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# From Orthodoxy to non-religion: Greek society in transition?

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## Abstract

Until very recently the dominant perception was that more than 95 per cent of the Greek society is Greek Orthodox, at least nominally. But is this really the case? The purpose of this paper is twofold. On the one hand, to present some recent findings showing that people in Greece, especially the younger ones, have ceased to be so religious compared to the previous generations and additionally to expound some recent developments that might be supportive of the argument that Greece is in transition from a traditional Greek Orthodox society to a more secular and non-religious one. These developments include, among others, the foundation of the first Atheist Union; the translation of the works of major atheist thinkers in Greek (Dawkins, Dennett, Harris); and the fact that many people have started to discuss openly and in public their atheism or non-belief, especially through the social media. Further to the above since 2015 Greece has a left-wing government for the first time in its political history and many of its members are non-religious, atheists or agnostics. On the other hand, the purpose of this paper is to present some findings of a qualitative research on Greek atheists through the answering of the following questions: who are the atheists in contemporary Greek society? How they "de-converted" from the Greek-Orthodox religion and how their family reacted to this rapture of the "chain of religious memory"? Which are their beliefs about the Orthodox religion and the Orthodox Church? Through the above two-part presentation it is going to be argued that despite the dominant stereotype Greek society with regard to religious beliefs seems to be in transition. Although Greece is still dominantly Orthodox, non-religiosity and atheism are steadily growing and struggle to take a significant place in the social realm and in the public sphere.

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