

# The Greek Paradox

Promise vs. Performance

> Graham T. Allison Kalypso Nicolaïdis,

editors

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Gianna Angelopoulos-Daskalaki is Vice Chairman of the Dean's Council of the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University. She studied law at the University of Thessaloniki and practiced as a lawyer in Athens after graduating. In 1986, she became actively involved in politics and was elected City Councilor of the Athens Municipality. She was elected Deputy to the Greek Parliament in November 1989 and reelected in April 1990. Mrs.

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#### **Preface**

Gianna Angelopoulos-Daskalaki & Graham T. Allison

The title of this volume mirrors that of the special Harvard Leadership Symposium we convened and co-chaired in October 1995. In choosing the title, we meant to be provocative. "The Greek Paradox: Promise vs. Performance"—the oft-noted gap between Greece's unlimited promise and its sometimes disappointing performance—is simultaneously disturbing, intriguing, and instructive.

The birthplace of democracy finds itself with a government that is often paralyzed. How can this be? and how can this be overcome? Economically—in entrepreneurship, finance, shipping, and business—individual Greeks push the frontiers of the global economy, while Greece itself lags behind other member countries in the European Union. Why? and what can be done to accelerate Greece's economic performance? Geopolitically, a nation that should serve as a natural hub of the Balkans and a pillar of stability in a volatile region repeatedly falls victim to insecurities that prevent realization of its potentialities. Once again, why? and what can be done to enhance Greece's security and the security of other countries of the region?

To address the issue of the Greek Paradox, we commissioned papers by four leading Greek and American analysts of Greece's politics, economics, and security. With these papers as a starting point, we convened a diverse cross section of Greek and American academics, politicians, journalists, and business leaders. We asked them to address our objectives in this enterprise and to answer two questions: What are the principal causes of the observed gap between Greece's promise and its performance? What specific actions can be taken to narrow this gap—what actions by government, or politicians, or business leaders, or citizens, or other governments, or friends?

President Constantine Stephanopoulos of Greece honored our symposium by presenting the opening address in the Forum of Harvard's John F. Kennedy School of Government. He challenged participants to be bold in thinking about agendas for action. Our sessions included long-time American friends of Greece, including Ambassadors John Kenneth Galbraith and Monteagle Stearns, and prominent Greek Americans like Michael Dukakis, whose perspective on Greek-American politics forms one of the book's most interesting chapters.

The diversity of the participants and the relevance of the topic stimulated lively and heated debate. The sessions were not arduously abstract or theoretical; they brimmed with passion, vehemence, and spirit. In selecting nontraditional participants with unique styles. perspectives, and expertise, we sought to reflect the varied forces influencing Greece today. In many ways, we succeeded.

Our deliberations and progression toward an agenda for the future were not linear. They exemplified what the chapters of this volume explain clearly—the realization of Greece's performance will require many long-term and difficult social, structural, and psychological adaptations. The good news from the symposium, we believe, is reflected in these chapters and in Loukas Tsoukalis's conclusion that summarizes the best from the discussions. That message is the growing realism—apparent across the spectrum of Greek leadership—about Greece's predicament and the objective conditions that narrow the margins for choice by Greek governments, Greek businesses, and Greek citizens. Greece's geopolitical location, the conditions for its participation in the European Union, and its integration into the global economy pose demanding, inescapable challenges that increasingly narrow its freedom of action. Paradoxically, the tightening of external constraints sometimes acts as the mother of creativity in the renewal and reform of Greece's economy, society, and polity. In scrutinizing Greece's challenges, the extraordinary opportunities for both internal and regional leadership become clear. Whether Greeks and friends of Greeks step up to these challenges and opportunities remains to be seen. But based on the evidence of this symposium and its participants, we report considerable grounds for optimism.

The focus of this volume is Greece, but the lessons of the Greek Paradox and the agendas for action to narrow the gap reach beyond Greece to most societies on the globe today. Everywhere governments are failing, or seen to fail. Weak governments, divided governments, tarnished leaders, quarrelsome and disappointed citizens-none are unique to Greece. Particularly in an era of democratization, where over the past decade more than thirty nations in the former Soviet Union. Central and Eastern Europe, Latin America, Africa, and East Asia have adopted structures of constitutional democracy and chosen leaders by free elections, many are tempted to euphoria over the

arrival of the apparent solution to all problems, or as one scholar has argued, the "end of history." But examining in detail the fabric of the first democracy, one is reminded of the wisdom of Winston Churchill's observation: democracy is the worst form of government known to man—except for all the others. Indeed, Greek democracy, American democracy, as well as newly-established democracy in new states, remain and will continue to remain works in progress. Revising citizens' unrealistic expectations about promise on the one hand, and achieving the high and quite realistic possibilities for performance on the other, requires continuous vigilance and exertion by leaders in every society. Our hope and expectation is that this initial symposium has been a first step toward an ongoing collaboration between Harvard University and a diverse cross-section of Greek leadership on these profound challenges to Greece and to other nations of the world.

This volume, and the symposium on which it is based, had its origins in the mind of one of us—Gianna Angelopoulos-Daskalaki. She and her husband, Theodore Angelopoulos, a distinguished Greek businessman, recognized the need for such a dialogue to occur, preferably under Harvard's auspices, where both neutrality and expertise could be deployed. Their ideas struck a responsive chord in the co-chair, Graham Allison, who marshaled Harvard resources to make the idea a reality. We had the pleasure of collaborating not only in the conception, but also in the conduct of the symposium. We look forward to a continuing collaboration, building on the foundation laid here.

Neither the symposium nor this book would have been possible without the energy and support of many individuals, including the coeditor of the volume, Kalypso Nicolaïdis; Holly Sargent, Associate Dean of the Kennedy School, and members of her staff; Sean Lynn-Jones and Teresa Lawson, who provided editorial advice; Loukas Tsoukalis, who helped us bridge the American-Greek expanse; and Dimitris Keridis, whose efforts helped make the symposium a success. Finally, this project would not have been possible without the sharp editorial eye and tireless commitment of Lynne Meyer-Gay, who is reported to have become in the process Greek by adoption.

— Graham T. Allison --- Gianna Angelopoulos-Daskalaki August 1996

### Contents

	Tables and Figures Contributors Preface Gianna Angelopoulos-Daskalaki and Graham T. Allison	vii ix xvii	
INTRO	DDUCTION		
1	What is the Greek Paradox? Kalypso Nicolaïdis	1	
ASSESSING THE "GREEK PARADOX"			
2	Greek Politics & Society in the 1990s P. Nikiforos Diamandouros	23	
3	The Greek Economy: Performance, Expectations, & Paradoxes Stavros B. Thomadakis	39	
4	Greek Security Issues Monteagle Steams	61	
5	The Temptation of Purgatory Misha Glenny	73	
WHAT	TIS TO BE DONE?		
6	Greece in the 1990s: The Challenge of Reform Dimitris Keridis	85	

## vi | CONTENTS

7	Greece between Yesterday and Tomorrow  Basilios E. Tsingos	97
8	Greece: An Agenda for Reform Alexis Papahelas	103
9	Greece & the Balkans: Implications for Policy F. Stephen Larrabee	107
10	Rethinking Security in the Post-Yugoslav Era Susan L. Woodward	113
11	The Perception Paradox of Post–Cold War Security in Greece Elizabeth Prodromou	123
PERS	SPECTIVES OF POLICYMAKERS	
12	Issues of Greek Foreign Policy Constantine Stephanopoulos	135
13	Greece & the Balkans: A Moment of Opportunity Joseph S. Nye, Jr.	145
14	To Be a Greek American Michael S. Dukakis	151
CON	CLUSION	
15	Beyond the Greek Paradox Loukas Tsoukalis	163
	Index	175
	About the Center for Science and International Affairs	183

## Tables & Figures

	Indices of Performance 1960–73: Greece, EU countries, OECD (% Annual Averages)	44
Table 2:	GDP Growth Rates and Inflation Rates	46
	Average Annual Rates of Change in Exports, Exchange Rates, Investment, and Industrial Productivity	48
•	Relation of Performance to Economic Structure: Openness to Trade, Industry Contribution, Unemployment	50
	(A) Fiscal Magnitudes as Percent of GDP (B) Structure of Taxes	52
Figure 1:	Public Deficit to GDP Ratio (DEFR), Greece 1968–93	54