

The Disruption of Democracy in The Age of Modernity: Examining the Case of Modern Greece

Dionysis Tsirigotis

Abstract: The main purpose of this article is to understand the use and abuse of the notion of democracy and its operation as a political system throughout the classical Greek period to modernity. The article will show how the development and understanding of democracy from the modern Western Europe completely differs from its classical conception. The analytical starting point is the assumption that the political system of Western democracy is presented as an indirect representation and creates a gap between policy and society such that the latter lacks its physical role as a mandator of the political system. By extending the above-mentioned syllogism to the modern Greek State in accordance with George Contogeorgis' assumption that the modern political system is neither democratic nor representative, the article is then able to describe the roots of Greece's current sociopolitical and economic impasse. Thus by questioning the absence of a coordinated political proposal from its executive branch for dealing with major sociopolitical and economic problems, the article searches for the misapplication of democracy in policy formation and implementation.

Keywords: democracy, modernity, policy, representation, society

 Dr., Pireaus University, dtsirigo7@gmail.com

 0000-0002-7003-6629

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Introduction

In recent years, society's demands for direct democracy have swelled regarding the deficits of representative democracy such as political abstention "and increasing dissatisfaction with parties, politicians and governments" (Lutz, 2006, p. 43; Dalton, 2002; Norris, 1999). Although some political science scholars have evoked a global presence of direct democracy (Boyer, 1992; Butler & Raney, 1994; Johnston et al., 1996; Qvortrup, 2002; LeDuc, 2003), in practice, and according to Modernity's reading of democracy, this seems to be a necessary fiction. This is the context in which one now confronts the question of the classical notion of democracy as liberty and its axial principles. The principle of constitution, which means every man is to govern and be governed in turn, and the principle of equality, which means "for a man to live as he pleases" and consequently "to not be governed by anyone preferably, and failing that, to govern and be governed in turn" (Aristotle, n.d., Vol. 6, section 1317b).

That said, the core issue of this study is to explain and understand the use and abuse of the classical notion of democracy and its operation as a political system from the classical Greek period to modernity. This study will show how the development and understanding of democracy in Western Europe and Greece in particular completely differ from its classical conception. The analytical starting point is the assumption that the political system of Western democracy, which is presented as representative, creates a gap between society and policy, thus disabling society from its physical role as a mandator of the government (Hardt & Negri, 2004, pp. 241, 245–255).

By extending the above-mentioned syllogism onto the modern Greek state in accordance with George Contogeorgis' (2007, 2013) assumption that the modern political system is neither democratic nor representative, the article will be able to describe the roots of the current sociopolitical and economic impasse in Greece. Thus by questioning the absence of a coordinated political proposal from its executive branch so as to deal with major sociopolitical and economic problems, the study searches for the perversions of democracy in policy formation and implementation. This study will therefore proceed to examine the following three questions using a case study analysis of the modern Greek state:

1. How is democracy defined in the modern era?

2. What is the relationship between policy (democracy) and civil society/citizens?
3. How can the question of the political function of democracy and society be explained/described?

The Meaning of Democracy

Before going deeper into the analysis of the current concept of democracy, the classical concept of democracy, meaning the self-rule of people, should be examined first while leaving aside the notion of leadership and government by leaders (Blackwell, 2003; Contogeorgis, 2006, pp. 225–247; de Ste. Croix, 2004; Ober, 1989). In Schumpeter's (1976, as cited in Mackie, 2009, p. 130) words, "the democratic method is that institutional arrangement for arriving at political decisions which realizes the common good by making the people itself decide issues through the election of individuals who are to assemble in order to carry out its will."

More precisely, the narrative defines democracy as freedom (Contogeorgis, 2007), the full version of which refers to the constraints that nature imposes on man as well as to the sociopolitical compulsions man has. Freedom has a unique value for Greek sociopolitical organization and is defined as the repetitive equivalent of autonomy (Contogeorgis, 2005). It also grows in three dimensions (i.e., individual, social, and political), which vary according to the phase of the anthropocentric cosmosystem (Contogeorgis, 2007, pp. 26–29). Firstly, individual freedom covers person's private life within society. It is not placed against nor in contradiction to society, but as a constitutive parameter of society. Secondly, social freedom focuses on the area of social life where the individual contracts with social systems and sub-systems (i.e., institutions or individuals) that binds their wills or alter one's social position. In other words, the contract that has been concluded between a person and that person's business owner so as to exchange labor for payment is a deprivation of that person's freedom (i.e., social freedom). Lastly, political freedom refers to the position an individual has in the political state system. The key issue here is the establishment of a relationship between society and politics in which the person has autonomy. In other words, political freedom means people should not be subject to anyone else's authority and concerns the position of the overall society of citizens within the political system. The political system, however, is combined with another aspect of freedom that has to do with the polysemy

(e.g., cultural, geographical) of society and, by extension, with the natural tendency of groups to self-manage their social, political, and economic issues (Contogeorgis, 2015, p. 118). As Lutz (2006, p. 45) described, “They criticize the lack of accountability in direct democratic decisions, the weakening of legislatures or the lack of minority rights protection. Supporters of direct democracy tend to highlight strongly potential positives such as citizens’ emancipation, increased voter awareness or even that direct democracy makes people happier.”

Modernity’s Reading of Democracy

In response to the questions at the heart of this article and in conjunction with the aforementioned analysis of the core features of classical democracy, the modern notion of democracy provides a system of governance in which rulers are more responsive to citizens’ preferences (i.e., mandate theory). By the same token, confusing democracy (i.e., freedom) with the principle of representation (i.e., serving the rule of “self-government of the people” in large-scale societies; Dahl, 1989, pp. 83, 97, 106; Przeworski et al., 1999), which leads to the electoralism fallacy, “equates [democracy] with regular elections, fairly conducted and honestly counted” (Schmitter & Karl, 1991, p. 78).

While classical democracy underpinned calls for “the rule by the people,” its modern notion has ensured that the principle of representation “serves the self-government of the people” in large-scale societies (Dahl 1989, pp. 83, 97, 106; Przeworski et al., 1999).

This is a main function of the mandate theory, which also defines the democratic and representative government by the level of its responsiveness to citizens’ preferences, “expressed in elections through the given mandate” (Körösenyi 2007, p. 4). The key issue here is the prevalence of the “responsive rule” (Saward, 1998, p. 14), ensuring through the use of democratic procedures the formation and implementation of governance and public policy according to citizens’ will whereby the government will carry out public policy according to the expressed preferences of the people. Respectively, Juan J. Linz (1978) emphasized the right of citizens to form political parties, while Lipset (1959) mentioned citizens’ right to choose the governing officials and influence political decision making. Bollen (1980) used the distribution of the political power between elites and citizens in order to define democracy. When citizens’ political power is

maximized and that of the elites is minimized, then the political system is democratic (Wong, 1990, pp. 34–35).

What the above-mentioned analysis shows is that the most striking feature of modernity's notion of democracy is the ill-considered interpretation of freedom being limited to its individual dimension (Dahl, 1986; Held, 2006; Hirst, 1988; Gottfried, 1999, pp. 30–36). Categorizing democracy in terms of representation, which “equates it with regular *elections*, fairly conducted and honestly counted” (Schmitter & Karl, 1991, p. 78), drives democracy into an electoralism fallacy that regards the misrepresentation of the population or the unrepresentative participation of parties. Focusing on individual freedom ignores democracy's social and political freedoms while concentrating on certain social rights to prevent the infringement of individual freedom and to preserve citizens' dependence contract with the government. Accordingly, the fundamental problem of modernity is the adoption of the democratic ideal in a pre-political system such as post-feudal Europe. In this way, democracy has been equated with individual rights and freedom (Berlin, 1969; Ignatieff, 2007; Lauk, 2014, p. 1; Meskill, 2013, pp. 89–91; Mill, 1859), something which is totally opposed to the basic logic of democracy as highlighted throughout Aristotele's *Politics* (Rackham, 1932).

Subsequently, the political system of modernity became representative through the introduction of the parliamentary system in Western Europe, especially in the United Kingdom (Lijphart, 1999; Mahler, 1997; Wilson, 1994). The principle of representation defines the measure of internal legitimacy, meaning that this is achieved through the “transformation of the political will from the individual level to the collective level. It holds that a group of people- today an electoral district- can elect a representative. They will represent the will of their constituency in the assembly of the other representatives – today in parliaments” (Lauk, 2014, p. 2). Upon deeper investigation, the equation of democracy with parliamentarianism in the beginning of the 20th century and the undisputable role of parties as “the most important vehicles of mass democracy” in the process-implementation of policy reflects “their leading position into the political system... In particular, [this is] because they were the vehicles of previously unenfranchised groups such as workers and peasants” (Strom, 2000, p. 180).

This development may be interpreted in light of the special position the Western political system acknowledges within political parties at all levels of politics and state

operation, such as in in parliament, government, and local administration (Cox & McCubbins, 1993; Dalton & Wattenberg, 2000, pp. 5–10; Strom, 2000, pp. 182–183).

Following the abovementioned syllogism, one can conclude that the transition from society to government for each political party leads to a merger among them (Dalton & Wattenberg, 2000, pp. 8–10). The party undergoes a public body, due to the main source of revenue being the public treasury, with the assistance of legislative and regulatory acts of the government. The result of this conjunction is not only the removal and separation of the ruling party from society but also the transformation of party from a representative to an authoritarian institution. The domination of party is reflected in its need to conquer the executive branch in order to implement its policy. Thus, the acquisition of governmental status by the ruling political party ends in its absorption of the political system and state politics. Therefore, “the transformation of party leaders into holders of public office promotes the de-democratization of political decision-making, that is, it increasingly delegitimizes lawmaking” (Lauk, 2014, p. 30).

In this regard, “Parties have become agencies that govern . . . rather than represent; they bring order rather than give voice” (Lauk, 2014, p. 29). This process not only expresses the total violation of the representation principle but also deprives society of its physical role as a principal agent of policy (Contogeorgis, 1985, pp. 30–31). In other words, this leads to the rehabilitation of society, and “is part of the process by which parties and their leaders separate themselves from the [latter].” In addition, the instrumental institutions of representative democracy guarantee that “elected governments fulfill the demands of ‘most people, most of the time’” (Verdun & Christiansen, 1999, p. 172), which is something that rarely occurs in the modern state.

The Relationship Between Society and Politics in Modern Greece

In seeking to understand the relationship between society and politics, a brief look at the typological clarification of political systems is called for as an intermediate representative liaison. One starting point here may be the categorization of political systems in terms of their level of anthropocentric progress. Building on the work of Professor Contogeorgis, the study discerns three distinct phases in the evolution of political systems, from pro-representatives, to representatives, and then to democratic

(Contogeorgis, 2013, p. 43; 2007, pp. 31–34). In the former, society is the state's own property. The state embodies the political system, and society retains the role of the individual without any participation or even framing of policy formation. Conversely, the civilian staff decides and forms in the first and last instances the course of political process, as they own the entire political system. In a representative political system, like Solon's *politeia* (Keaney, 1992, pp. 22–25), society is constituted to a municipality, namely as a perpetual political body where it becomes the mandator of the political staff through representation. In the last stage and similar to Cleisthene's *politeia*,¹ the municipality owns the universal political competence: It is the master of the political system, and society is not only the mandator expressing the political will but also the mandatee that applies its political decisions.

Therefore, the basic difference between a democratic and representative political system is detected in the abolition of the mandator-mandatee relationship. Both in representative and democratic political systems, the political staff is controlled by and accountable to the municipality for its acts. It is subject to justice and punished for any wrong or harm done to community decisions. Conversely, the shape of representation that modernity has introduced into political function is filled with the principle of the separation of powers (Held 2006, pp. 65–70; Lauk, 2004, p. 3). This was able to be applied during the transitional phase from feudalism to modernity as an effective mechanism to curb the authoritarian structure of a “despotic” state or to escape from a despotic rule (Contogeorgis, 2006, pp. 35–37). Moreover, because the moment when society homogenized into a state had come to an end and voting for all had been introduced, a radical reversal of the logic of the separation of politics took place. On a factual level, the party that acquires the majority in elections absolutely and indivisibly coordinates and controls the set of political functions (i.e., legislative, executive), as well as those of the government and justice, a procedure that is recorded as a simple administrative operation. At the same time, members of parliament (MPs) are placed above the law in terms of its law policies, political attitude, and decisions (parliamentary privileges). As such, the modern political system, consistent with its nature, not only distinguishes the statutory difference between voting for a “representative” and a “judgment” regarding its policy, but it also has immunity, meaning that it is excluded from judicial

1 “Aristotle noted the motive of Cleisthenes at 1319B21: (wishing to increase the democracy)” Keaney, 1992, p. 22.

jurisdiction, even including the private lives of its civilian staff (Contogeorgis, 2001, pp. 25–26). Throughout this discussion, the most distinctive characteristic of modernity has been identified as being its determination of all state structures in terms of property (Contogeorgis, 2007, p. 318; Ruggie, 1993, pp. 148–149). Two examples from the organizational structure of modern state can be used to clarify this issue. One focuses on the inseparability between the economic structure and the means of production and is realized by identifying the economic system (e.g., business) with owners' means of production (Weber, 2005, p. 15). The other looks over the political context where making any distinction between the political system and state is equally unconceivable nowadays. Hence the policies the actors of the political system shape are automatically set as state policies (Contogeorgis, 2011). However, the power that as an act differentiates the ruler from the ruled and the owner of the decisive right from the debtor of one's intention is centered on the individual's ability for self-action, namely to be autonomous.

By posing the detachment of the political system from the state as a pre-suppositional condition for its existence in this way, democracy demonstrates the fundamental difference between the state and the political system. Democracy also recognizes civil society as a unique institutional body for the formation and implementation of politics. At the same time, the totality of political and administrative functions (i.e., the main political responsibility) of the state moved into a society that is organized in the demos. The function of representation, however, similar to democracy, requires the transformation of civil society into a demos. However, in pre-representation, the political jurisdiction does not accrue entirely to the municipality of society. The municipality undertakes only the competences pertaining to the property of the principal, while the powers belonging to the carrier's agent remains in the hands of the political power of the state (Contogeorgis, 2007, pp. 24–29). Therefore, the political system in modern times is pre-representative and completely separate from society and leaves the configuration of the political, social, and economic fields out of the reach of society. Society has no involvement in the formation of social correlations, and the formation and implementation of politics actually belongs exclusively to institutional agents such as political parties. One could also argue that representation has been placed on the verge between the pre-representative political system of the early humanist era (modernity) and the republic of human accomplishment (Contogeorgis, 2007). The question that

derives from this interpretation of the relationship between state and society is how this has been able to manifest in modern Greece. In order to answer this, the next logical step is to reveal the fundamentals of the political system in Greece.

The Core Features and Sociopolitical Symptoms of the Greek Political System

Insofar as politics has been accepted as an essential component of society, then its political system as a continuation of political process reflects “the entirety of its social-political composition and dynamic” (Contogeorgis, 1985, p. 15) by expressing the mainstream way of life. What this argument emphasizes is the actual role society has as the exclusive configurator and administrator of politics. As such, what light does this general assumption shed on the question of the relationship between state and society in the modern nation state?

The article will attempt to explore and elucidate this relationship by tracking the establishment of the catholic vote in 1843 within the parliamentary system in the modern Greek state long before being established in so-called classic parliamentary countries such as Great Britain (Alivizatos, 1981; Charalambis, 1989; Petridis, 1984). In fact, the introduction of the parliamentary system in Greece will be the core means for resolving the conflict between central and local power and subsequently the vehicle through which the political elite and the dignitaries impose their presence through the introduction of universal suffrage and the idea of political and social sovereignty within the Greek state (Charalambis, 1989, p. 26). As Kondylis (1991, pp. 51, 56) characteristically described, the founding of the parliamentary monarchy during the King Otto of Greece period enabled the political system to appropriate the state apparatus and convert it into a party. This was because from that point on, the exercise of political power no longer remained as a way to promote or defend the common interest but instead became a struggle for the conquest and appropriation of public wealth so as to take over and remain in government. The ownership of state power was facilitated by the fundamental needs of social groups, due to both the rural population and landless people having rushed to the state to resolve their problems, at least until the beginning of the 20th century. The rural population attempted to channel its work surplus into the state market, and the landless people struggled for the distribution of national land (Contogeorgis, 1985, p. 95; Tsoukalas, 1999). Once the Greek state started acting as a

central employer, using it as an instrument for expansion and consolidation of political influence became easy for its main agencies. This process was embedded in a patron-client network that had developed by transferring the patronage relationship from society to a political structure, or by using political institutions to strengthen “interpersonal dependency relations at the level of the local community” (Contogeorgis, 1985, p. 95). For example, a farmer expects a share of state benefits that may be achieved by legalizing the patron to become owner in the political system-state apparatus through voting. In this manner, “the parliamentary party leader [...] requires from their ‘people’ obedience, [...] but at the same time undertakes to ‘act on their own affairs,’ (i.e., help them to ‘arrange’ and ensures through his influence, comparative advantages in their competition with the proponents of other parties” (Kondylis, 1991, p. 20). In other words, the parliamentary party leader becomes a possessor of public wealth so as to fulfill the selfish needs of private individuals. Respectively, one should not overlook the extensive autonomy of the political-party game, such as the patron-client relationship between politician and voter, in which each voter provides support while expecting protection, and a politician sells off the state to voters in exchange for holding state apparatus. Actually, politicians establish their power on their ability to distribute lucrative posts and positions. This process of autonomy in the political party game leads to the abolishment of ideological contrasts by making ideologies minor or merely pretextual (Charalambis, 1989). In particular, insofar as the current pre-representative Greek political system operates under the direction of the interests of the party system, the relationship of society with politics is strictly limited to the patron-client system. By using the parliamentary political system as a vehicle for promoting patronage interests and practices under the auspices of a patronage network, the governing party has occupied the entire political system and diminished Greek society, fully excluding society from the constitution and the conduct of politics and transforming it into the status of a private individual, or *idiōtēs* [idiot] in ancient Greek (Contogeorgis, 2008). This situation is a logical consequence of the deconstruction of the Greek historical *acquis* and the fastening of Greek society to the concept of modernity (Giddens, 1991; Kondylis, 1991, pp. 50–67; Martinelli, 2005, p. 8; Mitchel, 2000; Hall et al., 1996; Himmelfarb, 2005; Winks & Neuberger, 2005).

Specifically, the relationship between society and politics in the Greek political system is intermediate due to the absence of a representative authority. The principle of the

mandator and the meaning of politics does not belong to society, and as such fails to establish a link between society and politics. As Contogeorgis (2007, p. 749) stated, “The principle of the originator belongs exclusively to the agent-state, whereas the meaning of policy refers to ‘nation’ or the ‘public interest’ and not to the will of society or its interest.” The attribute of the mandator as a whole is in the possession of the mandatee (i.e., state), while the purpose of politics refers to the nation or the public interest and not to the will or interest of society. The state (i.e., government) represents the nation and not society. The final result of this process is the weakening of formal civil society (Mavrogordatos, 1993, 1997; Mouzelis, 1978; Tsoukalas, 1995), which has been characterized as relatively underdeveloped and poorly organized, with a few weak civil society organizations dominated by a powerful government (Jones et al., 2008; Sotiropoulos & Karamagioli, 2006; Theocharis & van Deth, 2015, p. 65).

Society’s Distrust of Democracy’s Political Function

The previous analysis stressed how the essence of the modernity approach to political function lies in the essential dichotomy between society and politics. This makes policy an exclusive operation of the state that is only expressed in terms of sovereignty. The state ensures its authoritarian autonomy and the independence of its willingness toward society (i.e., its own self-interest), which is in line with the national (i.e., public) interest. In this way, modernity has managed to bypass or oppose social will. It has not approached society as a coherent political entity, nor has it recognized society’s position in the political system or its role in the political process due to civil society not being considered to have the capability or maturity for taking part in the political function (Contogeorgis, 2001, pp. 18–19). Throughout this discussion, the central question is why “public doubts about politicians, political parties, and political institutions are spreading across almost all advanced industrial democracies” (Dalton, 2004, p. 3). The politically correct response would be that this is due to the separation between society and policy as the primary cause of the delegitimization of public politics. Although the mainstream view of public policies’ legitimacy puts emphasis on “the link between institutions and their politics (their degree of societal embeddedness), on the link between policies and institutions (the effectiveness of the electoral process), and on the link between policies and their social and economic effects (output-orientation)” (Verdun & Christiansen, 1999, p. 174); in reality, the primary tie between society and

public policy-making is a necessary fiction. As Verdun & Christiansen (p. 172) described, a basic dictum of liberal democracy is the determination of public policy using citizens' preferences, but "in modern states, this only rarely occurs. Instead, the institutions of representative democracy ensure that elected governments fulfill the demands of 'most people, most of the time.'" This is the context being challenged, in which the actual role of the modern state is as the sole institution to carry out politics (i.e., legislative, judicial, and executive) and the only voice of the national interest, with the role of the former being limited at the individual level through the legalization of the executive branch. The events that took place in many European countries and Greece in particular in the recent years of economic crisis have shown a cleave and an unbridgeable chasm between the rulers and the ruled, as well as an unconvincing claim by the political elites that they represent the public interest. In the case of Greece, "the financial crisis, the numerous political scandals and the solutions proposed by the ruling party in line with the IMF-EU recommendations have led many people to believe that the social contract is up for renegotiation" (Mylonas, 2011, p. 83).²

The general strike on May 5, 2010 and huge demonstration in October 2011 in Athens marked the beginning of the fight back. Large sections of the population who'd traditionally voted for the two ruling parties have become increasingly detached from the political system. Some Panhellenic Socialist Movement (PASOK) MPs and many trade unionists broke away from the government and participated in the escalating campaigns. Social repulsion for the political elites has changed from passive disengagement into active force.³ This deficit and these legitimacy crises are spread throughout the EU at the institutional level and are crystallized in the absence of the Union's citizens in

2 The electorate's disappointment with the political system is constantly rising. On behalf of Kathimerini newspaper, the political Barometer of the Public Issue pollster records the electorate's growing frustration and alienation from the political system; eight out of ten (78%) citizens are disappointed with the government's work, and nine out of ten (89%) are disappointed by the opposition. The stance of the citizens toward the parties is also deteriorating: Political parties and their leaders –except for Mrs. Aleka Papariga- see their popularity decrease, a tendency toward depoliticization is rising, and one-third of the citizens chose to abstain from voting. At the same time, George Papandreou's, the Prime Minister's, and PASOK's images are deteriorating, despite their lead in the polls. "Expands the frustration of voters from the political system", Kathimerini, Oct. 10, 2010, http://news.kathimerini.gr/4dcgi/_w_articles_politics_2_10/10/2010_418257 (accessed Dec.17, 2011).

3 The delegitimization of political parties and state institutions in Greece is a highly disconcerting development. In a recent poll, only 39% of interviewees said they would vote for PASOK or the New Democracy. This is a historic low for Greece. Furthermore, eight out of ten citizens express disappointment with the government, and nine out of ten express disappointment with the main opposition party. *Ibid*

the process of shaping and implementing basic political, economic, and social measures upon them.⁴ As Cimbalò (2011) described:

The most significant lack of democratic accountability has been the failure of at least two Commissions and others to enforce the existing Stability and Growth Pact within the Euro zone. Enforcing the agreement would not have prevented Greece's current crisis, but it would have stemmed the crisis of popular legitimacy the Union is currently facing in Greece. The Commission has failed to administer the rules of the Euro zone, but despite their inaction, their sinecures are completely secure. Greater legal capabilities wrought in this crisis are very unlikely to improve this democratic deficit, even if they can be made consonant with current treaties (assuming the negotiators will even try to make them such).

A social uprising has also been occurring globally against the core problem of modernity, as well as a request for a complete and utter reformulation of politics where society can actively participate in it, as shown in the global-level demonstrations on October 15, 2011. As such, the main question asks what the basic claims of the indignant citizens around the globe are,⁵ and what alternative policy proposals could lift Greece out of this political and economic impasse?

The basic claims of the indignant people are crystallized in the fulfillment of their basic needs: work, health, education and social policy. The people want to actively participate

4 As the Guardian noted: "Eurozone policymakers too often treat democratic accountability as a luxury rather than a necessity, as shall be made amply clear this week when Brussels will force the Athens parliament to pass a raft of sharp spending cuts, tax hikes and privatisations – despite the hostility of Greek voters". Quoted in *The Democratic Deficit in Europe and the Crisis in the Periphery*, 29 June 2011. <http://www.macrosilience.com/2011/06/29/the-democratic-deficit-in-europe-and-the-crisis-in-the-periphery/> (accessed May 11, 2020).

5 We refer here to the global demonstrations held on October 15th in more than 950 cities in 82 countries around the world, October 15th: Dreaming of a "new global citizen power", *Periodismo Humano* (Human Journalism), Oct. 12, 2011, <http://english.periodismohumano.com/2011/10/12/october-15th-dreaming-of-a-%E2%80%9Cnew-global-citizen-power%E2%80%9D/> (accessed May 3, 2012). See: "'Indignant' protests to go global on Saturday", *France 24*, Oct. 15, 2011; Article quote: "Protesters will take to the streets worldwide on Saturday, inspired by the 'Occupy Wall Street' and 'Indignants' movements, to vent their anger against alleged corporate greed and government cutbacks. The organisers, relying heavily on Facebook and Twitter, say demonstrations will be held in 951 cities across 82 countries in Europe, North America, Latin America, Asia and Africa." <http://www.france24.com/en/20111015-indignant-protests-go-global-saturday> (accessed May 3, 2012) and "'Indignant' protests across Asia", *Bangkok Post*, Oct. 15, 2011. Article quote: "Protesters across the Asia-Pacific region Saturday joined worldwide demonstrations inspired by the 'Occupy Wall Street' and 'Indignants' movements." <http://www.bangkokpost.com/news/asia/261525/indignant-protests-across-asia> (accessed May 3, 2012).

in the management of the main political and social problems of their countries so as to decide on the best available economic-political system that would help them put the current worldwide social, political, and economic impasse behind them. Greek abstention from the voting procedure is now seen as a logical revulsion of the participatory in the political system. This is highlighted and confirmed by the highest rates of abstention (42.08%) from the latest polls (2019). Abstention as a political action declares both the challenging nature of the political system as being pre-representative and also the civilian staff itself as being inconsistent with its physical role as mandatee of its society. In the Greek case especially, the main reason for such high abstention is the institutional separation between society and policy. As a result, the former seeks to have a discrete status in politics so as to be able to operate as a mandator and not as an idiot.

Conclusion

The main purpose of this article has been to understand the concept of democracy within modernity and its trajectory in the formation and implementation of politics. Following the essential sociopolitical needs of post-feudal Europe, the institutional status of people in terms of autonomy has become a universal sentiment for modernity. Thus, democracy has been equated with individual rights and freedom, something that is totally opposed to the basic logic of Aristotle's classical reading of democracy. The fundamental difference between the ancient and modern conceptualizations of democracy is based on the place and role of civil society within the city-state. In ancient Greece, civil society was constituted in the demos, while society in the modern era has a private role. The current era contrarily often focuses on personal levels of freedom (i.e., the institutional status of people in terms of autonomy). Neither social nor political freedom exist; instead, only certain social rights exist to prevent the infringement of individual freedom and to preserve citizens' contract dependence with the government.

Consequently, the introduction of the parliamentary system in Western Europe at the beginning of the 20th century (embedded in the principle of representation) led to parliamentarianism being equated with democracy. This resulted in the political systems of Western democracy being presented as an indirect representation while creating a separation between policy and society. In this way, society lacks the physical role as a mandator of the political system. To this end, the essence of the modernity approach

toward political function is detected to lay in the essential dichotomy between society and politics, making policy an exclusive operation of the state and being expressed in terms of sovereignty. This is manifested in the way modernity interprets the role of society not as a coherent political entity but as a sole individual. Modernity refuses to recognize society's leading position in the political system and its role in the political process. Modernity therefore doesn't recognize civil society as capable or mature enough to take part in political function. By tracing this procedure within the modern Greek state, this article has stressed and analyzed the factors constraining Greek society's economic and political wellbeing. The establishment of the parliamentary monarchy was what had given notables the essential means to dominate the state-political system by capturing its distributive gains. From that point on, the Greek state adopted a dual role. On the one hand, it acted as the main employer of Greek people, while on the other hand, it has been the main instrument of the governmental party for expanding and consolidating its political influence. What this implies is the rehabilitation of Greek historical *acquis* (i.e., the classical notion of Democracy) and the deprivation of Greek society from its physical role as the mandator of the political system. This is context in which the problem of *partitocracy* has been encountered as a logical consequence of the absorption of the political system by the governing political party. This is the root cause of the Greek sociopolitical and economical impasse. In particular, the party is the axial instrument for the conquest and ownership of the state, from which has resulted the "expansion of the state apparatus for partisan purposes to the benefit of all Greek political parties. This peculiar client relationship between politician and voter was registered in the realization of the state by the former in return for holding on to itself 'based on the strength of its ability to distribute [...] lucrative positions and offices' while the latter 'provides support expecting protection'" (Kondylis, 1991, p. 22). The logical outcomes have been symptoms of sociopolitical pathogenesis such as corruption, clientelism, state inefficiency, public inadequacies, absence of a welfare state, scandals, and tax evasion. Conversely, a democratic deficit has been created in the internal legitimacy of state government by its society due to the existential inability of the former to meet the basic requirements of the latter. A growing disillusion as occurred regarding political functions, as well as skepticism about parliamentary processes, with politicians being distrusted by citizens. This indicates a major contradiction between Western states and the modern Greek state. If citizens' expectations

in Western countries are a measure of “eroding faith in government [where] it is not so much that governments produce less, but that citizens expect more” (Dalton, 2004, p. 151), then it is the catholic acceptance (nine out of ten citizens) in Greek society that its country is moving in the wrong direction, with 86% of the populace stating that they are disappointed with the course Greece has taken so far.⁶ The crucial factor, however, “is not that citizens are expecting the government to do more” (Dalton, 2004, p. 151), but instead it is their lack of public confidence in Greek political institutions, such as the parliament and political parties.⁷

In conclusion, the political and economic stalemate of the modern Greek state is the result of an unfamiliar (and unknown to Greek society) political development under the auspices of modernity. This means that the state has been called to function in a context that is not akin to its historical *acquis* (i.e., the city-states of the ancient Classical period) and that has led to a series of structural, social, and political problems, the most fundamental of which is the misappropriation of the state apparatus by the ruling political elite.

Notes

For an extensive analysis of modernity’s notion of liberty, see Berlin, 1969; Christman 1991; Christman 2005; Meskill 2013; Skinner, 2002.

“Aristotle noted the motive of Cleisthenes at 1319B21: (wishing to increase the democracy)” Keaney, 1992, p. 22.

The electorate’s disappointment with the political system is constantly rising. On behalf of *Kathimerini* newspaper, the political Barometer of the Public Issue pollster records the electorate’s growing frustration and alienation from the political system; eight out of ten (78%) citizens are disappointed with the government’s work, and nine out of ten (89%) are disappointed by the opposition. The stance of the citizens toward the parties is also deteriorating: Political parties and their leaders –except for Mrs. Aleka Papariga- see their popularity decrease, a tendency toward depoliticization is rising, and one-third of the citizens chose to abstain from voting. At the same time, George Papandreou’s, the Prime Minister’s, and PASOK’s images are deteriorating, despite their lead in the polls. “Expands the frustration of voters from the political system”, *Kathimerini*, Oct. 10, 2010, http://news.kathimerini.gr/4dcgi/_w_articles_politics_2_10/10/2010_418257 (accessed Dec.17, 2011).

6 According to the findings from the Sociopolitical Changes Observatory 2.0. <http://news.in.gr/greece/article/?aid=1500047071> (accessed May 30, 2020).

7 Annual survey on trust in institutions. Confidence indicators 2007-2015. Public Issue, 30 November 2015. <http://www.publicissue.gr/12356/institutions-2015/> (accessed May 30, 2020).

The delegitimization of political parties and state institutions in Greece is a highly disconcerting development. In a recent poll, only 39% of interviewees said they would vote for PASOK or the New Democracy. This is a historic low for Greece. Furthermore, eight out of ten citizens express disappointment with the government, and nine out of ten express disappointment with the main opposition party. *Ibid*

As the Guardian noted: “Eurozone policymakers too often treat democratic accountability as a luxury rather than a necessity, as shall be made amply clear this week when Brussels will force the Athens parliament to pass a raft of sharp spending cuts, tax hikes and privatisations – despite the hostility of Greek voters”. Quoted in *The Democratic Deficit in Europe and the Crisis in the Periphery*, 29 June 2011. <http://www.macrosilience.com/2011/06/29/the-democratic-deficit-in-europe-and-the-crisis-in-the-periphery/> (accessed May 11, 2020).

We refer here to the global demonstrations held on October 15th in more than 950 cities in 82 countries around the world, October 15th: Dreaming of a “new global citizen power”, *Periodismo Humano* (Human Journalism), Oct. 12, 2011, <http://english.periodismohumano.com/2011/10/12/october-15th-dreaming-of-a-%E2%80%9Cnew-global-citizen-power%E2%80%9D/> (accessed May 3, 2012). See: “‘Indignant’ protests to go global on Saturday”, France 24, Oct. 15, 2011; Article quote: “Protesters will take to the streets worldwide on Saturday, inspired by the ‘Occupy Wall Street’ and ‘Indignants’ movements, to vent their anger against alleged corporate greed and government cutbacks. The organisers, relying heavily on Facebook and Twitter, say demonstrations will be held in 951 cities across 82 countries in Europe, North America, Latin America, Asia and Africa.” <http://www.france24.com/en/20111015-indignant-protests-go-global-saturday> (accessed May 3, 2012) and “‘Indignant’ protests across Asia”, *Bangkok Post*, Oct. 15, 2011. Article quote: “Protesters across the Asia-Pacific region Saturday joined worldwide demonstrations inspired by the ‘Occupy Wall Street’ and ‘Indignants’ movements.” <http://www.bangkokpost.com/news/asia/261525/indignant-protests-across-asia> (accessed May 3, 2012).

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