after his appointment, Papastamos, on the occasion of inauguration of the back part of the Gallery in 1976, tended, for the first time, an overall presentation of the Greek art from the collections of the Gallery. As he explained in the catalogue which accompanied the exhibition, he wanted to assure the objectivity and the scientific legitimacy of the presentation, deprived of any influence of personnel taste or effort of embellishment⁵³, and “*to present the development of modern Greek art and its links to the previous periods of its glory shown in the other museums of our country*”⁵⁴. In other words, he saw Modern Greek art as the continuation of the Byzantine and the ancient Greek art, subscribing thus to the “*ideology of continuity*” that prevailed in history scholarship since the mid 19th century⁵⁵.

On the first floor of the new building were displayed 400 works of 160 Greek artists. The exhibition was structured in seven parts presenting the stages of the historical development of Modern Greek art: post Byzantine and vernacular art, Ionian painters, historical painting, genre and romanticism, *plein air* painting, impressionism and modern trends⁵⁶. The intention of creating a continuous historical narrative of Greek art covering three centuries is evident both in the exhibition’s outline and in the title of the accompanying catalogue, *Greek painting since 1640*.

Papastamos presentation of the permanent collection comprised also a foreign section. On the second floor were exhibited 200, according to some, 345, according to others, works of western European art from the “*Italian renaissance, baroque, rococo, historical romanticism of the 19th century to the modern trends including Picasso, Picabia, Ernst and Magritte*”⁵⁷. Unlike the Greek section, there

⁵⁰ Seizan K., “Οι θησαυροί βρήκαν στέγη”, *Apogevmatini*, 14.5.1970.

⁵¹ “Οι Έλληνες επισκέπτες σνομπάρουν τον Γύζη. Επιστολή του Μαρίνου Καλλιγά”, *Ta Nea*, 8.12.1970.

⁵² Kalligas 1976, p. 19; G. Kontogiannidis, “Εθνική Πινακοθήκη. Γέφυρα του ευρωπαϊκού καλλιτεχνικού πνεύματος προς την Ελλάδα”, *To Vima*, 6.6.1971.

⁵³ Papastamos 1976, p. 39.

⁵⁴ Papastamos 1976, p. 43.

⁵⁵ Liakos A., “Προς επισκευήν ολομείας και ενότητας. Η δόμηση του εθνικού χρόνου”, in : *Επιστημονική συνάντηση στη μνήμη του Κ.Θ. Δημαρά*, Athens, ΕΙΕ/ΚΝΕ, 1994, pp. 171-199.

⁵⁶ Papastamos 1976, p. 1, 43.

⁵⁷ Spiliadi V., “Πινακοθήκη: 300 χρόνια νεοελληνικής ζωγραφικής”, *Katherimerini* 16.5.1976; “Έργα Γκρέκο, Ρούμπενς και Ελλήνων καλλιτεχνών θα εκτίθενται στην Εθνική Πινακοθήκη που

was no catalogue published. Interestingly enough, the Greco's paintings were displayed in a special room of the second floor along with the foreign artists.

However, the main characteristic of Papastamos 16-year tenure was the focus on temporary exhibitions. He organised temporary exhibitions of two types. The first was the retrospective exhibitions of Greek artists living or recently deceased. These responded to his primary concern for the promotion of Greek artists⁵⁸. He organised 99 such exhibitions, most of which were accompanied by catalogues that constitute still today a valuable source of information. Secondly, he inaugurated a practice of importing thematic and monographic exhibitions of foreign art from museums abroad through exchanges of works of ancient Greek art, mainly from the Goulandris collection⁵⁹. The 81 such thematic exhibitions hosted in the Gallery are of an incredible variety, ranging from Canadian to Japanese art and from painting to ceramics. Similarly, the 41 monographic exhibitions include both old and modern foreign artists of all continents and trends. Although some of them were landmarks for the Hellenic cultural history, like that of the Buchheim collection, in general their quality was unequal. There doesn't seem to be any internal logic or coherence in Papastamos exhibition policy, at least from a purely artistic point of view. However, the fact that they came from museums of both the western and the eastern block may imply a different logic in his choices⁶⁰. Indeed, the Gallery was charged for serving the public relations of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs⁶¹.

The Papastamos method of presentation of the permanent collection was criticised by a curator of the Gallery, who proposed its "*re-exhibition with a new ideology: instead of a sterile lining-up of the works, a representation of the social space in which they were produced*"⁶². His overall exhibition policy was also criticised on many different grounds. First, commentators considered that temporary exhibitions were to the detriment of the presentation of the permanent collections both of Greek and of foreign art⁶³. Indeed, during his days parts of the permanent collection of Greek art were often removed to make space for a temporary exhibition, while important works of foreign art remained "hidden" in the Gallery's depot⁶⁴. Finally, in 1989, the entire permanent collection was removed to make space for the temporary exhibition *Spirit and Body. The revival of the Olympic idea* organised by the Ministry of Culture as part of the Greek campaign for undertaking the organization of the Olympic Games in 1996. The

εγκαινιάζεται από τον κ. Τσάτσο τη Δευτέρα", *Makedonia*, 16.5.1976 ; "Τέχνη προσιτή στο λαό", *Apogevmatini*, 18.5.1976.

⁵⁸ Lambraki-Plaka 1999, p. 30.

⁵⁹ Lambraki-Plaka 1999, p. 30.

⁶⁰ For a list of the exhibitions, see Annex 2.

⁶¹ Kambouridis Ch., "Εθνική Πινακοθήκη και εθνική οικονομία", *Ta Nea*, 27.2.1989.

⁶² Stefanidis M., in: Michalopoulou A., "Εθνική Πινακοθήκη. Μουσείο ή Γκαλερί", *Exormisi*, 29.1.1990.

⁶³ Kafetsi A., "Οι μόνιμες συλλογές προσδιορίζουν τη φυσιογνωμία της Πινακοθήκης", *Epochi*, 26.2.1989 ; Kafetsi A., "Εθνική Πινακοθήκη: Θεσμός και δυσλειτουργίες" *Anti* 10.3.1989 ; Stefanides M., "Αν οργάνωνα ένα μουσείο θα έβαζα να κλέψουν ένα πίνακα" *Ta Nea*, 8.1.1990.

⁶⁴ Michalopoulou A., "Εθνική Πινακοθήκη. Μουσείο ή Γκαλερί", *Exormisi*, 29.1.1990; Chatzigiannaki A., "Θαμμένοι θησαυροί", *Eleftheros Typos*, 13.8.1989.

permanent collection will be re-exhibited only ten years later by a Papastamos successor.

Furthermore, even if Papastamos convinced some artists and their heirs as well as some collectors to donate works to the Gallery, and made some important purchases, including a Delacroix and a Rodin, partly financed by patrons⁶⁵, some critics underlined the difficulty of creation of a museum of European art while the historical collections of Greek art left much to be desired⁶⁶. Besides, his successor, M. Michalides, condemned severely his practices and promised a new approach in the management of the museum: the focus on the exhibition of the permanent collection of Greek art of the 19th century with a new philosophy and the drastic limitation of imported temporary exhibitions in view of creating a museum that would be an educatory institution for the history of the Greek art⁶⁷.

Secondly, according to other critics, the constant rotation of temporary exhibitions without any clear orientation rendered the public a passive consumer of images⁶⁸. Additionally, due to the lack of sufficient time, the scientific personnel was unable to study thoroughly the objects to be exhibited, and as a result, the catalogues were of poor scientific quality⁶⁹.

Of course, the temporary exhibitions themselves did not escape criticism. Both types were at times criticized for their quality⁷⁰. But it was on the exhibitions of living or recently deceased artists that criticism targeted the most. On the one hand, some critics admitted the necessity of such exhibitions in view of the absence of a museum of modern or contemporary art⁷¹. Papastamos himself claimed that the absence of a museum of contemporary art in Greece imposed this role to the Gallery: "*Only the creation of such a museum, necessary for a modern country, would allow the Gallery to exercise its proper mission, namely to concentrate in the roots and the historical evolution of Greek art, [...] free from the works of contemporary art and the temporary exhibitions that is today obliged to organize*"⁷². On the other hand, according to many critics, this practice made the museum look like a common gallery⁷³. But in reality, the Gallery was much more than a common gallery; it was directly implicated in the establishment of artists' reputations and the construction of artistic or even financial values. It seems as if the Gallery had thus been transformed into a State institution for the

⁶⁵ Lambraki-Plaka 1999.

⁶⁶ Lydakias S., "Η Εθνική Πινακοθήκη", *Eleftheros Kosmos*, 20.5.1976 ; Lydakias S., "Καλός ο Ντελακρουά, αλλά μήπως αγοράστηκε ακριβά ;", *Eleftheros Kosmos*, 22.3.1979.

⁶⁷ "Κλείνει ως γκαλερί η Πινακοθήκη", *Eleftherotypia*, 14.2.1990 ; "Η Εθνική Πινακοθήκη δεν είναι γκαλερί", *Proti*, 14.2.1990 ; Bakoyannopoulou, S., "Εγώ θέλω αποτέλεσμα" *To Vima*, 17.6.1990 ; Maragou M., "Σε πρότυπα ευρωπαϊκά θα λειτουργεί η Πινακοθήκη" *Eleftherotypia*, 10.4.1990.

⁶⁸ Kafetsi A., "Εθνική Πινακοθήκη: θεσμός και δυσλειτουργίες", *Anti*, 10.3.1989, p. 46.

⁶⁹ Kafetsi A., "Εθνική Πινακοθήκη: θεσμός και δυσλειτουργίες", *Anti*, 10.3.1989, p.46 ; Cf. Kafetsi A., "Οι μόνιμες συλλογές προσδιορίζουν τη φυσιογνωμία της Πινακοθήκης", *Epochi*, 26.2.1989.

⁷⁰ Kafetsi A., "Εθνική Πινακοθήκη: θεσμός και δυσλειτουργίες", *Anti*, 10.3.1989 ; Michalopoulou A., "Εθνική Πινακοθήκη. Μουσείο ή Γκαλερί", *Exormisi*, 29.1.1990.

⁷¹ Maragou M., "Πινακοθήκη : Εν αναμονή", *Eleftherotypia*, 16.10.1990.

⁷² Parlas K., "Εθνική Πινακοθήκη: Ο χώρος ασφυκτιά, ο θεσμός ξεστρατίζει", *Eleftheri Gnomi*, 3.7.1983.

⁷³ Kotidis A., "Για την Εθνική Πινακοθήκη", *Anti*, 2.12.1988.

support of Greek artists, as it was proposed in the 1890's, a proposal defended also by the first director of the Gallery, Georgios Iakovidis, an artist himself⁷⁴. Unfortunately, this transformation was to the detriment of its historical character and its research mission. The artists perceived an exhibition of their work at the Gallery as the recognition of the achievements of a lifetime⁷⁵. The practice of the Gallery created legitimate expectations on their part, for being presented there. It is indeed a moment when the Gallery's orientations and the artists' interests were strongly interwoven. Besides, the expectations of the artists were to be made explicit latter on, in the context of the controversy on the exhibition *Metamorphosis of the modern*.

But what were the criteria for an artist's retrospective to be organized in the Gallery? Most critics agreed that it was the merits of an artist recognized by the art historians, the art critics and the public, his participation in international exhibitions and his awards that should make an artist eligible for this privilege⁷⁶. However, some of the artists exhibited in the Gallery clearly did not meet these criteria⁷⁷. Such exhibitions were then considered a mere waste of taxpayer's money and Papastamos was accused of favoritism⁷⁸.

The Marina Lambraki – Plaka period (since 1992).

When M. Lambraki – Plaka was appointed, she found no permanent collection on display. On various occasions since her appointment, she expressed her views on the mission of the Gallery. The institution is now expected to function not only to further esthetical education but also as “*an instrument of national self-consciousness*”⁷⁹ or as a “*school of national self-consciousness through art*”⁸⁰. Elsewhere she describes the Gallery as the “*treasury of the visual memory of the modern Greek state*”⁸¹. This orientation of the museum is clearly stated also in the recently constructed official website of the museum. The page on the brief presentation of the museum describes the current policy of the museum: “*The institutional role of the National Gallery consists in the creation of collections, the maintenance and study of artworks as well as in the aesthetic cultivation of the*

⁷⁴ Mentzafou-Polyzou 2005, pp. 85-86.

⁷⁵ “Τρίμηνη έκθεση στην Πινακοθήκη με έργα συγχρόνων Ελλήνων”, *Apogevmatini*, 20.1.1978.

⁷⁶ “Τρίμηνη έκθεση στην Πινακοθήκη με έργα συγχρόνων Ελλήνων”, *Apogevmatini*, 20.1.1978.

⁷⁷ Lydakias S., “Τώρα η Εθνική Πινακοθήκη παρουσιάζει και άγνωστους”, *Eleftheros Kosmos*, 30.4.1982.

⁷⁸ Kotidis A., “Για την Εθνική Πινακοθήκη”, *Anti*, 2.12.1988; Kambouridis, interview of 21.5.2007.

⁷⁹ Bakoyannopoulou, S., “Πινακοθήκη όργανο εθνικής αυτογνωσίας”, *To Vima*, 24.11.1991; Roumboula D., “Οι εξετάσεις μιάς ‘ισόβιας μαθήτριας’”, *Ethnos*, 4.12.1991; Sakkoula N., “Οι στόχοι της Μαρίας Λαμπράκη – Πλάκα για την Εθνική Πινακοθήκη”, *Ta Nea tis Technis*, n. 105, March 2002, p. 18.

⁸⁰ Sakkoula N., “Οι στόχοι της Μαρίας Λαμπράκη – Πλάκα για την Εθνική Πινακοθήκη”, *Ta Nea tis Technis*, n. 105, March 2002, p. 18.

⁸¹ Chaimanta S., “Η Εθνική Πινακοθήκη με «ξεναγό» τη Μαρίνα Λαμπράκη-Πλάκα”, *Ta Nea tis Technis*, n. 7, April 1992, p. 11.

*public, the on-going education through art and the pleasure that it offers, but also in national self-consciousness through the history of Greek art that expresses national life on a symbolic level*⁸².

One should expect that since the Gallery is a state institution, it is implicated in the reproduction of national ideology. However, the reference of the Law 1979/1980 to the esthetical education of the people is neutral, deprived of any ideological connotation. The law does not even direct the scientific activity of the Gallery specifically towards Greek art. It therefore seems as if the Gallery was not destined by the official cultural policy as expressed in the law to be the kind of national museum, *“in which the inhabitants of a country can find their own cultural identity celebrated”*⁸³. Previous directors of the Gallery insisted mainly on its pedagogical mission⁸⁴, namely the esthetical education of the people through their contact with both Greek and foreign art. Plaka, however, was the first to systematically introduce this ideological element in the aims of the Gallery. There may be a number of possible explanations for her approach. Presumably she responded to the aspirations of a more or less concerned public; indeed, the demand for the museum to function as a proper “national” Gallery have been expressed in the press since the early days of its history. Another explanation, however, may be the subscription to the trend of hellenocentrism in the Greek art history in the context of the generalised return to nationalism in the ideological and political fields of the 1990’s⁸⁵.

Today, the Gallery houses more than 15.000 works of painting, sculpture, engraving and other forms of art. These include 12.000 works of Greek art, rendering the Gallery, as its web site puts it *“a treasury of Greek artistic creation from the post-Byzantine period until today”*⁸⁶. The collection of Greek art of the Euripidis Koutlidis Foundation is also housed today under the same roof with the collections of the National Gallery. As Plaka explains, *“this way we managed to enrich our national collections because the Koutlidis collection is richer in 19th century Greek paintings while the National Gallery is richer in 20th century Greek paintings. With the presentation of both collections our museum presents an almost complete national collection”*⁸⁷. Finally, the collection comprises also some 3.000 works of Western European art.

The exhibition activity of the Gallery under Plaka’s tenure may be divided into two periods. During the first, the Gallery hosted exclusively temporary

⁸² <<http://www.nationalgallery.gr/html/en/pinakothiki/istoriko.htm>>, (visited on April 25, 2007); (emphasis added).

⁸³ Compton M., “The National Galleries”, in: Thompson J.M., *Manual of Curatorship: A Guide to Museum Practice*, Oxford, Butterworth - Heinemann, 1992, p. 88.

⁸⁴ “Φιλοδοξεί να είναι σχολείο...”, *Gynaika*, 11.3.1970, p. 10 ; Papastamos 1976, pp. 37-38 ; Kalogeropoulou A., “Η Εθνική Πινακοθήκη αναλαμβάνει εκπαιδευτικό ρόλο πολύτιμο”, *Mesimvrini*, 20.8.1980.

⁸⁵ Matthiopoulos E.D. “Η ιστορία της τέχνης στα όρια του έθνους”, in: Hadjinicolaou, Matthiopoulos 2003, pp. 473-474.

⁸⁶ <<http://www.nationalgallery.gr/html/en/pinakothiki/istoriko.htm>>, (visited on 25.4.2007).

⁸⁷ Sakkoula N., “Οι στόχοι της Μαρίνας Λαμπράκη-Πλάκα για την Εθνική Πινακοθήκη”, *Ta Nea tis Technis*, n. 105, March 2002, p. 18.

exhibitions, the works of the permanent collections remaining in the depot since the Papastamos era. The second begins in 2000 with the re-installation of the permanent collections along with a number of temporary exhibitions. The absence of the permanent collections, even if part of them was displayed in the context of temporary exhibitions, blurred the identity of the museum for a long time. Plaka on her side attributed the delay in the re-installation of the permanent collections to the need of prior restoration of the interior of the building in order to adapt it to the needs of a modern presentation, "*in accordance with the current museological and other prerequisites for the security and protections of works of art*"⁸⁸.

The re-installation of the Greek section of the permanent collection followed a more systematic approach than that of Papastamos. It now seeks to respond to the new mission of the National Gallery, presenting its collections "*in a manner that highlights both the evolution of art and the parallel development of the society which it expresses*"⁸⁹, in other words with a socio-historical approach. As the director explained, it is sought that the visitor not only draws the pleasure that offer the works of art but is also "*motivated to contemplate on the interaction between Greek society and its art in their parallel march*"⁹⁰.

The exhibition is now structured in eight parts: 1. *Post-Byzantine art*; 2. *Domenicos Theotokopoulos*; 3. *Ionian island school*; 4. *The Painting of the Free Greek State. The Years of the Reign of King Othon 1832-1862*; 5. *The Bourgeois Class and its Painters (1862-1900)*; 6. *From the 19th to the 20th Century. Toward a Greek Modernism (1900 - 1922), Greek Light and Colour*; 7. *Between the Wars (1922 - 1940)*; 8. *After the War. Continuity and Rupture*⁹¹. According to the director "[a]s a result of the particular historical conditions neohellenic art has not followed an organic development. For this reason [...] the permanent collections should not be exhibited according to strict art historical criteria as is the case in other European museums. The presentation of the material is invited to fulfil multiple roles; when dealing with the period immediately following the Greek War of Independence we should try to explain the role of art in the newly founded state and to demonstrate the dialectical relationship between art and society. Through the application of this criterion we have sought in each period the thematic dominants meeting the demand of a particular horizon of expectation"⁹². The new presentation of the permanent collection is accompanied by the publication of a voluminous catalogue which, other than being the first complete documentation of these works, proposes a synthetic presentation of the history of

⁸⁸ Lambraki-Plaka 1999, p. 16; Sakkoula N., "Η επανέκθεση των μονίμων συλλογών της Εθνικής Πινακοθήκης", *Ta Nea tis Technis*, n. 93, Jan. 2001, p. 6; Lambraki-Plaka M., interview on 17.5.2007.

⁸⁹ <<http://www.nationalgallery.gr/html/en/pinakothiki/istoriko.htm>>, (visited on 25.4.2007).

⁹⁰ Sakkoula N., "Οι στόχοι της Μαρίνας Λαμπράκη-Πλάκα για την Εθνική Πινακοθήκη", *Ta Nea tis Technis*, n. 105, March 2002, p. 18.

⁹¹ Lambraki-Plaka 1999, pp. 16-17; <<http://www.nationalgallery.gr/html/en/pinakothiki/istoriko.htm>>, (visited on 25.4.2007).

⁹² Lambraki-Plaka 1999, p. 16; See also, Sakkoula N., "Η επανέκθεση των μονίμων συλλογών της Εθνικής Πινακοθήκης", *Ta Nea tis Technis*, n. 93, Jan. 2001, p. 6.

Greek art. The publication, to which collaborated also many external scholars, undoubtedly fills an important gap on art history bibliography.

The new presentation of the foreign section of the collection follows national schools and chronological order, but is rather limited and not accompanied by a catalogue. Although characterized as one of the most important ones in the wider Balkan area, the Gallery's western European collection hasn't been thoroughly studied⁹³. The promiscuous character of this collection, formed mainly by donations in the early years, seems to still puzzle the Gallery as to its utilization. As M. Lambraki-Plaka explained, the basic selection's criterion of the works exhibited in this section was actually their artistic quality: "*we chose the best of them.*"⁹⁴ However, Plaka wishes the enrichment of this collection but with a particular strategy: the acquisition of works related to Greece, such as works on the Greek War of Independence, as well as the completion of the Greco collection with works of his teachers or in general his circle⁹⁵.

In any case, the celebration of the 100 years of the Gallery, with which coincided the new presentation of the permanent collections, after ten years of absence, confirms the orientation of the Gallery's activity towards the promotion of and research on national art, a role that many critics have already proposed as its most appropriate one for this museum.

Temporary exhibitions of the Plaka period are both thematic and monographic. The thematic exhibitions are of both Greek and foreign art and, unlike those organized by Papastamos, they are less in number and more important in content. Most of them are high quality scientific exhibitions which involved previous research of the Gallery's curators, cooperation with external scholars and with foreign institutions as well as substantial expenses. The monographic exhibitions included some foreign artists, living or recently deceased, more retrospective of Greek artists living or recently deceased, including international Greeks, as well a limited number of older Greek artists⁹⁶.

The exhibitions of living artists inevitably raise the question of the identity of the museum. Is it a primarily historical or an historical as well as contemporary art museum? According to Plaka, the National Gallery is "*a museum of history not a contemporary art museum, which records the history of modern Greek art, from the Post-byzantine era up today*"⁹⁷. However, Plaka adopted the discourse of Papastamos on the extended role of the Gallery due to the lack of a museum of contemporary art. Speaking of the heritage of Greek art, she noted that, "*this rich*

⁹³ Kasimati M., "Η συλλογή έργων της Δυτικοευρωπαϊκής ζωγραφικής της Εθνικής Πινακοθήκης", *Archeologia kai Technes*, n. 33, December 1989. On the Western European collections, see also the exhibition catalogue, Mouriki 1987.

⁹⁴ Lambraki-Plaka M., interview on 17.5.2007.

⁹⁵ Lambraki-Plaka M., interview on 17.5.2007.

⁹⁶ Greek artists exhibited include 5 of the 19th century (Pantazis, Gyzis, Iakovidis, Savidis, Chalepas) and 12 of the 20th century, 9 of which were alive at the time of the exhibition (Pappas, Kalamaras, Grammatopoulos, Mytaras, Spyropoulos, Daniil, Akrihakis, Tetsis, Kaniaris, Papagiannis, Kapralos, Fasianos) and 3 were already deceased (Spyropoulos, Akrihakis, Kapralos). For a list of the exhibitions, see Annex 3.

⁹⁷ Lambraki-Plaka M., interview on 17.5.2007.

*heritage must be promoted. The past art, as an instrument of national self-consciousness and education, while the contemporary art because we must shed light on it and promote it in Greece and abroad.*⁹⁸ She also underlined on many occasions that the National Gallery *“is to be a substitute to the Museum of Contemporary Art”*⁹⁹. This may imply that if such a museum will be created, the scope of activity of the National Gallery should be redefined. The director of the National Gallery subscribed to this approach. Indeed, commenting on the plan of creation of two museums of modern art, she stated that *“after the creation of these museums, the National Gallery must redefine mainly its temporal scope. We will cease to follow the contemporary art and we will expand our historical collections while enriching our other collections until 1960”*¹⁰⁰.

Two museums of contemporary art, one in Athens and one in Thessaloniki, were indeed created in 1997. According to their constitutive law, the scope of their activity includes *“works of Greek and foreign artists, which belong to the history of contemporary art and works of various tendencies of the contemporary artistic production, Greek and foreign with pioneer and experimental character”*¹⁰¹. The director of the National Museum of Contemporary Art of Athens, Anna Kafetsi, as well as the President of the Greek Art Critics Association, Effie Strouza, claim that the law is not sufficiently clear in its definition of the nature and the chronological limits of the collections of the museum¹⁰². Anna Kafetsi in her forward in the museum’s website, specifies that, the Museum composes *“collections of selective rather than encyclopaedic character, which promote advanced tendencies and critical explorations of the artistic present but also its historical depths which reach as far as the second half of the 20th century.”*¹⁰³

Obviously, to some extent, the scope of the collections of the National Gallery overlaps with that the National Museum of Contemporary Art. According to Anna Kafetsi this may lead to the dispersal of the national collections, and constitutes an irrational state policy on the management of cultural institutions¹⁰⁴. The National Gallery’s director, on her side, does not seem preoccupied by the problem. In her view, a museum of history, such the Gallery, *“cannot cease to*

⁹⁸ Roumboula D., “Η σύγχρονη τέχνη στην Εθνική Πινακοθήκη”, *Ethnos*, 13.11.1991.

⁹⁹ Chaimanta S., “Η Εθνική Πινακοθήκη με «ξεναγό» τη Μαρίνα Λαμπράκη-Πλάκα”, *Ta Nea tis Technis*, n. 7, April 1992, p. 11; Roumboula D., “Η σύγχρονη τέχνη στην Εθνική Πινακοθήκη”, *Ethnos*, 13.11.1991.

¹⁰⁰ “Νέο θεσμικό πλαίσιο απαιτείται για τη λειτουργία της Εθνικής Πινακοθήκης”, *Ta Nea tis Technis*, n. 50-51, Sept.-Oct. 1996, p. 3.

¹⁰¹ “Στους σκοπούς των ιδρυόμενων Μουσείων περιλαμβάνονται: αα) η διάσωση και ανάδειξη έργων Ελλήνων και ξένων καλλιτεχνών, τα οποία ανήκουν στην ιστορία της σύγχρονης τέχνης και έργων διαφόρων τάσεων της σύγχρονης καλλιτεχνικής παραγωγής, ελληνικής και ξένης με πρωτοποριακό και πειραματικό χαρακτήρα. ββ) η προαγωγή της αισθητικής καλλιέργειας και της καλλιτεχνικής παιδείας του κοινού, γγ) η ανάπτυξη της επιστημονικής έρευνας σε θέματα ιστορίας και θεωρίας της σύγχρονης τέχνης και της σύγχρονης καλλιτεχνικής δημιουργίας, δδ) η εξυπηρέτηση της εξειδίκευσης στη μουσειολογία ιστορικών και θεωρητικών της τέχνης.” [“Θεσμοί, μέτρα και δράσεις πολιτιστικής ανάπτυξης”, Law 2557/1997 art. 2.1, γ].

¹⁰² Kafetsi A., interview on 18.5.2007; Strouza E., interview on 21.5.2007.

¹⁰³ <http://www.emst.gr/MUSEUM-dir_ENG.asp?lang_id=ENG&msi1=MUSEUM&mssi1=MUSEUM-dir>. Visited on 15.5.2007.

¹⁰⁴ Kafetsi A., interview on 18.5.2007.

enrich its collections, even though a museum of contemporary has been established. Eventually their choices may be complementary. The Museum of Contemporary art has been self-identified as a museum oriented towards experimental art. But here in Greece there has never ceased to be produced another form of art that does not have an intense experimental character. This kind of art should not be absent from the historical collections. The two museums with their choices complete one another." Using as an example the policy of the Metropolitan Museum and of the MOMA in New York on their contemporary art collections, she concludes that, *"through the complementary action of the Gallery and the National Museum of Contemporary Art on the level of purchases and enrichment of the collections, the history of the artistic production of our country is written and better elucidated from every point of view. There is no competition between cultural institutions"*¹⁰⁵. Indeed her acquisition policy envisages filling of gaps of the collection of works of the 20th century Greek artists¹⁰⁶. In that respect the Gallery has acquired not only works of Theofilos and Volonakis but also works of Thodoros and Bokoros¹⁰⁷.

As in the case of Papastamos, some have criticised M. Lambraki-Plaka for lack of coherence in her choice of subjects of exhibitions¹⁰⁸, or, to quote a former curator of the Gallery, *"as a result of the absence of clear and stable strategy [...] the Museum exhibits everything: from Jeffirelli to Vangelis"*¹⁰⁹. Indeed, exhibitions such as the *Treasures from Ancient Mexico* (1992) or *Imperial treasures from China* (2004) may not be really relevant. Nevertheless, in reality, the temporary exhibition policy is not deprived of coherence and internal logic. A series of thematic and monographic exhibitions, *The Child in Modern Greek Art* (1993), *Greek Landscape Painting* (1998), or the great retrospectives of Gyzis (2001), Iakovidis (2005) and Savidis (2006), explored specific aspects of Modern Greek art. An important number of exhibitions, and some of the most influential ones, set out to explore the crossroads of Greek and Western European civilisation or the influence of Hellenism, both Ancient and Modern, on the development of Western European art. Within the first category fall two important exhibitions on Greco, *Greco in Italy and the Italian Art* (1995) and *Greco, identity and transformation* (1999). The second category includes exhibitions such as *Greek Gods and Heroes in the Age of Rubens and Rembrandt* (2000), *In the Light of Apollo. The Italian Renaissance and Greece* (2003), *La Grèce en révolte Delacroix et les peintres français 1815 – 1848* (1997). Another series of exhibitions focuses on the relations between Modern Greek and Western European art during the 19th and 20th centuries. This is the case of the exhibitions *Athens-Munich* (2000), *Athens-Paris* (2006) as well as of the forthcoming exhibition on the Greco-italian artistic relations.

¹⁰⁵ Lambraki-Plaka M., interview on 17.5.2007.

¹⁰⁶ Lambraki-Plaka M., "Μέσα από την επανέκθεση δίνουμε το στίγμα του ρόλου που έπαιξε η τέχνη στην ελληνική κοινωνία", *Ta Nea tis Technis*, n. 88, June-August 2000, p. 17.

¹⁰⁷ Information provided by the National Gallery.

¹⁰⁸ "Μια κριτική προσέγγιση του έργου της Καλλιτεχνικής Επιτροπής της Εθνικής Πινακοθήκης από το Βλάσση Κανιάρη", *Ta Nea tis Technis*, n. 50-51, Sept.-Oct. 1996, p. 10.

¹⁰⁹ Stephanides M., in: "Εκατό χρόνια Εθνική Πινακοθήκη", *Ta Nea tis Technis*, n. 90, Oct. 2000, p. 12.

Some temporary exhibitions received “*thousands of visitors or rather pilgrims on a daily basis*”, while “[t]he 600.000 Greek visitors of the exhibition *From El Greco to Cézanne hosted by the National Gallery in 1992-1993 constitute a world record*”¹¹⁰. Furthermore, with the exception of the highly criticised exhibition *Metamorphoses of the Modern*, most exhibitions organised during this era were praised by the press¹¹¹. Some criticised at times the quality or the relevance of the works exhibited¹¹² as well as the quality of the information material accompanying the exhibition which may misguide the lay viewer¹¹³. For instance, a commentator points out on the occasion of the exhibition *From El Greco to Cézanne*, an attempt of the Gallery to restrict the wider public “*to a « conservative » art, to be understood solely by its subject*”¹¹⁴. Others have criticised the excessive cost of some exhibitions compared to the end result. Finally, a commentator criticized the exhibition of the works of the graduates of the School of Fine Arts of Athens, a privilege not granted to their counterparts of Thessaloniki, and the transformation of Gallery “*from a national institution to an instrument of the interests of this school*”¹¹⁵.

Justified or not, such criticisms have been rather rare. In general, the exhibitions received little or no criticism, most commentaries being limited to a mere presentation of their contents or stressing economical aspects, such as the cost of the exhibitions or the value of works exhibited¹¹⁶. On the face of it, it looks as if the Gallery’s activity has gained a wider approval. However, it may also be interpreted as a crisis of art criticism in Greece or as an indication of a lack of interest of the Greek art critics in the activities of the Gallery. Whatever the case, under these circumstances the overwhelmingly positive response of the public was not a surprise to those who praised the work of M. Lambraki-Plaka. This latter sees this response of the public as a demonstration of “*the new popular cult of art: the people’s need to seek in art the humanity and beauty which is lacking in the mass culture of the contemporary metropolis*”¹¹⁷.

However, some critics implied that it was not so much the quality of the exhibitions themselves but the advertisement thereof that prompted the public to visit the Gallery¹¹⁸. Indeed, Plaka used for the first time in the history of the Gallery direct and indirect advertisement through the mass media in order to

¹¹⁰ Lambraki-Plaka 1999, p. 14.

¹¹¹ For instance, according to an art critic, the exhibition *Greco Identity and Transformation*, “*abolishes the role of criticism*” [Kambouridis Ch., “Απολογισμός μιας λιτανείας”, *Ta Nea*, 12.1.2000].

¹¹² Kambouridis Ch., interview on 21.5.2007.

¹¹³ Kafetsi A., in: “«Λαϊκό προσκύνημα» στην Εθνική Πινακοθήκη”, *Sima*, 11, Jan.-Feb. 1993, p. 40

¹¹⁴ “«Λαϊκό προσκύνημα» στην Εθνική Πινακοθήκη”, *Sima*, 11, Jan.-Feb. 1993, p. 40.

¹¹⁵ Kambouridis Ch., “Επαθλα και θεσμοί”, *Ta Nea*, 18.6.1997.

¹¹⁶ “Αριστουργήματα της ευρωπαϊκής ζωγραφικής στην Αθήνα”, *Ανγι*, 6.12.1992; “Ένα «φανταστικό μουσείο» με αριστουργήματα. Από το Θεοτοκόπουλο στο Σεζάν”, *To Vima*, 6.12.1992.

¹¹⁷ Lambraki-Plaka, M. 1999, p. 14.

¹¹⁸ Kambouridis Ch., interview on 21.5.2007.

increase the number of visitors¹¹⁹. According to the director “[w]hen one has to promote a cultural event in a consumer’s society, he must make sure that it is not just competitive but ultra-competitive. One has to turn to the known recipes of advertisement and fight with the same means”¹²⁰. If it were indeed the advertisement that prompted the public to visit the exhibition, one may wonder whether the visitors of the Gallery had indeed suddenly discovered that art may be of service to their search of “*humanity and beauty*” or had seen their visit as a new trendy activity and were no more than mere consumers of culture. Whatever the case, M. Lambraki-Plaka did manage to attract a wider public.

Finally, during the Plaka period, a great evolution on the financing of the institution took place. The director made extensive use of sponsorship in order to cover a substantial part of the expenses of the exhibitions¹²¹. The institution has thus gained a relative financial autonomy, although public funding still remains crucial for its operations. In the era of neoliberalism, wishing to put an end at the State-financed culture¹²², the museum may inevitably have to move from the central-european model of state museum to the north-american model of privately funded cultural institutions. However, this may allow private interests to interfere in the definition of the Gallery’s policies or even lead to the transformation of the Gallery into a social club. Towards this conclusion may point some comments of the Gallery’s director on the use of the museums premises¹²³ as well as the recent establishment of an Association of Friends of the Gallery whose founding members include all major Greek entrepreneurs but almost no representatives of the world of arts and sciences¹²⁴.

¹¹⁹ In the exhibition *From El Greco to Cézanne* the director used a televised spot with the popular actress K. Karabeti [Zenakos A., “Μαρίνα Λαμπράκη-Πλάκα. Εχουμε δημιουργήσει ορίζοντα προσδοκίας”, *To Vima tis Kyriakis*, 3.12.2006] This was completed with the pictures of the queues of visitors waiting outside the Gallery diffused amply by the press along with numerous articles praising the exhibition. As one commentator puts it, “*the common citizen was ashamed for not having seen yet the exhibition*” [“Λαϊκό προσκύνημα» στην Εθνική Πινακοθήκη”, *Sima*, 11, Jan.-Feb. 1993, p. 40].

¹²⁰ *Ta Nea* 8.3.1993, quoted in: “Λαϊκό προσκύνημα» στην Εθνική Πινακοθήκη”, *Sima*, 11, Jan.-Feb. 1993, p. 40.

¹²¹ Lambraki-Plaka 1999, p.32.

¹²² Tatoulis P., “Τέλος στον κρατικοδίαιτο πολιτισμό”, *Kathimerini*, 7.11.2004. For a discussion on the views of Greek art critics on art and capitalism since the 1980’s, see Matthiopoulos E., “Ο Λαβύρινθος της σύγχρονης τέχνης και η Βαβέλ της τεχνοκρατικής στην Ελλάδα” in : *Χρήσεις της γλώσσας*, congress proceedings, Hetairia Spoudon Neohellinikou Politismou kai Genikis Paideias (Scholi Moraiti), Athens, 2004.

¹²³ Lalas Th., “Μαρίνα Λαμπράκη Πλάκα. « Στην Πινακοθήκη θέλω να γίνονται γάμοι και βαφτίσια»”, *BHMAgazino*, 10.7.2005.

¹²⁴ Όμιλος Φίλων Εθνικής Πινακοθήκης, *Ιδρυτικό δείπνο*, Athens, undated.

B. THE GALLERY IN THE CONTEXT OF THE GREEK ART WORLD: A CASE STUDY

The National Gallery functions in cooperation with a variety of other actors of the Greek art world: donors, sponsors, collectors, gallerists, artists, art historians, the other museums. Through this cooperation, every one of the said actors aspires to promote his own interests¹²⁵. Moreover, the Gallery as an institution functions through persons, its management and personnel, who, in pursuing its objectives, are not deprived of self-interest.

The exhibition *Metamorphoses of the modern. The Greek experience* (14 May-13 September 1992), organized in the Gallery by the then curator Anna Kafetsi, raised an intense controversy completely new in its history. This controversy offers an opportunity to examine the Gallery in the context of the Greek art world, to identify the nexus of interests and the expectations of the other participants of this world, made apparent in this crisis, as well as to explore some new aspects of the criticisms on the Gallery's activity.

I. The adventure of a working hypothesis

The working hypothesis of the exhibition

*“What is modern art in Greece? Was there a modernistic movement and which were its origins?”*¹²⁶ These were some of the main questions that addressed the *Metamorphoses of the modern*. The exhibition included 365 works (painting, sculpture, installations, and architectural design) of 99 artists, coming mostly from private collections. It was the fruit of a full two-year research on primary sources, in libraries, galleries, private collections and artists' studios. It costed approximately 60 million drachmas, an amount partially covered by Midland Bank¹²⁷. This was the first wide implication of sponsors in the activity of the Gallery.

As the curator explains in her introductory note of the accompanying catalogue, the exhibition sets out to explore the graduations of the *“more of less decisive rift with the prevailing imitative concept of art which took place since the first decades of the century”*¹²⁸. The curator distinguishes two definitions of modernism: a broad one, which sets the question in the historical perspective of

¹²⁵ See *supra*, Introduction.

¹²⁶ Kafetsi A., in: Kardoulaki A., “Οι μεταμορφώσεις του μοντέρνου-Η ελληνική εμπειρία”, *Ta Nea tis Technis*, n. 8, May 1992.

¹²⁷ Maragkou M., “Αποθήκη μοντέρνου”, *Eleftherotypia*, 8.6.1992; “Μεταμορφώσεις του Μοντέρνου - Η ελληνική εμπειρία ή πώς γραφεται η ιστορία. Προχειρότης, σκοπιμότητες ή άγνοια;”, *Sima*, n. 8, May – June 1992, p. 4. According to the first article, the sponsor contributed with 50 million, according to the second with 30 million drachmas.

¹²⁸ Kafetsi A. (ed.), *Metamorphoses of the Modern. The Greek experience*, National Gallery-Alexandros Soutsos Museum, Athens, 1992, p. 17.

the Greek context, and a narrower one, which “*seeks its foundations in the attempt to free the plastic arts of their imitative and representational function.*” According to the curator, “*this emancipatory trend, which was inextricably bound up with the conquest of artistic truth along individualized and subjective paths, is the firm and lasting term for judging the authentically modern. In this sense, it was not the morphological options made by artists or the fact that they oriented themselves towards one or other of the artistic centers (Munich or Paris) which gave their works a conservative or innovative nature.*” She proceeds with a critical analysis of the different approaches of Greek modernism in art history scholarship to conclude that “*it is the principle of the emancipation and autonomy of the plastic language [from the constraint of external reality] which provides the only safe criterion for describing a work as modern or not*”¹²⁹. This was the guiding principle for the selection of the works exhibited. The curator defines nine different “metamorphoses” around which the exhibition was structured. A separate part was dedicated to architectural utopias 1950-1971.

The misunderstanding of the working hypothesis

Apart from a limited academic debate on the definition of the modern, the controversy provoked by the exhibition focused mainly on the selection of the works and on the criteria of such selection and, ultimately, on the inclusion or exclusion of artists. Most of the critics wondered why there were so many artists missing. Almost every participant in the discussion drew his own list of artists that were absent or underrepresented as well as of artists that should not have been included, on the basis of various criteria like that of their historical importance or their recognition.

A large part of this controversy seems to have been the outcome of a misunderstanding of the intentions of the curator. This misunderstanding concerns mainly two points:

1. The critical discussion shifted the problem from the works to the artists, many of them still living and therefore directly concerned. In reality, the exhibition was explicitly not artist-oriented but work-oriented¹³⁰. As the curator explains, “*there were the artists’ works and not the artists that were selected*”¹³¹. Interestingly, the director of the Gallery M. Lambraki-Plaka in her own introductory note to the catalogue of the exhibition speaks also in terms of artists. She describes the exhibition as “*an endeavor to draw together the heterodox, heterogeneous, and anarchic material of a periphery’s art based on the “governing grammar” of*

¹²⁹ Kafetsi 1992, p. 18.

¹³⁰ Kafetsi 1992, p. 19. See also Belezinis A., “Μια έκθεση και ποιούς εκθέτει (2)”, *Anti*, n. 498, p. 56.

¹³¹ Kafetsi A., in: Kardoulaki A., “Οι μεταμορφώσεις του μοντέρνου-Η ελληνική εμπειρία”, *Ta Nea tis Technis*, n. 8, May 1992.

modernism which was brought forward around 1940 by the English speaking theoreticians, principally by Clement Greenberg” and continues: *“this rigorous formalistic teleology prevented some important Greek artists from being included in the curator’s selection”*¹³².

2. Furthermore, most of the critics seem to have disregarded the non historical character of the exhibition. According to a commentator, *“the pompous title **Metamorphoses of the Modern – the Greek experience** [...] means, if the editor doesn’t mind, how the contemporary art was shaped during our century”*. Another art critic describes the exhibition as an attempt to *“**write the history of Greek contemporary art** under the vague title «Metamorphoses of the modern»*¹³³. Elsewhere we read that the exhibition was organized *“with the scientific ambition to present all the important stages of the Greek plastic language of the 20th century. An historical exhibition which, according to its numerous adversaries, did not cover its **historical mission** at the slightest.”*¹³⁴ Anticipating such criticism, the curator warned that the exhibition *“although it follows the course of a specific artistic phenomenon, through time, has no wish whatever to pass itself off as an historical panorama of 20th century art”* and explained that *“works which should certainly have a place – often a central place- in the history of 20th century art but which make no material contribution to this first (and economical) identification of the nature of the modern should not be included.”*¹³⁵ Her aim *“was not to organize a retrospective Pan-Hellenic exhibition”*¹³⁶.

These misunderstandings could be ascribed to the fact that the exhibition was the first with a research character and the use of working hypothesis, which eventually presupposes the reading of a catalogue and its explanatory texts. This kind of exhibition found a large part of the public, used to a neutral, descriptive and not position-taking curatorial practice, completely unprepared. However, these misunderstandings also reveal ideas and expectations of two main actors, the artists and the gallerists, with respect to the role of the Gallery.

¹³² Kafetsi 1992, p. 11.

¹³³ “Μεταμορφώσεις του Μοντέρνου - Η ελληνική εμπειρία ή πώς γραφεται η ιστορία. Προχειρότης, σκοπιμότητες ή άγνοια;”, *Sima*, n. 8, May – June 1992, p. 2 (emphasis added).

¹³⁴ Μπατι Ο., “Μεταμορφώσεις του Μοντέρνου και ελληνικές αμαρτίες”, *Mesimvrini*, 12.6.1992. (emphasis added).

¹³⁵ Kafetsi 1992, p. 19.

¹³⁶ Kafetsi A., in: Kardoulaki A., “Οι μεταμορφώσεις του μοντέρνου - Η ελληνική εμπειρία”, *Ta Nea tis Technis*, n. 8, May 1992.

The reactions of some artists : “Close down the exhibition!”

The reactions of some artists were the most extreme ones, indication that they thought themselves as being the most concerned. Reactions came mainly from artists excluded. However, some of the included ones also did react.

The first saw their identification to the category “modern Greek art” annulled by what they perceived as the most important legitimating instance of the art world and thought that their identity was menaced. Their discontent betrays the expectation of artists’ population, or at least of a part of it, for the museum to function as an instance for the consecration of artistic values and for the establishment of artistic reputation, expectation considerably encouraged during the Papastamos era. To this corroborate the rhetoric of some artists. Christos Karras, an excluded artist, in a letter addressed to the newspaper *Kathimerini*, charges the exhibition with “*deliberate and brutal falsification of the country’s artistic history*” and speaks of the “*obvious reversion of values in the exhibition and the concealment of important contributions to the prevalence of the «modern» in Greece and to its development*”¹³⁷.

Later on, an artists’ committee demanded explicitly the Ministry to close down the exhibition and to take disciplinary measures against the Gallery’s administration claiming that the “*exhibition presents the personal appreciations and predilections of incompetent art historians and is characterized by family participations, partiality, lack of sense of responsibility towards History, piles of works of certain artists and deliberate absence of others, who really contributed to the formation of art’s character in Greece*”. Additionally, the committee proposed to organize in the place of the condemned exhibition a Pan-Hellenic one, in which every member of the Greek Chamber of Fine Arts could participate in his own right¹³⁸. Since the Gallery failed to fulfill their expectation as a consecrating instance, they turned to another institution, the Greek Chamber of Fine Arts.

Reactions came also from included artists. Georgos Lazongas, although cited in the exhibition’s catalogue, withdrew his works¹³⁹, while Thodoros made critical interventions through the press. Their reactions seem to have been due to their reluctance to accept their integration in a system of art promotion the practices of which they did not approve. Indeed, Thodoros said “*no to the deformations of the « Modern », which, without respect towards the works, puts forward its « good intentions » for the promotion of some of his own and a post-dated settlement of relatives and friends in the «apartments of Modern», at the moment were the*

¹³⁷ Karras Ch., “Μοντέρνο και Πινακοθήκη”, *Kathimerini*, 30.5.1992.

¹³⁸ “Να κλείσει η έκθεση της Πινακοθήκης”, *Mesimvrini*, 25.6.1992 ; Roumpoula D., “Μοντέρνα πάθη”, *Ethnos*, 26.6.1992.

¹³⁹ “Λαζόγκας : Μιλώ διαφορετική γλώσσα”, *Sima*, n. 8, May – June 1992, p. 10.

*market of sponsorship opens up and the Museum of Modern Art is forthcoming*¹⁴⁰.

The core of the problem seems to have been how and to what extent the museum is implicated in the construction of artistic and economic values and in the consecration of the artists. A critic addressed directly this problem: *“It is however an exhibition that by itself establishes values and surplus values in the sensitive art market”*¹⁴¹. Another critic takes a specific example from the exhibition, the presentation of a relatively unknown artist, noting that the value of his works is now expected to increase. And the critic concludes: *“thus they managed the post-mortem « metamorphosis » of an amateur painter to an « historical figure », whose works would become most wanted. [...] It is unclear, to what extent the Gallery is conscious of this dimension that derives from their actions”*¹⁴².

The reactions of some gallerists:

During the exhibition an open roundtable discussion on modern art and the involvement of the galleries was organized in the Gallery. In this discussion, which was coordinated by the director of the Gallery, participated many Athenian gallerists. The discussion soon got out of subject and turned into a discussion on the controversial exhibition to end up with the direct confrontation of gallerists, the director and the curator in a tensed atmosphere¹⁴³.

The gallerists did not examine or challenge the criteria of selection posed by the curator. Some simply noted that important artists were excluded from the exhibition, notwithstanding their contribution to the development of the artistic life of the country, or their national or international recognition. Others complained for not having been asked to collaborate with the curator in the organization of the exhibition¹⁴⁴. However, one may question the authority of the gallerists to challenge the theoretical choices of the art historian, given that they make their living from selling art works whose value is normally influenced by their consecration through legitimating instances such as museums. Although it is extremely reductive to attribute the reactions of the gallerists to their commercial interests, their position as merchants could not be completely ignored. One may furthermore explain their willingness to participate in the organization of the exhibition by their interest to upgrade their status in the art world from that of mere merchants to one of agents of the writing of contemporary art history. Obviously taking up this role may allow them to increase their prestige and authority.

¹⁴⁰ Thodoros, “Εγώ λέω όχι στις παραμορφώσεις”, *Ta Nea*, 29.5.1992.

¹⁴¹ Μπατι Ο., “Μεταμορφώσεις του Μοντέρνου και ελληνικές αμαρτίες”, *Mesimvrini*, 12.6.1992.

¹⁴² “Μεταμορφώσεις του Μοντέρνου - Η ελληνική εμπειρία ή πώς γραφεται η ιστορία. Προχειρότης, σκοπιμότητες ή άγνοια;”, *Sima*, n. 8, May – June 1992, p. 13.

¹⁴³ Βακογιαννοπούλου Σ., “Εμφύλιος στην Πινακοθήκη”, *To Vima*, 31.5.1992 ; “Οι γκαλερίστες εμίλησαν...”, *Sima*, n. 8, May – June 1992, p. 15 ; “Ένταση στην Πινακοθήκη”, *Kerdos*, 28.5.1992.

¹⁴⁴ “Οι γκαλερίστες εμίλησαν... ”, *Sima*, n. 8, May – June 1992, p. 15.

II. The criticism of “personal choices”.

The demands for an objective history

The curator of the exhibition was charged with falsification of history. Some considered these “*historical distortions*” deliberate and attributed them to favouritism. To quote a critic, “*the criteria of selection are subjective, depending, in the case of living artists, on social interrelations*”¹⁴⁵. Others even thought that these choices were dictated by back-stage networks of power, namely the School of Fine Arts, the State Committees, and the galleries¹⁴⁶. However, what has actually worried most critics was the fact that such an exhibition was organized by only one person: the majority spoke of “personal” or “subjective” choices presented as the official position of a national institution and financed with the Greek taxpayer’s money¹⁴⁷. Many argued that such a personal view on the Modern Greek art had no place in a State institution or, as Maria Maragkou puts it, “*personal choices are legitimate in a neutral place, but not in a State institution*”¹⁴⁸. Christos Karras in his letter of protest argued that “*the National Gallery represents the Greek State, which has the duty to write down history with the greater possible objectivity [...] If we were in country which respects itself, the exhibition would have been immediately closed down and a committee of a widest composition would inquire into the question in dept and would put it down with objectivity, transparency, broadness and courage.*”¹⁴⁹.

Extreme thought it may be, the position of the artist illustrates part of the public’s perception on the implication of a State institution in the writing of art history. Besides, the criticism of the “personal choices” of the curator which prevailed on this debate brings about the question of the status and liberty of the curators as scholars working for a State institution. What kind of history writing and subsequent curatorial practice did the critics expect? Apparently, a consensual and non-conflicting one. Anna Kafetsi responded to these critics with two notes in the journal *Ta Nea* proposing an interesting critical approach of objectivity in history. According to her the kind of objectivity demanded by the critics is reduced to : “*1. the suppression of the process of selection (everybody in!) and its substitution by a simple registration based on confirmed criteria, 2. the non assignment of exhibitions to curators without restrictions (teach and do not*

¹⁴⁵ “Μεταμορφώσεις του Μοντέρνου - Η ελληνική εμπειρία ή πώς γραφεται η ιστορία. Προχειρότης, σκοπιμότητες ή άγνοια;”, *Sima*, n. 8, May – June 1992, p. 6.

¹⁴⁶ Thodoros, “Εγώ λέω όχι στις παραμορφώσεις”, *Ta Nea*, 29.5.1992 ; Kazazi S., “Ένα εικαστικό γεγονός της Αθήνας που προκαλεί βαθιά απογοήτευση. Αγνοείται το έργο του Χρήστου Λεφάκη και του Νίκου Σαχίνη. Πολλές απορίες και ερωτήματα. Ιστορική και αισθητική παραπληροφόρηση”, *Makedonia*, 22.6.1992 ; Stefanidis M., “Παραμορφώσεις του μοντέρνου. Εφευρεση της ιστορίας”, *Avgi tis Kyriakis*, 14.6.1992.

¹⁴⁷ “Α. Καφέτση, Α. Μπελεζίνης, συν-δημιουργοί « Σπείρας»”, *Sima*, n. 9, Sept.– Oct. 1992, p. 2 ; Kovanis K., “Περί τέχνης και μύθου”, *Politika Themata*, 20.1.1992.

¹⁴⁸ Maragkou M., “Αποθήκη μοντέρνου”, *Eleftherotypia*, 8.6.1992.

¹⁴⁹ Karras Ch., “Μοντέρνο και Πινακοθήκη”, *Kathimerini*, 30.5.1992. See also, Maragkou M., “Αποθήκη μοντέρνου” *Eleftherotypia*, 8.6.1992; Μπατι Ο., *Mesimvrini*, 12.6.1992.

question!) and 3. the empirical, easy to understand and didactic, but not necessarily educational way of museological display (everything on the plate!)”¹⁵⁰.

The Gallery assumes its scientific mission

The exhibition has also provoked an academic debate, to which participated art critics and art historians— but, curiously, almost no university professors¹⁵¹. The debate focused on the theoretical problem of the definition of the “modern”. From a general point of view, a conflict arose between those who defended an socio-historical definition and those who preferred a rather morphological or intra-artistic one. Interestingly enough, even in this case, almost nobody has made the effort to start from the guideline of the exhibition which figured in the accompanying catalogue in order to control its internal coherence.

The academic debate that the exhibition opened turned the Gallery in a forum for discussion on the problems of research on Greek art. Some critics were happy to see this new role assumed by the institution. Athina Sxina, an art historian and critic, welcomes the research character of the exhibition, noticing its exceptionality compared to the previous curatorial practice of the Gallery. She insists on the fact that the exhibition proposes one possible interpretative approach of Greek modernity and, as such, a quite coherent one, opening thus a dialogue and offering an excellent opportunity in order to reexamine the question of modernity in art¹⁵². Alexandros Xydis, an art critic, adopts a similar position and even speaks of a “*regenerated Gallery, where the problems of Greek art could be discussed with sobriety and decency.*”¹⁵³ Notwithstanding his objections regarding the exhibition’s argument, he congratulates the Board of directors of the Gallery for deciding, with this exhibition, “*to take the institution out of the colorless and indifferent twilight that it was sunk since its creation (1976). It had ended as a super-gallery for individual exhibitions and for some group-exhibitions, mostly foreign, which occasionally occupied the premises of the institution.*”¹⁵⁴ Finally, the artist Giannis Psychopedis stresses the importance of this exhibition for a “*suffering institution which seeks through the decades to find*

¹⁵⁰ Kafetsi A., “Αναχρονισμοί”, *Ta Nea*, 23.7.1992.

¹⁵¹ Kambouridis Ch., “Στολισμένος Λαβύρινθος”, *Ta Nea*, 1.6.1992 ; Maragkou M., “Αποθήκη μοντέρνου”, *Eleftherotypia*, 8.6.1992 ; Stefanidis M., “Παραμορφώσεις του μοντέρνου. Εφευρεση της ιστορίας”, *Avgi tis Kyriakis*, 14.6.1992 ; Stefanidis M., “Μοντερνισμός και γάλα βλάχας”, *Sima*, n. 9, sept. –oct. 1992, p. 14-15 ; Xydis A., “Ελληνική Τέχνη. Πορεία και μεταμορφώσεις στον 20^ο αιώνα”, *Anti*, n. 497, 26.6.1992, p. 51 ; *Anti*, n. 498, 10.7.1992, pp. 54-55 ; *Anti*, n. 499, 24.7.1992, pp. 58-59 ; *Anti*, n. 500, 7.8.1992, pp. 54-55 ; Loizidi N., “Με αφορμή την πολυσηζητημένη έκθεση της Πινακοθήκης. Ο μοντερνισμός αλλού και εδώ”, *To Vima*, 23.8.1992.

¹⁵² Schina A., “Προς μια αναθεώρηση του μοντερνισμού (Α)”, *Anti*, n. 495, 29.5.1992.

¹⁵³ Xydis A., “Ελληνική Τέχνη. Πορεία και μεταμορφώσεις στον 20^ο αιώνα”, *Anti*, n. 497, 26.6.1992, p. 51.

¹⁵⁴ Xydis A., “Ελληνική Τέχνη. Πορεία και μεταμορφώσεις στον 20^ο αιώνα- IV”, *Anti*, n. 500, 7.8.1992, p. 54.

its identity with no success". He wishes the multiplication of this kind of events opening a dialogue and research on the extremely complex reality of contemporary Greek art, a field which, in his view, lacks theoretical analysis and was up to then approached "*sentimentally or ideologically and schematically*"¹⁵⁵. The reception of the "personal choices of the curator" is here completely inversed: Psychopedis welcomes the fact that that "*curators take the responsibilities for their choices, expose themselves as scholars*" and at last "*exit the civil service sleep*"¹⁵⁶.

"Civil war in the Gallery"

A final question brought up in the controversy was that of who precisely was to blame or to assume responsibility for the exhibition's positions. If most of the critics targeted directly the curator, it was the Gallery's responsibility as an institution that was actually at stake. The exhibition was unconditionally assigned to the curator Anna Kafetsi, at her proposal by the previous director, M. Michailidou, and the Board of directors of the Gallery, but was inaugurated by the current director, who had only been appointed earlier the same year.

M. Lambraki-Plaka stressed on the very catalogue of the exhibition that the approach adopted by the curator for the analysis of the 20th century Greek art is only one alternative, others being as well sustainable. The newspaper *Eleftheros Typos*, reporting on the press conference held for the exhibition's inauguration, presents Plaka, who, however, never ceased to stress the importance of the exhibition, as having differentiated her position from the curator's choices, "*that left out many important artists*", who "*might claim that the Gallery does not take them into account*"¹⁵⁷. As an administrator of the institution, her interest was not so much to open a theoretical debate on the positions of the curator, but rather to maintain the good public image of the institution and not to disturb its relationships with the artists. After the outbreak of the controversy, at the roundtable with the gallerists participation, the newly appointed director, still insecure in her position, clearly drew the line between her responsibilities and those of the curator, stressing that she did not intervene at the slightest in the preparation of the exhibition, while she, as an art historian, disagreed with the omission of important Greek modernists and the lack of an historical dimension in the exhibition's approach¹⁵⁸.

The artist and professor of the Athens School of Fine Arts P. Tetsis, an "excluded" and president of the Artistic Committee of the Gallery that inaugurated the exhibition, declared that the responsibilities should not be placed on the

¹⁵⁵ Kounenaki P., "«Το πνεύμα παράγεται σήμερα στις βιοτεχνίες ιδεών... ». Ο ζωγράφος Γιάννης Ψυχοπαίδης μιλάει στο ANTI", *Anti*, 26.6.1992, p. 54.

¹⁵⁶ Psychopedis G., in : "Πόλεμος ...μοντέρνος", *Ta Nea*, 26.6.1992.

¹⁵⁷ A. K., "Μεταμορφώσεις του Μοντέρνου στην Ελλάδα", *Eleftheros Typos*, 14.5.1992.

¹⁵⁸ Bakogiannopoulou S., "Εμφύλιος στην Πινακοθήκη", *To Vima*, 31.5.1992.

present director and that until the last moment nobody in the Gallery knew – other than through an outline- *“how the exhibition was organized and what exactly it represented”*. In his opinion, such an important exhibition should have been assigned to a small group of scholars in order for the results to be more objective, promising to support this idea for as long as he would be member of the Artistic Committee¹⁵⁹. Finally, a co-curator of the Gallery, M. Stefanidis, severely criticized the exhibition and even proposed the organization of a *“corrective exhibition-manifestation, fruit of collective work this time”*¹⁶⁰.

Responding to the management’s reaction, A. Kafesti expressed her own view on the role of the director of the Gallery. She wondered, whether there *“would ... ever be a case for a director of a museum or of another similar institution to interfere on the research part, confusing his administrative and scientific duties”*¹⁶¹.

The controversy raised thus the problem of the internal operation of the institution and ethics in the relationships between the director and curators. Indeed, at the time there was, and still today there is no internal regulation of the Gallery, clearly defining powers and authority of the director and curators. In a moment of crisis, in the absence of clearly defined functions of the persons who incorporate the institution, this latter appears divided. The open tensions between the director and the curator and the lack of solidarity among colleagues allowed the press to speak of “civil war in the Gallery”. The management’s effort to place the responsibility for the exhibition on their predecessors, in an attempt to secure their threatened position, challenged the idea of the organic continuity of the institution. This effort betrays the tension between the personal interests and the duty to defend the integrity of the institution, a constant since the 19th century phenomenon of Greek public administration, which some sociologists identified as the confused perception of the distinction between the public and the private sphere¹⁶².

¹⁵⁹ Tetsis P., “Η έκθεση στην Εθνική Πινακοθήκη”, *Kathimerini*, 2.6.1992; Tetsis P., “Για την έκθεση στην Εθνική Πινακοθήκη”, *Kathimerini*, 21.6.1992.

¹⁶⁰ Bakogiannopoulou S., “Εμφύλιος στην Πινακοθήκη”, *To Vima*, 31.5.1992.

¹⁶¹ Kafetsi A., “Σκοταδισμός και κηδεμονία”, *Ta Nea*, 2.6.1992.

¹⁶² Tsoukalas K., “Κράτος και κοινωνία στην Ελλάδα του 19^{ου} αιώνα” in: Tsoulos D.G. (ed.), *Όψεις της ελληνικής κοινωνίας του 19^{ου} αιώνα*, Athens, Hestia, 1998, p. 51-52.

CONCLUSION

The law defines in general terms the mission of the Gallery, leaving to its management a substantial margin for maneuver with respect to the definition of its identity, namely whether it is to play the role of a national or global culture, past or contemporary art museum.

On the question of the national or international character of the museum, the historical analysis of the Gallery's exhibition policy reveals that the definition of a precise orientation has been an extremely slow and problematic exercise. Even if Marinos Kalligas had put the basis for a Greek orientated museum, it took more than two decades for the Gallery to assume the role of an institution specialized in the exhibition, conservation and research on Greek art.

Furthermore, the Gallery, after a long vacillation and hesitations in the use of its foreign collections, tries to give today a solution by attempting to move towards a specialization: adopting to some extent an international orientation whose center of gravity and point of reference is the Greek civilization. Focusing on the cultural exchanges of various kinds between the Greek and Western European civilization, the museum managed to convey an image of Greek culture integrated in the European as well as in the international community.

The Gallery's orientation remained blurred for a long period of time on the question of past or present art. The Gallery has never ceased to invest in the organization of living artists retrospectives, while its directors have always underlined the historical character of the museum and justified the organization of such exhibitions on the grounds of the absence of a museum of contemporary art. The controversy over the exhibition *Metamorphoses of the Modern. The Greek experience* projects the Gallery into the Greek art world and reveals that the display of living artists may be extremely sensitive to the various interests of the involved actors. The creation of the National Museum of Contemporary Art in 1997 seems to have installed a new framework for the scope of the Gallery's operations. The two museums may now focus on the same historical period but for different reasons: the Gallery in the context of its historical mission, while the National Museum of Contemporary Art in the context of the promotion of contemporary art, mainly of experimental character.

How may one evaluate this long lasting ambiguity on the identity of the Gallery? Could it be due to deficiencies of the law or of the institution's management, or should it rather be read in a wider context? Could it be apprehended in the light of the specific historical conditions that determined the emergence of museums in South Eastern Europe? Is this ambiguity a phenomenon that recurs in the wider European setting, namely in other peripheral countries? Finally, could it reflect the ambiguities in the formation and the subsequent configurations of the national identity of the Greeks and of Greece's place in the wider European community? There is clearly a need for further analysis.

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ANNEX 1: THE DIRECTORS OF THE NATIONAL GALLERY

1900-1918	Georgios Iakovidis Painter, director of the School of Fine Arts
1918-1949	Zacharias Papantoniou Writer, art critic, amateur painter, Professor of aesthetics and art history in the School of Fine Arts
1949-1971	Marinos Kalligas Byzantinist, art historian
1971-1973	Andreas Ioannou Jurist, art critic, former prefect
1973-1989	Dimitrios Papastamos Archaeologist, art historian
1989-1990	Mairi Michailidi Civil servant of Ministry of Culture, art historian
1990-1991	Nelli Misirli Curator of the Gallery
1992-2007	Marina Lambraki-Plaka Professor of art history in the School of Fine Arts

ANNEX 2: EXHIBITIONS OF THE D. PAPASTAMOS PERIOD (1973-1989)

THEMATIC EXHIBITIONS

	INTERNATIONAL ART
1972	CARL ROTTMANN.GREEK LANDSCAPES PANORAMA DE L'ART FRANÇAIS CONTEMPORAIN
1973	
1974	CONTEMPORARY ROUMANIAN PAINTING IMPRESSIONISM CONTEMPORARY SOUTHAFRICAN ART
1975	ARAB ARTISTS GREEK AND CANADIAN STUDENTS CYPRIOTES PAINTERS ITALIAN SCULPTORS TRAVELLERS IN GREECE SINCE THE 15 TH CENTURY
1976	PANORAMA DE L'ART FRANÇAIS NATIONAL GALLERY OF SOFIA CONTEMPORARY BRITISH ART
1977	HISTORICAL MONUMENTS OF GERMANY CONTEMPORARY YUOGOSLAVIAN ART SCULPTURE OF BORDEAUX
1978	15 FINNISH ARTISTS HUNGARIAN ENGRAVING CONTEMPORARY PORTUGESE ARTISTS ITALIAN ENGRAVING GERMAN NAIVE PAINTING 3 CYRPIOTE ARTISTS
1979	CONTEMPORARY JAPANESE PAINTING

	<p>GERMAN ENGRAVING</p> <p>20 ITALIAN ARTISTS ILLUSTRATE THE DIVINE COMEDY</p>
1980	<p>IMPRESSIONIST AND POST-IMPRESSIONIST PAINTING</p>
1981	<p>JAPANESE ENGRAVING</p> <p>CONTEMPORARY CANADIAN ENGRAVING</p> <p>VUES OF ROME 17TH – 19TH CENTURY</p> <p>POLISH FEMALE PORTRAITS</p> <p>CONTEMPORARY BRITISH DRAWINGS</p> <p>ENGRAVINGS OF FRENCH NAÏVE ARTISTS</p> <p>FOREIGN IMPRESSIONISTS</p>
1982	<p>AMERICAN PAINTING FROM THE HOUSTON MUSEUM</p> <p>BAUHAUS</p> <p>THE POSTER IN BELGIUM</p> <p>PARIS-ROME-ATHÈNES ARCHITECTURE</p>
1983	<p>THEATER POSTERS FROM THE POPULAR DEMOCRACY OF GERMANY</p> <p>ENGLISH WATERCOLORS AND DRAWINGS 19TH CENTURY</p> <p>PICASSO AND THE MEDITERANNEAN SEA</p> <p>CONTEMPORARY DUTCH PAINTING</p> <p>6 PAINTERS FROM IRELAND</p> <p>SILKSCREEN PRINTS OF AMERICAN-INDIAN ARTISTS</p>
1984	<p>CHYPRUS SUFFERINGS</p> <p>THE GOLFEN CENTURY OF NAPOLITAN PAINTING</p> <p>30 GERMAN ARTISTS</p> <p>CONTEMPORARY SPANISH PAINTING</p> <p>CONTEMPORARY PHOTOGRAPHY IN SPAIN</p> <p>CONTEMPORARY ROUMANIAN ART</p> <p>ENGRAVING FROM AΠO THE POPULAR DEMOCRACY OF GERMANY</p> <p>CONTEMPORARY CHYPRIOTE ART</p> <p>500 YEARS OF WEST EUROPEAN ENGRAVING</p>
1985	<p>IMAGES OF AN HOLOCAUST</p> <p>AMERICAN CINEMA</p> <p>CANADIAN LANDSCAPE</p>

	<p>REALISTIC DRAWINGS. 8 ARTISTS FROM THE WEST GERMANY</p> <p>THE BUCHHEIM COLLECTION</p> <p>CONTEMPORARY EUROPEAN PAINTING</p>
1986	<p>DUTCH LANDSCAPE OF THE 17TH CENTURY</p> <p>LES GRANDS PROJETS D'ARCHITECTURE DE PARIS</p> <p>THE ART OF MULTIPLE IN THE WEST GERMANY</p> <p>ENGRAVING OF GERMAN EXPRESSIONISTS</p> <p>BULGARIAN ART</p>
1987	<p>AMERICAN WOOD-CUTS</p> <p>MURANO: HISTORY AND ART OF THE GLASS</p> <p>CONTEMPORARY YUGOSLAVIAN ART</p> <p>40 YEARS OF BRITISH SCULPTURE</p> <p>WEST EUROPEAN PAINTING</p>
1988	<p>VUES OF VENICE BY VENICIAN ENGRAVERS</p> <p>THE TERRA COTTA ARMY OF THE EMPEROR QINSHIHUANG</p> <p>THE GROUP IX (SWEDEN)</p> <p>GERMAN ARCHITECTURE AND PHOTOGRAPHY</p> <p>GERMAN WOODCUT IN THE 20TH CENTURY</p> <p>PORTUGUESE PAINTING OF THE LAST THREE DECADES</p>
1989	<p>TREASURES FROM THE HERMITAGE MUSEUM</p> <p>600 YEARS OF POTTERY FROM FAYENCE</p> <p>AMERICAN ART IN THE LATE 80'S</p>

Source: Exhibitions Archive of the National Gallery.

ANNEX 3: EXHIBITIONS OF THE M. LAMBRAKI PLAKA PERIOD (1992- 2007)

	THEMATIC EXHIBITIONS
1992	METAMORPHOSES OF THE MODERN- THE GREEK EXPERIENCE TREASURES FROM ANCIENT MEXICO PIETRO LONGI AND HIS CENTURY ITALIAN ENGRAVING FROM THEOTOKOPOULOS TO CEZANNE
1993	THROUGH THE EYES OF THE ROMANTIC. WORKS OF WESTERN EUROPEAN PAINTINGS FROM THE BENAKIS COLLECTION PHOTOGRAPHS FROM THE COLLECTIONS OF THE CENTRE POMPIDOU THE OLD TESTAMENT IN EUROPEAN ART THE COLLECTION OF THE NATIONAL BANK OF GREECE ICONS OF CRETAN ART THE CHILD IN MODERN GREEK ART
1994	PAINTING ON PAPER – NEW TENDENCIES OF GERMAN ART THE GATES OF MYSTERY- TREASURES OF THE ORTHODOXY ATHENS SCHOOL OF FINE ARTS
1995	GREEK MASTERS OF ENGRAVING GRECO IN ITALY AND THE ITALIAN ART RUSSIAN AVANT-GARDE
1996	ATHENS SCHOOL OF FINE ARTS ART IN THE END OF THE 20 TH CENTURY (WHITNEY MUSEUM) THE WOMAN IN MODERN GREEK ART PAINTING IN THE CINEMA- GIANT POSTERS FROM THE HELLAH COLLECTION
1997	LA GRECE EN REVOLTE. DELACROIX ET LES PEINTRES FRANCAIS ATHENS SCHOOL OF FINE ARTS
1998	GREEK LANDSCAPE PAINTING THE PERDIOS COLLECTION

1999	
2000	ATHENS- MUNICH LIGHTS AND SHADOWS – A PANORAMA OF GREEK ENGRAVING GREEK GOODS AND HEROES IN THE AGE OF RUBENS AND REMBRANDT
2001	
2002	THE GOLDEN AGE DUTSCH PAINTING THE CENTURY OF PICASSO
2003	THE NATIONAL THEATER IN THE NATIONAL GALLERY IDEAS ON PAPER- COLLECTION OF THE MUSEUM OF HAMBURG IN THE LIGHT OF APPOLO - ITALIAN RENNAISANCE AND GREECE
2004	EMPIRIAL TREASURES OF CHINA SIX LEADING SCULPTORS AND THE HUMAN FIGURE
2006	PARIS –ATHENS

	MONOGRAPHIC EXHIBITIONS	
1992	GIANNIS PAPPAS	
1993	ANDY WARHOL	
1994	ALBERTO BURRI	
1995	KALAMARAS GRAMMATOPOULOS MYTARAS SPYROPOULOS	
1996		PERIKLIS PANTAZIS
1997	VLADIMIR VELICKOVIC ANTHONY CARO ABRAMIDIS STAMOS	
1998	DANIIL AKRITHAKIS	MISERERE - G. ROUAULT
1999	TETSIS	EL GRECO - IDENTITY & TRANSFORMATION

	CANIARIS	
2000		
2001	CALATRAVA	GYZIS
2002		
2003	PAPAGIANNIS GLYPTOTHEQUE	
2004	KAPRALOS (GLYPTOTHEQUE) HENRI MOORE (GLYPTOTHEQUE) FASIANOS	
2005	LUCAS SAMARAS GONZALEZ	IAKOVIDIS
2006	BOTERO MARINI (GLYPTOTHEQUE)	SAVIDIS
2007		CHALEPAS (GLYPTOTHEQUE)

Source: Exhibitions Archive of the National Gallery.