

*Spyros Dimanopoulos, Christos Hadziiosif,  
Kostas Katsoudas and Nikos Potamianos*

## Small Business in Distress: Aspects of Petit-Bourgeois Collective Action in Postwar Greece

### ABSTRACT

The character of postwar small business associations in Greece was indelibly stamped by the authoritarian democracy that was constructed between 1945 and 1967. The integration of Greece in the process of European economic unification in the early 1960s was the fuse that sparked the accumulated frustrations into strong collective action, leading some tradesmen and artisans to question the political status quo and identify with centrist and left wing parties. This socio-political ferment led to the renegotiation of petit-bourgeois identity and attempts to link it to a new political context.

Keywords: *traditional petite bourgeoisie; European Economic Community; small business; associations; collective action*

### Introduction

Although the traditional *petite bourgeoisie*<sup>1</sup> makes up the bulk of Greek social structure, it has not attracted systematic historiographical attention matching the interest shown in this class by political science and sociology.<sup>2</sup> Up until the publication of

The research is implemented through the *Human Resources Development, Education and Lifelong Learning* Operational Programme and co-financed by the European Union (European Social Fund) and Greek national funds.

- 1 Meaning small businessmen in retail, services and industry, see: Nicos Poulantzas: *Les classes sociales dans le capitalisme aujourd'hui*, Paris 1974.
- 2 See, among others: Andreas N. Lytras: *Μικρο-αστική λειτουργία και οργάνωση στην Ελλάδα* [Petit-Bourgeois Function and Organisation in Greece], Athens 2010; Valia Aranitou: *Το μικρό εμπόριο στη μεταπολεμική Ελλάδα* [Petty Commerce in Postwar Greece], Athens 2006; Sokratis M. Koniordos: *Towards a Sociology of Artisans: Continuities and Discontinuities in Comparative Perspective*, Aldershot 2001; Andreas Moschonas: *Παραδοσιακά μικροαστικά στρώματα* [Traditional Petite-Bourgeoisie], Athens 1986.

Nikos Potamianos's book on the 'sociogenesis' of the traditional petite bourgeoisie at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century<sup>3</sup>, the Greek bibliography lacked a synthetic study on the subject. The knowledge gap is even wider for the period from Liberation (1944) to the imposition of military dictatorship in 1967. Those studies that do treat issues such as associational life, collective action, political representation and the ideological makeup of the Greek petite bourgeoisie have been limited to the level of description or indulge in abstract theoretical analysis based on scanty factual documentation.

In the case of postwar Western Europe, the pluralism of the political structure and the system of interest intermediation, the regulatory role of the state, the principle of social citizenship, and the existence of a wider consensus behind development strategies are considered the cornerstones of the 'democratic contract'. The middle classes were the main guarantors of political stability and sharers in prosperity.<sup>4</sup> However, the scholarship has identified differences between national examples. The German *Mittelstand*, once supposedly a paragon of 'reactionary' socio-political sensibilities, developed into a dynamic sector of modern, vigorous small-sized firms after the war, forming a pillar of economic development and political stability.<sup>5</sup> The political calculations of the ruling Christian Democracy in Italy dictated state protection of a galaxy of small investors and business owners.<sup>6</sup> The French postwar lower middle classes are portrayed as the main 'losers of modernisation' and a permanent source of disaffection, particularly during the period of the Fourth Republic.<sup>7</sup> In any case, scholars, without underrating the agency of the petit-bourgeois groups, consider that the po-

- 3 Nikos Potamianos: *Οι νοικοκυραιοι. Μαγαζάτορες και βιοτέχνες στην Αθήνα 1880–1925* [The "Noikokyraioi". Shopkeepers and Artisans in Athens 1880–1925], Heraklion 2015. See also: Nikos Potamianos: *From the People to a Class: The Petite Bourgeoisie of Athens, 1901–1923*, in: Andreas Lyberatos (ed.): *Social Transformation and Mass Mobilization in the Balkan and Eastern Mediterranean Cities 1900–1923*, Heraklion 2013, pp. 313–346.
- 4 Sotiris Rizas: *The End of Middle Class Politics?*, Newcastle upon Tyne 2018, pp. 98–135.
- 5 Frederick L. McKittrick: *From Craftsmen to Capitalists: German Artisans from the Third Reich to the Federal Republic, 1939–1953*, New York 2016; Hartmut Berghoff: *The End of Family Business? The Mittelstand and German Capitalism in Transition, 1949–2000*, in: *The Business History Review* 80:2 (2006), pp. 263–295.
- 6 Anna Pina Palladini: *Confartigianato. Dalle origini al consolidamento democratico (1946–1958)*, Milan 2016; Linda Weiss: *The Italian state and small business*, in: *European Journal of Sociology* 25 (1984), pp. 214–241.
- 7 Herrick Chapman, *Shopkeepers and the State from the Pujadist Revolt to the Early Fifth Republic*, in: Sylvie Guillaume/Michel Lescure (eds.): *Les PME dans les sociétés contemporaines de 1880 à nos jours. Pouvoir, représentation, action*, Brussels 2008, pp. 277–287; Cédric Perrin: *Entre glorification et abandon: L'État et les artisans en France (1938–1970)*, Paris 2007; Sylvie Guillaume: *Le petit et moyen patronat dans la nation française de Pinay à Raffarin, 1944–2004*, Bordeaux 2005; Georges Lavau/Gérard Grunberg/Nonna Mayer (eds.): *L'univers politique des classes moyennes*, Paris 1983; Suzanne Berger: *Regime and interest representation: The French traditional middle classes*, in: Suzanne D. Berger (ed.):

litical and economic context plays a decisive role in determining the nature of their collective action.

This paper aims to chart the postwar associational representation and collective action of the traditional Greek petite bourgeoisie, focusing on the General Confederation of Professionals and Craftsmen of Greece (GSEVE) and its satellite organisations.<sup>8</sup> Although it did not succeed in representing the petit-bourgeois milieu as a whole,<sup>9</sup> the GSEVE was historically the main peak association for small businesses in Greece. In the first part of this paper, we provide an overview of political and economic conditions in the early postwar decades. In the second, we outline the principal features of trade associationism during the same period. The third section deals with the refraction of the politico-economic crisis of the 1960s in the petit-bourgeois organisations. In the conclusion, we attempt to assess the social and ideological realignments that took place over two decades and to stress the peculiarities and distinctive attributes of the Greek experience.

## From the Civil War to the Dictatorship: Politics and the Economy, 1945–1967

The overthrow of political and social order during the Occupation in Greece (1941–1944) created the right conditions for the appearance of a powerful left-wing resistance movement, heading a broad sociopolitical bloc. Its rapid spread triggered a counter-coalescence of anti-communist forces. This new polarization between leftist and ‘nationally-minded’ elements replaced the prewar division between Liberals and Royalists. The conflict, which had already turned violent during the Occupation, intensified after the Liberation, culminating in the outbreak of a bloody civil war (1946–1949). The victory of the bourgeois faction, within which the balance of power was clearly tilted towards the conservative Right, defined the basic characteristics of the postwar political status quo.

The postwar political context largely determined the strategic choices that established the character of the Greek economy.<sup>10</sup> Greece was among those European coun-

Organizing Interests in Western Europe: Pluralism, Corporatism, and the Transformation of Politics, Cambridge/New York/Melbourne 1981, pp. 83–101.

8 For the history of the Confederation, see: Kostas Katsoudas (with Kostas Korozis): *Η ΓΣΕΒΕΕ στον 20<sup>ο</sup> αιώνα* [GSEVEE in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century], Athens 2019; Nikos Potamianos: *100 χρόνια ΓΣΕΒΕΕ* [100 Years of GSEVEE], Athens 2019.

9 The majority of merchants were represented by the local Trade Associations.

10 Panos Kazakos: *Ανάμεσα σε Κράτος και Αγορά. Οικονομία και Οικονομική Πολιτική στη Μεταπολεμική Ελλάδα 1944–2000* [Between State and Market. Economy and Economic Policy in Postwar Greece 1944–2000], Athens 2010; George Pagoulatos: *Greece’s New Political*

tries, which suffered significant losses in manpower and damage to their productive fabric and infrastructure network during the Second World War. The Reconstruction period (1945–1953) was marked by efforts to heal the wounds of the Occupation and to engage in a wide-ranging discussion on the enlargement of the country's productive potential. However, the unprecedented party consensus in favour of industrialisation and modernisation of Greek economic structures was at odds with the immediate priorities of the situation. The U.S. intervention (Truman Doctrine and Marshall Plan) ensured the survival of the bourgeois system and prevented social collapse, but the geostrategic importance of Greece did not entail the upgrading of its position in the international division of labour. Most of the foreign aid received was spent on food and military expenditure. The stabilisation programmes imposed by the Americans placed all investment efforts in the hands of private initiative, which, in spite of the funding it received, was unable to support the creation of an internationally competitive industrial sector. The close entanglement of political and business elites both fixated on short-term gains, transformed state intervention into a mechanism for the reallocation of resources among vested interests. Thus, the attachment of business to traditional behaviours was sanctioned and industrialisation was put on hold.<sup>11</sup>

The post-Civil War political system, which has been described as a 'stunted democracy', was entangled in a network of exclusions and constraints designed to guarantee the dominance of the victors of the Civil War.<sup>12</sup> Behind the parliamentary facade, extra-institutional poles of power, such as the armed forces, the monarchy and the American allies served as safeguards of the regime. The Communist Party had been declared illegal, while administrative and legal barriers hindered the social and professional lives of left-wing citizens, as well as the participation of the United Democratic

Economy: State, Finance, and Growth from Postwar to EMU, Basingstoke 2003; Christos Hadziioissif: *Η πολιτική οικονομία της μεταπολεμικής Ελλάδας, 1944–1996* [The political economy of postwar Greece, 1944–1996], in: Vasilis Kremmydas (ed.): *Εισαγωγή στη νεοελληνική οικονομική ιστορία* [Introduction to Modern Greek Economic History], Athens 2003, pp. 287–318.

- 11 Christos Hadziioissif: *Η πολιτική οικονομία της ανασυγκρότησης και του Εμφυλίου* [The political economy of the reconstruction and the Civil War], in: Idem (ed.): *Ιστορία της Ελλάδας του 20ού αιώνα* [History of Greece in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century], vol. D1, Athens 2009, pp. 8–61; Giorgos Stathakis: *Το δόγμα Τρούμαν και το σχέδιο Μάρσαλ. Η ιστορία της Αμερικάνικης Βοήθειας στην Ελλάδα* [The Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan. The History of American Aid to Greece], Athens 2004.
- 12 Ilias Nikolakopoulos: *Η καχεκτική δημοκρατία: κόμματα και εκλογές, 1946–1967* [The Stunted Democracy: Parties and Elections, 1946–1967], Athens 2001; Sotiris Rizas: *Η ελληνική πολιτική μετά τον εμφύλιο πόλεμο. Κοινοβουλευτισμός και δικτατορία* [Greek Politics after the Civil War. Parliamentarism and Dictatorship], Athens 2008; Nicos C. Alivizatos: *Les institutions politiques de la Grèce à travers les crises 1922–1974*, Paris 1979. Older studies retain their value, see: Jean Meynaud (with P. Merlopoulos & G. Notaras): *Les forces politiques en Grèce*, Lausanne 1965; Keith R. Legg: *Politics in Modern Greece*, Stanford 1969.

Left (EDA) party in the political process. Consensus was not the result of contractual compromise, and policy-making was not inclusive. The ostensible representation of organised interests through formal participatory institutions reveals an atrophied civil society. The state was not only a force of repression; it was also the main mechanism of ‘incorporation’ of dominated social groups, through selective subsidies and clientelist arrangements.<sup>13</sup> The perpetuation of these conditions long after the Civil War, especially during the period of right-wing single-party government (1952–1963), led to the accumulation of grievances.

The devaluation of the drachma by 50 per cent in 1953 and the accompanying measures (such as Legal Decree 2687/1953, enacting a set of preferential incentives and safeguards to attract foreign investors) were landmarks in the process of transition to the historic phase of ‘development’. The achievement of monetary stability was the cornerstone of production recovery and led to the partial liberalisation of the economy. The mobilisation of private initiative was significant, but development was guided by state interventionism and protectionism. Public investment during this period was spent on large-scale productive projects, while semi-public organisations assisted the implementation of development policy, and the state-supervised banking system funnelled funds to selected industrial sectors. The aim was to foster development while protecting the domestic market and the interests entwined with it. The stimulation of exports and the curbing of imports were accompanied by a series of tariff and other regulations intended to protect traditional sectors of the economy from free competition.<sup>14</sup> The result has been described as an ‘economic miracle’: the average growth rate of the Greek economy between 1954–1973 was 6.8 per cent, among the highest in the world.<sup>15</sup>

This impressive macroeconomic growth concealed darker undercurrents. While the adoption of Keynesian policies in Western Europe was based on a broader social consensus, economic policy in Greece was implemented without a social contract. The insistence on fiscal discipline prevented the proportional distribution of the social surplus among the lower classes. Moreover, the economy remained mired in structural weaknesses. Greece was industrialised but it was not transformed into an industrial country: the fragmentation of productive units was preserved in the agricultural sector

13 For the distinction between “integration” and “incorporation”, see: Nicos P. Mouzelis: *Politics in the Semi-Periphery: Early Parliamentarism and Late Industrialisation in the Balkans and Latin America*, London 1986.

14 Th. Sakellariopoulos: *Νεοελληνική κοινωνία: ιστορικές και κριτικές προσεγγίσεις* [Modern Greek Society: Historical and Critical Approaches], Athens 1993, pp. 233f.

15 Christos Iordanoglou: *Η Ελληνική Οικονομία στη “Μακρά Διάρκεια”, 1954–2005* [The Greek Economy in the “Longue Durée”, 1945–2005], Athens 2008, pp. 67f.

and transferred to the industrial sector as well.<sup>16</sup> The low technological composition of capital resulted in the incomplete distribution of labour and the unbroken dominance of small, non-competitive enterprises. Although, in 1961, the output of the secondary sector surpassed that of the primary sector as a percentage of GDP, both were outperformed by the service sector in which small shops predominated. Small units employing up to 10 people made up 99 per cent of manufacturing and absorbed 70 per cent of workers in the secondary sector.<sup>17</sup>

At the end of the 1950s, the conservative government of the National Radical Union (ERE) negotiated for the convergence of the Greek economy with the European Economic Community (EEC), culminating in the signing of the Athens Association Agreement (July 1961), which came into effect on 1 November 1962. The Agreement provided for a 22-year transitional period during which, as an associated member, Greece had to complete its adaptation to the Common Market (abolishing tariffs and domestic market protections). The Association with the EEC was obviously intended to 'synchronise' the terms of accession of the Greek economy with the European allocation system and to speed up the development process; however, the relevant bibliography points out that this decision was based less on economic calculations and more on current political needs.<sup>18</sup> The government considered that the gradual embracing of free trade and the concentration of capital in cutting-edge branches of industry, via the establishment of monopolies with state participation and partnership with foreign business groups, would strengthen the competitiveness of the Greek economy on the international markets, leading to a rise in national income. The centrist forces, which in 1961 banded together under the banner of the Centre Union (EK) party, did not object to the country's convergence with the European unification process, but they did express reservations as to the management capacity of ERE and the nature of state intervention in the economy. The centrists were more concerned with the availability of unexploited labour; they proposed the mitigation of deflationary measures and vowed to continue the import substitution policy, believing that the necessary investment could be provided by domestic capital. The leftist EDA was opposed to Greece being thrown into the 'lions' den' of the Common Market, identifying the European perspective with the subjection of the Greek economy to the

16 Christos Hadziiossif: *Η πολιτική οικονομία της ανασυγκρότησης και του Εμφυλίου* [The political economy of the reconstruction and the Civil War], pp. 310–313.

17 For further information on the weight of small enterprises in the Greek economy, see: Appendix. See also George Coutsouraris: *The Morphology of Greek Industry*, Athens 1963.

18 See: Susannah Verney: *The Greek Association with the European Community: a strategy of state*, in: Antonio Costa Pinto/Nuno Severiano Teixeira (eds.): *Southern Europe and the Making of the European Union, 1945–1980s*, New York 2002, pp. 109–156; Kostas Ifantis: *State interests, external dependency and "Europe": Greece*, in: Wolfram Kaiser/Jürgen Elvert (eds.): *European Union Enlargement: A Comparative History*, New York 2004, pp. 75–98.

goals of Western monopolist circles, the forfeiture of industrial development and the perpetuation of the country's underdevelopment.<sup>19</sup>

The cross-party dispute over the EEC coincided with a period of inflamed political passions. The EK and EDA denunciation of ERE for ballot rigging in the 1961 elections brought demands for the democratisation of public life to the forefront. These demands were accompanied by protests by broad social groups calling for participation in the benefits of economic growth. The EK government (1963–1965) focused on increasing political and socioeconomic democracy by mitigating the Civil War-era rigidities and implementing a rather unrefined redistribution policy. The fall of the government, due to the King's actions (June 1965), demonstrated the limits of the power system's toleration of attempts to reform it. The new cycle of upheaval transformed the state crisis into a crisis of legitimacy of the political status quo as a whole. The legitimising basis of the post-Civil War state was undermined in favour of the new rift between the Right and an 'anti-Right' socio-political coalition.<sup>20</sup> The impossibility of defusing the crisis within the framework of constitutional order opened the way for the 1967 military *coup d'état*.

## Dimensions of Associationism During the Period of the 'Stunted Democracy'

From its establishment in 1919, the GSEVE and its organisations formed a 'class pole', an institutional, political and ideological structure that contributed by its actions and discourse to the reproduction of the petit-bourgeois social formation and the circulation of a distinct class identity (which, of course, was subject to continuous renegotiation).<sup>21</sup> Recognising their members, self-employed and small employers, as the 'bourgeois middle class' (the term 'petite bourgeoisie' was rarely employed by them), they promoted the motif of the social 'middle', a space consisting of people who were simultaneously workers and small capital holders, and who formed the 'bul-

19 For the stance of the Greek parties, see: M. G. Pateras: *From Association to Accession: Changing Attitudes of Greek Political Parties Towards Greek Relations with the European Communities, 1957–1975*, unpublished PhD dissertation, London 1984.

20 Ilias Nikolakopoulos: *Η καχεκτική δημοκρατία: κόμματα και εκλογές, 1946–1967* [The Stunted Democracy: Parties and Elections, 1946–1967], pp. 48, 50. For the multifaceted crisis of the 1960s, see: Alkis Rigos/Serafeim I. Seferiades/Evanthis Chadjivassiliou (eds.): *Η "σύντομη" δεκαετία του '60. Θεσμικό πλαίσιο, κομματικές στρατηγικές, κοινωνικές συγκρούσεις, πολιτισμικές διεργασίες* [The "Short" 60s. Institutional Framework, Party Strategies, Social Conflict, Cultural Processes], Athens 2007.

21 For the concept of the 'class pole', see: Nikos Potamianos: *Οι νοικοκυραιοι. Μαγαζάτορες και βιοτέχνες στην Αθήνα 1880–1925* [The "Noikokyraioi". Shopkeepers and Artisans in Athens 1880–1925], pp. 28f.



wark' between the forces of big business and labour. They also promoted their self-image as *noikokyraioi*, an almost untranslatable term that combined social identities and moral categories, denoting independent owners and guardians of traditional values.<sup>22</sup> They sought to form ad hoc alliances, sometimes promoting an anti-plutocratic discourse when seeking union assistance, and sometimes barricading themselves behind their employer identity in order to reject their employees' demands. They treated the state with reservation where the expansion of its fields of intervention was concerned, but also displayed a kind of 'statolatry' or worship of the state, expressed through various requests for support from it. Moreover, if lobbying and consultation with the authorities were the basic instruments they used to influence policymaking, taking to the streets was by no means rare.<sup>23</sup>

However, the heterogeneous social composition of these organisations hindered them from running smoothly. The mismatched economic interests of tradesmen and artisans were translated into divergent party loyalties, according to an earlier study, which needs to be relativised but appears to retain its value.<sup>24</sup> Shopkeepers and tradesmen (called 'professionals', a term covering all small entrepreneurs) adhered to the liberal camp, which championed the opening of the Greek economy to the international markets; meanwhile, faced with the possibility of *déclassement*, the pre- and anti-capitalist sections of the traditional petite bourgeoisie turned to the royalist parties. The rift deepened during the dictatorship of General Metaxas (1936–1941), which entrenched 'class division' by establishing separate artisans' organisations.<sup>25</sup>

The social and political upheavals of the Occupation led to the radicalisation of a section of the traditional petite bourgeoisie and its consequent rapprochement with the left-wing resistance movement. The shock of the violence and destruction that was unleashed during the so-called 'December Events' of 1944, the armed conflict in Athens between British and government troops on the one hand and Communist partisans on the other, drove the radical group into retreating and reactivated petit-bourgeois defensive reflexes, with the petite bourgeoisie seen as championing the social order. By the autumn of 1947, the security services had concluded that the GSEVE

22 *Ibid.*, pp. 208ff.

23 For the means of collective action at the disposal of bourgeois organisations, see: Michel Offerlé: *L'action collective patronale en France, 19e–21e siècles. Organisation, répertoires et engagements*, in: *Vingtième Siècle* 114 (2012), pp. 82–97; Brian Elliott et al.: *Bourgeois Social Movements in Britain: Répertoires and Responses*, in: *Sociological Review* 30:1 (1982), pp. 71–96.

24 G.T. Mavrogordatos: *Stillborn Republic: Social Coalitions and Party Strategies in Greece, 1922–1936*, Berkeley 1983, pp. 136–141.

25 Kostas Katsoudas (with Kostas Korozis): *Η ΓΣΕΒΕΕ στον 20ό αιώνα* [GSEVEE in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century], pp. 61–65.



board was steadfastly ‘law-abiding’,<sup>26</sup> while the escalation of the Civil War and intensifying repression forced the last supporters of the Left out of the trade associations and signposted the latter’s compliance with the status quo.<sup>27</sup> Nevertheless, the inability of many left-wingers to find work in the wider public sector, as they were unable to secure the notorious ‘certificates of social beliefs’ issued by police authorities, meant that many of them turned to self-employed work in petty commerce and artisanal manufacturing, with the result that the potential influence of the Left was greater than that recorded at organisational level.<sup>28</sup>

One of the results of the victory of the nationalist forces in the Civil War was the state co-optation of the trade associations. The enactment of Law 196/1946 was a landmark. It decreed that those insured with the Professionals and Artisans’ Fund had to pay a monthly contribution to the GSEVE. The Confederation, in turn, had to allocate half the total income to its member organisations, keeping the rest for its own needs. Law 196/1946 obliged all tradesmen and artisans to contribute to an organisation regardless of whether they were members or not. In effect, it disconnected the leadership from the associational base and established heavy dependence on the state. For example, the data for 1960 show that the amount received from the ‘obligatory contribution’ made up 74 per cent of GSEVE income, while the budgeted allocations of the member organisations corresponded to 0.5 per cent.<sup>29</sup> By managing the state ‘subsidy’, the peak organisation controlled the lower organisations rather than being dependent on them. It was in a position to condemn to economic suffocation any federations that were governed by persons not to its liking, to dictate terms to the rest, or even to maintain rubber-stamp associations, creating artificial majorities in the collective bodies.<sup>30</sup>

This resulted in the consolidation of an unchecked, tight-knit group of ‘class leaders’ who alternated on the boards of the Confederation, the major organisations and certain state bodies. Employers’ associations were unfamiliar with the existence of party-affiliated factions. The administrative positions were contended for by *ad personam* groupings of prominent association members who generally drew their influence from

26 Diplomatic and Historical Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, file 1947/57/1/4, Ministry of Public Order to Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 6 October 1947.

27 Kostas Katsoudas (with Kostas Korozis): *Η ΓΣΕΒΕΕ στον 20<sup>ο</sup> αιώνα* [GSEVEE in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century], pp. 69–83.

28 Sotiris Rizas: *Η ελληνική πολιτική μετά τον εμφύλιο πόλεμο. Κοινοβουλευτισμός και δικτατορία* [Greek Politics after the Civil War. Parliamentarism and Dictatorship], p. 296.

29 Archive of the General Confederation of Professionals, Craftsmen and Merchants (GSEVEE), file 1/4/2, Minutes of the GSEVE Board, 30 July 1961.

30 Cf. Giorgos Th. Mavrogordatos: *Μεταξύ Πιτυοκάμπτη και Προκρούστη. Οι επαγγελματικές οργανώσεις στη σημερινή Ελλάδα* [Between Pityocampetes and Procrustes. Professional Associations in Contemporary Greece], Athens 1988, p. 163; Andreas Moschonas: *Παραδοσιακά μικροαστικά στρώματα* [Traditional Petite-Bourgeoisie], p. 81.

patronage networking with low-level officials and political figures. It is not coincidental that Ioannis Bernitsas, who rose to Chairman of the GSEVE in 1949 and remained in that position until 1968, was the longest-serving chairman in the history of the Confederation.

While the postwar western democracies remained committed to liberal models of state-civil society relations, or adopted policy concertation schemes, the hybrid characteristics of the Greek interest group representation system bore the hallmarks of the ‘stunted’ postwar democracy. Law 196/1946 introduced a strong corporatist parameter, but other features of ‘state corporatist’ administration of interests, such as licensing of organisations from above and obligatory membership, were absent. The institutional framework largely retained its liberal hue. The establishment of independent organisations was not hindered, as long as they did not contravene the emergency legislation.<sup>31</sup> The large artisans’ federations chose not to be reintegrated into the GSEVE; instead, they founded the Supreme Confederation of Craftsmen’s Unions (ASVE) in 1946. The GSEVE did not hold the monopoly on representation of small businesses, but it did enjoy the advantage of having privileged connections to the political leadership. Its relations with ASVE were not always unfriendly, but the allocation of the state ‘subsidy’, which the GSEVE kept back from non-member associations, poisoned those relations. The idiosyncrasies of the framework of representation of organised interests in Greece rendered it dependent on clientelist and para-institutional modes of operation.<sup>32</sup>

The traditional petite bourgeoisie was considered the ‘supporting class’ of the postwar status quo.<sup>33</sup> The official discourse addressed the *noikokyraioi* as the “backbone” of the nation, society and the economy (and often, eloquently, ‘of the state’), a shield against the ‘communist threat’ and undesirable class struggle.<sup>34</sup> The petit-bourgeois organisations gladly accepted these compliments, which enabled them to transform their corporatist claims into ‘national’ necessities, and to decry any measure that harmed their sectoral interests as a blow against social cohesion. “Our class,” as the chairman of a provincial federation declared in 1958, “is the cornerstone of the pres-

31 For the classical distinction between types of corporatism, see: Philippe C. Schmitter: Still the Century of Corporatism?, in: *The Review of Politics* 36:1 (1974), pp. 85–131.

32 See especially: Stelios E. Alexandropoulos: *Συλλογική δράση και αντιπροσώπευση συμφερόντων πριν και μετά τη μεταπολίτευση στην Ελλάδα* [Collective Action and Representation of Interests before and after the Restoration of Democracy in Greece], Athens 2010, pp. 80ff.; Dimitris K. Kioukias: *Οργάνωση συμφερόντων στην Ελλάδα: Ενσωμάτωση και πρόσβαση στο κράτος σε συγκριτική προοπτική* [Organisation of Interests in Greece: Integration and Access to the State in a Comparative View], Athens 1994, pp. 89–92.

33 Ilias Nikolakopoulos: *Η καχεκτική δημοκρατία: κόμματα και εκλογές, 1946–1967* [The Stunted Democracy: Parties and Elections, 1946–1967], pp. 41f.

34 Valia Aranitou: *Η μεσαία τάξη στην Ελλάδα την εποχή των μνημονίων* [The Middle Class in Greece in the Age of Memoranda], Athens 2018, pp. 134f.

ervation of social balance and the social order. In the struggle between capital and the workers we stand as a barrier and woe betide today's social order if this barrier should break under the weight of encumbrances."<sup>35</sup>

The study of the discourse and demands of the petit-bourgeois organisations reveals an ambivalent attitude towards the role and purview of the state. On the one hand, they were opposed to any form of state intervention in the market as an adulteration of freedom of business. On the other, there were widespread demands for the state to shelter petit-bourgeois entrepreneurship from the dangers of monopoly capitalist penetration: "Freedom does not mean letting the other person be destroyed."<sup>36</sup> Defending small business through opposition to the 'interventionist' or 'uncaring' state, subject to the restrictions imposed by the political system, defined the collective demands of Greek small businesses and the way in which they were expressed.

The main themes of petit-bourgeois mobilisation did not diverge significantly from the patterns of the interwar period. Opposition to fiscal rationalisation led to consecutive mass protests (1945, 1949–1952) with varying degrees of success, while demands were constantly put forward regarding commercial premises and labour law. The state responses illustrate aspects of the prevailing clientelist mode of 'incorporation'. Commercial enterprises groaned under the burden of a plethora of indirect taxes, the cornerstone of the Greek fiscal system, but the inefficient tax collection system allowed the independent petite bourgeoisie to get away with tax evasion.<sup>37</sup> The constant lease extensions, with relatively minor adjustments, were clear victories of the shopkeepers over the rentier lobby. As for the rudimentary welfare state, complaints about employer contributions to private employees' insurance funds were somewhat mitigated by clientelist regulations that boosted the insurance funds of self-employed professionals by transfers of state funds.<sup>38</sup>

- 35 Mellon Epaggelmaton-Viotechnon 30 July 1958 (K. Loustas). Translated by the authors.
- 36 GSEVEE Archives, file 1/3/2, Minutes of the GSEVE Executive Committee, 28 April 1959 (G. Mylonas). This attitude is commonplace in petit-bourgeois political culture. See, among others: Davide Baviello: *I commercianti e il primi anni della Repubblica 1946–1951*, Milan 2008, pp. 87f.; Richard Scase/Robert Goffee: *The Real World of the Small Business Owner*, London 1980, pp. 125f.
- 37 Unfortunately, we do not have reliable figures on the level of participation of specific social groups in the shadow economy in the first postwar decades. Some studies appear to indicate that self-employed tax evasion ballooned after the dictatorship, see: Maria Negreponi-Delivani: *Η οικονομία της παραοικονομίας στην Ελλάδα* [The Economics of the Shadow Economy in Greece], Athens 1990. For the nature of the Greek tax system in the 1960s and the asymmetry between direct and indirect taxes, see: George F. Break/Ralph Turvey: *Studies in Greek Taxation*, Athens 1964.
- 38 G. V. Dertilis: *Ατελέσφοροι ή τελέσφοροι; Φόροι και Εξουσία στο Νεοελληνικό Κράτος* [Ineffective or Effective? Taxes and Power in the Modern Greek State], Athens 1993, pp. 64ff., 98f.; Panos Kazakos: *Ανάμεσα σε Κράτος και Αγορά. Οικονομία και Οικονομική Πολιτική στη Μετα-*

The militant protest repertoire resorted to in the years immediately after the war betrays how easy it was to engage in collective action. Closing shop had proven useful leverage for obtaining policy outputs: “while the demands of the great are resolved with just a few words at dinners and in lobby hallways, the only resort left to the middle class is intensive struggle, since overtures and pleas are usually thrown in the waste-paper basket.”<sup>39</sup> Another favourable factor was the sense that the “most conservative and law-abiding class of the Nation”<sup>40</sup> could press its demands without fear that its actions would be labelled ‘subversive’, as was often the case with worker and employee strikes. Moreover, the social role performed by tradesmen and shopkeepers, due to their dominance of basic commodities retail and their primacy in the absorption of employment, increased their negotiating power; the ruling class was well aware that they were mediators of political and ideological influence over the subaltern classes.<sup>41</sup>

The adherence of the association leadership to the governing conservative party explains the drop in assertive action after 1952. However, the underlying resentment of economic policy-making that did not consider small businesses stoked new uncertainties. The unequal treatment of small businesses from the era of the Marshall Plan onwards and the scanty loans provided to artisans by the banking system underlay the resurgence of traditional distrust, particularly by small producers in the secondary sector, which saw the state as the servant of the business elite. “Our class is in danger,” declared the chairman of ASVE in 1948. “The Artisanal class is systematically afflicted, while benefits are always given to industrialists.”<sup>42</sup> The economic liberalisation policies adopted after 1953 reignited collective fears regarding small business sustainability, gradually transforming the ‘neglected’ artisanal manufacture into the focus of petit-bourgeois discontent. The division into separate tradesmen and artisans’ organisations—particularly evident in Athens and the major urban centres—deepened the conflicts, which political forces, such as the Centre and the Left, attempted to exploit, alongside the pervasive restlessness of the urban middle classes.

πολεμική Ελλάδα 1944–2000 [Between State and Market. Economy and Economic Policy in Postwar Greece 1944–2000], p. 147; Keith R. Legg, *Politics in Modern Greece*, pp. 108f. For the context of GSEVEE demands in the ‘longue durée’, see: Nikos Potamianos: 100 χρόνια ΓΣΕΒΕΕ [100 Years of GSEVEE], pp. 244–381.

39 GSEVEE Archives, file 4/2/2b, Minutes of the General Assembly of the Federation of Professional Craftsmen of Athens 23 February 1951 (N. Leonardos). Translated by the authors.

40 Acropolis 8 September 1950. Translated by the authors.

41 Mellon Epaggelmaton-Viotechnon, 1 May 1959; GSEVEE Archive, file 1/5/1, Proceedings of the 11<sup>th</sup> GSEVEE Conference 12–16 June 1960.

42 GSEVEE Archives, file 4/2/7, Minutes of the General Assembly of the Federation of Professional Craftsmen of Athens 6 October 1948 (N. Leonardos). Translated by the authors.

## Petit-Bourgeois Collective Action and Class Realignment in the 1960s

At the dawn of the 1960s, the fact that the Association of Greece with the EEC coincided with the ‘political opportunity structure’<sup>43</sup> created by the onset of the crisis of the ‘stunted democracy’ regime, launched two mutually reinforcing processes: the formulation of an alternative petit-bourgeois identity to that managed by the GSEVE leadership, and the emergence of a new cycle of collective action by small business organisations. The point of intersection of the two processes was the attempt to reconfigure the petit-bourgeois ‘class pole’.

The process of adapting the Greek economy to the EEC brought about changes in the sharing of the domestic market and affected the internal hierarchy of economic interests, provoking competition among groups and sections of capital over who was to benefit from state intervention.<sup>44</sup> While the problems of tradesmen’s and artisans’ organisations had hitherto been more or less the same whatever their political orientation, and any disputes had been over the way in which those problems should be resolved, the Association with the EEC was the first issue to split the organisations into two distinct camps. For the first camp, EEC Association was a blessing; for the second it was the harbinger of ills. In the GSEVE, which mainly consisted of tradesmen’s federations of the urban centres and mixed tradesmen and artisans’ organisations of the provinces, a climate of restrained optimism prevailed, whereas the large craft federations grew disgruntled.

The deep-seated petit-bourgeois uneasiness was reframed with hopes and fears for the future of small business in an unknown environment of stiff international competition. The ‘open door’ policy for European products and the establishment of foreign companies was primarily considered a threat to craft sectors whose level of accumulation depended exclusively on protecting their position in the domestic market. Moreover, the ‘peripheral’ position of the purely artisanal organisations in the representational structure of organised petit-bourgeois interests and their relative inability to negotiate government concessions encouraged the expression of dissent. From as

43 For the term ‘political opportunity structure’, see: Sidney Tarrow: National politics and collective action: recent theory and research in Western Europe and the United States, in: Annual Review of Sociology 14 (1988), pp. 421–440; Patricia L. Hipsher: Democratic Transitions as Protest Cycles: Social Movement Dynamics in Democratizing Latin America, in: David S. Meyer/Sidney Tarrow (eds.): The Social Movement Society: Contentious Politics for a New Century, Lanham 1998, pp. 153–172.

44 Michalis Nikolakakis: “Μοντέρνα Κίρκη”: η κοινωνική κατασκευή του μεταπολεμικού ελληνικού τουρισμού [‘Modern Circe’: The social construction of Greek postwar tourism], in: Koinonikes Epistimes 6 (2015), p. 48.

early as 1959, the craft federations protested to the government about the omission of the craft industry from state planning and its exclusion from the necessary tax and credit incentives.<sup>45</sup> The vague promises made by the government drew criticism from the representatives of small manufacturing sectors (metallurgy, clothing, etc.), who were afraid that current government policy would lead to their being squeezed out of the market by stronger competitors.<sup>46</sup> In the spring of 1960, draft legislation to tighten the fiscal framework and the approval of a German ready-to-wear clothing factory in Thessaloniki led to the first artisans' strike in many years; this took the form of opposition to government policy and tax incentives for large investors and industrialists.<sup>47</sup> Rumours that foreign capital was about to be invested in activities hitherto monopolised by the craft industry, such as shoes and leather-working, created turmoil in the primary associations and increased pressure on the leadership of the federations and the ASVE to take action. The denunciation of foreign investment as an 'invasion' became common currency during this time. The discourse of the affected artisans' organisations was similar to that of EDA, which predicted that the 'super-privileges' of foreign enterprises and 'tariff disarmament' would 'eliminate' Greek manufacturing.<sup>48</sup> It was the boards of these organisations who were the first to engage in contacts with the Left.<sup>49</sup>

The GSEVE, on the other hand, wished to appear the social partner of the government and a steady steward of class affairs. Integration in the Western European economy was presented as an opportunity, since, as both the GSEVE and the government assured people, it was small rather than large units, which would become competitive. The Confederation heralded itself not only as the 'headquarters' for the elaboration of a special EEC adaptation programme, but even as the vanguard of a 'crusade' to achieve the agreement.<sup>50</sup> The fact that the GSEVE sided with government choices

- 45 GSEVEE Archives, file 4/2/7, Minutes of the General Assembly of the Federation of Professional Craftsmen of Athens 24 June 1959; Viotechnis 28 July 1959.
- 46 Viotechnis 15 July 1959; GSEVEE Archives, file 4/2/7, Minutes of the General Assembly of the Federation of Professional Craftsmen of Athens 9 November 1960.
- 47 Viotechnis 24 February 1960; Modern Social History Archives (ASKI), EDA Archive, file 423/2, The Federation of Craftsmen's Associations of Athens and the Federation of Craftsmen's Associations of Piraeus to colleagues 5 May 1960.
- 48 I Avgi 31 July 1962. Cf. Nikos Kitsikis (ed.): *Η θύελλα της Κοινής Αγοράς* [The Common Market Storm], Athens 1962, pp. 47–67, 113–122.
- 49 The greater willingness of artisans to support left-wing parties compared to small businessmen has been noted, see: Nonna Mayer: *L'ancrage à droite des petits commerçants et artisans indépendants*, in: Georges Lavau/Gérard Grunberg/Nonna Mayer (eds.): *L'univers politique des classes moyennes*, pp. 337f.
- 50 GSEVEE Archives, file 1/4/3, Minutes of the GSEVE Board 20 November 1962; Kostas Katsoudas (with Kostas Korozis): *Η ΓΣΕΒΕΕ στον 20ό αιώνα* [GSEVEE in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century], pp. 97–100.



should not be attributed solely to political priorities. It sprang from the conviction of powerful Athenian tradesmen's organisations, representing shopkeepers of the commercial centre that the policy was intended to boost active demand without favouring the process of centralisation of capital in retail sales.<sup>51</sup> So instead of tending to adopt an antitrust stance, vested professional interests reasonably supposed that, in the absence of competitors, they had a good chance of reaping the rewards stemming from state policies.<sup>52</sup> The opposite view was mainly expressed by tradesmen's organisations of the provinces and the Athens suburbs. Various provincial organisations accused the GSEVE of disregarding the crisis of the regional rural economies on which the turnover of local tradesmen and shopkeepers depended.<sup>53</sup> The tradesmen's and artisans' organisations of the Athenian suburbs registered their concern that they were insufficiently represented in the collective bodies and argued that focusing demands on the modernisation of businesses favoured the larger shops in the centre of Athens, which would siphon customers off from those in the suburbs.<sup>54</sup>

The emerging front of opposition to the GSEVE board and the government was firmly established at the end of 1961. Political scientists have shown that the contestation of the ERE victory in the 1961 elections marked a 'political opportunity structure' which spurred a 'protest cycle' and the formation of a 'movement sector' (workers, farmers, students) demanding the economic and political democratisation of the country.<sup>55</sup> The 'transmission of signals' by the political system (weakened gov-

- 51 In contrast to many European countries where competition between small shops and department stores dated back to the 19<sup>th</sup> century, there were no strong capital concentration tendencies in Greek retail trade prior to the 1970s. Of course, in countries such as France, Italy and Belgium, supermarkets only began to appear in the 1960s, so their experience could hardly have been taken into account by Greek shopkeepers in the early 1960s. See: Bruno Maida: *Proletari della borghesia. I piccoli commercianti dall'Unità a oggi*, Rome 2009, pp. 124–133; Tristan Jacques: *The state, small shops and hypermarkets: a public policy for retail, France, 1945–1973*, in: *Business History* 60:7 (2018), pp. 1026–1048; Peter Heyrman: *Unlocking the padlock: retail and public policy in Belgium (1930–1961)*, in: *Business History* 60:7 (2018), pp. 1049–1081; Valia Aranitou: *Το μικρό εμπόριο στη μεταπολεμική Ελλάδα* [Petty Commerce in Postwar Greece], pp. 60ff.
- 52 Mellon Epaggelmaton-Viotechnon 8 October and 1 November 1961.
- 53 GSEVEE Archives, file 1/5/2, Proceedings of the 12th GSEVE Conference 16–20 June 1963; Enosis Epaggelmaton kai Viotechnon 31 January 1964. Large strikes were also held in support of the disadvantaged farmers, for example in Heraklion and Agrinio, see: Eleftheria 15 February 1961; Athinaiki 16 February 1961; I Avgi 3 August 1962.
- 54 Enosis Epaggelmaton kai Viotechnon 15 February 1961.
- 55 Dimitris Papanikolopoulos: *Ο κύκλος διαμαρτυρίας του '60. Συλλογική δράση και δημοκρατία στην προδικτατορική Ελλάδα* [The Protest Cycle of the 1960s. Collective Action and Democracy in Pre-dictatorship Greece], Athens 2015; Serafeim I. Seferiades: *Συλλογικές δράσεις, κινηματικές πρακτικές: η "σύντομη" δεκαετία του 60' ως "συγκρουσιακός κύκλος"* [Collective action, movement practices: The "short" 60s as a "contentious cycle"], in: Alkis Rigos/Serafeim



ernment, potential institutional allies) had a double effect on the petit-bourgeois organisations, affecting processes within their ranks and shaping the conditions for engagement in collective action. Forces within the tradesmen and artisans' organisations, which saw economic liberalisation as a threat, sought to enter into alliances with EK and EDA, while, conversely, the opposition parties saw an opportunity for political representation of petit-bourgeois discontent. This confluence of interests led to the 'politicisation' of criticism and the formation of a unified trade association opposition in 1962, attracting elements of both the Centre and the Left. The traditional demands were not modified, nor did resorting to the symbolic funds of 'moral' indignation<sup>56</sup> cease, but there was an attempt to convey new meanings: this time demands were not made in the name of preserving the 'social order' but in the context of the struggle for democratisation. The close entanglement between the trade associations' conflict and the political dispute at national level is also apparent from the fact that the opposition network of tradesmen's and artisans' organisations was formed simultaneously with the official EK call to popular mobilisation against the conservative government.<sup>57</sup>

The rapprochement of the disaffected lower middle class elements and the opposition parties was founded on the antitrust elements of EK and EDA programmes and the common demand for democratisation. The ratification of the EEC Association agreement shifted criticism to its method of implementation: restrictive policies and provision of incentives to foreign and large capital. The promise of development through the application of expansionist policies formed the meeting-point of artisanal objectives and the political discourse of the opposition parties. In effect, EK and EDA were recognised as having a policy more in line with the capabilities of 'national' capital, in other words their own. Moreover, the vision of democratisation could be interpreted not only by reference to the political system, but also in relation to economic policy,<sup>58</sup> which was interwoven in turn with the overthrow of the status quo

I. Seferiades/Evanthis Chadjiassiliou (eds.): Η "σύντομη" δεκαετία του '60. Θεσμικό πλαίσιο, κομματικές στρατηγικές, κοινωνικές συγκρούσεις, πολιτισμικές διεργασίες [The "Short" 60s. Institutional Framework, Party Strategies, Social Conflict, Cultural Processes], pp. 56–77. For the concept of the "protest cycle", see: Sidney Tarrow: *Cycles of Collective Action: Between Moments of Madness and the Repertoire of Contention*, in: Mark Traugott (ed.): *Repertoires and Cycles of Collective Action*, Durham/London 1995, pp. 89–115.

56 Cf. Frank Bechhofer/Brian Elliott: *Petty Property: the survival of a Moral Economy*, in: Frank Bechhofer/Brian Elliot (eds.): *The Petite Bourgeoisie: Comparative Studies of the Uneasy Stratum*, London 1981, pp. 182–200.

57 See, for instance: Enosis Epaggelmaton kai Viotechnon 31 January 1964; General State Archives (Heraklion), Archives of the Heraklion Chamber, file 353, Heraklion Federation of Professionals and Craftsmen to G. Papandreou 8 May 1964.

58 For cooperatives—which flourished briefly in the 1960s—as a 'democratic sector of society', see: ASKI, EDA Archive, file 424/2, Union of Merchant Tailors and Tailors to the General Assembly 7 April 1967.

at organisational level: “The struggle for survival of the tradesmen’s and craftsmen’s class is inextricably linked to the struggle for the guaranteeing of trade-association and democratic freedoms.”<sup>59</sup>

The united opposition front came forward with the promotion of a common candidate in the elections to the board of the Professionals and Artisans’ Insurance Fund in 1962.<sup>60</sup> Although the opposition ticket was defeated, this challenge to the pro-government candidate after many years of unbroken rule alarmed the GSEVE board. This was the start of a strategic competition over lower-middle-class support between the two sides. The GSEVE proclaimed its supposed ability to gain concessions from the government, as it had with the issue of lease extension for commercial properties. It also accused dissidents of being communist fellow travellers.<sup>61</sup>

The opposition forces expanded on traditional demands by highlighting the dangers posed by foreign investment to Greek small businesses, and infused the pursuit of class interests with a spirit of combativeness. The ‘protest cycle’ of the petit-bourgeois organisations featured a wide repertoire of action, including the issuing of memoranda, remonstrations, rallies, indoor gatherings and work stoppages at shops and workshops (ranging from a few hours to one day). The strike and mass rally of March 1963 was a milestone, not only due to the high turnout but also because the wording of its primary demand, the prohibition of foreign investment in active craft sectors, resembled the language of the opposition parties: “The foreigners want to crush us. To monopolise our domestic market. And then to exploit our labour and that of our employees and exploit the whole of the Greek people in colonialist fashion.”<sup>62</sup> Similar bids for ‘economic nationalism’ washed up on the banks of wider cultural currents, which had acquired a hegemonic dynamic during the 1960s. As a counterweight to the official ideology of ‘national-mindedness’, EDA and the left wing of EK propounded a competing version of patriotism, which interpreted as the dominant conflict the confrontation between a very large social majority (in which the middle classes and the ‘national bourgeois class’ explicitly participated), and the domestic and foreign agents of ‘imperialist dependency’, proclaiming the restoration of ‘national sovereignty’ to be the key issue at stake.<sup>63</sup> The polemic against the ‘invasion’ of foreign

59 G. D. Siaflekis: *Η οικονομία του Βόλου και η Κοινή Ευρωπαϊκή Αγορά (Βιομηχανία-Βιοτεχνία)* [The Economy of Volos and the European Common Market (Industry-Manufacture)], Volos 1963, p. 33. Translated by the authors.

60 Enosis Epaggelmaton kai Viotechnon 3 April 1962.

61 GSEVEE Archives, file 1/4/3, Minutes of the GSEVE Board 26–27 January 1964.

62 ASKI, EDA Archive, file 559, The Federation of Craftsmen’s Associations of Athens and the Federation of Craftsmen’s Associations of Piraeus, “Διακήρυξις συγκεντρώσεως διαμαρτυρίας” [“Declaration of protest meeting”] 14 March 1963. Translated by the authors. See also: *I Avgi* 14 & 16 March 1963.

63 Cf. Katerina Lambrinou: *ΕΔΑ, 1956–1967: Πολιτική και Ιδεολογία* [EDA, 1956–1967: Politics and Ideology], Athens 2018; Tassos Trikkas: *ΕΔΑ 1951–1967. Το νέο πρόσωπο της Αρι-*

capital tapped into the reservoir of collective imagination and aimed to integrate itself in historical narratives that interpreted recent Greek history in terms of perpetual ‘resistance’. In a characteristic example, the Secretary General of the Federation of Merchant Tailors unloaded a verbal blast against the proposed establishing of a foreign underwear factory in Athens: “we are faced with a new form of German occupation, which, if we are to survive it, it is our [...] patriotic duty to confront as we victoriously confronted [...] Hitler’s hordes.”<sup>64</sup>

While the ERE campaign programme crowed about the incentives for heavy industry and asserted that the other social classes would benefit from the trickle-down approach to economic policy and the gradual diffusion of prosperity, the opposition parties placed small business at the heart of their plans. However, whereas EDA wanted to challenge the European perspective overall and organically link petit-bourgeois agitation with the mobilization of other social classes,<sup>65</sup> by promising the ‘total exclusion’ of foreign capital from the industrial sector, and reserving to the tradesmen and artisans the task of covering domestic popular needs, lower middle class associations demanded state support to improve small business competitiveness in order to participate in the modernisation process on an equal footing with large industrial corporations. They imbued their rhetoric with ‘national-democratic’ content, which, however, did not reject the internationalisation of the economy, as long as its effects were palliated by policies protecting the domestic market. They demanded long-term lending to small manufacturers, their inclusion in the five-year development plans, assumption by the state of the cost of modernisation of workshop mechanical equipment, and the reduction of production costs for small enterprises (particularly through reduction of employer insurance contributions and, more rarely, requesting wage moderation). The main points echoed the centrist programme promising that it would turn diversified small units into the drivers of industrialization that would take the lead in the transformation of the Greek economy into an export-oriented one.<sup>66</sup> Another reason for petit-bourgeois alignment with the Centrists was the promise of a more ‘relaxed’ tax, income and loans policy, a particularly attractive prospect for those who equated de-

στεράς [EDA 1951–1967. *The New Face of the Left*], Athens 2009, vol. II, pp. 1360–1364; Andreas Pantazopoulos, “Για το Λαό και το Έθνος”: Η στιγμή Ανδρέα Παπανδρέου, 1965–1989 [“For the People and the Nation”: The Andreas Papandreou Moment], Athens 2001, pp. 108–126.

64 Viotechnis 22 February 1963 (D. Moraitis). Translated by the authors. Note that the factory was Swiss- rather than German-owned.

65 ASKI, EDA Archive, file 418/1, “Τα προβλήματα οργάνωσης της πάλης των μεσαίων στρωμάτων”, [“Organisational problems of middle-class struggle”] n. d.

66 EDA Election Manifesto, undated, p. 20; Viotechnis 1 January 1964; I Avgi 21 January 1964; Union of the Democratic Centre Archive, Election Manifesto, undated.

velopment with short-term policies sympathetic to the ‘common man’.<sup>67</sup> The Centre Union party won the majority vote of the urban petite bourgeoisie.<sup>68</sup>

During the period of EK government, the cohesion of the ‘redistributive’ alliance that had brought it to power was tested, as social groups competed more fiercely for state favours. Although EK did not change the ‘outward-looking’ orientation of the economy in any significant way, it did not lose the support of the tradesmen and artisans. The artisans’ associations even postponed a demonstration against foreign capital investments and participated in a ‘pan-European’ conference on small manufacture organised under the auspices of the state.<sup>69</sup> The alliance was held together by the stakes underlying the overriding political conflict. The new government strengthened the position of the centre-left trade associations in real terms. It replaced the governing boards of the state-supervised institutions representing the petite bourgeoisie and severed relations with Bernitsas’s circle by withholding the ‘subsidy’ established under Law 196/1946. In 1964, as the GSEVE leadership entrenched itself in power, the opposition tradesmen’s and artisans’ organisations attempted to capitalise on government goodwill by setting up a ‘GSEVE Reorganisation Committee’ which served as a battering ram for the takeover of the Federation.<sup>70</sup>

The ‘royal coup’ of July 1965 provoked a flood of popular demonstrations in support of the elected government. Just as the GSEVE was reclaiming its place as the defender of public order against ‘mob rule’, the course of events solidified the cohesion of the dissenting artisans’ and tradesmen’s associations, which aligned themselves openly with the ‘anti-right’ inter-class coalition defending ‘democratic normality’: “It is not dictatorship and oligarchy which will serve us, the people of small and medium-sized enterprise, but Democracy.”<sup>71</sup> The declining phase of the ‘protest cycle’ that ensued brought the struggle for the hegemony in the associations to the fore-

67 Christos Hadziiossif: *Η περίοδος της Ανασυγκρότησης 1945–1953 ως στιγμή της σύγχρονης Ελληνικής και Ευρωπαϊκής Ιστορίας* [The period of Reconstruction 1945–1953 as a moment in modern Greek and European history], in: *Η Ελληνική Κοινωνία κατά την Πρώτη Μεταπολεμική Περίοδο (1945–1967)* [Greek Society during the First Postwar Period], Athens 1994, pp. 31f.; Jean Meynaud (with P. Merlopoulos & G. Notaras): *Les forces politiques en Grèce*, pp. 290f.

68 See: Tassos Trikkas: *ΕΔΑ 1951–1967. Το νέο πρόσωπο της Αριστεράς* [EDA 1951–1967. The New Face of the Left], vol. II, pp. 1028–1029.

69 GSEVEE Archives, file 4/2/7, Minutes of the General Assembly of the Federation of Professional Craftsmen of Athens 17 March 1965.

70 Kostas Katsoudas (with Kostas Korozis): *Η ΓΣΕΒΕΕ στον 20ό αιώνα* [GSEVEE in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century], p. 105.

71 *Nea Epaggelmaton Viotechnon Emboron* 2 September 1965. Translated by the authors. The participation of shopkeepers and artisans in the mobilisations was notable, particularly in the general strike of 27 July 1965, see: *Athinaiki* 28 July 1965; *I Avgi* 28 July & 1 August 1965.

front. However, the General Confederation board had established contacts with the subsequent minority governments, which revoked many of their predecessor's measures. The turning point was the 13th GSEVE Conference (1966), when the two sides clashed amid verbal wrangling and police intervention. The Bernitsas governing board was re-elected, but the legality of the procedure was repeatedly challenged. The legal proceedings brought the Federation's activities to a standstill until the *coup d'état* that ushered in the Junta of the Colonels in 1967.<sup>72</sup> The legacy of the social imageries and identity narratives that were shaped in the 1960s, however, was to be retrieved by the petit-bourgeois organisations after the restoration of parliamentary democracy in 1974.

## Conclusion

A consequence of the Greek Civil War and the dominance of the conservative forces was the co-optation of small business associations. The traditional petite bourgeoisie, largely absent from the policy-making process and overlooked in the economic modernisation process, was nevertheless attached to the web of power in a clientelist manner. The fact that the Association of Greece with the EEC coincided with the 'political opportunity structure' arising from the start of the crisis of the political status quo set the stage for the launching of two parallel processes. On the one hand, there emerged a cycle of trader and artisan mobilisation which was incorporated, as a minor participant, in the broader 'movement sector' of the 1960s that supported the political and economic democratisation of Greece. The basic demands revolved around traditional claims (taxation, lease extension, loans, insurance), which, however, adapted to the context of the Association with the EEC and to handling the competition that the liberalisation of the economy was predicted to bring about. The second process concerned the establishment of a unified trade association opposition allied to the centrist and left wing parties on a national level. The point of intersection of the two processes was the attempt to form an alternative 'class pole', charged with reinterpreting petit-bourgeois interests, redelimiting relations with other social subjects, redefining the channels of intermediation with the political system, and redetermining the methods of promoting collective objectives.

The discursive recasting of petit-bourgeois identity was defined by opposition to the economic 'oligarchy' (via the dipoles small/large, local/foreign, monopoly/non-monopoly capital) and the conservative political structure, while the traditional self-image of the *noikokyraioi* was more ambivalent towards the capital-labour conflict

72 Kostas Katsoudas (with Kostas Korozis): Η ΓΣΕΒΕΕ στον 20<sup>ο</sup> αιώνα [GSEVEE in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century], pp. 105f.

and subservient to the ruling power block. The lower middle class was primarily seen as a 'popular' element and its assertion of self-interest was endowed with 'national' relevance.<sup>73</sup> The outline of a 'protest populism', the dichotomy between the undifferentiated 'people' and the 'elite' was present<sup>74</sup>; however, the corporatist and populist elements of the petit-bourgeois demands were expressed together with other discourses in a 'chain of equivalence' forged by the progressive sociopolitical alliance of the 1960s, in the framework of which the different thematics were merged into one hegemonic signifier: democratisation.<sup>75</sup> Herein lies the political divergence of the Greek experience from other petit-bourgeois movements of the same period that swayed towards conservative causes. The latter, faced with a high level of institutional legitimacy and social integration in western liberal democracies, were often diverted into anti-political paths.<sup>76</sup> The resentment of many tradesmen and artisans in Greece, on the contrary, found a place in the anti-right-wing and anti-imperialist rhetoric of the Centre and the Left, and petit-bourgeois protest unfolded in the space created by the crisis of representation and the erosion of mechanisms of 'incorporation' that characterised the authoritarian postwar regime.

The appeal of the 'popular-democratic' interpellations outlines the contours of the 'radicalisation' of the discontented tradesmen and artisans. Although they were "experiential deniers of monopoly capitalism",<sup>77</sup> they did not go so far as to visualise radical social transformation. They were bounded by the defence of the microcapitalist character of the Greek economy, the preservation of sectoral gains and the desire for state protection. They were unable to overcome their differences with the subaltern classes, and the unified struggle with the latter was undermined by an instinctive adherence to separate objectives. Their criticism was limited to relations of domination, in other

- 73 Katerina Lambrinou: ΕΔΑ, 1956–1967: Πολιτική και Ιδεολογία [EDA, 1956–1967: Politics and Ideology], pp. 411f.
- 74 Pierre-André Taguieff: *L'illusion populiste*, Paris 2002, pp. 127–135. See also: Pierre Birnbaum: *Genèse du populisme: le peuple et les gros*, Paris 2012.
- 75 Ernesto Laclau: *On Populist Reason*, London 2005; Idem: *New Reflections on the Revolution of our Time*, London/New York 1990. Similarities can be identified with the plebeian movements during the crisis of oligarchic parliamentarianism in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, when the petit-bourgeois guilds found themselves at the forefront, see: Nikos Potamianos: *Ο ριζοσπαστισμός στα 1908–1910 και η έννοια του λαϊκισμού* [Radicalism in 1908–1910 and the concept of populism], in: *Λαϊκισμός στην ιστορία, την τέχνη, την πολιτική* [Populism in History, Art, Politics], Athens 2016, pp. 117–131.
- 76 For the striking case of French *poujadisme*, which began as an anti-taxation protest movement and ended in the political camp of the extreme Right, see: Romain Souillac: *Le mouvement Pujade: de la défense professionnelle au populisme nationaliste, 1953–1962*, Paris 2007; James G. Shields: *An enigma still: Poujadism fifty years on*, in: *French Politics, Culture & Society*, 22:1 (2004), pp. 36–56.
- 77 Ν. Λυτράς: *Μικρο-αστική λειτουργία και οργάνωση στην Ελλάδα* [Petit-Bourgeois Function and Organisation in Greece], p. 226.

words to the alternative management of political and trade association power, without touching on relations of production.<sup>78</sup> The programmatic legitimisation of their claims by the centre-left parties obscured the striking consistency of their demands, and the ‘national’ anti-monopoly discourse cleared their self-satisfied clichés about a ‘conscientious, hard-working’ class and ‘healthy’ small capital of any conservative connotations. The foundations of the political resignification of petit-bourgeois identity were laid in the 1960s, without its components being exposed to any significant modification. The consequences became apparent after the restoration of democracy in 1974, when the same political forces, on the rise once more, remythicised the *noikokyraioi* into ‘non-privileged’ subjects *par excellence* and the bedrock of ‘national popular development’.<sup>79</sup>

## Appendix

In order to determine whether a business can be termed professional or artisanal, the bibliography relies on the quantitative criterion of number of employees and the qualitative criterion of whether manufacturing activity is taking place.<sup>80</sup> Manufacturing places the unit in the category of industry, while its absence indicates a tradesman’s shop. Scholars disagree on the number of employees required to define a unit as industrial. The main proposals refer (not counting family employment) to 10, 25 or 50 employees.<sup>81</sup> We adopt the limit of 50 employees to define an industrial unit. Although we realise that that this may mean that small industrial units are classified under artisanal manufacturing, the other limits of 10 or 25 employees are too restrictive, excluding workshops with a concentration of labour and minimum mechanisation of

78 *Ibid.*, pp. 218–237.

79 Ioannis Karayiannis: *Πολιτική εξουσία και συγκρότηση ταυτοτήτων. Η κατασκευή των “μικρομεσαίων” στην Ελλάδα, 1974–1985* [Political Power and Identity-Building. The Construction of the “Lower Middle Class” in Greece, 1974–1985], unpublished doctoral dissertation, Athens 2003.

80 These are criteria established by government agencies in the context of interventionist national economic policies.

81 Andreas N. Lytras: *Μικρο-αστική λειτουργία και οργάνωση στην Ελλάδα* [Petit-Bourgeois Function and Organisation in Greece], *passim*; Sokratis M. Koniordos: *Η ‘ανάπτυξη’ των προγραμμάτων ανάπτυξης: Οι βιοτέχνες και η δικτατορία 1967–1974* [The ‘development’ of development programmes: Artisans and the dictatorship 1967–1974], in: *Epitheorisi Koinonikon Erevnon* 103 (2000), pp. 27–56; Greek Productivity Centre: *Προβλήματα της Βιοτεχνίας Εν Ελλάδι: Προτεινόμενοι Λύσεις* [Problems of Artisanal Manufacture in Greece: Proposed Solutions], Athens 1965.



production.<sup>82</sup> Records of the number of professionals in the tertiary sector are unreliable; the available statistics are incomplete and heterogeneous. We therefore apply the criterion of membership of the professional chamber (excluding wholesale, transport and banking, which were not permitted to enrol in the chambers).

Artisanal workshops in the period under scrutiny (1945–1967) formed over 99 per cent of manufacturing as a whole (Table 1). Moreover, approximately six in 10 workers in manufacture were employed in the artisanal sector (Table 2). Professionals (shopkeepers and tradesmen) are similarly dominant in the tertiary sector. The number of professionals' shops is only slightly lower than the total number of shops in the tertiary sector with the right of enrolment in the professional chambers, and forms a high percentage (86 per cent) of tertiary-sector businesses as a whole (Table 3). Small units predominated in the majority of manufacturing branches, with the average number of employees not exceeding four (Table 4). Very small units also predominated in the tertiary sector. In retail, the largest branch of this sector, 85 per cent of shops employed one or two people (Table 5).

There are no available data on the contribution of the artisanal sector to Gross Domestic Product during the period in question, either in the statistical series of the Hellenic Statistical Service or in the secondary bibliography. The only information we have been able to glean, related to state attempts to reorganise the artisanal sector, concerns estimates of the income it generated (Tables 6 and 7). However, these figures, compared with corresponding data on national income and income from manufacturing, are indicative of the importance of the contribution of artisanal workshops to the national economy. There is no information on the share of professionals and shopkeepers in the income produced by the tertiary sector, nor are there any relevant estimates by government services.

82 Parliamentary Planning Commission, *Βιοτεχνία* [Artisanal Manufacture], Athens 1959, p. 17.

Table 1. Manufacturing: Number of (artisanal) shops by number of employees.\*

Year	1951 shop number	1958 shop number	1963 shop number	1969 shop number
Total manufacturing (Industrial—Artisanal)	81,417	109,236	122,851	124,651
Artisanal (0–50 employees)	80,897	108,516	121,663	123,715
Artisanal Shops as a percentage of Total Manufacture	99.4	99.2	99	99.3

Sources: Συνοπτική Στατιστική Επετηρίς Ελλάδος 1954 [Summary Statistical Yearbook of Greece 1954] at: [http://dlib.statistics.gr/Book/GRESYE\\_01\\_0002\\_00010.pdf](http://dlib.statistics.gr/Book/GRESYE_01_0002_00010.pdf) (accessed on 11 August 2020)

Απογραφή των βιομηχανικών, βιοτεχνικών και εμπορικών εν γένει καταστημάτων της 15ης Νοεμβρίου 1958 [Census of Industrial, Craft and Commercial Enterprises of 15 November 1958] at: [http://dlib.statistics.gr/Book/GRESYE\\_02\\_1001\\_00006.pdf](http://dlib.statistics.gr/Book/GRESYE_02_1001_00006.pdf) (accessed on 11 August 2020)

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\* Not including cottage industries.

Table 2. Absolute numbers and percentage breakdown of employment in manufacturing (Industrial-Artisanal), 1958–1969.

Unit size	1958		1963		1969	
	Absolute number	Percentage	Absolute number	Percentage	Absolute number	Percentage
Up to 50 employees	249,756	66.5	147,934	67.1	257,146	63.5
Over 50 employees	126,075	33.5	98,421	32.9	147,681	36.5

Sources: Απογραφή των βιομηχανικών, βιοτεχνικών και εμπορικών εν γένει καταστημάτων της 15ης Νοεμβρίου 1958 [Census of Industrial, Craft and Commercial Enterprises of 15 November 1958] at: [http://dlib.statistics.gr/Book/GRESYE\\_02\\_1001\\_00006.pdf](http://dlib.statistics.gr/Book/GRESYE_02_1001_00006.pdf) (accessed on 11 August 2020)

Αποτελέσματα της απογραφής βιομηχανίας-βιοτεχνίας και ορυχείων της 28ης Σεπτεμβρίου 1963 [Census Results of Industry-Crafts and Mines of 28 September 1963] at: [http://dlib.statistics.gr/Book/GRESYE\\_02\\_1001\\_00006.pdf](http://dlib.statistics.gr/Book/GRESYE_02_1001_00006.pdf) (accessed on 11 August 2020)

Απογραφή των βιομηχανικών, βιοτεχνικών και εμπορικών εν γένει καταστημάτων της 27ης Σεπτεμβρίου 1969 [Census of Industrial, Craft and Commercial Enterprises of 27 September 1969] at: [http://dlib.statistics.gr/Book/GRESYE\\_02\\_1001\\_00006.pdf](http://dlib.statistics.gr/Book/GRESYE_02_1001_00006.pdf) (accessed on 11 August 2020).

Table 3. Number of shops in branches of the tertiary sector with right of enrolment in professional and professional and artisans' chambers, 1969.

Professional Chamber Employment Branches	Retail	Hotels — Restaurants	Personal Services	Total Prof. Chamber Branches	Total Tertiary Sector	Professional Chamber Branches as a percentage of Tertiary Sector
Shops employing <50 workers	134,854	49,525	24,661	209,040	250,032	83.6
Shops employing >50 workers	44	50	6	100	576	17.4
Total	134,898	49,575	24,667	209,140	255,798	81.7

Source: Απογραφή των βιομηχανικών, βιοτεχνικών και εμπορικών εν γένει καταστημάτων της 27ης Σεπτεμβρίου 1969 [Census of Industrial, Craft and Commercial Enterprises of 27 September 1969], at: [http://dlib.statistics.gr/Book/GRESYE\\_02\\_1001\\_00013.pdf](http://dlib.statistics.gr/Book/GRESYE_02_1001_00013.pdf) (accessed on 11 August 2020).

Table 4. Average number of employees by manufacturing branch, 1963\*

Branches	2.0	2.1	2.2	2.3	2.4	2.5	2.6	2.7	2.8	2.9
Employee Average (by shop)	2.4	1.8	7.9	4.3	1.8	2.1	2.6	6.5	4.1	4.2
Branches	3.0	3.1	3.2	3.3	3.4	3.5	3.6	3.7	3.8	3.9
Employee Average (by shop)	4.3	4.7	5.4	3.7	6.0	2.2	4.4	3.1	2.5	2.3

Source: Αποτελέσματα της απογραφής βιομηχανίας-βιοτεχνίας και ορυχείων της 28ης Σεπτεμβρίου 1963 [Census Results of Industry-Crafts and Mines of 28 September 1963], at: [http://dlib.statistics.gr/Book/GRESYE\\_02\\_1001\\_00011.pdf](http://dlib.statistics.gr/Book/GRESYE_02_1001_00011.pdf) (accessed on 11 August 2020).

\* Hellenic Statistical Service Manufacturing Branch Codes: 2.0: Food, 2.1: Drinks, 2.2: Tobacco, 2.3: Textiles, 2.4: Shoes and Clothing, 2.5: Wood and Cork, 2.6: Furniture, 2.7: Paper and Paper

Products, 2.8: Printing and Publishing, 2.9: Leather, 3.0: Rubber, 3.1: Chemicals, 3.2: Oil- and Coal-derived Substances, 3.3: Non-metallic Minerals, 3.4: Metallurgical, 3.5: Metal Objects, 3.6: Machinery—Appliances, 3.7: Electrical Machinery—Appliances, 3.8: Means of Transport, 3.9: Various

Table 5. Retail Trade by employment category, 1962.

	1–2 employees	3–9 employees	10 or more employees	Total
Absolute numbers	57,545	9,313	530	67,388
Percentage	85.3	13.9	0.08	100

Source: Αποτελέσματα απογραφής εμπορικών καταστημάτων της 1ης Αυγούστου 1962 [Census Results of Commercial Enterprises of 1 August 1962], at: [http://dlib.statistics.gr/Book/GRE-SYE\\_02\\_1001\\_00008.pdf](http://dlib.statistics.gr/Book/GRE-SYE_02_1001_00008.pdf) (accessed on 11 August 2020).

Table 6. Artisanal Income as a percentage of National Income and Total Manufacturing Income (Industrial—Artisanal), 1950–1956.\*

	1950	1951	1952	1953	1954	1955	1956
Artisanal Income as a percentage of Manufacturing Income	38.4	40.6	41.2	38.3	37.2	38.1	37.9
Artisanal Income as a percentage of National Income	8.01	8.03	7.6	7.2	7.2	7.03	6.8

Source: Basic Committee of Secondary Production, Βιοτεχνία [Artisanal Manufacture], vol. III, issue 5, Athens 1959, p. 190 (processed by the authors).

\* Calculated based on current prices. Artisanal Income includes household industries.

Table 7. Artisanal Income as a percentage of Manufacturing Income at current prices, 1963.

Year 1963	
Total Manufacturing Income	20,250
Artisanal Income	7,900
Artisanal Income as a percentage of Total Manufacturing Income	39

Source: Greek Productivity Centre, *Προβλήματα της Βιοτεχνίας εν Ελλάδι. Προτεινόμενοι Λύσεις* [Problems of Artisanal Manufacture in Greece. Proposed Solutions], Athens 1965, pp. 58, 62 (processed by the authors).

**Christos Hadziiossif** is Professor Emeritus in Contemporary History at the University of Crete.

**Nikos Potamianos** is Assistant Researcher at the Institute for Mediterranean Studies-FORTH.

**Spiros Dimanopoulos** is a PhD Candidate in History at the University of Crete.

**Kostas Katsoudas** is a PhD Candidate in History at Panteion University.