Chapter 7
In Search of the Greek Landscape: A Cultural Geography

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Abstract Although Greece was among the first European countries that signed the European Landscape Convention, it has only recently ratified it, while the landscape, generally speaking, has been absent from most expressions of everyday private and public life in Modern Greece. Moreover, irreparable

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destruction of the Greek landscape, dating back to prehistoric times, has recently been exacerbated through widespread neglect, misuse, or even outright destruction, much accelerated since Greece's era of rapid urbanization in the 1950s and 1960s. This chapter begins with a brief illustration of trends and facts that point to the problematic relationship of Greek society with its landscapes. It traces the roots of this relationship in the cultural make-up of the Modern Greek nation-state and in a series of historical particularities and social-institutional deficiencies, much amplified during the post-war period. The objective of this chapter is to attempt to understand and explain this shortcoming by exploring the lack of a well-developed landscape conscience in Modern Greece.

Keywords Landscape · Culture · Landscape conscience · Landscape history · Landscape destruction · Greece

7.1 Introduction: The Greek Landscape in Light of the European Landscape Convention and the Greek Institutional Context

According to the European Landscape Convention (ELC), landscape must become a mainstream political concern, since it plays an important role in the well-being of Europeans who are no longer prepared to tolerate the alteration of their surroundings by technical and economic developments in which they have had no say. Indeed, although national landscape initiatives in many European countries are relatively new and not yet fully implemented (Wascher, 2001), Greece is in the unfortunate position of being far behind most other European countries in landscape protection, as in all landscape matters. If the European landscape is in crisis, the Greek landscape is – to put it mildly – in an even deeper, perhaps irreversible, crisis, in stark contrast to most other southern European countries of the Mediterranean (Grenon and Batisse, 1989; Pettifer, 1993; King et al., 1997; Höchtl et al., 2007; Vogiatzakis et al., 2008).

Greece signed the European Landscape Convention in 2000, but only recently ratified it (16 February 2010). If the institutional context may be outlined in a few words, the country does not to date have a Landscape Department or Directorate at the ministry level, nor landscape institutions at the regional and local levels. The landscape is absent from most expressions of everyday private and public life in Modern Greece, whereas, in the European context, it has repeatedly been attributed the properties of 'an essential component of a community's well-being, and of visitors' enjoyment' (Pedroli et al., 2007: 11).

Institutionally, the Greek landscape's existence is legally acknowledged properly only in the context of environmental legislation, where it is defined in the Act for the Protection of the Environment as 'any dynamic entity of biotic and abiotic environmental factors and elements that either separately or interactively compose a visual experience in a given space' (FEK, 1986: Article 2). The extent of its legal existence lies in its appearance in various environmental laws, master plans, and regulatory statutes concerning the protection of archeological spaces, and in legislation on traditional settlements, aesthetic forests, and national parks. It is implicitly or

explicitly dealt with in environmental legislation as 'areas of high biological, ecological, aesthetic or geomorphologic value' (FEK, 1986: Article 1). Two categories of protected natural landscapes have so far been established in Greece: 'aesthetic forests' and 'landscapes of natural beauty' – but their existence plays a minimal role in for instance forestry planning. Besides international organizations active in Greece, such as the European Union (EU), International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS), World Wildlife Fund (WWF), etc., the most significant stakeholders in landscape policy-making and management have been the Archeological Service of Greece, the Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of Environment, Planning and Public Works, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), local government, private actors, and some civic societies. A major handicap is the precedence given to priorities put forth by the State Archaeological Service in legal matters and decision-making concerning landscape planning, policy, management, and land-use determination for industrial, agricultural, or other general development purposes.

Generally speaking, the current state of affairs as regards the Greek landscape may be described as follows: systematic physical planning interventions have been restricted to metropolitan and urbanized areas and have predominantly been a long-standing tradition of the design sciences. Mobilization in matters pertaining to the agricultural landscape in Greece has only been very recently instigated through European Union legislation and subsidized interventions (through the Common Agricultural Policy or CAP) that enforce rural landscape protection and preservation (Louloudis et al., 2005). The lack of institutional support, in terms of landscape planning, policy, and management, is evident in the absence until very recently (October 2009) of a separate Ministry for the Environment. Instead, all environmental matters have so far been dealt with by the Ministry of the Environment, Regional Planning and Public Works, with a long history of prioritizing the built environment, urban growth, residential development, and public works. With pressure mounting from the EU and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) for initiatives for landscape research, planning, and policy, Greece is currently finding itself in a position of having to struggle to meet its own landscape problems and challenges and to develop its own landscape agenda for the future.

With regard to Greek landscape education and science (Terkenli, 2004), landscape education is still lacking at all levels of the educational system despite serious but rather sporadic and fragmented efforts in tertiary education institutions around the country. Only very recently have there been signs of consolidation in technical and graduate studies programmes, such as in the Graduate Programme in Landscape Architecture offered by the Aristoteleian University of Athens. Processes of establishing landscape science, research, and practice have been only slowly gaining ground in Greece in very recent years. There is still for instance a total lack of Greek landscape maps, with the exception of a recently completed atlas of cultural landscapes of Greece, by the Department of Geography at the Harokopeion University of Athens (Greekscapes, 2009).

In the 1990s, Greek landscape science underwent a qualitative shift. Previously the engagement of the design sciences (architecture, landscape architecture, and urban and regional planning) with practical landscape issues, as they developed

out of related design and planning initiatives and spatial interventions, was fragmentary, peripheral, and haphazard. More recently, there has developed a more concerted, focused, and systematic landscape approach by several disciplines and practitioners (including landscape historians, rural sociologists, geographers, environmentalists, etc). However, this shift has been characterized by its very limited extent and impact on actual landscape problems and issues in Greece. It is also suffering from disciplinary limits and from the lack of communication and cooperation between academics, practitioners, and administrators, as well as from lack of effective application in landscape policy.

In most circumstances of local or public life, as regards cultural trends, economic activities, political initiatives, social issues, urban and regional development, and planning and management, the Greek landscape seems almost to be a nonentity – and its appearance is correspondingly nondescript (Figs. 7.1 and 7.2). It normally does not constitute an issue, concern, or matter of interest for most laypeople. As a rule, local interests, input, and decision-making concerning the landscape are normally ill-informed, marginalized, or – more commonly – non-existent (Terkenli, 2004; Manolidis, 2008). Under these conditions, landscape matters tend to remain overwhelmingly dependent on public or private economic or political interests. Such facts and tendencies unfailingly characterize a people's and a state's priorities vis-à-vis its landscape and these priorities are, in turn, engraved in its landscapes. Simply put, they mirror the society that created them; they become its representation. This points to a very problematic relationship of Greeks with their landscape, a relationship that this chapter explores.

Fig. 7.1 The main street of a mid-sized contemporary Greek city, Mitiline, Lesvos, 2007 (Photo: Theano S. Terkenli)

Fig. 7.2 The hinterland of Hersonissos, Crete, 1999 (Photo: Theano S. Terkenli)

The chapter proceeds from a brief illustration of indicative trends and facts that point to this problematic relationship of Greek society with its landscapes to their analysis and interpretation, with a bearing on Greece's position with regard to the European Landscape Convention. It traces the roots of this relationship in the cultural make-up of the Modern Greek nation-state and in a series of historical particularities and social-institutional deficiencies, much amplified in the post-war period. The objective is to attempt to understand and explain this shortcoming by exploring the lack of a well-developed landscape conscience in Modern Greece.

7.2 Looking for the Causes

Greece's problematic relationship with its landscape can be traced to lack of a defined and well-developed landscape conscience in the country as compared to other modern (European or not) nation-states. If 'conscience' is defined as the mixture of perceptions, thoughts and emotions, it presupposes the existence of an external world (Sutherland, 1989). Landscape conscience refers then to the distinctive bonds (conscious or subconscious) that characterize a person's or a people's relationships with their landscapes. Undoubtedly, the causes of lacking landscape conscience for Greece are many; some that seem to have played a crucial role will be examined in the following.

The legal, historical, aesthetic, and socio-cultural trajectory of the relationship of Greece with its landscape will be traced through the past 150 years in search of the *urban* origins of a landscape conscience. In the process, some elements will be constructed of an unfulfilled cultural geography of the Greek landscape that has its origins in a multitude of factors, such as: the late industrialization of the country;

the prevalence – according to the historian William McNeill (1978) – of a 'market-place principle' among its populace; the role of Greek Orthodox ecclesiastical art in landscape representations; and the lack of a sense of commons concerning environmental resources. These are only a few, but critical, pieces of the puzzle. Finally, a brief account will be given of the changes now unfolding in the reconfiguration of the country's urban and agrarian identities, as new notions of urbanity and rurality emerge through the growth of foreign and domestic tourism.

7.2.1 Historical Roots of the Current Situation

Greece, under Ottoman occupation and cultural stagnation from the mid-15th to the early or mid-19th century, never went through any of the stages of landscape formation and landscape conscience formation that modern European cultural landscapes had gone through by the 17th century – notions that accompanied the development of Western European landscapes up to our times (Cosgrove, 1998; Olwig, 2001). Rather, it adopted from the West aspects of modernity in certain realms of life a posteriori, by implanting and overlaying them on to pre-existing cultural particularities and local ways of life. Moreover, upon becoming 'urban', Greeks lost the old connection with the land, nature, and the landscape, which had traditionally been handed down from one generation to another. The few already existing urbanites and the children of the first and subsequent generations of rural migrants into the big cities never developed a sense of landscape in the first place.

Since antiquity, compared to other European people, Greeks have tended to be predominantly urbanites. The ancient Greek world constituted a web of city-states, where citizens were considered only those free individuals in possession of landed property. Cosgrove (2001: 25) writes:

> In the Greek polis citizenship derived initially from ownership of cultivated land, and ownership of immobile property—'real' estate—remained for millennia the foundation of political franchise. . .. A hierarchical order that mapped space, society, the idealized body, and its faculties to a scale of humanity and opposed human 'culture' to nature has been continuously reworked in Western thought and practice. The city was regarded as the spatial expression and locus of a fully developed humanity.

Greek thought and culture continued to thrive throughout the Byzantine era, and on through the Ottoman occupation, mainly in the urban centres of southeastern Europe and the Balkans, where most of the Greek population tended to cluster. Perhaps one final indication of this trend is the overwhelming primacy of present-day Athens in the context of the Greek urban system, representing the outcome of enormous centripetal forces on the post-war Greek rural population.

Although any sort of spatial conscience generally attributed to a cultural system tends to find its roots in the history of a modern nation-state, caution must be exercised in generalizing and totalizing as regards whole cultures or social systems. Before the post-war era of rapid Greek urbanization, Greek people of rural, mountain, or island pre-industrialized communities tended to live under conditions

tightly interwoven with their particular environments and landscapes. They used to relate to their landscapes through much more organic, multilayered and reciprocally intertwined cultural, environmental, economic, institutional, political, ideological, and legal bonds. These bonds tended to tie people symbiotically to the land, which ensured their livelihood; they also protected and paid homage to the landscape and carved their cultural systems into it and through it. The local housewife used to sweep the street in front of her yard, while her husband would regularly whitewash the village square. The community would assume the clearing or planting of the forest land around the village. Generations of subsequent communities would name the hills, the ravines, the springs, and the mountaintops, and attribute sacred or divine properties to parts of the landscape in the name of protector saints, nymphs and elves, and old legends. As was the case throughout pre-industrial Mediterranean Europe, they would build 'traditionally' in harmony with the landscape and its natural inhabitants, the trees, the beaches, and the watersheds (Manolidis, 2008).

What happened since then? In the following an attempt is made to trace and elucidate this evolution of the relationship of Greeks with their landscapes, starting with images and representations of the landscape in Greek culture and beyond.

7.2.2 Greek Landscape Depiction and Representation

An especially eloquent and revealing view of the Greek landscape in its symbolic and representational perspectives emerges through landscape painting at the time of the formation of the new modern nation-state of Greece, after its war of independence in the 19th century. If landscape is a 'way of seeing' closely connected to the development in Europe of modern urban, commercial life, then landscape representations in art are renditions into some form of image of the ideological construction of the newly-emergent European nation-states (Cosgrove, 1998). Analysis of 19th-century Greek landscape painting exposes the construction of the Greek landscape as a context of human life and experience in accordance with romantic ideals. At the basis of the emergent Greek cultural identity were two ideals: (a) connections to classical antiquity; and (b) Orientalism (Terkenli et al., 2001). Such ideals, originally introduced in Greek landscape painting by Western painters and Western views of the modern Greek state and identity, sought to reconcile the 'Other' with the 'Self' of Western culture in representations of the Greek land for the eyes and the psyche of the Western observer (Terkenli et al., 2001). They were deeply embedded in Western conceptions of the local landscape and were only gradually replaced by indigenous depictions and local landscape ideals – in both formal and naïve renditions of the Greek landscape – in the course of the 20th century.

The first theme, the connection of the Greek landscape with classical antiquity, demonstrates the alleged direct descent of modern Greeks from the Hellenes of the classical period, considered the progenitors of modern European civilization. Incontrovertible witnesses in the Greek landscape to this newly-formed national identity were, among others, the archaeological monuments scattered over and under Greek soil. It is with these that the cultural landscape has until recently been

almost exclusively equated by the Greek state and intelligentsia (Doukellis, 1998). For the ordinary Greek subject, however, the Greek landscape was quite different (Stathatos, 1996: 20). In contrast to such glorious depictions, the actual landscape tended to be plainer, even drab, poor, ravaged by war and pillage, and of a less monumental scale. It was the ordinary landscape of a Mediterranean country coming out of four centuries of foreign occupation.

The second landscape theme is the pervasive theme of Orientalism, which has, since the inception of the Modern Greek state, infused its cultural identity as perceived from the West. The Orient (Near East), according to Edward Said (1978), is an idea that has a history and tradition of thought, imagery, and vocabulary that have presence in and for the West. Upon this is constructed the hegemonic relationship of the West with the Orient. More significantly, the 'Other' in the post-Reformation West, argues Vassilis Lambropoulos (1993), is always defined as an integral part of the dominant ideology. This was the case with the idea of 'Greekness', inherent in the definition of Western civilization, yet with the Greek remaining as the 'Other' for Westerners. The 'Other', however, always remains at a safe distance of 'difference' from the hegemonic culture, and this is where the theme of Orientalism comes especially handy in Western constructions of 'Greekness'. Difference can benefit from its intrinsic relation to sameness, especially powerful here in the articulation of the cultural hegemony of the West, which has existed in relation to and to the detriment of various 'Others' (Terkenli et al., 2001).

In the 20th century, Greek landscape painting gained only a partial and gradual emancipation from the influences of foreign schools through the development of various indigenous forms of expression (Kambouridis, 2009). The landscape ideal and form of representation most influential upon the Greek psyche and most characteristic of the Greek cultural realm remained the two-dimensional, apparently flat, but actually inverted, perspective of Greek Orthodox art (Fig. 7.3). The human figure tends to dominate in ecclesiastical iconography, rather than the landscape per se. This inverted perspective pulls the viewer into the painting, rendering the viewer the centre of the world in the work of art and thus exerting a great power of suggestion over him or her. Much inspired by Greek Orthodox ecclesiastical art, El Greco's manner of landscape depiction was perhaps the closest Greek art came to Western landscape depiction and articulation until the creation of the Modern Greek state and the importing of foreign painting and painters to the Greek landscape and all manner of spatial intervention. Nonetheless, Greek Orthodox art, surviving and flourishing amidst the deeply religious populace under Islamic domination, seems to have imprinted its highly influential worldview on the Greek mind and psyche, providing an ideal and way of relating to the world still pervasive in Greek life and art.

7.2.3 The Destruction of the Modern Greek Landscape

European landscapes, products of human-environment interrelations over time, have long faced a variety of forces of transformation, which were accelerated

Fig. 7.3 The baptism of Christ, Nea Moni of Chios, Greece, 2009 (Photo: Courtesy of Gareth Roberts)

through the Industrial Revolution. Currently, however, they are acquiring a series of new attributes under conditions of rapid unprecedented change on a global scale (Terkenli and d'Hauteserre, 2006; Vogiatzakis et al., 2008). Simply put, 'this diverse landscape is in a deep crisis', according to Pedroli et al. (2007: 11). In this context, concerted and integrative intervention in landscape protection, management, and planning becomes essential, in cooperation with the public and all involved stakeholders.

The irreparable destruction of the Greek landscape dates back to prehistoric times (about 1000 BC). Since then, the landscape has been plagued by much neglect, misuse, or even outright destruction, much accelerated since Greece's era of rapid urbanization in the 1950s and 1960s. The distinguished Greek architect Dimitris Pikionis, in his inaugural speech in 1963 for the founding of the First Exposition of the Committee for the Hellenic Landscape in Zappeion, Athens, cried out against the irreparable destruction of the Greek landscape, which was gradually disappearing as a reality while beginning to be imprinted as an image through the photographic lens. Semaioforidis, another accomplished Greek architect, talks about the immaterialization of the landscape of Attica between 1953 and 1963, in the name of the magic words of the times, namely 'urban planning' and, a little later, 'regional planning' (Semaioforidis, 2005: 121–122). These admonitions foretold trends that were to overtake most of continental and insular Greece in the latter part of the 20th and first part of the 21st century, and are still dominating the Greek landscape (for a more detailed history of the evolution of Greek landscapes and the ways these historical impacts have been 'inherited' by contemporary Greek landscapes, see Terkenli, 2002, 2004). Table 7.1 diagrammatically presents the main phases of the evolution

Table 7.1 The historical phases of Greek landscape evolution (Terkenli, 2004)

Chronology	Main landscape types		
	Island	Coastal	Inland
3rd millenium BC to 5th century BC	Urban Revolution, establishment of first cities, emergence of great cultural centres of antiquity, beginning of natural landscape degradation		
5th century BC to 4th century AD	Rise and fall of ancient Greek city-states, accelerated destruction of natural landscape, idealized Arcadian landscape of antiquity		
4th century AD to 14th/15th century AD	Christianity and middle ages, consolidation of previous landscape impacts and characteristics and slow, gradual introduction of a few new ones		
14th/15th century to 1820s–1830s	Occupation of Greece by Ottoman Empire		
	Defensive hilltop settlements, life of hardship	Highest impact of Ottoman occupation, stagnant societies	Idealized landscape of the mountains, freedom, 'good life'
1820s–1830s to 1950s–1960s	Foundations of the modern Greek state		
	Poverty, isolation, abandonment, desertion	Slow, steady rates of growth, new cultural identity and landscape	Gradual liberation of all Greece, cycles of growth and decline
1950s–1960s to today	Industrial revolution and urban development and growth		
	Tourism, growth, development, island landscape idealization	Unparalleled urban growth, landscape destruction	Desertion, isolation, poverty, loss of social dimension of rural landscapes

of Greek landscapes, distinguished in three categories – island, coastal, and inland landscapes – while highlighting characteristics and levels of landscape deterioration during each chronological period from prehistoric times to the present (Terkenli, 2004).

The wide variety of dangers and problems facing the contemporary Greek landscape is well documented (Terkenli, 2004; Louloudis et al., 2005; Hadjimichalis, 2008; Manolidis, 2008; Stathatos, 2008; Trova, 2008; Vlachos and Louloudis, 2008). These reports have not been effective in influencing public or state opinion and not led to a reaction to the issues at hand, due to long-entrenched cultures of corruption, nepotism, and unfavourable administrative structures. The dangers and problems include the following processes, inducing variable degrees of landscape impact: illegal construction; rampant land-use change and subdivision; lack of comprehensive and rational planning and law implementation; insufficient documentation and deficient restoration of historic landscapes; unchecked urban development; intensification of agriculture; landscape homogenization; loss or degradation of natural, aesthetic, and cultural landscape character (e.g. through soil erosion, collapse of old structures, interventions incongruous to local landscape identity, etc); desertion of mountain and remote rural landscapes through abandonment of traditional rural activities; unequal development or geographical exclusion and discrimination; lack of protection measures from illegal interventions; fires; and floods.

If we attempted to distinguish the two or three most detrimental forces affecting the contemporary Greek landscape, we would perhaps point to: unplanned recreational use of the countryside; widespread rural-urban migration and consequent abandonment of agriculture and livestock raising; and the proliferation of second-home construction throughout the country (Terkenli, 2004; Hadjimichalis, 2008; Manolidis, 2008; Stathatos, 2008; Vlachos and Louloudis, 2008). The exodus of rural populations from the Greek countryside robbed it of its guardians and stewards, with strongly negative impacts on its physical regimes and its cultural wealth. The burgeoning growth of secondary residences (legal and illegal) by an increasingly affluent middle class has been:

> . . .exacerbated in recent years by the country's adhesion to the European Union and the influx of North Europeans in search of holiday homes; the inevitable effect has been a rapid and continuing change in the population of certain areas, particularly but not exclusively along the coast. . .. In conjunction however with the Greek government's inflexible policy on real estate taxation, whereby a single transfer of land from a farmer to an incomer can, irrespective of use, bring about a hundred fold increase in the value of the entire area, the new colonizers sooner or later replace the original inhabitants of these supposedly privileged regions (Stathatos, 1996: 18).

Other apparently negative impacts on the landscape only tend to be recognized as such when they become catastrophic or lead to calamities, after which some form of balance is eventually restored in the physical landscape, as, for example, after the fire disasters and human deaths in the Peloponnese during the summer of 2007, and on the outskirts of Athens in August 2009.

7.2.4 Urban-Industrial Deficits and Socio-Cultural Constraints

Varying modern landscape spatialities and varying manifestations of landscape conscience have been identified in Europe at different times and places (Cosgrove, 1998; Bunce, 1994). One common factor that appears to play a significant role in the development of a landscape conscience in the modern European realm is the advent of the Industrial Revolution. 'It was precisely this urbanization, and the increasing distancing from nature to which were subjected the population of societies in the process of industrialization, which almost simultaneously created the need for contact with some substitute, however false' (Stathatos, 1996: 16). The resulting loss of place and landscape particularity was an inevitable outcome of social-structural adjustments instilled by industrial capitalism. Instead, the bourgeoisie reinvented the landscape concept, initially closely tied to the English picturesque landscape school (Stathatos, 1996). A series of new landscape spatialities ensued through the newly emergent contradistinction between the rural and the urban, and through the nostalgia of urbanites for the 'lost' countryside. Thus, the countryside ideal and the rediscovery of the rural landscape was a social construction of the times, best exemplified in the case of the UK, the first nation to experience these trends and the development of a deep landscape conscience six generations ago (Bunce, 1994).

In contrast, Greece never went through a fully fledged industrial revolution. Pettifer links this to the weakly developed environmental movements and environmental conscience: 'There has been no real industrial revolution in Greece and consequently no Romantic movement in literature to see nature threatened by man's activities' (Pettifer, 1993: 172). In lieu of an urban-industrialized socio-cultural system, the country retained its rural character until the post-war mass rural migratory movements into the large urban centres. Many vestiges of the rural ways of life imported into the Greek cities in the 1950s and 1960s still remain strong. Such, for example, is the persistence up to the present of a 'market-place principle' in Greek social life (McNeill, 1978). The historical centrality in Greek society of exchange and of market-place skills emerges as a crucial feature in the lives of all modern Greeks (McNeill, 1978); the market-place principle and material wealth seem to hold a place of uncontested primacy in Greek life. McNeill (1978: 12) develops this idea further:

> Skill in bargaining for the best possible prices, skill in deciding the exact moment at which to make a deal... these were the ways to wealth and success. These were also the skills that won the respect of others in the village, even if such respect might be a little grudging. For if one man was able to do even a little bit better than others in such negotiations, it meant that he had somehow outsmarted everyone else. Privacy and deception play a large role in the successful conduct of such negotiations. Deception must be practiced against one's fellows, who, if they crowd round at the critical moment, might spoil the advantageous deal by trying to get in on it too... Deception must also extend to the person with whom one is dealing... The effort to deceive is of course reciprocal... Suspicion of one's contractual partner therefore remains near the surface... The idea that a deal might be mutually beneficial is hard for a Greek to accept.

From ancient times to the present, Greek life has revolved around market negotiations, a tendency which not only reflects on all aspects of current everyday life and thinking, but has also greatly accommodated Greece's general eagerness to fit, so to speak, into the global economy and Western development models. Accordingly, consumption figures for modern amenities (i.e. household expenditure) have tended to exceed mean European figures (Eurostat Cultural Statistics, 1995, 2006). The uncontested dominance of the market-place principle in contemporary social life gives precedence to economic rather than cultural, environmental or aesthetic concerns regarding spatial construction, planning, and management of any sort – with grave repercussions on Greek nature and landscape.

Hence, in post-war Greece, modernization and development have been defined mostly in economic terms, often to the detriment of environmental, socio-cultural or civic values, as seen in the grave lack of green areas in Greek cities. Economic development, of a quasi-capitalist character, unfolded on the basis of a mainly agrarian society. Alongside many facets and factors of Greece's idiosynchratic economic development, major long-term cultural particularities, such as clientelism and patronage, have been responsible for an atrophic civil society (Demertzis, 1997: 110), with serious repercussions on community life. Legg and Roberts (1997: 72) expand on how, 'despite decades of social and economic change, the state still overwhelms civil society, and personal and family ties remain significant in most areas of life. The domination of civil society by the state is an overwhelming fact of Greek economic, social, and political life'. Consequently, in contemporary urban Greek society, environmental and landscape matters were relegated to the jurisdiction of the state and absolved of individual, personal responsibility. There rightly reigns a cynical and sceptical attitude regarding the role of the various governments in these matters, however. Concerning 'the public good', Greeks tend to think that if the government does anything it will be done badly – or that possibly it should not be done at all – but, 'applied to environmental matters it is very unhelpful as many of the environmental threats need countering by long-term policies that often demand the sacrifice of short-term private interests' (Pettifer, 1993: 173).

One outcome of this trait has been a long-standing lack of a sense of the landscape as a common good in the Modern Greek society. A common good is defined as the integrated set of material and non-material dimensions and features of the landscape at the disposal of a particular social group, where its use by one user diminishes the amount available to all others, but where the exclusion of additional users is difficult or impossible (Bromley, 1991). According to recent social-scientific thought, rationally optimal behaviour favours a cooperative, ethically active and vigilant strategy of generous mutuality (community) (Tuan, 1986; Ostrom, 1990). Generally speaking, one of the most resistant ramparts of the old ways of life has been the nuclear family (Eurostat Cultural Statistics, 1995, 2006). 'Unlike in many other European villages, in rural Greece, most of the time the work unit as well as the marketing and consumption units coincide with the boundaries of the nuclear family' (McNeill, 1978: 15). Since modern urban life also tends to make the nuclear family the primary unit of consumption and mutuality, these rural cultural patterns were readily transferred to Greek cities and implanted into urban ways of life. As

elsewhere in the post-war world, however, the nuclear family has been challenged by newer forms of capitalism, ecumenical culture, and a surge in individualism (Karapostolis, 1983).

No matter how materialist the conditions of contemporary socio-cultural life are, however, the 'good life' would be impossible without reference to non-material (cultural) conditions (Tuan, 1986), such as provided by landscape, as a mirror of society and as a stage set for everyday life. In Greece, the disintegration of the traditional environmental conscience of formerly rural populations with regard to outdoor resources, including the landscape, has been replaced by rampant laisser-faire capitalism, land speculation, illegal construction, and short-term profit in most entrepreneurial activity domains. According to Stathatos (1996: 16), 'as far as the Greek perception of natural space is concerned, the problem is exacerbated by a peculiarly Greek form of parochialism, whereby allegiance is pledged to extremely small territorial subdivisions, down to the level of neighborhood or village'. Thus, landscape never constituted a collective good for most Greeks, and especially in the case of urban Greeks. There is no sense of the landscape as part of a common home – the sense of home tending to be narrower in larger cities than in small towns or villages (Terkenli, 1995).

7.3 Tourism: The Changing Scene

All of the above obstacles to the development of a landscape conscience among Greeks are slowly coming under scrutiny or transformation. Some of the most significant reasons for this recent trend may be traced in the following three broad contexts:

1. International pressure on Greece's environmental policy, e.g. from the EU, in order to conform to its agricultural policy (CAP) and to address climatic change and environmental impacts of this by adopting environment-friendly measures of resource use and protection
2. Recent catastrophes and irrevocable loss of large extents of priceless landscape by forest fires (summers 2007 and 2009), and a growing public awareness of landscape loss through uncontrolled growth, illegal construction, and 'development'
3. The need for 'nature', and nostalgia for 'Greece as it used to be' culturally, physically, aesthetically, ethically, historically, and symbolically, as opposed to life in the city; this need has mainly materialized through internal tourism, often in search of personal and collective identity, and ancestral roots.

The Greek landscape, generally speaking, had been taken for granted by the state and Greek society at large until the end of the 1970s. It started to be acknowledged at that time through growing awareness of interconnections emerging between agricultural modernization and change in the rural landscape, and through tourism. Before that, there existed a fairly well-articulated relationship of Greeks with their

landscapes in organically developed and long-standing 'traditional' pre-industrial settlements throughout rural and small-town Greece. This close and well-structured coexistence between humans and their landscapes was disrupted with the post-war advent of rapid urbanization, with unchecked growth and development. Since then, perhaps the most significant factor in a slowly emerging dynamic of return to the Greek landscape has been internal domestic tourism. Tourism effectuated in the case of Greece, as it had previously done so in other parts of the world, a rediscovery of the Greek landscape.

On the basis of its visual and relational or experiential character, the landscape constitutes a crucial medium in the nexus of relationships that develop between tourist and visited location. These relationships are obviously highly complex, as well as place-, time- and culture-contingent; in Greece, they represent the most effective ways in which the public at large has been rediscovering the country's landscapes. All landscape aspects and elements – human and natural – are involved in tourism development (Williams, 1997; Lickorish and Jenkins, 2004; Vogiatzakis et al., 2008). At the basis of any ensuing discussion vis-à-vis the landscape, however, stands its environmental nature. The Aegean landscape, for instance, has been much romanticized in recent decades as an idyllic island paradise, isolated and free of the demands of modern life, blessed with perfect climate and characterized by its small-scale, intimate settings ideal for romantic adventures in the land of the 'Greek gods'. The 'four S's' (Sun, Sea, Sand, and Sex) collectively constituted a powerful pole of tourism attraction for the Aegean from its onset in the 1960s. Landscape elements, both natural (the sea, the beach, and sunshine) and human-made (such as the whitewashed cubic houses in real or imitation stone-paved streets), exemplify and reinforce such images of the Aegean and are preserved and highlighted in popular culture (e.g. motion pictures such as *Shirley Valentine* and *Summer Lovers*).

Among its various impacts on place and landscape, the tourism industry has been greatly responsible for the worldwide diffusion of specific landscape forms, functions, and symbolism (Towner, 1996). In place of a fully fledged industrial revolution, tourism has been the main source of the development of awareness of the countryside and the generation of a landscape conscience among Greeks. This was accomplished through the intentional seeking out of a contraposition to the urban industrial contemporary way of life. It was achieved through the escape from congested, suffocating Greek cities and the return to 'nature', to cultural and historical references, and to family or national 'roots'. This is manifested in the retreat to the village family home, the revisiting of ancestral lands, or the construction of a second, 'holiday' home. The country has been selling images of itself (Figs. 7.4 and 7.5) in which 'the sun always shines brightly, where the sea is always blue and placid, the houses – of a uniformly Cycladic style – are invariably freshly whitewashed, and all of whose inhabitants are permanently cheerful, welcoming and colourful' (Stathatos, 1996: 38). Foreign and external tourism activated among contemporary Greeks an increased awareness of the aesthetic, natural, and cultural richness, and the diversity and uniqueness of Greek landscapes. It also instilled the lifestyle of ease, leisure, and generalized consumption, from Coca-Cola to landscape. As a result of thriving Aegean tourism, post-war economic decline and

Fig. 7.4 Sounion: an imaginary landscape depiction from the campaign of the National Tourism Organization of Greece, 2006 (Photo: Courtesy of Yiannes Patellis)

population depletion are now in the process of being reversed in most parts of this region.

As a case in point, the landscape of the Aegean islands has been widely conceived as a cultural image of tourist consumption for its visitors, besides being viewed as a national symbol and as a cultural and family hearth – a historical construct in collective Greek imagination. It has been perceived as an essentially uninhabited landscape during most of the year, while, during holidays and especially in summer, it becomes 'vacationland', the playground of both Greek and international tourism (Tsartas, 1989; Terkenli, 2001). These perceived qualities of the Aegean landscape are mainly derived from its visual characteristics. For example, mainly for purposes of attracting tourism or preserving 'traditional' landscape identity, the facade of urban landscapes has largely been preserved, whereas all else considered 'superfluous' in modern life and tourism has been dispensed with. Visual Aegean landscape characteristics have also been expropriated and exploited for various 'development' purposes, often with negative impacts on their appearance, and undermining the very essence of the landscape that attracted development there in the first place.

Initially, it was islands with cultural heritage of archaeological, religious, or general historical interest that attracted most visitors – both foreign and local. During the 1970s and 1980s, however, these islands were transformed into the quintessential tourist havens of Greece through their establishment as conventional summer tourism destinations. The Greek islands in general constitute the stereotype of an

Fig. 7.5 View of Port Hesonissos, Crete, summer 1999 (Photo: Theano S. Terkenli)

island tourist paradise, with their 'perfect' physical environment (warm, sunny, and beautiful beaches), ancient history interwoven into long-standing 'traditional' ways of life, and hospitable, friendly locals inviting visitors to enjoy an easy way of life. Tourism has boosted the economy of the Aegean islands, changing their main income bases from agriculture to service activities, stemming population out-migration, and creating conditions for new construction and development in the form of tourism infrastructures – catering to the boom in organized charter air transportation systems (Williams, 1997; Minca, 1998; Lickorish and Jenkins, 2004) – or in the form of second-home development. Kizos et al. (2007: 341–342) describe the unequal development of contemporary tourism and its impacts on the Aegean Islands:

> Seasonally, approximately 3.5 million tourists visit, almost exclusively in summer; mostly by charter flights (67% in 2001); and this fact causes intense seasonal changes in transport frequency and environmental pressures. Spatially, most of the beds (250,000 in total) are found on a small number of islands. . . . In addition to tourists, holidaymakers in general are very important economically and in terms of land use, since the amount of new housing is one of the most intense problems confronting the landscape and the environment. The local economy has benefited greatly from building works, and the consequent rise in land prises, but this development is temporary, whereas the environmental and social impact is permanent.

7.4 Conclusions

Contemporary Greece seems to suffer from a lack of a sense of the significance of one's surroundings for the quality of life, exemplified in the case of landscape as the stage set of everyday life (Terkenli, 2004; Manolidis, 2008). As shown in this chapter, the historical roots of this deficiency lie in Greece's inability to develop its own landscape spatialities alongside Western European models of spatial organization and governance, and to experience a fully fledged industrial revolution – mainly due to the prolonged Ottoman occupation. This era bequeathed the country with a series of problematic socio-cultural trends that compounded the lack of its sense of landscape as a common good: clientelism, state patronage, atrophic civil society, individualism, parochialism, and mistrust of governmental institutions. Moreover, the lack of development of a lay landscape conscience may be seen to have been exacerbated by the fact that Greeks historically have always tended to be urbanites, operating on the basis of a very strong market-place principle and strong social competition ethic, compounded by the influence of the unique way of constructing and depicting the world by Greek Orthodoxy, as illustrated in ecclesiastical iconography. The basis for public participation in matters pertaining to the landscape, in accordance with the intentions of the ELC, is far from existent in Greece, where short-term private interests are routinely prioritized over long-term collective goals of sustainability and a sense of the landscape as a public, common good. Instead, the attitude of the vast majority of the country's citizens to the landscape is one of ignorance, neglect, apathy, disinterest, and distrust in those institutions and media that play a role in its planning, management, and general sustenance.

A country blessed with a high degree of landscape variability and diversity, a source of cultural inspiration since antiquity, presently finds itself under grave threat of loss, with social, cultural, economic, environmental, ethical, aesthetic, and spiritual consequences. Questions that need to be urgently addressed are: whether valued features of the Greek landscape can be protected and saved, before it is too late; whether and how a landscape conscience may be instilled and developed among laypeople and authorities likewise; whether concerted efforts towards landscape planning, development, and management may be instigated and implemented in the country at large; whether knowledge from the experiences of other countries may prove useful here; and whether Greece can transcend its own distorted tourist image exported to the world. Stathatos (1996: 38) argues that there is reason to believe that

this image may be becoming innate, perhaps because 'that is what the ultimate loss of innocence consists of: the curse whereby, when one has lived a long time with falsehood, it becomes increasingly difficult to distinguish truth'.

This chapter has suggested that the absence of a well-developed landscape conscience among contemporary Greeks lies at the basis of the country's landscape problem. The task of redefining and developing lay landscape conscience is long and arduous, but for Greece it is imperative. It needs to rest on knowledge and education, active participation in decision-making and, most of all, immediate action in reconfiguring our landscape geographies – a task long overdue. Nonetheless, through reaction to and mobilization against environmental and human disaster, including climatic change, as well as falling rates of growth in tourism, some first signs of such a development are presently emerging. Fully acknowledging the need for serious efforts in this direction, however, still has a long way to go.

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