Dis-embeddedness and de-classification: modernization politics and the Greek teacher unions in the 1990s

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Abstract

During the 90s, PASOK, in common with the other European social democratic parties, has advocated Third Way revisionism and has placed the ‘modernization’ of the Greek society high on its political agenda. By focusing on a series of conflictual incidents between the teacher unions and the Greek government, this paper exemplifies the repercussions of this process on teachers–state relations. Building upon the dialectics of path shaping and path dependency, we suggest that the particular development of the modernization project and the reactions it has triggered are to be attributed to the historically determined, nationally specific, contingently activated institutional legacies and structures that, on the one hand, stand in the way of the incorporation of Greece to the EMU/ESM and, on the other, are employed by the unions to defend industrial and social citizenship.

Introduction

The assumption of the leadership of PASOK (Panhellenic Socialist Movement) and of the premiership of Greece in 1996 by Simitis, signaled the introduction of a set of modernization measures regarding teachers’ labour relations that centered round three interrelated issues (remuneration, appointment, appraisal). These measures were advocated as a necessary precondition for the overall modernization of the educational system and met the strenuous resistance of the teacher unions. Within the three years that followed, DOE (Primary Teachers Federation) and OLME (Secondary Teachers Federation) clashed with the PASOK government on three successive occasions. Initially, the unions went on strike for 13 and 55 days respectively, opposing the introduction of a unified pay structure that imposed pay freezes and performance related pay (PRP). Following, the attempt by the government to replace the former egalitarian appointment system (epetirida: appointment lists conducted, after the graduation of teachers from Teaching Training Schools and Colleges, according to seniority) with a competitive entry exams system (CEE) led to the gradual escalation of unions’ reactions.
from the traditional modes of protest – demonstrations and strikes – to the most conflictual and tenuous confrontation between the State and the teacher unions since their formation in the early 1920s. Violent clashes between teachers and police Special Forces for 5 days turned 30 cities in Greece into what the press called ‘gas chambers’ and ‘sites of atrocities’ (see daily press 12/6/98–16/6/98). In addition, the attempt by the Ministry of Education (MoE) to implement a new appraisal scheme met the universal resistance of head teachers who refused to collaborate. Thus, a third potential conflict lurks behind the introduction of the revised appraisal scheme that is currently underway. Despite the fact that teacher unions in Greece have traditionally been energetic and dynamic (Athanasiades, 1999), one cannot but notice that their reaction, particularly in the case of the appointment system, moves well beyond the established patterns of protest not only of homologous organizations but of the labour unions as well.

In this paper, we propose a scheme that understands these developments in terms of a mismatch between the emerging paradigm (‘modernization/europeanization’) and the existing institutional frameworks (the architectural arrangements that defined the relationship between teachers – both as citizens and as civil servants – and the state since the restoration of parliamentary democracy in 1974).

We suggest a reading of the social conflicts that takes seriously deep rooted traditions, political legacies and modes of operation; the nationally specific mindsets and their objectification into particular regulatory frameworks and institutions; the collective memories of the past, the growing discontent with the present and the sense of uncertainty about the future; the political ideas, interests and strategies of key agents as they are modified, transformed or contested within a changing national and supranational environment.

On the dialectics of path shaping and path dependency

To explain the formulation, choice and realization of the modernization strategy in Greece and the reactions it has triggered, we offer a heuristic account of the dialectics of path shaping and path dependency. To avoid functionalism, intentionalism and voluntarism, that have frequently characterized approaches to institutional reforms (Hall and Taylor, 1996), we follow Nielsen et al. (1995: 5–8), who suggest that research should focus ‘on path-shaping strategies in a path-dependent context’. By the former, they refer to the way the ‘social forces can intervene in current conjunctures and actively rearticulate them so that new trajectories become possible’; by the latter, they imply that the institutional legacies limit the current options and possibilities in institutional reform.

By the term ‘institutions’ we refer to the ‘formal rules, compliance procedures, and standard operating practices that structure the relationship between individuals in various units of the polity and economy’ (Hall, 1987:
so as to include both ‘the formal organizations and the informal rules and procedures that structure conduct’ (Thelen and Steinmo, 1992: 2). Institutions are important because they shape and are shaped by the political actors’ definitions of interests and goals, because they host and mediate political struggle, and because, once established, they are endowed with values, meaning systems and commitments that strongly influence the worldview and consequent behaviour of actors operating within them (Rothstein, 1996).

In this paper we examine how a stable path (the former institutional arrangements that defined teachers-state relations) is dislocated, how path-shaping strategies and path-dependent selectivities interact in the formulation of policy outcomes (i.e., the limitations and options that policy makers have to cope with), and, finally, how self-reflexive transformation strategies attempt to prevent the old path from ‘kicking back’ in the sense of blocking or perverting desired policy outcomes (i.e., the way the actual reform was introduced).

More specifically, we focus on a) the way the modernization bloc attempts to dis-embed the institutional fixes that stabilized the Greek social formation so as to re-embed it into the European Monetary Union (EMU) and the European Social Model (ESM); b) the institutional embeddedness and union resistance that such an endeavour had to encounter; and c) the methods (discursive, administrative or otherwise) adopted to overcome such obstacles.

Still, we would suggest that, despite its self-reflexivity, the modernization project violated so severely the norms of the established mode of development that it gave rise to a countermovement and clash became inevitable. In short, the dialectics of path shaping and path dependency can account for not only the actual form the modernization project took but, also, for the concessions that the government was forced to make to its initial formulation. We conclude that, despite the apparent differences in the measures introduced, Greece is not deviating from the global paradigm; rather what looks as an procedural bureaucracy arrangement (the introduction of CEE and top-down appraisal) is the outcome, on the one hand, of the self-reflexivity of the policy makers, and, on the other hand, of the struggles of the teacher unions to impose and/or to defend particular forms of social and political regulation to what has been presented as a neutral, technical, rational and inevitable arrangement.

The dislocation of a stable path

A stable path is characterized by a high degree of sedimentation and taken-for-grantedness with regard to the structural couplings between intra-societal spheres; the institutional forms of the state, economy and civil society; the articulation of the main political, economic and social organizations; and the socio-economic frame of meaning that defines the horizon for political, economic and social orientation and action (Torfing, 1999). The ensemble of the institutionalized social, cultural and economic relations and identities, and the
socially embedded or regularized nature of class struggle that routinize and
normalize the behaviour of social agents provides a degree of ‘societal coher-
cence’ which facilitates, but does not guarantee, social and economic produc-
tion and reproduction (Jessop, 1990; Tickell and Peck, 1995). This is not to
suggest that the flawless realization of a harmonious way of living and of a
virtuous growth circle, without its ups and downs, is feasible. Each stable path
has a certain degree of elasticity that can stall, absorb, mediate or accommo-
date, by means of minor adjustments (ie by slightly modifying its institutional
forms) a certain amount of minor crises and/or of structural and institutional
incoherence (Offe, 1985; Boyer, 1990). Because the system of alliances, com-
promises, discourses and patterns of domination that resonate with the lived
experiences, structures of expectations and scalar dependencies of significant
actors can never overcome but can simply stall contradictions, the practices
and meanings institutionalized in a particular mode of societal regulation will
no longer be sufficient to sustain the unity in opposition and crisis tendencies
become insistent (Macleod and Goodwin, 1999: 717). As Lipietz (1987) sug-
gests, there are times that the failure to integrate or retain important new
events emerging at the sectoral, national and global level will tend to dislo-
cate the structural coherence of the path by rendering it ‘outdated’ or ‘obso-
lete’. In this case, the sedimented institutions will become destabilized and the
fixed meanings would start to float. At this conjuncture of ‘catastrophic equi-
librium’ when ‘the old is dying and the new cannot be born’ (Gramsci, 1971:
276) a major crisis which ‘create[s] a terrain more favourable to the dissemi-
nation of certain modes of thought and certain ways of posing and resolving
questions involving the entire subsequent development of national life’
(Gramsci, 1971: 184) may arise. This implies that the more or less partial
breakdown of the systemic coherence and the social basis of support tend to
open a strategic terrain for economic, political and social re-articulation. The
intra-societal relations become politicized and new and old agents struggle
over the formation of a new path. Such an approach drives our attention not
only to the reaching of certain structural limits but also to the struggle over
the political and moral leadership in society which, in case of a major crisis,
is manifested in the shift of what Jenson (1990) calls the ‘societal paradigm’.
In this case, the introduction of new rules in the game – the articulation of a
new hegemonic discourse, set of practices and institutional forms – penetrates
as an alien object the social tissue.

The violence of this penetration increases with the extent to which the chal-
lenged arrangements are institutionally embedded. With increasing embed-
dedness, existing arrangements are representing core rather than peripheral
parts of (ie sectoral, administrative, political) traditions which are rooted in
nationally specific paradigms. Higher adaptation pressure emerges when the
new arrangements challenge such institutionally deeply embedded or core
patterns. For example, the extent to which (ie sectoral) styles and structures
represent core patterns of national (ie administrative) traditions depends on
their embeddedness into the general institutional context defined by the state
tradition: thus, institutional embeddedness is the higher the more sectoral/administrative arrangements reflect the basic conception of the state (Knill, 1998).

**Institutional forms: wage–labour relations and state–citizens compromises**

Boyer (1990: 37–48) suggests that the regulatory fabric comprises five key institutional forms: 1) business competitive strategies; 2) monetary constraint vis-à-vis national, supranational and international financial regulation; 3) wage–labour relations; 4) institutionalized compromises between citizens and the state; and 5) the possibilities offered and constraints imposed by the international regime for the strategic space in question.

For the purposes of this paper we shall focus on the wage-labour relations and to the institutionalized compromises between teachers as citizens and the state and on the way they are modified within a changing national and supranational environment. The wage-labour relation includes the organization of work, the determination of the length and intensity of the working day, the ways in which labour power is recruited, the structure and acquisition of skills, the conditions of employment, and the factors that determine the level and distribution of direct and indirect wages (Dunford, 1990: 307). In fact, it comprises the whole nexus of institutional arrangements that define the rules of the game between teachers (as employees) and the state (as their employer).

The state–citizens compromises refer to the historically specific articulation between rights and responsibilities, norms and practices, demands and claims that define the relationships between the state and civil society. Jessop’s (1990: 314–15) conceptualization of the state as both the agent and the object of economic and political regulation provides a fruitful way to deal with the way this relation is cast and recast. As an agent the state aims to achieve social coherence and a sustainable model of development. The capacities and the autonomy that the state has as an agent of regulation are closely linked to the historically specific rules and norms that govern the state itself. This refers a) to the assigned capacities and forms of obligation for economic and social outcomes and b) to the norms, principles and institutions through which the demands and values of citizens construct and constrain the state project. In periods of consensus interest articulation works in both ways: as a process by which the state articulates peoples values to the mode of economic and social regulation and as a process by which entrenched interests and values constrain the state from acting against the norms and expectations of civil society. However, in periods of crisis the legitimate scope, the boundaries and responsibilities of the state, are redefined (Hay, 1996). The former institutional fixes are discursively reconstructed as impediments that have to be removed if systemic survival is to be secured while citizens and workers are called to
reorient their attitudes to the requirements of the ‘general interest’ and, particularly, the needs of the national and the global economy.

The two facets of the de-traditionalization process and the commodity form

The de-traditionalization process assumes a dual and analytically distinct form: on the level of system integration, we witness a process of dis- and re-embeddedness; on the level of social integration, a process of social de- and re-classification. The former refers to the changing balance between and within the intra-societal spheres, to the search for extra-economic forms that regularize the market economy and to the political and social struggles over the dominant principle of societalization (Jessop, 1990). The latter refers to the jettisoning of the previous moral regime and to the re-negotiation of the proper relation between rewards and legitimate aspirations (Lockwood, 1992). In any case, stabilization depends upon whether the new institutional framework leads to new practices, norms and values and whether it coincides with the achievement of stable growth.

Since Polanyi’s (1944) *The Great Transformation* it has been established that capital accumulation always and everywhere depends on a precarious and changing balance between commodity relations and other forms of social organisation. This dependence generates a complex, conflictual and contradictory process involving recurrent shifts in the relative weight of commodification, decommodification and recommodification. In turn, this highlights the importance of analysing how far market forces (and their profit-seeking logic) penetrate the social world and of examining the conditions for such penetration to be reproduced. Jessop (2001) suggests that there are four interrelated ways in which market forces and profit-seeking logic can come to dominate society.

First, the commodity form and the logic of exchange can be extended to labour, land and money and then into new spheres of social life. Second, even domains or activities that retain a primarily non-commercial orientation can be subjected to a secondary economic coding. This occurs when choices among formally non-commercial activities are influenced by ‘profit-and-loss’ or economic ‘cost-benefit’ calculations. This is reflected in careerism, the use of market proxies or to the subordination of (ie education) institutions to the perceived or discursively constructed imperatives of a strong, internationally competitive economy.

Third, the ecological dominance of a globalising capitalist economy means that it may cause more problems substantively for other systems than they cause for it. In other words, in the multilateral structural coupling of systems, other systems adjust more to the logic of accumulation than the capitalist economy incurs costs in adjusting to them. This is implied in Polanyi’s claim that a market economy can only function in a market society (ibid: 57).
Fourth, a successful hegemonic project may establish accumulation as the dominant principle of societalization. This can be seen in the increasing demand for other spheres of social life on spatial scales, from the local to the continental, to accept the ‘imperatives’ of ‘structural’ or ‘systemic’ competition, ie competition that goes beyond narrow economic criteria to include wholesale restructuring of any organisations and institutions that might bear on competitiveness. Where these four tendencies reinforce each other, the market economy can be consolidated in a market society.

Such a project, currently labeled modernization, Third Way or ESM, despite the self-delusive declaration that ‘We support a market economy, not a market society’ (Blair and Schroeder, 1999), is increasingly assuming a hegemonic status among national and supranational political elites (see Diamantopoulou, 2000). However, in a series of countries ranging from France to Greece and from Australia and Canada, teacher unions with different capacities and different degrees of success have contested this dis- and re-embedding project mounting a countermovement that defends what is perceived as social protection measures, that is, as institutions that consolidate industrial and social citizenship and mitigate the rationalizing economization of social relations (Robertson and Smaller, 1996; Patramanis, 1999; Joshua, 2001).

The Greek institutional fix

Initially modeled out of the French paradigm, both the education system and the teacher unions developed along etatist, centralized and bureaucratic lines. In fact, teacher unions in Greece share with their French colleagues a series of characteristics: a) a republic idea regarding education (universal, comprehensive, secular, free, state-funded/provided/regulated) and the teaching profession (civil servants/state functionaries), b) a corporatist relation with the state and an active involvement in the formulation, dissemination and/or opposition to hegemonic state projects, c) a socialist or social-democratic orientation, and d) a unitary structure predicated upon the commonality of demands regarding both labour relations (ie job security for all teachers) and education provision (ie the incorporation of all education institutions into the state system) (Athanasiades and Patramanis, 2001).

After a very turbulent period marked by numerous dictatorships, political and social authoritarianism and a civil war, Greek teachers, particularly after 1974, had become the only, apart from the military, occupational group that had managed to secure for themselves a one-to-one correspondence between their credentials and public employment, a correspondence that implied not only a monopoly of competence but also a monopoly of post. Teacher training schools and colleges were considered as schools of public administration that generated civil servants (Code of Civil Servants, 1951, 1977, 1986) and, consequently, a teacher’s appointment to a tenure post in the public sector.
was conditional only upon registration to the appointment list (epetirida). The removal of the political criteria that regulated, between 1929 and 1974, teachers’ recruitment and promotion chances along with the abolition of the Body of Inspectors in 1982, opened the way for the unimpeded recruitment, promotion and remuneration of teachers.

The external differentiation and internal de-differentiation that this arrangement institutionalized insulated teachers from the exigencies that are inherent in capitalist labour markets while the socialization of recruitment and promotion chances that it established increased their workplace control, bargaining power, solidarity, and professional autonomy. On the other hand, the state by assuming the responsibility for societal prosperity and welfare through direct economic and political intervention, part of which was also the allocation of students to the Schools of Public Administration, had also assumed the obligation to train and appoint teachers.

These national, institutional fixes were inscribed into the overall institutional architecture of the post-dictatorial era that in the name of modernization and democratic consolidation advocated the principles of full employment, job and wage protection, and the social mobility of the ‘non-privileged’. Education institutions and personnel both in the public and the private sector fell under the same regulatory framework since even the private schools were considered only secondarily as commercial enterprises. This architecture was embedded in a system of social classification such that the legitimacy of the relative rewards attaching to the hierarchy of social functions and the legitimacy of the allocation of individuals to positions within this hierarchy was indisputable and the social order was secured.

However, since the early 1990s, the demands on teachers to reorient their labour to the needs of the national and the global economy have become acute. The restructuring of education and teachers’ labour relations involves an attempt to unhinge teachers’ claims on the state and to disembed those institutions that have advanced the case for teachers’ distinct professional and occupational status. The particular institutional fix that regulated teachers–state relations is discursively reconstructed as an impediment to the state’s project to re-embed, by developing a competitive teaching force and, more generally, entrepreneurial subjects, the Greek social formation in a more antagonistic and market driven global order and, more particularly, to the EMU. This dis-embedding/re-embedding process entails a process of social de-classification/re-classification: teachers are deprived of the institutional framework that advanced their work- and market-place control and professional autonomy and are called to adjust their labour to new governance structures and pedagogical modalities (Bonal and Rambla, 2002). Moreover, their legitimate aspirations are revised, their collective mobility project is under attack while a considerable number of them (the unappointed teachers) lose their teacher status altogether.

The exhaustion of the mode of development and the marked incongruity between realistic conditions and legitimate expectations made the societal
coherence to crack. The need for the modernization of the structural and institutional properties of the system and for the moral renovation of the underlying system of social classification had allegedly become severe.

**Third Way policies or a third way out of politics: national and supranational revisionism**

The revisionism of social democracy

Third way politics or the politics of ‘modernization’, in both the UK and Southern Europe, are not confined to the renewal of social democracy and to the revisionism of socialist ideas (to the partial conversion to the ethos of the market) (Fouskas, 1998; Ehkre, 2000). The main ambition is the renewal-modernization-detraditionalisation of the whole nexus of the structural and institutional properties of contemporary societies that have been diagnosed to be functionally incompatible with the requirements of capitalist accumulation, economic growth and social order. In all these countries, ‘modernization’ has a significant appeal amongst politicians who, either, as in the case of Southern Europe, seek to ‘catch up’ with Europe by adopting/imposing a supposedly ‘superior’ model of economic and political rationality, or, as in the case of UK (a former ‘leading’ country), struggle to catch up its most successful rivals on the Continent (Sassoon, 1996: 736–51; Maravall, 1997: 140).

The modernizers’ argument states: in an increasingly globalized world the old tools of regulating the economy, the state and civil society and managing the mutually contradictory demands that arise out of the dynamic articulation of accumulation, legitimation and social cohesion (Dale, 1989), have become obsolete. The identities, norms, aspirations, expectations, habits, practices and cultures that the former settlement had nourished to stabilize and perpetuate the social order, have become non-affordable in a double sense: a) financially (the ‘tax and spend’ policy has reached its limits and must be replaced by a stability-oriented monetary and fiscal policies) and b) institutionally (the former arrangements threaten the viability of the social system as a whole). In short, the inability to keep in pace with the changing international, technical and social division of labour has given rise to a series of anomic phenomena such as dependency culture, patronage, populism, clientelism, excessive statism, inactivity, rent seeking, authoritarianism, fiscal irresponsibility, hostility to innovation etc. The former Keynesian, Welfare, National State (KWNS) is recast more as part of the problem than part of the solution and is discursively reconstructed in terms of a closed, rigid, overprotective, bureaucratic, corporatist structure that hinders innovation, creativity, enterprise, flexibility, adaptability, responsibility, and the development of an active civil society. Welfare and social security no longer seem vital elements in political stability and social efficiency, necessary both to ensure a healthy and
motivated population and to bind individuals into the social body (Giddens, 1998, 2000; Blair and Schroeder, 1999; Simitis, 1989a; 1995; PASOK, 1999, Blair and Simitis, 2001).

The new role attributed to the state is to remove the institutional barriers and traditions (ie standard terms of employment, normal career profiles, Keynesian regulation, and the role of trade unions) that hindered flexibility, innovation, and entrepreneurship and to establish structures conducive to the development of ‘common norms of conduct’ and compatible with the new mode of development and economic/political regulation in the era of ‘reflective modernization’ (Ehkre, 2000; Jessop, 1999). Giddens (1998: 99) is quite eloquent: ‘Government has an essential role to play in investing in the human resources and infrastructure needed to develop an entrepreneurial culture . . . a phenomenon that concerns not only private industry but the state and civil society too.’

Within this framework, the ‘social investment’ state is increasingly reconstructed as a ‘facilitator’ and ‘regulator’ of the market (‘steering not rowing’) while its distributive and demand management role is demonized. Moreover, it is deprived of its ability to function as an ‘employer of the last resort’ since the resulting expenditure would have to be funded through higher taxes and/or state debt (Giddens, 1998, 2000; Blair and Schroeder, 1999; Blair and Simitis, 2001).

The modernization project can be codified in terms of a set of binary oppositions that prioritize:

- equality of opportunity over equality of outcome;
- responsibilities over rights;
- risk and entrepreneurial independence over protection and security;
- meritocracy, effort and achievement over uniformity, conformity and mediocrity;
- flexibility and adaptability over rigidity and compromise;
- active citizens over passive subjects;
- partnership with and for a competitive state over dependency on an overprotective state;
- supply side management over demand side management; and
- performance, accountability and excellence over red tape, fiscal irresponsibility and seniority.

Within this framework:

- Equality is defined in terms of reinforcing individual capabilities;
- Freedom is conflated with autonomy of action, with the capability to make effective choices and with the freedom to achieve;
- Meritocracy is identified with the removal of external barriers that hinder the exercise of capabilities; and
• Social justice is reduced to distributive justice, that is, to the acquisition of rewards according to performance in an environment where equality of opportunity and equality of contractual relationships has been established.

In any case, what the modernization project boils down to is the removal of all structures and institutions that generate ‘rigidities’ to the functioning of both the state and the market by suppressing possessive individualism and enterprise culture or by allowing citizens to press their claims on the state. This involves the restructuring of the state that a) would establish structures that facilitate the flexibility of product, capital, service and labour markets and b) the development of a positive climate of entrepreneurial independence, self-reliance and initiative. In short, the typical administrative recommodification policies of the capitalist state (Offe and Ronge, 1975) assume a more regressive form.

**The revision(ism) of the European social model**

The Third Way project, however, is not confined to the reformulation national-scale politics. In fact, at the supranational level, the EU has adopted a similar codification regarding the mode of economic and social regulation (Habermas, 1999).

As Streeck (1999) suggests, at the heart of the new ESM lies the unstable combination of systemic competitiveness (through adaptability and entrepreneurship) with social cohesion (through individual responsibility and collective solidarity). The emerging ESM shifts the emphasis of the political discourse from redistribution and protection towards investment in the ability of individuals and communities to survive in intensified international competition. Prosperity, equality and justice are increasingly expected, no longer from redistribution of individual means of consumption, but from investment in collective means of production. Redress of inequality is sought through broad and equitable investment especially in the ‘human capital’ of individuals. Ideally, this ‘supply-side egalitarianism’, achieved through the equalization of the individuals’ initial endowments, would improve and equalize their marketability and their ability to compete in the market, and would make ex post political intervention largely redundant. The new political keyword, ‘employability’, defines the responsibility of public policy, not in terms of decommodification, but to the contrary, of creation of equal opportunities for commodification. In this way, Third Way becomes indistinguishable from an activist liberalism which pursues social justice through intervention in the distribution, not of market outcomes, but of the capacities for successful market participation (Habermas, 1999).

The new policy of equal marketability and of supply-side egalitarianism tends to be associated with the rationalization of the public services/sector. Political commitment to ‘employability’ coincides with heavy pressures on
educational institutions and their personnel to improve their efficiency. On the other hand, the individualization of responsibility for ‘human capital’ development and risk management is coupled with the withdrawal of state’s responsibility for economic and social outcomes.

The systems of social and industrial citizenship are being scrutinized in terms of their implications for the productivity and competitiveness of national economies facing the international marketplace. Elimination of institutional ‘rigidities’ has moved to the top of the political agenda, not just of those who want to reduce social rights in order to cut costs, but also of the national states that seek to reconstruct the basis of their legitimation through relocating and thus depoliticising state power to individuals, groups or supranational bodies (Robertson, 2002). This is attempted either through the creation of markets or where this is more difficult (education and health) through the discourse of responsibility and duty. In this context, a productivist reconstruction of solidarity becomes both an economic and a normative imperative and the technicalization of social problems is coupled with the moralization of politics (Ehkre, 2000). The ‘internally [nationally] equally distributed external [international] competitiveness’ (Streeck, 1999) is pursued through the dual strategy of external (systemic) de-differentiation and internal (individual) differentiation: the boundaries between the economic and the extra-economic become blurred as the former relies increasingly on the latter while rewards and legitimate aspirations become conditional upon individually differentiated and economically defined contribution.

The peculiarities of the modernization discourse in Greece

While in the ‘West’ modernization refers to the process of transition from ‘simple modernity’ to ‘complex’ or ‘reflexive modernization’ or from industrial to post-industrial society (Giddens, 1994), in Greece, its major proponents perceive and describe this process in terms of a quiet distinct set of polarities, namely: parochial/modern, pre-capitalistic/capitalistic, or, more generally, traditional/modern. This is most evidently manifested in the attempt of the modernizers to present their project as a transition from an ‘ascriptive-traditional-status’ society to an ‘achievement-modern-class’ society that would form the basis of the European integration process (Diamantouros, 1993, 2000; Mouzelis, 1994, 1995, 1996a; Tsoukalas, 1991, 1995). Alluding to the proponents of the modernization theory of the 1960s, they argue that ‘the real modernization occurs when the whole society, the most dynamic parts of it, of all the social strata and classes, achieve a cultural transition towards the new realities caused by these breaks with the past’ (Simitis, 1999: 6) and tend to attribute the ‘backwardness’ of the country to the domination of the ‘traditional’ political culture (the so-called ‘parochial/underdog’) over the ‘modern’ one (the ‘liberal/reformist’).

The former is held to be introvert, conspiratorial, nationalist, defensive, and manichean, while the latter is secular, extrovert, innovative, designed
to promote rationalization along liberal, democratic and capitalist lines, favourable to the market mechanism and supportive of the use of the state to foster competition and adaptation to the international order. The modernization discourse polarizes the allegedly latent authoritarianism and the leveling egalitarianism of the least-competitive social strata and sectors of the economy (small business owners, white-collar workers, state-protected industrialists) with the more western-oriented, modernizing/universalizing culture of the intelligentsia, the diaspora bourgeoisie and the export-oriented entrepreneurs (Diamantouros, 1993, 2000; Mouzelis, 1995).

Despite the apparent differences between the modernization discourse in the European and Greek version, we would suggest that it could be, at least partly, attributed to the different traditions that the modernizers can utilize and draw upon. New Labour, for instance, have traced their market oriented revisionism back to the ‘ethical’ or ‘liberal socialists’ like T.H. Green and L.T. Hobhouse (Freeden, 1999) and have incorporated to their project elements of the ‘new times’ thesis (Finlayson, 1999).

On the other hand, PASOK, being the first and only social democratic party ever established in Greece, cannot draw upon any similar tradition. Moreover, PASOK itself had, particularly during the 1970s and early 1980s, identified ‘democratization’ and ‘modernization’ with the surpassing of capitalism, proclaiming a ‘third road’ to socialism that was neither communism nor western like social democracy (Kariotis, 1992; Sassoon, 1996; Maravall, 1997). In an attempt to break away with the democratic socialist tradition that PASOK had established, the modernizers identify themselves with key liberal political figures (Trikoupis and Venizelos) that had pursued a modernization (read westernization) project in the past (see Mouzelis, 1996b) and, at the same, incorporate to their critique elements, albeit mediated, of the ‘neo-marxist’ (sic) tradition of their organic intellectuals (see Mouzelis, 1977, 1986; Tsoukalas, 1981, 1986; see also Simitis, 1989a,b). In short, modernizers, by attributing the Greek exceptionalism to some sort of developmental/institutional/cultural lag, have tried to reconstruct the whole history of modern Greece along a binary polarity: traditionalists-populists/modernizers-euro-centrics. This has resulted in a particular discursive reconstruction of the Greek social formation as traditionally being distinct in a series of levels: the economic, the political and the institutional.

On the economic level, it is argued that the state never really managed to marginalize the precapitalistic elements of the feudal mode of production and, as a result, the *traditional* has survived in a situation of unstable equilibrium with the *modern*.

On the political level, the failure to modernize agriculture and to articulate it effectively with industry led to an over-inflation of the state apparatus and to an accentuation of its clientelistic and corrupt features. This created a vicious circle: the more the state failed to modernize agriculture the more the anti-developmental and anti-rationalistic features of both the state itself and the overall economy were exacerbated. The massive influx of the former
agricultural producers into cities with weak or nonexistent industrialisation unavoidably brought an over-inflation of the state apparatus and this in turn became the major obstacle to development.

This environment was conducive to the development of numerous interest groups that raise their demands towards the state reinforcing the particularistic, sultanist, populist and clientelist features of the patrimonial Greek state. On the other hand, the responses by the state (the satisfaction of the demands of the various interests groups that took the form of protection against competition, subsidization and massive state employment) has

a) consolidated Greece’s semi-peripheral status within the world economy and the EU;
b) resulted in the formation of parties along paternalistic, populist and clientelist lines who are reluctant, due to the political cost, to modernize and transform Greek society;
c) hindered the development of mass, democratically articulated, ideologically coherent, relatively autonomous, class organizations. On the contrary, it has facilitated the development of innumerable interests groups who persistently raise their demands towards the state that is perceived as the ‘protector of particularistic interests and privileges’;
d) established a political culture conducive to the satisfaction of demands irrespective of their compatibility with the meso and/or macro level requirements of the national structures and institutions for modernization and adaptation to the constantly changing international environment; and

e) resulted in the poor performance of the public sector. Due to (b), (c) and (d), a notion of equality that downgrades the qualitatively different individual contribution has become dominant amongst the Greeks. Meritocracy and performance has been subordinated to the political and social criteria while favouritism, nepotism, and mechanistic egalitarianism has prevailed (Mouzelis, 1977, 1986, 1994, 1995; Tsoukalas, 1981, 1986, 1991; Simitis, 1994).

In this context, the institutional/administration reforms have been acknowledged as the most crucial requirement in the run to EMU and in the pursuit of the overall modernization of the country (PASOK, 1999). As the Congressional Theses of PASOK (1996: 62) declare, the party is committed to reform the public sector, that is, the ‘entire administrative apparatus at the heart of which lies the corporatist and Keynesian core of the Third Republic’. However, this implies the dislocation of the institutional architecture that had allowed PASOK to gain power and to stabilize the post-dictatorial era by satisfying the popular demands. As Moschonas (2001) observes, PASOK’s abandonment, particularly after 1996, of the ‘macro-economic populism’ for an explicit neo-liberal set of policies has resulted into conflict with the social groups that formerly constituted its traditional social base (farmers, pensioners, teachers and workers in major industries).
The post-dictatorial era and the managerial turn in public administration and education

The year 1974 signaled the transition from authoritarianism to parliamentary democracy. The ND’s (New Democracy: [Right]) term of office (1974–1981) was punctuated by the crisis of the Bretton Woods system, the subsequent oil crisis and the post-junta mass movement. ND responded by expanding state interventionism and boosting aggregate demand.

Building upon and extending the tradition of the Keynesian statism that ND had initially introduced, and in an attempt to satisfy the popular demand for democratization, the PASOK government (1981–1989) introduced a series of laws that directly affected public administration. The aim was the democratization and modernization of the civil service that took the form of reducing the hierarchical distinctions, the acceleration of career advancement, the generalization of career perspectives, and the homogenization of status. Within this particular context democratization meant the opening of the public administration to the society in view of the abolition of its authoritarian tradition and the ‘re-appropriation’ of administration by its citizens (Spanou, 1996; Mavrogordatos, 1997). In this sense democratization was linked to modernization: ‘the democratization of public administration implies that there will be an end to the unequal treatment of citizens and to the discrimination among civil servants on the basis of their political convictions or social origin’ (PASOK, 1981: 23–4).

As Tsoukalas (1995) maintains, the reforms had a symbolic dimension reflecting the demand for democratic consolidation and extension of mechanisms providing protection, security and employment (eg the democratization of distribution of resources to include the ‘non-privileged’). The reforms were, thus, ‘trapped’ in the context of the dominant values of social justice and equality, while the principle of selection itself and the very notion of merit provoked suspicion and hostility (Mavrogordatos, 1997: 19).

The new grade system (L1586/86) reduced the number of grades, dissociated grade from function and pay and introduced a quasi-automatic advancement based on seniority. As Spanou (1996: 104) argues:

egalitarianism and de-differentiation were meant to introduce democratization in an environment which was by definition organized in a hierarchical way based upon the division of labour and professional competence . . . the unobstructed advancement of personnel . . . ran counter to any idea of selection, merit, incentive and performance appraisal.

The widespread lack of credibility of the CEE for the selection of civil servants led the PASOK government to introduce a computerized system of calculating, in an impersonal, transparent and objective way, the points capitalized by each candidate to a number of pre-valued criteria (L1320/83).
‘The abolition of clientelism . . . the establishment of social criteria for the evaluation of the candidates, materializes for PASOK a crucial social policy which expresses our ideology and our practice’ (PASOK, 1983: 58).6

These policies captured the hearts and minds of wide social strata including teachers and their unions who, being one of PASOK’s basic constituencies, experienced them as the realization of their struggles. In fact PASOK, apart from democratic consolidation, initially incorporated into its program and, later, satisfied most of the demands of the teacher unions (pay rises, the abolition of the school inspectors, the upgrading of Teachers Training Colleges into University Departments, the introduction of a unified pay scale, unstructured promotion, massive appointments and the comprehensivization of education).

However, particularly after 1990, the internal functioning of public administration came under the spotlight. Modernizers, from both major parties, have acknowledged it as the major barrier to the ‘europeanisation’ process and as the major obstacle to economic development and national prosperity. The modernizers’ critique focuses primarily on three issues: the appointment, promotion and remuneration of civil servants. In all three cases, the argument suggests that, non-meritocratic and egalitarian criteria have been established, primarily, due to the irresponsible and greedy behaviour of the unions and their political patrons. Civil servants are recruited, promoted and paid according to a unified promotion and pay structure irrespective of merit or performance. As a result, a tradition and culture of ‘mechanistic egalitarianism’, ‘promotion as a right’, and politicisation has superseded any notion of meritocracy, evaluation, justice, productivity and efficiency turning the ‘whole apparatus into a shapeless, greedy, unresponsive monster’ (Tsoukalas and Panagiotopoulou, 1992; Mouzelis, 1996a).7 Moreover, any attempt at rationalization (reduction of personnel, flexibilization of employment conditions, PRP, pay freezes etc) has met the militant resistance of civil servants unions who, in order to protect their ‘gained rights’, the argument goes, have been very reluctant to accept any of the required changes.

Ever since the early 1990s, the public sector has been increasingly perceived in what Clarke and Newman (1997) call ‘universalistic’ and ‘isomorphistic’ terms and has been restructured so as to become part of the infrastructure of the economy. The educational system has not been immune from that change. However, contrary what has happened elsewhere, the modernization of the educational system, so as to be responsive to the challenges of the ‘information/knowledge society’, is, by and large, confined to the labour relations of teachers. In fact, the educational reforms underway not only focus on the ‘administration’ rather than on the content and process of education, but also do not recognize the need for any special treatment to the educational personnel.

The first official document that blurred the distinction between teachers and the rest of the civil servants (and not surprisingly raised the issue of teach-
ers’ appointment, remuneration and promotion) was the Report on the Reform and Modernization of Public Administration issued in April, 1990. Ever since and in all the consecutive experts’ reports (Makrydimitris and Mihalopoulos, 2000) the principles of NPM have been presented as the only way out of the ‘endemic crisis’ of the public sector. As far as teachers are concerned, the reports proposed the abolition of their distinct appointment system and their subjection to the rules and regulations that apply to the civil service as a whole.

The changes in teachers’ wage relations

A common denominator of all three aspects of the reform is the ‘need for rationalisation through (de-)differentiation’. Actually, in the modernizers’ lexicon this need has two analytically distinct dimensions: a monetary one and an institutional one. The first refers to that part of the reform that aims to address issues of ‘fiscal responsibility’ by, for instance, imposing pay freezes or by reducing the number of state employees. This was most evidently manifested on the conflict over the remuneration issue: although the issue of pay structure is very complicated to do justice to here, the intention of the government to introduce a new unified pay structure that would standardize wages actually implied the imposition of pay freezes (Athanasiades et al., 2000). In a period when the taming of the inflation and the constraint of government deficit, in view of the entrance to EMU, was the major priority, the treatment of wages as a ‘cost of production’ rather than as a ‘source of demand’ is perfectly justified. Both the ND (1990–1993) and the PASOK (1993-present) government were obliged to adopt a policy of replacing initially one out of every three and later out of every five civil servants in order to satisfy the European Commission that Greece deserved further transfers of its Convergence Funds (Featherstone, 1998).

However, the issue has an institutional dimension as well. As Tsoukalas (1995: 204) claims:

Public salaries are not market prices for labor power but quasi-rents allocated to selected, if extremely wide, tenured segments of the population on the basis of political criteria. In this sense the public labor market does not function as a part of a wider labor market and does not yield to market rules. On the contrary the public system obeys its own criteria of recruitment, creates its own standards, conveys on the civil servant corps a privileged rent and provides the main topos where, in full contrast to liberal forms, personal income is seen as a right, almost totally detached from personal contribution to production . . . it is no wonder that, by the very fact of its overwhelming numerical and symbolic significance the public sector ethos has inundated the entire social tissue.
The institutional aspect refers to the managerial turn in the public sector and is most evidently manifested in the introduction of a performative dimension to teachers' appointment, promotion and payment structures.

More particularly, for the modernizers, epetirida (the appointment list) is a Gordian knot that epitomizes the ‘whole nexus of the ‘guild-like vested rights’ of teachers and crystallizes the populist, statist, clientelist and partisan culture of their political patrons’ (Kontoyiannopoulos, 1991: 60). It is perceived as a system of ‘mechanistic egalitarianism’, that despite its objective and unimpeachable features, is not meritocratic. Rather, it is a system of recruitment with strong monopolist characteristics that a) imposes rigidities on the labour market since it incorporates occupational rights into the university degree; b) does not allow the law of supply and demand to distribute the limited numbers of jobs to the best teachers; and c) refutes the state’s ‘right to manage’. On the other hand, by keeping requirements down and by guaranteeing public employment, it socializes teachers and, consequently, their students, into a work ethic that prioritizes security over risk, relaxation over entrepreneurship, protection over initiative, entitlement over effort, rights over responsibilities. As a result it has created a culture of dependency and minor effort, which, to quote Kontoyiannopoulos (1991: 34–5), is exemplified ‘in the claim-right citizens raise to the state to educate them, to hire them and to pay their retirement scheme’. Due to epetirida, the argument goes, a significant number of teachers neither seek a different professional orientation nor do they invest in the culmination of their human capital but prefer to remain unemployed, underemployed or ‘mismatched’ waiting for the appointment day. Consequently, they do not prepare themselves for other job prospects that would guarantee them ‘a satisfactory and permanent income’, intensify the passivity of citizens and the over-reliance on the state and increase the rate of unemployment. In short, by nourishing ‘certainty and security’, this institution insulates the individual from the disciplinary effects of the market, allocates resources irrespective of ‘merit’ or ‘desert’, suppresses possessive individualism, and threatens the economic prosperity of the nation. The CEE, on the other hand, would provide all teachers equal opportunities to compete and get appointed. As a result, and apart from the upgrading of the educational provision and the enhancement of systemic competitiveness, it would restore social justice and would allow teachers to make use of their capabilities (Kladis, 1991; OECD, 1995; White Paper, 1997; Kontoyiannopoulos, 1991; n.d, Aryiros, 1994; Papandreou, 1997; Arsenis, 1998).8

On the other hand, teacher unions perceived the abolition of epetirida as a sort of a Trojan horse that would pave the way for the deregulation of the whole nexus of labour relations and for the overall deterioration of their status. In fact, for the unions, epetirida was the foundation stone of tenure, unobstructed wage/rank promotion and uniform job rights. Consequently, its abolition would lead to labour casualisation, job insecurity, the abolition of tenure and the introduction of contractual, deregulated, part-time employ-
ment practices. It was also seen as the institution that guaranteed the independence of civil servants from the nexus of clientele relations, and as the mechanism that protected the value of their credentials and secured uniform occupational rights to all graduates. Finally, it symbolized the obligation of the state to appoint all unappointed teachers and legitimated their demand for appointment (OLME, 1998; PEAE, 1997, 1998; Yalanis et al., 1996; Tsoulias, 1997; Kalomiris, 1997; Fatourou and Yalanis, 1997).

Path shaping, path dependency and the outcome of the conflict

It must be clear by now that both the unions and the modernizers draw upon and utilize a set of discursive practices that derive from two mutually exclusive societal paradigms: the pro-Keynesian Welfare National Statist settlement and the Schumpeterian Workfare Post-National Regime respectively. It seems that the transition from the one to the other would be inevitably punctuated by a series of conflicts over issues evolving recognition and redistribution. These developments, of course, don’t constitute a peculiarity of Greece. Rather, they are a global phenomenon (Jessop, 1999; Robertson and Dale, 2000; Robertson, 2000). Still, the problem remains: why are the modernization measures introduced in Greece so apparently different from ones introduced elsewhere? With particular reference to teachers, why was epetirida replaced by CEE, a recruitment method that has historically been identified with procedural bureaucracy? Or why did the new appraisal scheme eventually take a typical top down bureaucratic form? Is Greece, contrary to the global trend towards ‘marketization’ and ‘performativity’, moving towards further bureaucratization? (see Andreou 1996 for such suggestions).

We reckon that such an approach is rather superficial for the simple reason that there is not a one to one correspondence between CEE and procedural bureaucracy. In fact, as the example of UK and Australia testifies, NPM is perfectly compatible with CEE. In both countries open competition that would ‘give all citizens an opportunity to compete on merit to join and advance within the civil service’ (Dawkins quoted in Ives, 1995: 585) was part of the restructuring of the civil service along managerial lines and, more particularly, of the de-bureaucratization and de-politicization of the civil service labour relations initiated by Thatcher and Hawke (Maor, 1999).

Moreover, such an approach overlooks the fact that the breakdown of the old path does not result in the creation of an absolute void. Institutional forms remain intact and these remnants of the former path still tend to shape policy output by affecting, in a selective manner, the path-shaping strategies (Torfing, 1999; Radice, 2000). There is a historically determined repertoire that key agents can draw upon. For instance, the discursive pool is constrained by the inherited value system and the frames of meaning which define the legitimate scope, means and ends within particular policy field; or the institutional heritage allows for a limited range of options in terms of resources, institu-
This implies that Greece is not deviating from the emerging global paradigm. Rather, it is the nationally specific institutional arrangements and legacies that have both shaped the current reforms and have prevented policy makers from implementing a fully-fledged modernization project. On the contrary, the government, despite the inherent asymmetry of power involved in state-union clashes, was forced by the tide of events to make a series of compromises and concessions. This is manifested in all three dimensions of the wage relation we are studying here.

Starting from the remuneration issue, the initial attempt to break away from the tradition of egalitarianism and to establish PRP seems, for the time being, to be abandoned. Although pay freezes have been imposed, almost six years after the bill was issued PRP has not been activated yet.

Following from that, the attempt to introduce an appraisal scheme – a necessary precondition for the implementation of PRP – crashed into the collective memories of the past, a strong and enduring culture of resistance and a tradition of non-intervention. Fuelled by the collective memories about the disciplinary role of the inspectors (Andreou and Papakonstantinou, 1994), galvanized by the struggles over their abolition, and nourished by the corporatism of the 80s (Athanasiades, 2001), a particular occupational tradition that perceives professional autonomy as lack of appraisal and interference seems to have been established amongst Greek teachers. This legacy clashed with the initial scheme that made provision for both external (conducted by a Body of Inspectors appointed by the government) and internal (conducted by a school-based committee) evaluation. When Arsenis, in September 1999, attempted to introduce the internal part of the scheme he met the universal resistance of heads who, backed up by the unions, refused to collaborate and the measure was made inactive. Moreover, the Body of Inspectors was never established and was ultimately abolished in the latest revision of the appraisal scheme (March, 2001). Finally, the revised scheme adopts a ‘soft’ top down bureaucratic model that focuses, primarily, on those of the teachers who bid for managerial positions.

Still, the clearest manifestation of the power of institutional legacies is to be found in the case of the appointment system, a battle the unions clearly
lost despite the massive appointments that followed and indicate the government’s attempt to ameliorate tension. We have to establish right from the beginning that epetirida was not abolished so that CEE to be introduced; but rather that, CEE were introduced so that epetirida could be abolished. This implies that the CEE although inscribed within the overall dis-embedding process hardly constitutes an embedded form of social regulation.

In fact, none of the arguments developed against epetirida supported the introduction of CEE. On the contrary, even the key policy makers did not fully support CEE (eg Exarhakos, 1998a,b). More particularly, Kontoyiannopoulos, the first MoE that challenged epetirida and suggested the introduction of CEE had expressed his ambivalence: ‘the system of competitive entry exams does not allow the detection of the most capable candidates; all it does is the allocation of the existing posts to the candidates’ (1991: 62). Moreover, Simitsis (PASOK, 1991: 36–8) had, against his official party policy, opposed the preservation of epetirida and had suggested that, as part of the overall decentralization of the educational system, school units themselves should be responsible for teacher recruitment. In addition, Arsenis (1997, 1998), despite his support of competition, had suggested that ‘it should be complemented by an interview, which, ‘due to the lack of ‘institutional credibility and reliability’ had, for the time being, to be postponed’. Furthermore, just three months before the first CEE, he had maintained that ‘it is not at all guaranteed that the best teachers would be recruited through the CEE’ (ibid). So, how can we account for the introduction of a measure that none of the policy makers seem to support?

Our suggestion is that the answer lies not in the ‘functional needs’ of education but to the political and ideological imperatives of the modernization project both in terms of the restructuring of teachers’ labour and of the reformulation of citizens–state relations so as to converge to the ESM.

Tsoukalas and Panagiotopoulou (1992: 314–15), for example, reflecting a view widely held by the modernizers, argue that during the first PASOK’s term in office

the corps of graduates succeeded in organizing themselves into officially recognized pressure groups functioning as ‘waiting lists’ for public employment. Today, probably more than half of unemployed university graduates consider their future job as an inalienable ‘social right’. Thus, despite the continuing power of clientelist networks, the corporatization of credential-holders has strengthened and institutionalized demand for public recruitment on the national scale. . . . Indeed, ‘credential holders’ are nothing if not future ‘rent holders’ (our emphasis).

What seems to be the real matter is not the technical/functional capacity of teachers’ but rather, their ability to mobilize in an organized way, to press their claims to the government and to defend institutions that constraint the state projects. ‘Social rights’ and ‘waiting lists’ that consolidate both recogni-
tion and redistribution are an anathema to modernizers because they legitimate both the right of different groups to make claims and the obligation of the government to respond to those claims. Furthermore, it is upon the commonality of interests that social groups formulate generally agreed-upon demands and mobilize a common willingness to act (Offe, 1985). So, apart from the financial burden they impose, it is also the political burden that one should take into consideration. At this point, Simitis (1989b: 16–17) is quite eloquent:

The state can no longer satisfy various social demands. Its weakness leads to frustration and to fears that vested interests will be undermined. Social groups intensify their struggle to defend their position. Political parties, to retain their clientele, are under pressure to resort to populism. But populism creates new hopes, new demands and the crisis deepens. This vicious circle must be smashed.

In fact, according to Exarhakos (2000: 8) the two basic objectives of the educational reform that aspires to adjust education to the changing external environment are

a) The free access to tertiary education and the modernization of university curricula
b) The disengagement between the acquisition of a university degree and occupational safeguarding and, especially, the removal of the state’s obligation for the full employment of university graduates.

This implies that for the state managers the problem is not how to ‘improve the quality of education’ but how to engineer the shift in policy orientation from full employment to employability, from demand side intervention to supply side egalitarianism, from decommodification to equal marketability, from job and wage protection to exposure to the disciplinary forces of the market, from social and industrial to economic citizenship. Simitis (2000) is again illuminating:

I am against any form of epetirida in the sense that ‘I have done that sort of job for so many years and now I deserve something, a sort of recognition and appreciation for what I have offered’. I don’t deny the need for appreciation for those who have struggled. However, as far as the government is concerned there is only one thing that matters: Can you do the job fast and effectively? Can you help us solve this or that problem?

Be that the problem, the solution is far from simple. The need to break the vicious circle of graduation-appointment-promotion-retirement or, more generally, to dis-embed teachers’ labour relations and to implement a fully-fledged contractual regime was constrained, apart from the growing
radicalization of the unions (Athanasiades, 2000), by a series of interrelated factors:

- the institutional embeddedness and the limited range of alternative institutional forms and modes of governance;
- the historically determined discursive repertoire that modernizers could mobilize; and
- the mistrust of citizens towards the state.

As far as the modes of governance available are concerned, the individualization of contracts and/or the decentralization of labour relations to the district or even to the school level was not an option particularly after the ubiquitous refusal of prefects in 1995 to assume responsibility for educational matters other than the maintenance of school infrastructure. In fact, to the governmental proposals that Greece should adopt the Anglo-Saxon model of educational provision (devolved budgets, parental choice, per capita funding) and of labour relations both the teacher unions and the local authorities replied that the government was attempting to dismantle, for financial and political reasons, the comprehensive, free and egalitarian national school system. Alluding to their colleagues in France that between 1996–98 opposed the decentralization initiatives on the grounds that they constitute a direct attack to the republican principles of the education system (Menendez Weidman, 2001), teacher unions refused to discuss any proposal that would jeopardize the equality of opportunity, the meritocracy and the universalism that the system has secured. Moreover, they suggested that the decentralization would lead to the undermining of epetirida, to the overall deterioration of their employment relations and to the privatization of education. On the other hand, the local authorities suggested that the government by devolving responsibility to the regional level is actually devolving the financial and political burden that education carries with it. The government fell back and the bill was withdrawn (Athanasiades and Patramanis, 2001).

On the other hand, the discursive reconstruction of a bureaucratic fix as clientelist, populist or parochial is inscribed within the overall reconstruction of the Greek social formation as being backward and patrimonial. The traditional depiction of Greece, by the organic intellectuals of PASOK, as a third world country that suffers from a developmental lag implied that the catching up endeavour in the current conjuncture couldn’t have been possibly pursued in terms of a transition to a ‘post-industrial’, ‘post-Fordist’, or, more generally, ‘post-traditional society’. The metaphor of change that would drive the popular imagination necessarily assumed, for one more time, a traditional/modern polarity. This constrained the form, without compromising the content that the dis-embeddeding mechanism would eventually take.

Furthermore, the spectre of clientelism and the mistrust of citizens to the state made interviews a non-viable option while the enduring tradition of egalitarianism (by definition suspicious to any credentialing hierarchy) precluded
the introduction of a ‘points system’ based on pre-valued criteria (degree, MA, PhD etc). Apart from that, such a measure, by just ‘re-shuffling’ teachers without abolishing the correspondence between credentials and public employment, would have re-introduced a form of epetirida through the back door.

The CEE seems to be the only concrete recruitment method that, without diverging from the ESM principles, could, at least in the short run, replace epetirida. Towards that aim the modernizers resort to the ideological armory of the liberal tradition (achievement principle, distributive justice, and possessive individualism) and to the introduction of structures that would facilitate the artificial competitive game of entrepreneurial conduct to be played to the best possible effect. As Mueller (1984) maintains the individualistic orientations to immediate personal advantage tends to impede group formation and coordinated, organized pursuit of group interests, without necessarily violating the legitimacy of the state’s ‘worthiness to rule’. However, the dynamics of the ‘double movement’ (Polanyi, 1944) worked differently than the modernizers might have expected.

To lend legitimacy to the CEE, the new system was modeled out of the General Exams (for university admission), an institution that is considered as objective, unimpeachable and meritocratic. Still, the legitimacy and institutional embeddedness that epetirida enjoyed could hardly be contested by the CEE. The argument that the CEE ‘would allow the state to recruit the best teachers for our children’ (PASOK, 1999: 82) was denounced both by teachers and the general public. Contrary to what one might have expected, only one out of three Greeks fully supports the abolition of epetirida. More particularly, the highest degree of disagreement appears amongst the youth, the university graduates, the lower income strata, and the semi-urban/rural population while agreement reaches its peak at the fairly older, urban and higher income strata.

Devoid of discursive justification for a more explicit managerial turn, lacking alternative modes of governance, and constrained by the values of the

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<tr>
<td>Age 25–34</td>
<td>60.3%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Age 35–44</td>
<td>39.0%</td>
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<td>Semi-urban/Rural</td>
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<td>Urban</td>
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<td>Low income strata</td>
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<td>High income strata</td>
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<td>University graduates</td>
<td>55.5%</td>
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(V-PRC in Ta Nea 18-9-97).
citizens modernizers resorted to CEE, an institution that they hardly both-
ered to support with any confidence. Still, the unions didn’t embrace the gov-
ernmental aspirations, and within the overall deterioration of teachers–state
relations, conflict broke out. Within the ESM convergence context, the mili-
tary defeat of teachers and the proliferation of unappointed teachers interest
groups suggest that a new era in the teachers–state relationship is arising.

Conclusion

In this paper we have attempted an initial exploration of the dis- and re-
embedding process that the modernization project constitutes. By drawing
attention to the past institutional arrangements and legacies that character-
ized the Greek social formation we have suggested that the nationally specific
forms that the modernization project takes and the reactions it has triggered
can be more adequately explored through the conceptual lens of ‘path shaping
strategies in a path dependent context’. We have also draw attention to the
catalytic role that the EMU/ESM have played as the major driving forces
behind the transformation of the ideological, programmatic and social profile
of PASOK and of Greek politics in general.

At a higher level of abstraction, we have suggested that the internally
equally distributed external competitiveness that lies at the core of the
ESM is pursued through the dual strategy of external de-differentiation and
internal differentiation.

On the systemic level the process of external de-differentiation tendentially
takes the form of the universalization of the commodity form: capital, money,
labour and service markets are treated isomorphically while the boundaries
between the state and the private sector are blurred by the transformation of
the former to the infrastructure of the latter.

This process de-differentiates teachers not only from the rest of the civil
servants and subsumes education into the infrastructure of the economy but
also de-differentiates the public sector labour market from capitalist labour
markets and severely curtails the non-economic forms within which teachers’
labour was embedded.

This process of external de-differentiation is coupled with a process of
internal differentiation that takes the form of the universalization of economic
citizenship: the legitimation of aspirations and rewards is conditional upon
economically defined productivity and individually measured contribution
to systemic competitiveness. However, as the reactions suggest, the dis-
embedding process gave rise to a countermovement that defended measures
of social and political regulation. To this dynamics of the double movement
as they are inscribed within the path dependent context we have attributed
the particular form that the modernization project has taken. We have sug-
gested that despite these apparent differences Greece is not deviating from
the global shift towards a Schumpeterian, Workfare Post-National Regime.
Yet, the actual characteristics of this regime would be the object and the outcome of an intense struggle, as teachers have proved, for the time being and despite the opportunities offered, rather reluctant to abandon the collective mobility project for a more individualist one.

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Received 20 March 2001

Finally accepted 21 May 2002

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank Professor Roger Dale, Dr Susan Robertson, Mario Novelli and the Sociological Review anonymous referees for their constructive comments and suggestions. The usual disclaimers remain.

Notes

1 Diamantopopulou is the European Commissioner for Employment and Social Affairs.

2 Throughout the paper we focus on the approach to modernization put forward by Blair/Giddens not only because of the discursive similarities with their Greek homologues (Simitis/Mouzelis) but also because of the fact that the Greek modernizers have persistently drawn upon that particular version of modernization and have constantly urged the Greek government to implement similar policies as the only way out of the endemic crisis Greece is experiencing. The clearest manifestation of this convergence can be found in Blair and Simitis’ common declaration.

3 The essence of the revisionist shift is aptly captured in Paavo Lipponen’s (Finnish Social Democratic Party) statement: ‘I am a liberal in the sense I believe people have really suffered because of lack of competition. We need a paradigm change... We have to get more flexibility and reduce labour costs and social security costs’. Similar comments have been made by Bad Godesberg (Austrian Social Democratic Party): ‘Social-democratic economic policies draw on a dynamism of a competitive economy and make use of market mechanisms. But in contrast to conservative concepts, it is not limited to these two factors. It seeks to build into the system a network of social safeguards against threats to one’s livelihood. It combines the achievement principle with the principle of solidarity’ (quoted in Sassoon, 1996: 742).

4 Diamantourou is the Greek ombudsman.

5 The Third Republic refers to the historical period from 1974 to the present. The First concerns the war of independence (1821–1829), the Second the interwar era (1924–1935).

6 The measure provoked criticism due to the extreme weight assigned to ‘social criteria’ that advanced the chances of the PASOK constituency (the ‘underprivileged’) and was eventually revised (L 1735/87). Teachers were excluded from these arrangements.

7 On these grounds, PASOK, in 1994, issued L 2190 that introduced CEE as the recruitment method of civil servants, a measure that was welcomed by the general public. Teachers once more were not affected.

8 Kladis was the general secretary of the MoE; Kontoyiannopoulos was MP and MoE (1990–1991: ND), and currently is MP (PASOK); Arvios was Deputy in the European Parliament (ND), and chairman of the Greek Federation of Industrialists; Papandreou is ex MoE, and current Minister of the Exterior; Arsenis was MoE (1997–2000: PASOK).

9 Tsoulias is the chairman of OLME; Kalomiris was the general secretary of OLME; PEAE is the Panhellenic Association of Unappointed Teachers, Fatourou and Yalanis were members of the board of PEAE.
10 Dawkins was the Minister assisting the Prime Minister for Public Service Matters.
11 Exarhakos was the chairman of the Pedagogical Institute, the education thinktank of the government.
12 Suffice it to say that the changes in the appointment system were not accompanied by any change regarding the academic or professional training of teachers.

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