

# The party-system of modern Greece: a historical and comparative overview

## Session 13

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- ① Greece in context: democratization and party system formation from 1830 to 1974
- ② From the 1974 until now: democratic consolidation
- ③ The trajectory of the Greek party system: evolution and change
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# Greece in context: democratization and party system formation from 1830 to 1974

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Greece was **part of the Ottoman empire until 1830**, when a long era of imperial domination (Roman, Byzantine and Ottoman) came to an end

Antecedents:

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- Control of the coastal territories by the Ottoman administration but **independent brigades had control over the mountainous terrains in central Greece**
- **Commerce men in the islands had accumulated a large wealth** thanks to trading routes from the Mediterranean to the Atlantic sea

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- “The half-baked Greek enlightenment undermined the authority of the Church, reconnected the Christian Orthodox elites with Ancient Greece and Western Europe, and created the fertile ground for a revolution that was not only nationalist but also democratic and liberal” ([Hatzis, 2019, p. 3](#))



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  - the support from Western countries
  - the internal problems of the Ottoman Empire
- After the war, the first Greek Constitution was abolished by the first elected president in order to organize the different factions from a centralized authoritarian state, and create the basic state institutions of Modern Greece (**first republic**)

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  - **Party-system based on IR: English Party, French Party, Russian party, etc.**

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- defeat against Turkey in 1897 because of a dispute about Crete leading to bankruptcy
- additional problems like political corruption, rigged elections, a powerful clientelist system and a dysfunctional bureaucracy led to a **military coup**, but a defective democracy with a modified institution remained

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- After their victory as part of the allies during the first world war, Greece lost their territories in the current Turkish land because of internal conflicts and the *Megali Idea* died. The Turkish minority in Greece was forced to migrate to Turkey and the Greek minority in Turkey was forced to migrate to Greece (**decreased ethnic heterogeneity**)

# Greece in context: defective democracy from 1922 to 1940

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- The republicans vs royalists conflict overlapped with the **liberal vs. conservative** conflict, with the **pro-orthodox vs. pro protestant/catholic** conflict, and with the **pro-german vs. pro-british** conflict

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- That is, ***one single dimension dominated by preferences over institutions*** because of a non-consolidated democracy

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- **Parties** representing the **traditional cleavages** were born during this time: **agrarian party, socialist parties, jewish party, ect.**

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- During World War II, Greece fought together with the allies, that imposed a government coalition after the end of the war

# Greece in context: war from 1940 to 1949

From 1940 to 1949:

- However, the communist didn't take part in the coalition and a **civil war** between a coalition of conservative royalists and liberals against the communists took place from 1946 to 1949, involving the international community, and ending with the defeat of the communist

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  - The death of the new authoritarian leader together with the return of Karamanlis led to the creation of the **Third Greek Republic in 1974**

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- The **Greek Orthodox Church is under the protection of the State** and it is the prevailing religion according to the constitution

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- Revival of **ND** in 2019



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- But was this always the case? Is it still the case?



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  - ③ **Exception in 1963**, when Centre Union was able to unify the centre and win the elections

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  - ② Communist party reduced its support to barely 10% or less

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TABLE 2

ELECTORAL OUTCOMES (PERCENTAGE OF VOTES AND PARLIAMENTARY SEATS) IN TWO-PARTY POLITICS, 1981–2000

Political parties (by name)	1981	1985	1989 (June)	1989 (Nov.)	1990	1993	1996	2000
PASOK	48.1 (172)	45.8 (161)	39.1 (125)	40.7 (128)	38.6 (123)	46.9 (170)	41.5 (162)	43.8 (158)
New Democracy (ND)	35.9 (115)	40.9 (126)	44.3 (145)	46.2 (148)	46.9 (150)	39.3 (111)	38.1 (108)	42.7 (125)
Greek Communist Party (KKE)	10.9 (13)	9.9 (12)	13.1 (28) <sup>a</sup>	10.9 (21) <sup>a</sup>	10.3 (19) <sup>a</sup>	4.5 (9)	5.6 (11)	5.5 (11)
KKE Interior (SYN since 1992)	1.4	1.8 (1)				2.9	5.1 (10)	3.2 (6)
Political Spring (POLAN)						4.9 (10)	2.9	
Democratic Movement (DIKKI)							4.4 (9)	2.7
Democratic Renewal (DIANA)			1.0 (1)		0.7 (1)			
Other	3.7	1.6	2.5 (1) <sup>b</sup>	2.2 (3) <sup>c</sup>	3.5 (7) <sup>d</sup>	1.5	2.3	2.1

Notes: <sup>a</sup> Coalition of Left and Progress (Synaspismos tes Aristeras kai tes Proōdou); alliance of KKE, KKE-Interior, and other leftist forces

<sup>b</sup> Muslim ticket (Empistosyne)

<sup>c</sup> Empistosyne (1 seat), Ecologists (1 seat), independent candidate Apostolos Lazares (1 seat)

<sup>d</sup> Muslim tickets Empistosyne and Pepromeno (1 seat each), Ecologists (1 seat), local tickets in single-seat constituencies (4 seats)

Figure 1: Table 2 in Pappas (2003)



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  - ④ Minor PRRs parties and extreme right parties (i.e., Golden Dawn) taking over the immigration issue

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**Table 1.** Greek parliamentary election results, September 2015 & July 2019.

Political parties	Sept. 2015			July 2019		
	Votes	%	Seats	Votes	%	Seats
<b>SYRIZA</b>	1,926,526	35.4	145	1,781,057	31.5	86
ND	1,526,400	28.0	75	2,251,618	39.8	158
<b>Golden Dawn</b>	379,722	6.9	18	165,620	2.9	-
PASOK-led centrist coalitions*	341,732	6.2	17	457,623	8.1	22
<b>KKE</b>	301,684	5.5	15	299,621	5.3	15
Potami	222,349	4.0	11	-	-	-
<b>ANEL</b>	200,532	3.6	10	-	-	-
<b>EK (Union of Centrists)</b>	186,644	3.4	9	70,178	1.2	-
<b>EL (Greek Solution)</b>	-	-	-	209,290	3.7	10
<b>MeRA25 (DiEM25)</b>	-	-	-	194,576	3.4	9
Total			300			300

Source: official results announced by the Greek Ministry of Interior.

The parties in bold are those which before 2015 were anti-austerity and anti-memoranda. The other three parties (ND, PASOK/DISY/KINAL and Potami) were pro-austerity, pro-memoranda and anti-populist.

\*The PASOK-led centrist coalitions were: in 2015 DISY (Democratic Alignment) and in 2019 KINAL (Movement for Change).

**Figure 2:** Table 1 in Skoulariki (2020)

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- **QUESTION: why are there not strong cross-cutting cleavages?**

# **Greece in an international context: Southern European party systems after the Great Recession**

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- **QUESTION:** how does Greece relate to the case of Portugal, Italy and Spain?

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- **What features** of the Greek's party system formation and evolution history do **match those of Lipset and Rokkan** and what others do not? What does this tell us about the **applicability of the cleavage theory to other countries beyond North Western Europe?**

# What can Greece tell us about party competition in post-transitional democracies? A discussion

- **What features** of the Greek's party system formation and evolution history do **match those of Lipset and Rokkan** and what others do not? What does this tell us about the **applicability of the cleavage theory to other countries beyond North Western Europe?**
- **Let's divide the class in two groups!** One group must defend why cleavage theory applies and its usefulness for explaining cases beyond NWE. The other group must defend the opposite argument. First, discuss with your partner. Afterwards, defend your argument in front of the class.

# References

## References I

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