

## Reasons for Rebellion: Nationalism's Role in the Greek War of Independence

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*Because the Greek War of Independence led to the creation of a Greek nation-state, it is important to examine the role nationalism played in the Greek rebellion. During the Greek War of Independence, national rhetoric was used to create international support for the Greek cause; however, the portrayal of a united Greek nation was not fully formed in reality. Furthermore, the intervention of major European powers in the Greek War of Independence appears to have been based more on geo-strategic factors rather than fostering ideas of the "Greek-nation." Through an analysis of the religious, economic, educational, and international factors that led to the Greek rebellion, this essay argues that national sentiment was not the primary motive behind the Greek War of Independence.*

The influence of nationalism in the Greek War of Independence is challenging to accurately measure; many factors outside of nationalism need to be considered when studying the creation of the Greek nation. When the Greek War of Independence began in 1821, creating a Greek nation-state was a novel idea, diverging from the basic principle of state "legitimacy" established by the major European powers during the Vienna Settlement.<sup>1</sup> After Greek independence was achieved, liberals and nationalists around the world used Greece as an example for creating a successful nation-state and Greece soon became a universal symbol for the promotion of nationalism world-wide.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ian Clark, *Legitimacy in International Society*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, Incorporated (2005): 93; Robert S. Alexander, *Europe's Uncertain Path 1814-1914*. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, (2012): 4. The Vienna Settlement was the result of the 1814-15 Congress of Vienna, which constructed a new political order in Europe after the Napoleonic Wars. The principle of state "legitimacy" that was supported by the Vienna Settlement was largely based on the French Foreign Minister Talleyrand's claim that a government's authority was only lawful if its form and function were "consolidated and consecrated by a long succession of years." As a result, the Vienna Settlement repudiated the changes that occurred in Europe during the French revolution and the Napoleonic Wars and "loosely implied that the regimes overthrown from 1789 onward should be reconstituted".

<sup>2</sup> Padelis E. Lekas, "The Greek War of Independence from the Perspective of Historical Sociology," *The Historical Review/La Revue Historique* 2, (2006): 162. <https://doi.org/10.12681/hr.188>.

Despite nineteenth-century understandings of the Greek War of Independence, the effect nationalism had in the war is now regularly debated. For example, R.S. Alexander notes that "Greek nationalism was confined to a small minority who adopted it mostly to appeal to Western sensibilities for aid."<sup>3</sup> The Greek cause was regularly linked to nationalism by the West, where preconceptions of Greek nationality were valorized through the Philhellenic movement.<sup>4</sup> Before the Greek War of Independence, a sense of Greek identity was loosely established by those who practiced Greek religion and spoke the Greek language.<sup>5</sup> However, while a small number of these "Greeks" were spurred on by national sentiment, economic, religious, political, and international affairs appear to have played a larger role in the Greek War of Independence.<sup>6</sup>

When analyzing the impact national thought had in the Greek War of Independence, nationalism must be placed into an early nineteenth-century historical context. Modern-day supporters of nationalism have often attempted to link national consciousness to the past to further ideas of a shared sense of community. History can be reconstructed to spark national sentiment, which is why Benedict Anderson defines a nation as "the imagined community."<sup>7</sup> By describing nations as imagined, Anderson is not arguing that national sentiment is fabricated or falsified.<sup>8</sup> Instead, Anderson sees nationalism as "envisioning something that we cannot see, but which is nonetheless real."<sup>9</sup> However, Anderson's depiction of nationalism as an abstract concept is countered by historians who argue that nationalism is based on real-life political and social factors.<sup>10</sup> For example, in *Nations and Nationalism* Ernest Gellner and John Breuilly argue that nationalism is born out of "economic, social, and cultural factors," making it a fundamentally modern phenomenon.<sup>11</sup>

In the nineteenth century, the advocacy for a single nation's political sovereignty became popular in European political thought. In his 1994 book *Nationalism*

[org/10.12681/hr.188](https://doi.org/10.12681/hr.188).

<sup>3</sup> Alexander, *Europe's Uncertain Path 1814-1914*, 37.

<sup>4</sup> Lekas, "The Greek War of Independence from the Perspective of Historical Sociology," 164. Philhellenism was an intellectual movement that was prominent in Western Europe during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Philhellenes idolized Greek culture because they believed all of Western civilization originated from Greece.

<sup>5</sup> C. M. Woodhouse. *The Greek War of Independence: Its Historical Setting*. New York: Russell & Russell, (1975): 29.

<sup>6</sup> Diamandouros, *Hellenism and the First Greek War of Liberation (1821-1830)*, 21.

<sup>7</sup> Benedict Anderson. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. Revised edition. London: Verso, (2006).

<sup>8</sup> John Breuilly. "Benedict Anderson's Imagined Communities: a symposium." *Nations and Nationalism*, 22 (2016): 628. doi: 10.1111/nana.12236.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Ernest Gellner and John Breuilly. *Nations and Nationalism*. 2nd ed. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, (2008): 106.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

and the State, John Breuilly defines a “nation” as a homogeneous group striving for political sovereignty who feel strongly that they are unique and distinct from “others.”<sup>12</sup> Breuilly argues that “nationalism” is the act of prioritizing the nation’s needs and values above all other needs and values.<sup>13</sup> Discrepancies between Greek motivations in the Greek War of Independence and Breuilly’s definition of nationalism quickly arise. Greek fighters lacked unity; self-interest was often prioritized in the rebellion and many of the rebels did not identify with a distinct “Greek nation.” Rather than being a cohesive self-aware nation, Greeks who participated in the War of Independence remained torn by factionalism based on clashing religious, regional, familial and social issues.<sup>14</sup>

Greeks who rose against Ottoman rule did not have a unified plan for state leadership after the rebellion.<sup>15</sup> There were three main options for the future Greek state: the creation of a multinational state, a nation-state, or a grouping of Greek principalities.<sup>16</sup> National and universal sentiments were simultaneously operating when fighting began in 1821, despite the conflicting outcomes of these two lines of thought.<sup>17</sup> Whereas a universal outlook would lead to the formation of a multinational state under the control of an imperial power, a national outlook supported the creation of an autonomous, self-governing nation-state.<sup>18</sup> A large section of universalists who fought in the Greek War of Independence were not attempting to grant the Greek population political sovereignty and were therefore at odds with national streams of political thought. Conflicting ideas surrounding future Greek leadership highlight the confusing and often weak ties to nationalism that Greek rebels possessed.<sup>19</sup> The mixed motives of those who took part in the Greek rebellion and the fragmentary nature of Greece after the Greek War of Independence show that the Greek rebellion did not occur solely because of rising Greek nationalism.

Greek discontent under Ottoman rule was largely due to religious conflict, as the majority of Greeks were Orthodox Christians living under the rule of a Muslim Sultan.<sup>20</sup> The Orthodox Church was granted a large level of autonomy under Ottoman rule and the weakening administrative power of the Ottoman Empire led to the maintenance of a “theocratic basis of Greek unity.”<sup>21</sup> As the leader of the Greek Orthodox community, the Patriarch of Constantinople was regarded as a high official by the Ottoman govern-

12 John Breuilly, *Nationalism and the State*. 2nd ed. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, (1994): 2.

13 Ibid.

14 Diamandouros, *Hellenism and the First Greek War of Liberation (1821-1830)*, 31.

15 Ibid., 25.

16 Ibid., 23.

17 Zakythinis, *The Making of Modern Greece: From Byzantium to Independence*, 190.

18 Ibid.

19 Diamandouros, *Hellenism and the First Greek War of Liberation (1821-1830)*, 27.

20 Alison W. Phillips. *The War of Greek Independence, 1821-1833*. New York: Scribner, (1897): 5.

21 Phillips, *The War of Greek Independence*, 6.

ment and was granted legal, administrative, and educational responsibilities.<sup>22</sup> In return for these powers, the Patriarch was expected to promote good conduct in the Greek Orthodox community.<sup>23</sup> While the Sultan’s decision to govern through the institution of the Orthodox Church worked when the Church remained loyal to the Ottoman Empire, it failed when the Church abandoned its commitment to Ottoman rule.<sup>24</sup> Although the Orthodox Church was granted a large amount of autonomy, the legal subjugation of Christians under Ottoman rule angered Greeks.<sup>25</sup> Furthermore, religious autonomy allowed leaders in the Orthodox Church to gain political experience and consciousness.<sup>26</sup> In his book *The Greek War of Independence*, C.M. Woodhouse notes that it was “under the leadership of the heads of the Church, that the first impulse came to rebel.”<sup>27</sup>

Weakness in the Ottoman Empire’s law-enforcing and bureaucratic capacities allowed Muslim landowners to oppress Christians in the Empire without restrictions.<sup>28</sup> Many Christians who were under the control of Muslim landowners fled and found refuge in mountainous regions where they would be free from Muslim subjugation.<sup>29</sup> Groups of Christian communities in the mountains were originally helpful to the Ottoman Empire.<sup>30</sup> For example, the “Armatoli,” a militia largely composed of Christian peasants who lived in the mountains, was used for defence of the Empire. However, as the Ottoman Empire grew weaker, the Sultan began to cut back on the number of Christian militia forces the Empire employed, angering many Christian soldiers trained in mountain warfare.<sup>31</sup> During the Greek War of Independence, large numbers of the Christian militia turned on the Sultan, using guerilla warfare tactics that were hard to suppress.<sup>32</sup>

Because most Greeks and Turks in the Ottoman Empire were unaware of the “complex ideas relating to territorial boundaries and cultural and linguistic uniformity which makes up the European concept of a nation-state,” the tensions between

22 William St Clair, *That Greece Might Still be Free*. Cambridge: Open Book Publishers, 2008. <http://library.oapen.org/handle/20.500.12657/30318>.

23 Ibid.

24 Ibid. On Easter Sunday 1821, Ottoman officials hanged Patriarch Gregory V of Constantinople for his role in the Greek rebellions. While Gregory was not directly involved in the preparations for the Revolution, he was aware of the plans. As Patriarch, Gregory formerly excommunicated individuals who were involved in the rebellions; however, many of the early Greek conspirators were members of the clergy.

25 Diamandouros, *Hellenism and the First Greek War of Liberation (1821-1830)*, 113.

26 Woodhouse, *The Greek War of Independence: Its Historical Setting*, 32.

27 Ibid. When the Greek rebellions began, Orthodox Bishops and priests who were a part of the conspiracy urged their parishioners to rise up and exterminate their Muslim neighbours; St Clair, *That Greece Might Still be Free*, 12.

28 Phillips, *The War of Greek Independence*, 9.

29 Diamandouros, *Hellenism and the First Greek War of Liberation (1821-1830)*, 115.

30 Phillips, *The War of Greek Independence*, 10.

31 Ibid.

32 Ibid.

these communities appear to be predominantly based on religious rather than national differences.<sup>33</sup> Christian discontent largely stemmed from their inability to access land. In an agricultural society where land was coveted, Muslims were granted the majority of the farmable property despite being the minority in the area.<sup>34</sup> Many Greek peasants revolted against the Sultan's rule because they resented the harsh conditions Christians were placed under by Muslim landowners.<sup>35</sup> Throughout the war, Greek rebels plundered Muslim-owned land, leaving Christian landowners alone. These attacks appear to be based on religious tensions and "land hunger" rather than national sentiment.<sup>36</sup> It was the systematic oppression of Christian peasantry and their inability to access land that spurred many Greek peasants into revolt.

International intervention in the Greek War also had religious factors, as many states rationalized Greek intervention through the use of crusade rhetoric, claiming that they were helping Christian Greeks shake off their Muslim oppressors.<sup>37</sup> Tsar Alexander's international policy supported "legitimate authority" over any rebel groups; however, Russia was motivated to intervene on the side of the Greek rebels based on their shared religion.<sup>38</sup> During the Greek War of Independence, the "civilized-barbarian binary" was used to legitimize the Greek cause.<sup>39</sup> International coverage of the war often emphasized the atrocities of the Muslim oppressors while ignoring or valorizing the violence of Christian rebels, bolstering notions of Muslim barbarity and Christian civility.<sup>40</sup> Although nationalistic sentiment helped foster international sympathy and support for the Greek cause, religious discord was also crucial in shaping the international community's opinion on the Greek War of Independence.<sup>41</sup>

The Greek War of Independence would not have occurred without the growth of Greek political consciousness. In *Hellenism and the First Greek War of Liberation (1821-*

33 St Clair, *That Greece Might Still be Free*, 8.

34 Diamandouros, *Hellenism and the First Greek War of Liberation (1821-1830)*, 114; Turkish and Albanian Muslims accounted for about one ninth of the total Peloponnese population; St Clair, *That Greece Might Still be Free*, 2.

35 Diamandouros, *Hellenism and the First Greek War of Liberation (1821-1830)*, 116.

36 Ibid.

37 Alexander, *Europe's Uncertain Path 1814-1914*, 36. Historically, Christian Crusades have been justified based on the belief that Christians need access to and protection in the Holy Land.

38 Alexis Heraclides and Ada Dialla. *Intervention in the Greek War of Independence, 1821-32*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, (2016): 108. <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt1mf71b8>.

39 Y.A Stivachtis. "'International society' versus 'world society': Europe and the Greek War of Independence." *International Politics* 55, (2018): 111. <https://doi-org.ezproxy.library.uvic.ca/10.1057/s41311-017-0069-1>. In the West, the belief that "civilized" Christianity was bound in a deadly conflict against "barbaric" Islam allowed members of the Philhellenic movement to portray the Ottoman Empire as a direct threat to Western Civilization.

40 Heraclides and Dialla, "*Intervention in the Greek War of Independence, 1821-32*," 124.

41 Heraclides and Dialla, "*Intervention in the Greek War of Independence, 1821-32*," 124.

1830), Nikiforos Diamandouros argues that the Ottoman Empire placed Greeks under eight conditions that restricted their autonomy and limited their attempts to form a resistance to Ottoman control.<sup>42</sup> "Political disenfranchisement," "simplification of class structure," "economic impoverishment," "ethnic dilution," "religious retreat," "legal disenfranchisement," "deformalization of culture," and "cultural isolation" constrained Greeks under Ottoman rule.<sup>43</sup> These conditions stunted the Greek people's ability to form a strong political community, which might have otherwise fostered Greek national sentiment.<sup>44</sup> However, Diamandouros notes that by the time the Greek rebellion broke out in 1821, only legal and political disenfranchisement remained in the way of Greek autonomy.<sup>45</sup> This was because the Ottoman Empire's authority was dissolving and failed attempts by Sultan Mahmud II to reform led to a decentralization of power in the Empire.<sup>46</sup> Greeks were given increased autonomy, which allowed them to become more prosperous.<sup>47</sup> Having gained increased security in life, ambitions for legal and political enfranchisement began to enter Greek consciousness.<sup>48</sup>

Historians often attribute economic prosperity and increasing education rates to the growth of a politically conscious Greek society.<sup>49</sup> Abroad, exiled Greeks had set up communities that were foundational to the Greek economic revival.<sup>50</sup> In *The Making of Modern Greece*, Dionysios Zakythinos argues that the Greeks of the diaspora created an economic ruling class of Greeks outside of the Ottoman empire, who "combined . . . a passion for moneymaking with a passion for their country."<sup>51</sup> These men influenced the opinions of the rising urban class merchants in Greece, who were in contact with Greek communities outside of the Ottoman Empire through trade.<sup>52</sup> In the Greek islands, maritime trade led to prosperity since Turks permitted many forms of self-government in commerce.<sup>53</sup> Furthermore, because the Greek communities who lived on the maritime islands were granted a large amount of political autonomy, they acquired skills in governance that allowed them to become "natural leaders" for the rebellion and for leadership after the war.<sup>54</sup> For the Greek economy to flourish, they had to shift their trade outside of the weakening Ottoman Empire and into the West, where they

42 Diamandouros, *Hellenism and the First Greek War of Liberation (1821-1830)*, 21.

43 Ibid.

44 Ibid.

45 Ibid.

46 Alexander, *Europe's Uncertain Path 1814-1914*, 18.

47 Zakythinos, *The Making of Modern Greece: From Byzantium to Independence*, 138.

48 Diamandouros, *Hellenism and the First Greek War of Liberation (1821-1830)*, 22.

49 Woodhouse, *The Greek War of Independence: Its Historical Setting*, 29.

50 St Clair, *That Greece Might Still be Free*, 8. By the late eighteenth century, colonies of Greeks in the cities of Italy, France, Austria, and Russia were prospering.

51 Zakythinos, *The Making of Modern Greece: From Byzantium to Independence*, 131.

52 Ibid.

53 Phillips, *The War of Greek Independence*, 14.

54 Ibid., 15.

were increasingly in contact with liberal ideas from the American and French revolutions.<sup>55</sup> Rising living standards occurred as a result of economic success, allowing Greeks to “break the monotony of life” and focus on the formation of political ideas.<sup>56</sup> Furthermore, increased economic prosperity led to a growth in the “merchant bourgeoisie,” a group directly influenced by nationalist ideas.<sup>57</sup> Members of the prosperous Greek merchant communities often possessed liberal and nationalist ideas; however, they made up a very small percent of the Greeks who rebelled against Ottoman rule.<sup>58</sup> The majority of Greeks lived in agricultural-based communities and were not directly influenced by the increase of wealth and ideas coming into Greece through the merchant community.<sup>59</sup> While a small number of Greeks became urbanized and Westernized, the majority of the Greek masses were not exposed to liberal and national ideas.<sup>60</sup>

Education played a crucial role in paving the way for Greek independence since the Greeks were allowed almost full autonomy in their education system under Ottoman rule.<sup>61</sup> The Greek education system used the Greek language and religion, promoting the idea that the Greek community existed independently from the rest of the Ottoman Empire.<sup>62</sup> Educational reforms led to an increasingly literate Greek population; as education spread, ideas of a shared culture began to reach larger parts of Greek society.<sup>63</sup> Literature helped spread national sentiment; for example, the language of Hellas was revived in Greek communities, linking Greeks to an ancient tradition and forming a perception that the Greek community possessed a longstanding culture.<sup>64</sup> Education spread national consciousness and Greeks began to see their “cultural heritage . . . [as] the special possession of Greek-speaking people.”<sup>65</sup> However, despite extensive educational reforms and the rise of literacy, historians have noted that only a small percent of Greeks were influenced by the “neo-Hellenic enlightenment.”<sup>66</sup> The neo-Hellenic movement was the emergence of a perceived Greek culture linked to ancient Greece and was more popular abroad, where liberals, nationalists, and the Greeks of diaspora fostered ideas of a Greek identity in the international community.<sup>67</sup>

55 Clogg, *The Movement for Greek Independence, 1770-1821: A Collection of Documents*, xxi.

56 Zakythinos, *The Making of Modern Greece: From Byzantium to Independence*, 138.

57 Clogg, *The Movement for Greek Independence, 1770-1821: A Collection of Documents*, xxi.

58 Lekas, “The Greek War of Independence from the Perspective of Historical Sociology,” 171.

59 Diamandouros, *Hellenism and the First Greek War of Liberation (1821-1830)*, 113.

60 Ibid., 123.

61 Woodhouse, *The Greek War of Independence: Its Historical Setting*, 29.

62 Ibid.

63 Zakythinos, *The Making of Modern Greece: From Byzantium to Independence*, 24.

64 Phillips, *The War of Greek Independence*, 16.

65 Diamandouros, *Hellenism and the First Greek War of Liberation (1821-1830)*, 24.

66 Clogg, *The Movement for Greek Independence, 1770-1821: A Collection of Documents*, xxi. Greeks who were influenced by the neo-Hellenic movement were often members of the wealthier merchant communities mentioned earlier in this essay.

67 Heraclides and Dialla, “*Intervention in the Greek War of Independence, 1821–32*,” 110.

In his study of Greek life under Ottoman rule, Richard Clogg claims that ballads and folklore were more effective in shaping the Greek peasant and urban artisan classes’ perceptions of Greek liberation than the neo-Hellenic movement.<sup>68</sup> Whereas the neo-Hellenic movement emphasized ideas of a Greek nation, ballads and folklore were usually based on regional or religious connections.<sup>69</sup> Greek ballads, prophecies, and oracles regularly foretold Christian liberation from the “Hagarene yoke,” stressing the idea that Greek liberty would be achieved through divine intervention.<sup>70</sup> Education reforms fostered the sense of a shared Greek community; however, when the Greek War of Independence broke out, the Greek masses were still viewing Greek independence in religious or personal terms rather than from a nationalistic point of view.<sup>71</sup>

While historians’ opinions vary on the extent to which the West impacted the Greek War of Independence, Western influence is regularly cited as a key component in the rebellion.<sup>72</sup> In his 2006 article “The Greek War of Independence from the Perspective of Historical Sociology,” Padelis Lekas claims that it is doubtful that Greek independence would have been achieved without the West.<sup>73</sup> For Padelis, Western influence is key to understanding Greece’s transition into an increasingly modern way of life.<sup>74</sup> Waning Ottoman authority allowed more Western influence into the area that would later become Greece and as a result, Greeks became increasingly aware of the disparities between their standard of life compared to the West.<sup>75</sup> Merchants were often “‘modernised’, ‘de-regionalised’ and ‘nationalised’ by intellectuals abroad.”<sup>76</sup> However, despite Western influence, the Greek War of Independence cannot be defined simply as a fight for modernization or Westernization. Many Greeks opposed the movement towards a secularized liberal state that was being promoted in revolutionary rhetoric abroad and many Greeks lacked connections to Western ideas.<sup>77</sup>

Philhellenism and the belief in uniting all Greeks based on a shared culture were more popular abroad than in Greece.<sup>78</sup> The Philhellenic movement was promoted

68 Clogg, *The Movement for Greek Independence, 1770-1821: A Collection of Documents*, xxi.

69 Ibid.

70 Ibid. The term “Hagarene” was used in Christian literature to describe the Arabs who conquered Syria, Egypt, and Mesopotamia. European Christians often defined the Ottoman Empire using descriptions that were already applied to “former foreign empires with names such as ‘Saracens’, ‘Ishmaelites’, ‘Hagarenes’ or ‘Arabs’”; Simon Hadler. “Europe’s other? The Turks and shifting borders of memory,” *European Review of History: Revue européenne d’histoire*, 24:4, (2017): 507. 10.1080/13507486.2017.1307814

71 Phillips, *The War of Greek Independence*, 9.

72 Lekas, “The Greek War of Independence from the Perspective of Historical Sociology,” 176.

73 Ibid.

74 Ibid., 167.

75 Clogg, *The Movement for Greek Independence, 1770-1821: A Collection of Documents*, xii.

76 Lekas, “The Greek War of Independence from the Perspective of Historical Sociology,” 173.

77 Ibid., 182.

78 Ibid., 175.

in the international community by liberals, nationalists, and by Greeks living outside of Ottoman rule.<sup>79</sup> Diasporic Greeks often fled to other parts of Europe, where they formed communities that upheld formal Greek culture.<sup>80</sup> These communities often used Philhellenic sentiment to gain sympathy for Greeks in the international community, promoting their cause through nationalistic rhetoric.<sup>81</sup> When the war broke out, thousands of “Philhellenes” from abroad joined the fight on the Greek’s side, feeling closely tied to the Greek cause through the Romantic notion that ancient Greece was the birthplace of Western culture.<sup>82</sup> Diasporic Greeks promoted ideas of a “Greek nation” to gain international support and increase the Greek war-effort.<sup>83</sup> The international Greek community had been attempting to gain Greek liberation from Ottoman rule for decades before the Greek War of Independence.<sup>84</sup> However, Greeks in the diaspora often reasoned that in order to gain freedom from the Turks, Greeks would have to submit to Western rule.<sup>85</sup> Creating a nation-state or an independent Greek state was not always crucial to Greek perceptions of liberation.<sup>86</sup> In fact, many Greeks seemed content with imperial rule if it resulted in increased Greek agency and liberty.<sup>87</sup>

In order to gauge nationalism’s impact on the Greek War of Independence, a study into the motives of the powers who intervened in the Greek rebellion is required. International intervention played a major role in ensuring Greek victory in the War of Independence. The Philhellenic movement helped shape international opinions on the Greek war, since “European and American public opinion had been on the Greek side almost from the beginning.”<sup>88</sup> Citizens from Italy, France, England, Scotland, Ireland, Germany, Poland, Scandinavia, America, Spain, Portugal, Hungary, and other countries volunteered in the Greek War of Independence as they felt deeply connected to the Greek cause.<sup>89</sup> However, it is crucial to note that the international community felt connected to the Greek cause for a variety of reasons and their sympathy for the Greeks was not always based on national sentiment. This multifaceted connection to the Greeks was illustrated in Russia, where many citizens and policymakers identified with the Greeks because of their shared belief in Orthodox Christianity.<sup>90</sup> Furthermore, many European and American citizens felt attached to the Greek cause because they viewed the Greeks as descendants of the

79 Lekas, “The Greek War of Independence from the Perspective of Historical Sociology,” 164.

80 Diamandouros, *Hellenism and the First Greek War of Liberation (1821-1830)*, 22.

81 Zakythinos, *The Making of Modern Greece: From Byzantium to Independence*, 129.

82 Heraclides and Dialla, “*Intervention in the Greek War of Independence, 1821–32*,” 110.

83 Lekas, “The Greek War of Independence from the Perspective of Historical Sociology,” 174.

84 Diamandouros, *Hellenism and the First Greek War of Liberation (1821-1830)*, 22.

85 Ibid.

86 Zakythinos, *The Making of Modern Greece: From Byzantium to Independence*, 192.

87 Ibid.

88 Heraclides and Dialla, “*Intervention in the Greek War of Independence, 1821–32*,” 109.

89 Ibid.

90 Alexander, *Europe’s Uncertain Path 1814-1914*, 36.

founders of Western civilization.<sup>91</sup> It was a cumulation of religious, universal, and Romantic ideals that made international opinion favourable towards the Greek cause.

While connections between the Greek War of Independence and nationalism were made by the international community, nationalism played a small role in state policymakers’ decisions to join the Greek cause. Russia proposed intervention in Greece as early as 1824 on the basis of upholding Christian principles, although geo-strategic territorial and commercial interests were key to Tsar Alexander’s decision to intervene.<sup>92</sup> Through the 1826 St. Petersburg Protocol, Britain agreed to intervene in Greece alongside Russia.<sup>93</sup> The British foreign minister, George Canning, joined the Greek War of Independence largely because of geostrategic reasons.<sup>94</sup> Fearing that Russia would gain too much territory, Britain wanted to increase its interests in the Balkans and limit Russian expansion in that area.<sup>95</sup> Furthermore, Britain wanted to form an independent Greek state that had close ties to Britain while keeping the Ottoman Empire intact. France joined Russia and Britain’s intervention plan in July 1827 and was hoping to sign a treaty based on the St. Petersburg protocol that would check both England and Russia.<sup>96</sup> The three-power intervention in the Greek War of Independence was formed largely off of geostrategic decisions since Russia, Britain, and France all wanted to maintain the “balance of powers” in the European periphery.<sup>97</sup> While the international public supported Greeks because of Philhellenism and humanitarianism sentiment, state policymakers’ motives appear to have had a “mixture of humanitarian and instrumental motives” for intervening in Greece.<sup>98</sup>

The Greek War of Independence was spurred on by religious, economic, and international factors that were not always based on national ideals. Many Greeks who rebelled in the Greek War of Independence did not possess a sense of national consciousness.<sup>99</sup> Greeks in the diaspora and the international community of liberals and nationalists often used national rhetoric to spur international support for the Greek cause, creating the perception of a united Greek nation that was not fully formed in reality.<sup>100</sup> Although the international community often promoted the notion of the “Greek-nation” through the Philhellenic movement, the intervention of the major

91 Heraclides and Dialla, “*Intervention in the Greek War of Independence, 1821–32*,” 110.

92 David Brewer, *The Greek War of Independence, 1821-1833: the Struggle for Freedom from Ottoman Oppression and the Birth of the Modern Greek Nation*. New York: Overlook Press, (2001): 25.

93 Ibid., 46.

94 Alexander, *Europe’s Uncertain Path 1814-1914*, 36.

95 Heraclides and Dialla, “*Intervention in the Greek War of Independence, 1821–32*,” 111.

96 Brewer, *The Greek War of Independence, 1821-1833*, 46.

97 Lekas, “The Greek War of Independence from the Perspective of Historical Sociology,” 164.

98 Heraclides and Dialla, “*Intervention in the Greek War of Independence, 1821–32*,” 124.

99 Diamandouros, *Hellenism and the First Greek War of Liberation (1821-1830)*, 123.

100 Lekas, “The Greek War of Independence from the Perspective of Historical Sociology,” 182.

powers in the Greek war appears to have been based more on geostrategic factors than fostering ideas of the “Greek-nation.”<sup>101</sup> Understanding the role of nationalism is crucial in understanding the Greek War of Independence since the war resulted in the creation of a Greek nation-state; however, it appears that national sentiment played a small role in the Greek War of Independence and the resulting formation of Greece.

§

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<sup>101</sup> Brewer, *The Greek War of Independence, 1821-1833*, 46.