THE EMPTY CRADLE OF DEMOCRACY

SEX, ABORTION, AND NATIONALISM IN MODERN GREECE

ALEXANDRA HALKIAS

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For Christos C. Halkias

with love

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CONTENTS

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This is just a hypothesis, but I would say it's all against all. There aren't immediately given subjects of a struggle, one the proletariat, the other the bourgeoisie. Who fights against whom? We all fight against each other. And there is always within each of us something that fights something else.

—MICHEL FOUCAULT,

The History of Sexuality, Vol. 1

The role for theory today seems to me to be just this: not to formulate the global systematic theory which holds everything in place, but to analyze the specificity of mechanisms of power, to locate the connections and extensions, to build little by little a strategic knowledge (*savoir*).

—MICHEL FOUCAULT, *Power/Knowledge*

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This book addresses the research done for my dissertation in Athens, Greece, in 1994. Yet the project of the book is different from that of the dissertation defended in 1997. This book develops a line of analysis and argumentation that became visible once the dissertation was complete. The focus shifted from abortion and national identity to sexuality and nationalism, and to re-theorizing the gendered subject of late modernity by exploring new relations between elements of the historically situated discourses that produce it in a formally democratic context. The social relationship between agency, violence, and discourse became central.

Through every stage of developing this book, from the formation of the original idea all the way through the dissertation and then the additional years of radical reworking, I have benefited from the scholarly advice, intellectual friendship and support of many. Some generously offered me their thoughts and comments during the first formative phase of this project. Of these, I am most grateful to the chair of my doctoral committee, rigorous and yet creative sociologist, and relentless editor, Chandra Mukerji, as well as to Dan Hallin and Michael Schudson, both of whom not only inspired the media analysis but also helped to hone the larger argument concerning liberal democracy. Lisa Lowe also made important insightful comments throughout, especially with regard to feminist theory, and lightly offered vital practical and intellectual assistance at a determining moment in the book's development. Without Page DuBois and her incisive comments at critical junctions from the very beginning of the project as a research proposal in 1991, this book might not have been born(e). Last but not at all least, Michael Herzfeld carefully read and meticulously commented on the full doctoral dissertation, in addition to supporting this work since then in multiple crucial ways, and also became a very good friend. The standards of excellence set by each of these scholars were

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INTRODUCTION

This book traces the social and cultural construction of the nation, the body, gender, and sexuality in Greece, a nation that is in many ways located at the crossroads of East and West, a charged site of conflict and conjunction between modernity and tradition. This process of construction is a deeply political project. My ostensible focus is on abortion, of which there have been anywhere from 150,000 to 400,000 annually throughout the 1990s, and on the perceived national problem of a low birth rate, approximately 110,000 births annually for a population of close to 11 million, that is popularly called *to demografiko*.[1] Even *The Economist* noted in a special 2002 issue on Greece, "Greece has an exceptionally high incidence of abortion."

What can we learn about the construction of the subject and the nation in late modernity from this high rate of abortion in Greece? Rather than asking why there are so many abortions in Greece at the present, I ask *how* is it that there comes to be a high incidence of abortion in a country where the low birth rate is a national issue. In pursuing this paradox, the book attempts to chart the discursive production of the gendered and nationed subject in present-day Greece. My objective is to trace the vexed operation of power in the recesses of the national imaginary, as it is expressed, for instance, in press coverage of the demografiko and in the capillaries of daily social life, such as sexuality and erotic relationships. In effect, this involves an exploration of the meanings of love, life, the divine, and agency and their very intimate affiliations with stories about what it means to be Greek.

Unraveling this tangled set of discourses, I find that the same stories of Greekness that produce the specific construction of the demografiko as a major national problem also yield forms of sexuality, personhood, and "the couple" that result in the high rate of abortion, which the demografiko discourses penalize even though the medical act itself has been legal since 1986

and easily and safely available even before then. In arguing thus, I offer a case study of the ways nationalism permeates and shapes the body and of how understandings of gender and sexuality animate nation-building projects of late modernity. The primary material considered consists of in-depth interviews, and often a series of follow-up conversations, with 120 women living in Athens who reported having had two or more abortions and all mainstream newspaper articles on abortion or the demografiko that were published during the calendar year 1994, a year that Greece presided over the European Council. Also, my observation of over four hundred ob/gyn exams performed in a state clinic and of the surrounding interactions between medical personnel and the women visiting the clinic constitute an important part of the material used in developing my analysis.

Thus, this book is not *about* abortion. Rather, it examines the vexed constitution of subjects, political subjects, and the larger national community to which they imagine they belong. Their sense of who they are and what has meaning to them is what affects their actions, and their sense of who they are is grounded in particular understandings of what it means to be *Greek*. This book traces some of the discourses of gender and of nation at one particular geopolitical site. Using abortion and the demografiko as a point of entry, I map some of the narratives and the discursive practices through which the body politic and the physical body are together founded in Greece. The book follows the junctions, the collusions, and the sometimes violent collisions that occur between disparate stories about what it means to be properly Greek and stories about what it means to be a good Greek *woman,* as these are inscribed on the different, but similarly intimate—and, as I suggest here, intrinsically linked—domains of sex and the national imaginary.

This book is also not just about Greece. Although in "the margins of Europe" in many ways, Greece is not only at the "crossroads of East and West" but also at the heart of the so-called West (Herzfeld 1987). At the level of the international imaginary, if we can speak of such, Greece seems to occupy a privileged position as a symbol of passion, of freedom and, in the consumerist contexts of globalization, of fun and pleasure, if one judges from the promotional materials the tourist industry produces every summer concerning the Greek islands. In addition, Greece is seen as "the cradle of democracy," the phrase used by many Western news media to refer to the country. In mapping the meanings of nation, sex, and the body in Greece, I attempt to expose the shaky foundations at the heart of contemporary liberal democracy and to chart the troubled waters of agency in late modernity as it is shaped in typically very densely woven cultural and historical political contexts.

At the present historical moment, the cornerstone of liberal democracy in Europe, the United States, and elsewhere and the driving force behind most projects of modernization globally are the presupposed "autonomous" and "rational" individual and the purportedly secular modern nation-state. This book sheds light on the shadows, that is, on the *lived* aspect of these two constructs and suggests that these are laboriously crafted, often contradictory, and certainly only tenuously achieved fictions that rely on a sterilized and clinical view of complex social realities that are in fact laced with contest.

Analysis of the decision-making process in modern Greek sexual contexts thus extends beyond the sexual act, its pleasures, its multiple dangers, and its ramifications to demonstrate that the postulated political subject of late modernity, the independent and rational individual, cannot be taken as a given. At the same time, its home, the nation, is not merely "out there" in the state, in formal political discourse, or in citizen's transactions with the state, but also very deeply within, as it colors and shades human beings' most intimate moments, including their own sense of their body. Thus, policy efforts that are based on different definitions of the subject and the nation are themselves smuggling in forces conducive to deepening social injustices rather than remedying them. The currently popular discourses of state-building modernization projects across the globe, that presuppose populations as a collection of individuals, often not even aware of this assumption as a problematic and supremely political move, obfuscate and silence the fraught and often dangerous arena of agon within which everyday life takes place in late modernity.

Incidents such as the July 2001 Genova uprising and the September 2001 attacks on core symbols of U.S. financial and political domination are but small signs of the cost of continuing to use discourses in public policy that, whether economic or social, gloss the often harsh specificities of the lived experience of the self in disparate geopolitical contexts of globalizing high modernity. Violence that is less visible, but perhaps more profound, than that witnessed at the Twin Towers has been occurring in particular cultural habitats all along. At issue is not the elimination of violence, for the very constitution of the subject involves certain forms of violence, as Butler (1993) persuasively argues,[2] but a higher awareness of its strategic deployments and of the depth of the "collateral damage" that is caused, even by ostensibly peaceful and well-meaning state-building projects, whether they are directly aimed at individual citizens, categories of them, or nations as a whole. At stake in this analysis of what goes on in people's bedrooms and within their imagination in contemporary Greece is an interrogation of the premises of liberal democracy. This book seeks to contribute to the project of understanding that

what we have come to think of as being properly democratic might not be quite so democratic after all.

The Plot: Greece, Modernity, and the Body

The extent of the coverage of Greece's currently low birth rate in all sectors of the Greek press, as well as its status as the object of study of one of Greece's few interparty parliamentary committees (1993–94), among other developments, indicate the significance of the demografiko as a contemporary Greek cultural phenomenon. It is the premise of this book that the sheer numbers are not relevant. First, there is the technical problem of an absence of formal national statistics on abortion, which makes all numbers suspect. Second, abortion aside, when a population of 11 million (including anywhere from 500,000 to 1 million foreign immigrants) has a yearly number of births of 100,000–120,000, this is not in itself, and certainly not self-evidently, a major national problem. We live in an era when national prowess is established and gauged by technological sophistication, in the military or in industry, and by capital consolidation; at the same time, scientific developments in DNA research and reproductive technologies are increasingly challenging the centrality of "natural" human births as a prerequisite for the survival of a population. Third, even if the numbers did indicate a very sharp decrease in the size of the population and not just "a difficulty with reproducing the population," as the Greek demografiko is usually defined, of deeper interest is how this particular aspect of social reality is being interpreted, deployed, and invested in by different parts of society or "constituencies." How are larger narratives at play? Most important, what types of political orders and subjects do the discourses relating to the demografiko attempt to install and secure?

Part of the argument put forward is that the preoccupation with Greece's biological "robustness" can be seen as a product of friction between the discursive "plates" of modernity and tradition.[3] The media's articulation of the demografiko reveals evidence of a diffuse and always incomplete conjunction between various culturally specific discourses and their associated practices. On the one hand are the European Union's various mandates to rationalize business and state operations and the cultural concomitants of a long-standing Greek desire to become fully "European." On the other hand are both the much bemoaned yet tenacious clientelistic party relations, inherited by social structures put in place during the Ottoman Empire and shaping not only contemporary Greek politics but many facets of life in Greece, and the communitarian ethics associated with Greek Christian Orthodoxy.

The heightened concern over productivity in the economy does not eliminate the fear of invasion by Turkey but, rather, *displaces* it so that it is often transmuted into the more modernly palatable, if Orientalizing, notion that Greece will be overrun by (unmodernly, as this narrative goes) proliferating Muslims and other "foreigners" who are more and more immigrating to Greece. The only protection "we" have from such a prospect, according to this story, is if Greek women do their part to protect the nation in these dire straits by ceasing to abort, themselves quite unmodern and thus bizarrely Muslim-like in this instance, and fulfilling what emerges as their civic duty to be a mother. This complex and always open-ended struggle to *be* modern, as well as the occasional truces in the struggle, create a friction between the cultural "tectonic plates" of the social formations and discursive practices associated with modernity and tradition.

The pressures exerted by the confrontations and unexpected alliances between aspects of these larger social and discursive formations, otherwise called the condition of modernity, are an important factor shaping contemporary Greek political culture in general. In addition, the current location of the demografiko in a historical moment of fairly pronounced nationalism and in the shadow of a public discursive space formally ruled by the strong, if ambivalent, desire to modernize the Greek nation renders it a space within which the national imaginary lets its hair down, so to speak. In effect, the demografiko as a discursive domain serves as a repository, as well as a catalyst, for the fears, anxieties, and yearnings that are increasingly disallowed as inappropriate in the actively modernizing discourses articulated elsewhere. Similarly, the 120 women living in Athens who have had two or more abortions whom I interviewed constitute a very particular boundary group wherein one is likely to find a condensed version of the discourses, and the paradoxes, animating the body politic at large.

A key characteristic of contemporary Greek domestic and foreign politics is the tension resulting from a vexed desire: on the one hand, to surrender to the seduction of the modern and, on the other, to remain loyal to and continue to benefit from social formations (institutions, social relations, and identities) that are not consistent with a society that is highly rationalized in the Weberian sense. My argument is that the demografiko and the high rate of abortion in Greece are in fact firmly connected, though not, as the Greek press suggests, in the linear sense that abortions are a causal factor contributing to the national crisis of an aging population. The relationship, rather, is an underground one. Both the demografiko and the high rate of abortion are *symptoms,* each manifested on a different plane of social life, of the fraught

encounter between what is commonly envisioned in Greece today as modernity and tradition.

Certainly, the high national rate of abortion presents an appearance, if not more, of opposition to the cultural mandate for more births that the demografiko authorizes. In this context, abortion in the formal public sphere frequently takes on the significance of an antipatriotic act. Yet, closer examination reveals that abortion at the site of the gendered subject actually figures primarily as a reactionary or even a conservative expression of the very same larger sociopolitical tensions producing the racializing and sexualizing nation-building technology that the demografiko operates as. That is, the demografiko works both to *engender* the Greek nation and to give it a racialized identity and, as a by-product of this very process, women have embodied subjectivities and couples have sex of the type that produce many abortions. As I argue in this book, the demografiko is animated by a powerful reactionary reassertion of the I of the nation—that is, of what is seen as *the core* of its identity—as what looks much like a religious state. Yet, the practice of repeat abortion, which ostensibly appears to be at odds with this construction of Greece, stands as evidence of an endorsement of the affiliated reactionary definition of "woman" as the subject whose body is seen as *essentially* reproductive and of Greek female bodies as "inherently" adverse to "invasions" such as those most methods are seen as being. In this context, abortion actually shifts meaning from that of an antipatriotic or even treasonous act, as it is represented in public sphere demografiko discourses, and emerges at the site of Greek women's subjectivity as an act that is to varying degrees natural.

At this level, the intertwining of gendered and nationalist discourses yields a politicized syntax of sexuality that is filled with contradictions. Modern birth control methods are figured as "invasive" and constituting "foreign bodies," whereas both heterosexuality itself and abortion are together *naturalized*. The demografiko is thus constituted as a national drama in which gender has a central role. Patrolling the borders of the modern nation-state is a project linked to the fortification of a particular configuration of gender, and the demografiko operates as a powerful technology that helps to manage both of these. In this sense, a critical reading of abortion can nonetheless also find in it a significant element of counterhegemonic praxis.[4]

That is, the popularity of abortion in Greece today can be seen as strong and suggestive evidence of the bankruptcy of some of the founding fictions of the modern Greek nation. The very same stories of struggle, valor, passion, and resistance to control, violation, invasion, and hostile foreign bodies,

which work to make dominant an idea of the nation as vitally needing more *Greek* babies, are, I argue, those that, installed at the site of the subject's sexuality and body, make abortion itself seem natural, and birth control very often a threatening or alien force. If seen in the light of its co-implication with the stories that in the public sphere represent it as a national problem, abortion in Greece may emerge as a fruitful opportunity for a radical reassessment and reworking of popular national narratives. It is political praxis in more and unexpected ways, and it needs to be read as such.

In brief, the media's portrayal of a national demographic problem operates as a reproductive technology in the following senses: (1) it promotes a national agenda that prioritizes the biological reproduction of Greeks and redeploys a cultural discourse of compulsory motherhood that is already in wide circulation, hence operating as a reproductive technology in a literal sense; (2) it concretely engenders the nation itself by emphasizing a need for male babies, as one of the main mandates behind the demografiko is for more *male* soldiers; and (3) it uses religion to advance a particular racialized notion of Greece and "Greekness" while obscuring, at best, other configurations of these. Moreover, all this is done in a way that firmly heterosexualizes the nation and, at the same time, renders motherhood the normative requirement for Greek female citizenship. Thus, the demografiko works as a complex reproductive technology by reproducing and naturalizing particular institutions, including political forms of reproduction (heterosexual nuclear families and a particular matrix of the modern nation-state) and certain political configurations of subjects (Greek Orthodox *mother* citizens and Greek Orthodox male citizens).

Beyond Greece

As noted, the project of this book extends beyond Greece. The subtext running throughout, and which I flag at appropriate junctions, involves the main currency of liberal humanism and the democratic state-building projects it fuels in high modernity. In probing the demografiko press coverage, for example, we are confronted by some of Greece's cultural preoccupations, even obsessions, as they emerge at this historical moment.[5] This analysis of Greek configurations of nationhood and personhood in the mainstream press, however, in conjunction with the interviews and the follow-up conversations that typically ensued, also illuminates the assumptions and cultural contradictions limiting liberal democratic projects in other geopolitical contexts.

Moreover, the findings of this research challenge those rigid disciplinary

understandings of social and political institutions that do not properly take account of the foundational role played in the latter not only by culture, but specifically by discourse and communication. I argue that a more useful unit of analysis, for scholarly research, policy formation, and national debate alike, in Greece as well as elsewhere, is in fact the *textuality* of both subject and nation. In particular, specific constellations of discursive practices that implicate gender in the formation of national identity, and vice versa, require attention if public policy aimed at any level of a society is to be effective. Thus, my research raises serious questions about the transportability of conceptions of the liberal subject of modernity, "the individual," and of the modern nation-state to settings outside those of abstract theory. Certainly, these constructs project and presuppose a social and political environment that is much more *peaceful* than most.

The Theory: Discourses, Subjects, and the Nation

In the beginning, there was the Word.

As Foucault convincingly argued, discourses effectively produce the body. To secure the anchor of my project it is useful to briefly consider Foucault's own words on this score.[6] Describing his own project, Foucault states, "What I want to show is how power relations can materially penetrate the body in depth, without depending even on the mediation of the subject's own representations" (1980c, 186). This understanding of power clearly posits the body firmly within the field of power rather than as something that is, at least initially, external to power's efforts to dominate. Foucault elaborates: "If power takes hold on the body, this isn't through its having first to be interiorized in people's consciousnesses. There is a network or circuit of bio-power, or somato-power, which acts as a formative matrix of sexuality itself as the historical and cultural phenomenon within which we seem at once to recognize and lose ourselves" (186). In effect, this is an understanding of power as radically constitutive, where its repressive qualities are almost secondary to its fundamental productive operation. In this view, the body itself, and sexuality as the site of truth of the subject, are more the products of power than its victims.

Thus, Foucault offers a different positioning for those interested in a critique of power. Instead of "the problem of sovereignty (What is the sovereign? How is he constituted as sovereign? What bond of obedience ties individuals to the sovereign?)," Foucault suggests that political analysis have a different subject:

> the analysis of a whole range of areas; I realize that these can seem over-empirical and secondary, but after all, they concern our bodies, our lives, our day-to-day existences. As against this privileging of sovereign power, I wanted to show the value of an analysis which followed a different course. Between every point of a social body, between a man and a woman, between the members of a family, between a master and his pupil, between every one who knows and every one who does not, there exist relations of power which are not purely and simply a projection of the sovereign's great power over the individual; they are rather the concrete, changing soil in which the sovereign's power is grounded, the conditions which make it possible for it to function. . . . For the State to function in the way that it does, there must be, between male and female or adult and child, quite specific relations of domination which have their own configuration and relative autonomy. (187–88)

Pivotal to this type of analysis of power is the understanding that much of what is taken for granted in contemporary social science and observed as a neutral datum or unit of analysis is itself a historically and culturally specific product of power, just as much as are the particular practices of scientific observation and knowledge production. This includes our notion of the individual (firmly bounded and characterized by "rational" thought and "free" choice), the family, and sexuality, indeed reproduction itself. To clarify this aspect of Foucault's argument, consider what he says, having first noted the contrast with feudal societies: "In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries a form of power comes into being that begins to exercise itself through social production and social service. It becomes a matter of obtaining productive service from individuals in their concrete lives. And in consequence, a real and effective 'incorporation' of power was necessary, in the sense that power had to be able to gain access to the bodies of individuals, to their acts, attitudes and modes of everyday behavior" (125).

This development had an important corollary. The theoretical significance of the project of this book hinges on the two together. Foucault continues, "But at the same time, these new techniques of power needed to grapple with the phenomena of population, in short to undertake the administration, control and direction of the accumulation of men (the economic system that promotes the accumulation of capital and the system of power that ordains the accumulation of men are, from the seventeenth century on, correlated and inseparable phenomena): Hence there arise the problems of demography, public health, hygiene, housing conditions, longevity and fertility. And I believe that the political significance of the problem of sex is due to the fact

that sex is located at the point of intersection of the discipline of the body and the control of the population" (125).

In sum, many domains of social life, including the very topos of the body and the individual, that have become naturalized through discourses, are, with a Foucauldian perspective, denaturalized and reposited as themselves products and instruments of power that require analysis. Many Foucault scholars have subsequently argued that discourses produce the body in *gendered* and *racialized* ways (see especially de Lauretis 1987). There is a significant body of literature focused specifically on theorizing the political significance of the gendered production of the body.[7]

The case of abortion and the demografiko in Greece provides an opportunity to contribute to this theorization of the subject while also providing vivid empirical evidence of how this process works and of how profound its effects may be. Examining the phenomenon of Greece's high rate of abortion by tacking among Greek medical, media, and personal sites, I show how the discourses of nation specifically and their deployments of gender, race, and religion effectively *create* the Greek body, its sexuality, and, quite literally, the very possibility of life itself. Thus, I offer an analysis of how the controversial and, at some level, absurd-sounding theoretical claim *Discourses produce worlds* is borne out at one site. In so doing, following the epigraphs opening this book, my aim is to map discursive contestation in order to contribute to contemporary social and political theory.

I investigate the historically specific contemporary Greek manifestations of (1) Benedict Anderson's (1983) nation as "imagined community"; (2) Foucault's (1977) modern subject as a dynamic product of power operating from within, at the level of desire, as well as from without; and, very importantly, (3) the interanimation of these two. Toward these ends, I approach the narratives women shared with me about their lives and the mainstream coverage of the perceived national problem with a low birth rate (called, for short, the demografiko) as expressions of collective memory in which national identity is being negotiated.[8] The crux of my argument is that the stories told at these sites in effect create *Greece* and a particular range of Greekness, at the same time that they also actually produce, and reproduce, Greek human bodies.[9]

Many of the 120 women living in Athens who were interviewed expressed disagreement with the terms of the discussion about Greece's birth rate as they are presented in the public sphere. Some put forward their own incisive social critiques of the country's current state of affairs. All their narratives also indicate that the configuration of personhood that underlies these dis-

cussions, as well as the liberal democratic projects with which reactionary manifestations such as the demografiko are intimately linked, are not always pertinent to the ways these women experience themselves and their lives. For the Greek women living in Athens who participated in this research, although abortion may be about the nation in some sense, it is not at all about the nation in the terms of the Greek press. And although women are often only too aware of the expectation that they must either breed or properly contracept in order to be "good Greek women," the ways they spoke to me of heterosexuality, conception and contraception, love and betrayal, and dreams and loss suggest that most of the time abortion, even repeat abortion, actually makes a lot more sense to them than do any of the other options. With what follows, I hope to instigate a dialogue, a coming together, and a mutual interrogation of the sets of discourses shaping the understandings of the Greek press or a more formalized public sphere, on the one hand, and those of the women I spoke with, on the other. In so doing, I propose, we can come to see in a new light, and retheorize, important aspects of the larger liberal democratic discourses with which these Greek phenomena are affiliated.

One part of the project of this book, then, is to map the meanings of abortion and plot their contestation in Athens today. But, more important, because abortion is as prevalent as it is in the experience of modern Greek women (second-highest frequency after Rumania, despite easier access to contraception), I have taken abortion in Greece as a useful point of entry for studying Greek configurations of gender and personhood. Because of the country's preoccupation with the demografiko and the frequent public deployments of a connection between the frequency of abortion and the demografiko problem, I have also looked at both women's narratives and the media's discourse on abortion as important grounds for an analysis of representations of Greek national identity. Given the historical specificities of Greek conceptions of the nexus of nationhood and personhood, the demografiko and the narrated experiences of sexuality by Greek women are important, and telling, shards of modern Greek culture. Finally, because of Greece's unique cultural and geopolitical position "in the margins" of Europe, the stories articulated at these sites help to put together a "representative anecdote" (Ortner 1989) that at the present historical moment offers a privileged vantage point from which to view the larger social, cultural, and political terrain of not only Greece and the unifying European Community, but "the West" wherever it occurs.[10]

Thus, this book outlines some of the ways in which the historically specific concept of struggle, agon, or *agona,* and concern with various forms of inter-

vention, interference, or invasion (*epemvasi*), especially that of a foreign body (*to xeno soma*), animate or inanimate, barbarous or civilized, help to constitute a particularly Greek syntax for more and less local narratives of nation and person—or "allegories of identity."[11] These narratives viscerally shape Greek women's understandings of their body, of sexuality, contraception, and abortion. I attempt to place the public sphere discussion of the demografiko, as well as the larger concern with Greek national identity, into conversation with the stories told by women about abortion, identity, and politics in Greece.

Both the narratives of the women I spoke with and the press coverage of the demografiko, when positioned against the backdrop of the other sources I draw from (ranging from the detailed kaleidoscopic views of the history and culture of this territory that I put forward in part 1, to the currently popular songs and local scholarly work on nationalism analyzed at the opening of part 3), constitute uniquely rich sites for furthering the theorization of the subject-nation nexus, as well as for examining the specifically Greek conceptions of nationhood and personhood.[12] In all, this work seeks to contribute to the project of illuminating the politics of late modernity by studying what is particular in how nation and gender are *cofounded* at the present historical moment in Greece, which is arguably at the center of the pervasive margins of European modernity. Thus, this is a study of how nationalisms, genders, and sexualities come together and how, in late modernity, they sometimes fall apart.[13] At the same time, this book also puts forward another story, one that suggests that prevailing notions of liberal democracy rely on truncated understandings, at best, of the profoundly political construction of the subject.

A Map of This Book

Thus, the explicit project of this book is to plot the coordinates of Greece as an imagined community at the present historical moment. Under examination are the political categories of nation, citizenship, gender, sexuality, and race as they are shaping and animating the contemporary Greek national imaginary.

In part 1, I initiate this project by putting forward significant aspects of the politics of Greek identity and the present state of Greece, including its historical contexts. Beginning with a description of Athens in the present, I move to the historical development of Athens in chapter 1, keeping Greece in the background for a moment, and, then in chapter 2, to the social and cultural context of contemporary Greek women's life. After that, in chapter 3 I survey the historical development of Greece itself and discuss salient aspects of the broader context that make up the stage on which the drama analyzed in this

book is performed. I also advance the argument for the charged role race and religion have historically played in the politics of identity at this site while gesturing toward the gendered field of power in which this process currently takes place. In chapter 4, I turn back to the present, to how the demografiko itself is defined in contemporary Greece and position it in comparative context.

The focus in part 2 is on two vital aspects of the contestation involved in abortion and the demografiko in Greece. In chapter 5, I offer a straightforward ethnographic narrative describing one day at a clinic where abortions are performed, while also positioning myself as researcher in the field. In chapter 6, I focus on the letters to the editor of mainstream newspapers expounding on the demografiko and abortion to probe the underlying common matrix of nationhood in the public sphere. Analysis of the press coverage puts in bold relief how the historically specific manifestation of anxiety about foreign bodies, invasion, and struggle come together in this sector of the Greek public sphere to produce a variety of competing explicit understandings of national identity and a nonetheless common implicit underlying matrix of nationhood in which Greece figures as a genre of religious state.

In part 3, consideration of the ways abortion is talked about by the women I interviewed reveals how the matrix of nationhood driving the Greek public imaginary in effect *creates* Greek sexuality, contraceptive behavior, and even life itself. Underlying the analysis of these interviews is my observation of more than four hundred gynecological exams performed by medical interns at one of the prototype State Family Planning Clinics of Athens and of innumerable instances of contraceptive advice given by midwives, interns, and doctors at the Family Planning Center run by the same Clinic, as well as other interactions between and among these groups. As a result, it becomes possible to show how the various nationalist and religious discourses that permeate the press and other sectors of the public sphere, and that work to tentatively establish the boundaries of "Greece" as it is popularly imagined, also work *viscerally* to produce culturally specific configurations of the boundaries of Greek bodies and to shape perceptions and experiences of sexuality, of love, and of relationship. Thus, in chapters 7, 8, and 9, I argue that the same stories that contribute to the social construction of the demografiko as a major national problem also help naturalize precisely what many demografiko discourses configure as the main enemy: abortion.

More specifically, in chapter 7 I examine the dynamics through which abortion emerges as a more natural method of birth control while others are configured as varyingly invasive, alien, or violating of core understandings of both Greekness and trust. In chapter 8, we see how, in addition, abortion

operates as politics by other means and has positive uses within the fraught field of power constituted by the heterosexual couple. In chapter 9, I explore the ways abortion in Greece is nonetheless also experienced as painful in different ways. Thus, this part of the book explores sites of sexuality, the body, and *erota* or love/passion and reveals a different configuration of subjectivity than that typically presupposed when speaking of the modern liberal, rational, and autonomous individual. The implications for theorization of agency are elaborated here.

In part 4, I attempt to bring to the fore and to instigate a dialogue in multiple directions. That is, in chapter 10 I return to the demografiko discourses in the mainstream press with a focus now on the politics of representation of Greek women, rather than of the nation. I deepen the argument about how the nexus of meanings of contemporary Greece is articulated at the site of sexuality and reproduction by exploring the refractions projected in the public sphere. I argue that this occurs in such a way as to yield the contradictory public representations of Greek women both as signs of the *nation-state's* modernity via appropriate contraceptive behavior, and as protectors of the more traditional *homeland* or *patrida* by being good breeders. This is in direct counterpoint to part 3, where analysis of women's narratives tells a very different story about how it is Greece comes to have a high rate of abortion.

In the last chapter of the book, chapter 11, I return to the conversations I had with the women, though this time to examine their own opinions and critiques of the demografiko. This body of material constitutes a fairly direct response to the media discourses on the demografiko from a site that has not yet been heard. At the same time, this chapter also critically reads the women's responses and charts the circulation of nationalism within their own narratives. I trace the formation of alternative configurations of nationhood and conclude by providing a further illustration of how subject and nation alike are often discursively produced in contradictory ways, yet always refracting both entrenched patterns of power and resistance in the process. In effect, even as almost all the women I spoke with were strongly opposed to the demografiko, and often incisive in their analysis of why, I argue that overall, the resistances they express, much like the relationships and sexuality they describe, nonetheless exhibit the endorsement of pronouncedly nationalist understandings of Greekness. This has serious implications for current theory on agency, democracy, and the subject. In the final section on theory and policy, I explicitly draw a link between the theoretical argument explored throughout and social and public, domestic or foreign, policy.

Embedded within the text at critical junctions are short Greek phrases

written in English characters for readability. In most cases, these phrases are the Greek for whatever has just been said in English. This use of Greek is meant to underscore and guard against the danger of developing a sense of a "complete understanding" of the charged and continuously contested multivocality and polysemy of the field of national politics and gender in Greece. The book is an exploration of this field, of the often paradoxical stories of what is true and what is real and what is good at this geopolitical site. As an exploration, it cannot but be open-ended, partial, and, potentially, disruptive of taken-for-granted ideas about social reality. An exploration of rugged terrain, no matter how thorough or penetrating it might be, does not make that terrain one's own. The occasional Greek phrases, written in English characters, usually mirroring the Greek spelling, serve as a reminder of ever-present alterity, of the limits of our field of vision.

I take seriously Donna Haraway's argument that "one cannot relocate in any possible vantage point without being accountable for that movement. Vision is *always* a question of the power to see—and perhaps of the violence implicit in our visualizing practices. With whose blood were my eyes crafted?" (1991, 193). Throughout the book, I attempt in different ways to render visible some of the violence inherent in the observations and analysis that I support and, where appropriate, to gesture toward the "blood" of which my own "personal" eyes are indeed crafted. As Haraway argues, "The 'eyes' made available in modern technological sciences shatter any idea of passive vision; these prosthetic devices show us that all eyes, including our own organic ones, are active perceptual systems, building in translations and specific ways of seeing, that is, ways of life. There is no unmediated photograph or passive *camera obscura* in scientific accounts of bodies and machines; there are only highly specific visual possibilities, each with a wonderfully detailed, active, partial way of organizing worlds" (190). The path that remains, once this is fully acknowledged, is to participate in the effort to build "situated and embodied knowledges" without engaging in "the god-trick of seeing everything from nowhere" (189) and also without falling prey either to relativism or to "a serious danger of romanticizing and/or appropriating the vision of the less powerful while claiming to see from their positions" (191). This is the path I try to follow in this book.

PART ONE

The Agoras of Agon

In the beginning was the wrath of the earth.

Later Apollo came and killed the chthonic serpent, Python. It was left to rot. It is said that this is where the first name of Delphi, Pytho, came from. In such a fertilizer, the power of the god of harmony, of light and of divination took root and grew. The myth may mean that the dark forces are the yeast of light; that the more intense they are, the deeper the light becomes when it dominates them. One would think that, if the landscape of Delphi vibrates with such an inner radiance, it is because there is no corner of our land that has been so much kneaded by chthonic power and absolute light.

—George Seferis, *Delphi*

Part 1 situates and thus initiates a cartography of discourses of national identity and of gender that are in circulation in Athens at the topos of abortion. Part 1 offers a kaleidoscopic view of Greek society, culture, and politics, historically and in the present. The focus is on mapping some of the forces characterizing the geopolitical field of Athens at the present, including the historical dimension of the politics of Greek identity, so as to firmly situate the critical analysis of discourses this book puts forward.

In many ways, Athens is an agora of agon—an agora or marketplace,

where different sites peddle different wares, different kinds of struggle, engaging subjects and thus *creating* them. The scent of one field of power, we might imagine, intermingles with those of others. Streams of discourse flow from one place to another, congealing into different categories of subjects, with unpredictable order, noise, shoving, and arguments. From time to time, something falls and breaks. The sound of shattering is absorbed and transmuted into a sound like that of a wind chime, punctuating the pervasive background sound of tinkling coins changing hands. Thieves move through the crowd easily, taking one form of agon from one stand, grabbing another, a prized new possession paid for dearly, from the crowd. Posing as detached observers, other thieves stuff their pockets. In the distance, somebody blows a whistle. Someone is arrested. The streams of humans continue to flow, the forms of struggle coagulate and mutate.

Pushing this metaphor just a little more, Athens is also an agora in the more traditional sense of "a marketplace of ideas." As I show, it is not the clear or abstract well-argued ideas of ancient philosophers, nor is it ideologies in a Marxist sense, that are at a premium here, but rather the far more nebulous and less easily identified discourses and discursive practices of national identity and gender. It is these that give shape to the mob. In what follows, we join the crowd. And yet, we must not forget, we also remain radically separate.

Chapter 1

SETTING THE STAGE: ATHENS, GREECE, FANTASY, AND HISTORY

Certainly, "the Greek light" that so many have written of, as has the Nobel prize-winning poet Seferis in the excerpt opening this part of the book, is a prominent part of the Greek landscape. Whether there are perceivable physical differences to the light in this part of the Mediterranean is hard to tell. What matters is that Greeks and foreigners alike tend to share a belief in its uniqueness. The metaphoric sense of light is operative because the link is often explicitly made between the quality of the light here, an almost relentless brightness, and the clarity of thought of especially Ancient Greek thinkers. Moreover, as Seferi suggests, a narrative about good and evil also seems to be intertwined with those relating to the Greek light.

Glossy images of whitewashed little houses perched on a barren slope of one or another island with the sparkling sea below and the clear blue sky above tend to be connected to a romanticized idea of a starkly simple and wholesome mode of life. The image may appear as seductive as it does because it is superimposed on an imaginary snapshot of "the Ancient Greek world." This double exposure, gilded by fragments of more recent historical narratives about Greece and Greeks, may be what is read as evidence of a distinctly Greek *spirit*. Incisive thinking, uncompromising conviction in high ideals, including a superior aesthetic such as that exhibited in the ancient ruins scattered across the country, relentless freedom and independence, and an inferred readiness to take absolute and passionate action in heroic ways are vital parts of the contemporary Greek myth. This, I think, is what "the Greek light" is made of. This representation of Greece, even if muted locally by the hectic rhythm of life, the high stakes of bipartisan micropolitics, petty clientelism, and other stressful aspects of Greek late modernity, no doubt constitutes an important part of the context of contemporary Athens, the site of my research (see figure 1).

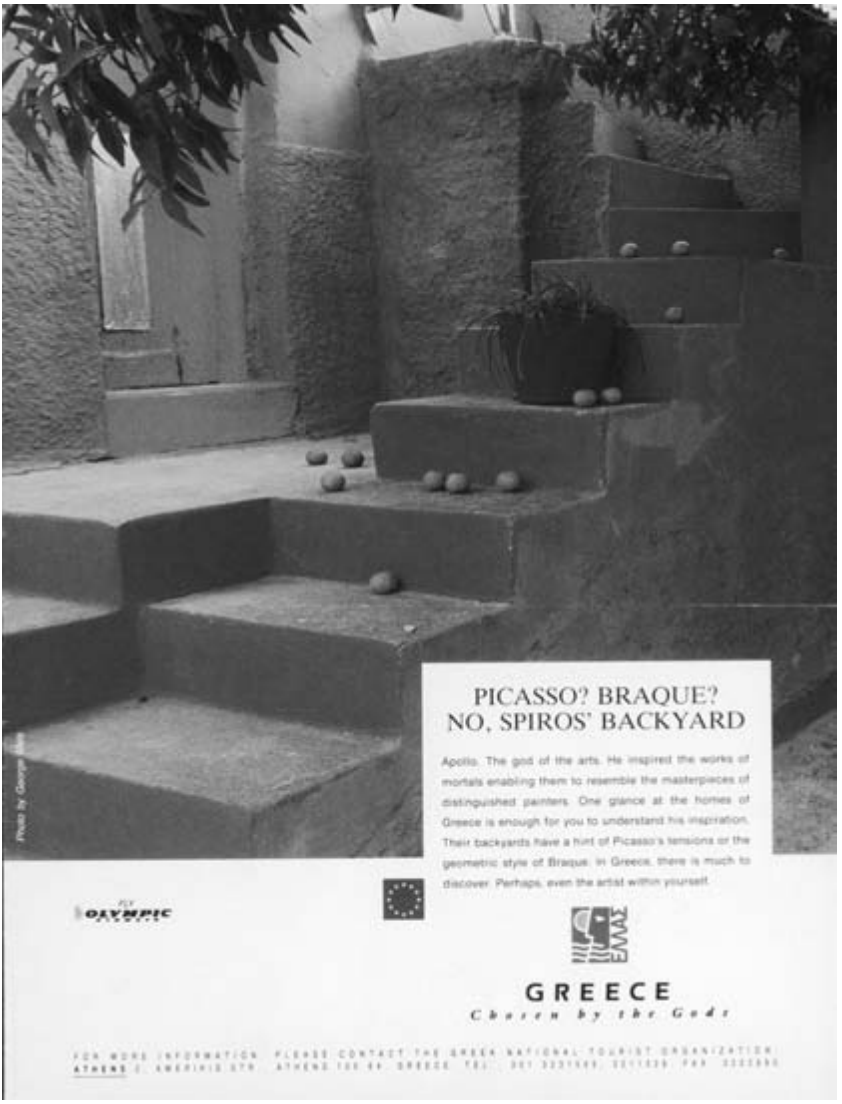

Figure 1. The Greek National Tourist Organization reinscribes a popular image of Greece in its ad campaigns. The viewer of this ad is humbly invited to draw a parallel between Great Western Art and the painted walls of "the *homes* of Greece," while the caption strategically calls on the English-speaking visitor's quest for his or her own creativity. At stake in this representation is the contemporary economic survival of the modern nation via the tourism industry.

There are other, less noble but equally important features.[1] Athens today is a city whose busy central Constitution Square sports a thriving McDonald's, only the first of several now operating in the larger Athens area, that is surely host to almost as many as those who come to visit the Parthenon, a mere mile away from Syntagma, also the home to the Greek Parliament, i Vouli ton Ellinon. The adjacent old town areas of Monastiraki and Plaka are filled with tourist shops selling Greek memorabilia. This area gives way to the increasingly posh areas of Thisseio, Psirri, and Gazi, where the natural gas factory used to operate and workers' dwellings have been renovated to become some of the more fashionable restaurants and bars frequented by the Athenian elite. Little bars and tavernas can be found in abundance in most neighborhoods of Athens, assuming one is willing to negotiate with the unbelievable traffic found at almost all times of day and night! This city, representing less than 5 percent of Greece's territory, is where 34 percent of the approximately 11 million Greeks live.[2]

In the upper-class neighborhood of Kolonaki, as well as the nearby northern suburbs of Psyhico and Filothei, Filipino cleaning women, considered the elite of the caste of Russian, Ukrainian, Bulgarian, and Albanian cleaning women now employed regularly even by middle-class households, keep house for the aging and diminishing class of Athenian aristocracy as well as for the newly rich. These are also areas where one rarely sees in public any of the thousands of Albanians who entered the country legally or illegally during the 1990s. Further downtown, as well as along parts of the avenue along the coast, Greek prostitutes are joined by a growing number of male and female Russian, Ukrainian, Albanian, and other prostitutes, some of whom also double as "California Girls" dancing at some of the fancier strip joints.

Athens, specifically Exarhia, the area neighboring Kolonaki, is the base for what has been called Europe's most enduring anarchist movement. Even today, police vans often line its central street or park outside the headquarters of the party in office, the Panhellenic Socialist Party (PASOK), in an attempt to ward off "trouble." *Fasaria. Klouves.* Athens has also been the main site of action for a twenty-year-old revolutionary organization called the 17th of November (commemorating the day in 1973 when students took over the Athens Polytechnic in protest of the U.S.- supported Papadopoulos dictatorship) that the United States ranked as one of the most dangerous terrorist groups in the world. In a larger global context of entities such as the IRA and ETA, and of course now Al Qaeda, this is a puzzling title, because the 17th of November has engaged in highly focused strategic actions resulting in some damage to property and the death of twenty-three people, almost exclusively

members of the Greek and foreign elite, since its operation began in 1975. Nonetheless, it has increasingly been the subject of heated discussion in the public sphere, and in June 2001 highly contentious legislation was passed to help "fight the terrorist threat." U.S. and British pressure played an important part in this new wave of effort to find and arrest members of this group, which culminated, in the summer of 2002, in the arrest of several alleged members.[3]

Another especially prominent aspect of the contemporary Athenian public sphere are the 2004 Olympic Games that the city fought for and won under the mostly inspired leadership of Iana Aggelopoulou, the wife of a very wealthy industrialist, though of working-class background herself. Putting aside the scandals associated with the allocation of the related funds that have sent shock waves through Greek society on more than one occasion, preparations for the Games—necessary to create an infrastructure capable of supporting the expected massive influx of people to an already very congested Athens—are affecting many facets of life in Athens today. The new Eleutherios Venizelos airport, built in the remote area of Spata, opened in March 2001 and the new roads constructed to facilitate traffic to and from it are two of the proud achievements of the currently governing PASOK; both have received extensive media coverage.

Other significant features of the Athenian social landscape include the largest professional association of lawyers in all of Europe, the highest per capita concentration of doctors, at least twenty well-equipped high-tech Centers for Assisted Reproduction, innumerable art galleries and gyms, many theaters, *barakia* (little bars with music), a few of which cater to a gay clientele, and tavernas and *kentra* (places to drink and eat that also usually have music) as well as *kafeteries* and *fast-foodadika*. For several years now, Greece reportedly has had the highest per capita consumption of scotch and of cigarettes in Europe. Cafés are ever-present and crowded at most hours of the day; there people sit talking with one another, sipping a *portokalada,* an orange drink, or *frappe,* a foamy iced coffee drink that, along with the iced cappuccino, *freddo,* have almost replaced the traditional *tourkiko* or *elliniko,* the small cup of thick espresso-like coffee called Turkish or Greek depending on the degree of one's nationalism.[4]

The fairly loud voices, honking cars, and overall ruckus heard in Athens are punctuated by the sound of phones ringing. The center of Athens today is a site inhabited by humans whose most prominent feature, male and female alike, might well be the contraptions they hold firmly in their hands and into which they talk very loudly and often. In a very short period of time, the mobile phone, *to kinito,* has become a vital appendage for many Greeks whose dense

social networks now have another outlet for further *zimosi* ("kneading"), as social interaction with a purpose is called, or simply casual gossip (*koutsobolio*). The Greek market for mobiles is at 59 percent saturation; the average in other countries of Europe is 65 percent.[5] In Athens, as well as elsewhere, the kinito has become in a very few years an important accessory with which, as many claim openly, there is a powerful relationship of dependence.

Fervently trying to connect some of the disparate points of the Athenian landscape is an erratic public transportation system and thousands of taxis. The massive construction undertaken to build a tunnel for a new underground train (*to metro*), which kept encountering ancient ruins, finally yielded results. It is another of the proud and well-publicized accomplishments of PASOK and is making its mark on Athenian traffic, often as much by creating yet more congestion at the stations where commuters' cars park erratically as by somewhat diminishing the flow on some of the main arteries of the city. Indeed, the traffic is often the reason cited for the need of the omnipresent mobile phones. Surrounding all this, and enveloping it, is the pervasive smog (*to nefos*), which is routinely at levels comparable to that of Los Angeles.

Historical Background of the City

Athens was not always like this. In this section I track significant events in the city's historical development, leaving the details of the various histories of Greece itself in the background for the moment. Greece was formally declared an independent state, having successfully won a fierce and bloody struggle for independence from the Ottoman Empire, with the Protocol of London on 3 February 1830. In 1822, one year into the revolution, Athens was a city of eight thousand (Leondidou 1989, 48).When, in 1834, Athens was declared the capital of the Greek Kingdom, it was basically a city in ruins with twelve thousand inhabitants.[6] Barely three thousand houses remained intact (Markezinis 1966, 126). The adjacent port of Piraeus, famous in antiquity and now again thriving, was a wild coast with a few moorings. Although interesting versions of Athens existed in ancient times, the Roman or Middle Ages, and the immediately preceding period of the Ottoman Empire, in many ways, the history of contemporary Athens as a city begins in 1830. After its declaration as the capital of Greece, a highly centralized state apparatus developed and replaced the decentralized modes of administration that existed during Ottoman rule. The government, the king, and social classes that serve the state were installed. Athens became a city with power and control over the nation, without itself having any directly productive economic activity.

Figure 2. *I Sholi ton Athinon No. 2* (The School of Athens No. 2), 1974, Yiorgos Vakirtzis. Courtesy of National Gallery of Art of Greece.

This began to change in 1870 to marked effect by 1880. The Greeks living in their own communities outside of Greece, mostly in Western and Eastern Europe and in northern Africa, who had kept their businesses outside of Greece, began to settle in Greece and to invest. As they settled in Athens, the city began to operate as a mercantile center and the new bourgeoisie became a dominant economic force. A capitalist mode of production developed during the 1880s and Athens proper began to grow. Thus, whereas there were 87,117 inhabitants of the Athens-Piraeus area in 1879, by 1889 there were 144,589. From that time on the population exploded.[7]

The next significant change came after the military uprising against the king in the Athens area of Goudi, in 1909.[8] The process of industrialization, which intensified during World War I, gradually transformed the Athens-

Piraeus area from a small-scale base for bourgeois and petit bourgeois classes to the productive center of Greece (Leondidou 1989, 96). This transformation intensified after 1922, when the refugees from the Asia Minor disaster arrived in Greece. As per the agreement made by Greece and Turkey (more on this in the section on the history of Greece), there was an "exchange of populations" wherein a total of 1.3 million refugees arrived in Greece in "exchange" for 500,000 Turks who left Greece for Turkey (151). Of this number of returning Greek refugees, it is estimated that in 1928 about 250,000 had settled in the larger Athens area (table 16, 159). Thus, between 1920 and 1928 the population doubled, from 453,000 to 802,000 (156; table 15, 158). During the nineteenth century, Athens never had more than 4 to 6 percent of the country's population, but after the arrival of the refugees this figure climbed to 13 percent.[9]

After the refugees' arrival, a wave of internal immigration to Athens, along with continuing industrialization and urbanization, all played a role in transforming postwar Athens into "the crossroads of Greece." A survey of Athens in 1960 counted 690,000 "local" Athenians and 867,000 who had been born in other parts of the country or elsewhere.[10] By 1981, despite a slowdown in internal immigration during the 1970s, 31 percent of the country's population resided in the larger area of Athens. Today, that larger area (including Piraeus and suburbs) is home to 3,761,810 Greeks.[11]

SOCIAL STRATIFICATION AND THE ECONOMY

The social structure of Athens has gone through several changes. During the nineteenth century, the Greek bourgeoisie was located outside of Greece, in Europe and northern Africa, where Greeks had settled to take advantage of economic opportunity, and in Asia Minor, where they continued a long history of Greek presence. At this time, there were two phases to the socioeconomic development of Athens. In the first, lasting roughly until the early 1870s, the population consisted primarily of urban-dwelling bourgeois, public servants, and petit bourgeois. Primary economic activity was minimal (i.e., by 1876, there are reports of a mere eleven factories in Athens and twenty-seven in Piraeus).

The second phase of development occurred in the 1870s: the Greeks abroad begin to return, establishing Athens as the base for their financial enterprises. In the Balkans of this time, there were significant investments in large-scale transportation projects. Indeed, in Greece the 1880s have been called "the decade of the railways." The wealthier Greeks who returned from abroad also began to invest in banks, mining, shipping, and commerce. Industrializa-

tion gradually changed the economic profile, specifically of Piraeus from a services-centered city to a more directly productive one. At the end of the nineteenth century there were roughly six thousand workers in the larger Athens-Piraeus area.[12]

Greece recovered in the first decade of the twentieth century. After the Goudi uprising in 1909, many productive units were created. In 1910 there were reports of 243 factories in the Athens-Piraeus area, of which 12 were large. The area was radically transformed by industrialization, which intensified during World War I. The diaspora bourgeoisie, made up of wealthier Greeks who had come to settle, was joined by a newly developing "domestic" bourgeoisie, and the mercantile class continued to thrive. At the same time, a workers' movement developed, as workers multiplied and lived in poverty and socialist ideas began to circulate. The second Panhellenic Workers Conference in Athens in 1918, partly an effect of the October Revolution, resulted in the foundation of the General Federation of Workers of Greece (Leondidou 1989, 113). The same year saw the founding of the Socialist Workers' Party of Greece, later to become the Communist Party of Greece (KKE). The influx of the Asia Minor refugees in 1922 further enhanced Athens's economic development, as many of them became a source of cheap labor. More women also joined the active workforce, mostly in the area of tapestry and rug making (Leondidou, 198). The area of Nea Ionia became a weaving center; the areas of Kaisariani and Virona developed several small industries; the Piraeus areas of Kokkinia and Drapetsona became large workers' towns (174, 178).

However, the Athens economy did not fully absorb the new populations. Rather, as the population grew between the two World Wars, so did the problems associated with rapid urbanization. Unemployment was endemic and especially pronounced during the Metaxas dictatorship (1936–40). The working class lived in poverty, poor living conditions became even worse during the 1940s, unemployment increased.

The class divisions in Athens were mapped spatially. The ruling class and bourgeoisie lived in "their own" neighborhoods, around Constitution Square, in Kolonaki, and in the new "garden towns" that later became the northern suburbs of Psyhico, Filothei, and Ekali. These areas were far removed from the more congested workers' neighborhoods that developed in areas of Piraeus such as Kokkinia and Korydallo, or eastern and northern suburbs of Athens such as Vironas, Kaisariani, Nea Ionia, and Nea Filadelfia. In these working-class neighborhoods a distinct culture emerged where tightly knit bonds within and between families served as a bulwark against the dangers of

the exploitative financial environment of Athens. Political differences created lines of division between the internal immigrants to Athens from other parts of Greece, who tended to be opposed to Venizelos, and the refugees from Asia Minor, whose beliefs ranged from supporting Venizelos to communism. Other aspects of a common culture were strong, though. For example, a genre of music stemming mostly from the subproletariat, the songs of *rebetika*, were enjoyed by most.[13]

In postwar Greece, after the civil war and with U.S. aid from the Marshall Plan, Athens went through a boom. Architecturally, construction increased from 1957 to 1963. New buildings were built and prominent landmarks in the Athens landscape were created. The imposing Hilton Hotel in the center of Athens was built in 1958–63 according to the design of architects E. Bourekas, P. Vasiliadis, and S. Staikos (Wharton 2001). Its novel size, along with the implications of its being a highly visible symbol of U.S. capitalism, generated both local and international criticism.[14] However, the construction of the Hilton, along with the creation of Mont Parnes, which was the first luxury hotel to begin operations in Athens in 1961, and other large hotels whose construction was decided in the late 1950s, seemed to some to herald a new era. Slowly, Greece entered what was to become a crucial sector of the economy: the international tourist industry. In addition, a surge in investments in housing resulted in Athens undergoing a phase of massive reconstruction.

At the same time, there was rapid economic growth. A marked improvement in the conditions of life for the entire population took place. The poverty of the period between the two World Wars became a thing of the past and the population of the subproletariat sharply diminished. The working class grew so that by 1971 about 42 to 45 percent of those living in Athens were workers, whereas in 1928 it accounted for 38.1 percent of the working population (Leondidou 1989, 188). All public and most private sector activities had made Athens their base. In postwar Greece, Athens played the main role in the financial development of the country.[15]

POLITICS

This does not mean that social conflict disappeared. Class stratification was complex in a polarized economy such as Athens. On the one hand, there were increasing units of mass production, and on the other, the thriving merchants and petite bourgeoisie. Between the two was a growing working class with some upward mobility. The fluidity of occupations during the postwar