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GENDER,
MEDIA,
THE MILITARY
AND
THE CHURCH

Rosa Vasilaki - George Souvlis

MAINSTREAMING THE FAR RIGHT IN GREECE

MAINSTREAMING THE FAR RIGHT IN GREECE:

GENDER, MEDIA, THE MILITARY AND THE CHURCH

EDITED BY

ROSA VASILAKI AND GEORGE SOUVLIS



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FOREWORD

ARISTOTLE KALLIS

The banality of the extremes and the "normality" of Golden Dawn

The conviction of Golden Dawn as a criminal organisation in October 2020 closed a long cycle that began with the murder of Pavlos Fyssas seven years previously. The intervening period witnessed a number of important upheavals: the electoral and organisational annihilation of the party along with the arrest and imprisonment of its leadership, the turning of much of Greek public opinion against Golden Dawn as a presence in the political sphere, with particular emphasis put on the condemnation of its extremist methods, and the emergence of new electoral formations that filled the ideological and – at least in part – electoral gap left by the de facto disappearance of the far-right party. The delegitimisation of Golden Dawn seemingly closed another, even longer cycle that began with the (seemingly) sudden social dispersion and electoral rise of the far-right political party in Greece during the economic crisis (Ellinas, 2013; Angouri & Wodak, 2014).

So, did the condemnation of this organisation also signal the end of the contemporary Greek Far Right? Was the meteoric rise of Golden Dawn a temporary side effect of the economic and political crisis, of the memoranda, of the significant increase in migration flows over the past three decades? Yes, to a certain extent, namely only in the very narrow sense that the rise of Golden Dawn itself expressed and identified itself politically with a shift of a significant portion of the electorate to antisystemic, ultranational alternatives (Verousi & Allen, 2021). The key question, however, is whether the strengthening of the party's reputation constituted (a) a form of spasmodic and transitory protest or (b) the visible consequence of more important and long-term ideological and social transformations in Greek society (Vasilopoulou & Halikiopoulou, 2015).

The former view is somewhat reminiscent of the narratives of "historical parenthesis", or *interregnum*, to which national historiographies of coun-

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tries that experienced fascist regimes in the interwar period had recourse to during the transition to the postwar "normality" of democracy, parliamentarism and liberal pluralism (Leavitt, 2016). The logic of "parenthesis" constitutes a historical configuration which regards antidemocratic, ultranationalist, intolerant and violent phenomena as ephemeral exceptions to a supposedly one-way historical path towards a society that would be open, democratic, progressive, peaceful, more tolerant and free from the prejudices of the past. The supposed historical setback would serve as a springboard for democratic leaps that would irreversibly move away from the dark pages of the past. In any case, Greece belongs to a special group of European countries which experienced these setbacks in multiple and successive versions. both during the interwar and the postwar periods. From a microhistorical point of view, such setbacks can be considered as inevitable stages of a historical dialectic between action and reaction. The belief, however, that such side effects are the exception to a macrohistorical "civilisational process" forms an overall optimistic narrative, where the rule, the dominant tendency, is emphatically opposed to the temporary "parenthesis".

Contrary to this optimistic view, the second interpretive hypothesis sees the political strengthening of extreme forms of populist ultranationalism as an expression of a broader, deeper and longer-term ideological normalisation of extreme ideas. Such a normalisation, in fact, is considered to go far beyond the electoral power of transitory political formations that invoke it (for example, the tendency of contemporary far-right movements to ground their legitimacy on the expression of an alleged "silent majority") (Lowndes, 2016). In addition, the dynamics of this normalisation expresses deeper social reflexes of reaction against the dominant tendency, which often transcends specific political parties. In this sense, the decline – whether temporary or more permanent – of the electoral power of certain far-right parties can be considered neither the result nor a resolute proof of the decline of the ideas they expressed. The ostensible "exception" of the reaction obscures, in many cases, a deeper and more lasting dynamic of normalisation of extreme ideas, which cumulatively affects the scope and the general content of the dominant social trend (Krzyżanowski, 2020; Krzyżanowski et al, 2021).

What exactly is this "dominant trend"? This concept, that is the "main-stream", remains one of the most inaccessible and neglected categories in the analysis of ideological extremism. The difficulty to define the "dominant trend" has to do with the fact that it refers to an unstable and complex amal-

¹ The argument that fascism was a "historical parenthesis" is related to the view of fascism by liberal intellectuals, such as Benedetto Croce. See for instance, Rizi, 2003.

gam of perceptions, attitudes and practices (Kallis, 2015). For this reason, it would be more accurate to regard the dominant trend as a range of views, attitudes and practices, extending from a core of general consensus towards more diverse, heterogeneous and often contradictory peripheries, which are considered as more or less non-"extreme" and therefore acceptable at a given time (Minkenberg, 2013). The problem with this logic is that the notion of "extreme" is *also* defined in relation to a "normality" grounded on the "dominant trend" which defines both what "normality" is but also its extreme refutations (Bötticher, 2017). Consequently, the attempt to define what exactly can be considered as a "dominant trend" and what is considered as

an "extreme" is intertwined in a tautology that makes it complex and poten-

tially questionable.

The problem, then, is not so much whether Golden Dawn was an extreme phenomenon, but the definition of "normality" from which it supposedly deviated and which it blatantly violated. According to Foucault (2007), normality is produced through two parallel and different processes. On the one hand, what we call the "normal" means "the usual", the empirically widespread prevalent and accepted by the social majority. On the other hand, however, normality is also inextricably linked to power structures, expressing not so much the kind of knowledge and truth which are quantitatively dominant, but the kind of knowledge and truth which has regulatory authority. Therefore, both the "dominant trend" and its "extreme", nonlegitimate contradictions are based on the power to define normality not as that which is already normal but as that which should be "normal". For this reason, Foucault distinguishes the meaning of normalisation using two similar terms: normalisation (what is already statistically normal) and normation (what produces the normative as that which should be or must become normal). The difference is significant, because while in the first case the normal and the extreme are determined by the empirically determined average, in the second case the normative produces and promotes what the normal should be, it makes it politically, if not quantitatively, dominant, and it delegitimises or devalues a wider range of opposing perceptions and practices (Mayes, 2005; McWhorter, 2014).

The electoral collapse and judicial conviction of Golden Dawn are directly related to the broader analysis of the trajectory not only of the Greek Far Right, historical and contemporary, but also with the spectrum of the contemporary Greek "dominant trend". The latter may be based on a series of regulatory logics, such as the "constitutional arc" (Saridakis, 2017), the discrediting of ultranationalist fantasies and extremist demands, the pro-European perspective and, above all, the delegitimisation of violent political attitudes (Fragoudaki, 2013). However, neither the historical Far Right nor

its contemporary versions developed their thinking and practices in complete contrast to the "dominant" political, cultural, and social perceptions of the time. After all, in many cases the "extreme" maintains a relationship of quantitative continuity rather than vertical qualitative rupture with the "normal".

At this point the ambiguity of the concept of normality gives rise to the following question: in what sense and in what way was Golden Dawn "extreme"? Of course, its violent and terrorist practices, the brutal aggression associated with its ideas and the recurrent breaking of a series of hard political taboos (widespread use of physical violence, brutal misogyny, allegiance to fascism and the dictatorship of the colonels, preaching intolerance inside and outside of Parliament, Holocaust denial (Navoth, 2018), etc.) stigmatised Golden Dawn as a political organisation and delegitimised it in the eyes of the majority of the electorate (Petrou & Kandylis, 2016). On the other hand, however, a significant number of voters over the past decade voted for it and a section of public opinion - which is far wider socially, politically and agewise than the party's electoral influence even at the height of its power (Koronaiou et al., 2015) – converged with Golden Dawn's ideological narratives and justified its aggressive intolerance, even if its most extreme practices and the attitude of its top officials was criticised. This trend, in fact, continued for a long time after the murder of Pavlos Fyssas.

So how did we get to the 7% of the 2012 and 2015 elections or the 9.4% of the 2014 European elections? (Vasilopoulou & Halikiopoulou, 2013; Vasilopoulou & Halikiopoulou, 2014). Was the spectacular strengthening of the party a sudden spasmodic reaction against a seemingly incompetent and worthless political establishment and an early Greek version of the populist demand for the nation "to take back control" in the midst of an unprecedented crisis in post-1974² Greece and in Europe? (Toloudis, 2014; Sotiris, 2015; Lamprianou & Ellinas, 2017). Quite the opposite. In a significant sense, the Golden Dawn of 2010 did not emerge suddenly but was already an integral part of another Greek "normality", which was political as well as social and cultural, which the regulatory narrative of post-1974 Greece, the narrative of Greek "modernisation", sought to marginalise and silence but failed to eliminate or deconstruct. The appearance of Golden Dawn on the country's electoral map was not just a simple and temporary side effect of the economic crisis or the outcome of immigration, but the result of a deeper, longer-term radicalisation of Greek nationalism since the 1990s. It

² The post-1974 period, known as Metapolitefsi (i.e. regime change) in Greece is the period following the collapse of the military dictatorship in Greece 1967–1974) and the transition to democratic governance.

was also associated with a series of long-term extremist notions of national uniqueness and historical decline, which may have been delegitimised – at least some of them – in the dominant discourse of the post-1974 period, but which have not lost either their social appeal or their aficionados within the "dominant trend" (Vasilopoulou & Halikiopoulou, 2015; Ellinas, 2013).

However, even the most "extreme" among these ideas were not developed or reproduced in an ideologically sealed space, separate from the modern Greek "mainstream". On the contrary, they rely to a large extent on commonplace nationalist ideas, which were in the past and still remain perfectly legitimate, both at the level of everyday life and in the context of the dominant political discourse. Although the violent nationalist frenzy and fanatical intransigence of Golden Dawn were extreme phenomena, in the sense that they violated a number of taboos, these taboos were associated mainly with the behaviour and the specific way of conducting politics of behalf of its members. Nevertheless, on an ideological level, Golden Dawn is in a relationship of qualitative continuity with perceptions reproduced within the spectrum of the dominant trend of contemporary Greek society. Assuming that, in addition to the transgressive attitudes it adopted, Golden Dawn expressed "extreme" positions on a number of issues national identity and sovereignty, the treatment of all forms of minorities, religious freedom, immigration and border control, etc. - these constituted, to a large extent, a kind of extremism articulated via the exaggeration of dominant rather than already delegitimised ideas. Because these positions are, in any case, inextricably linked to commonplace and legitimised nationalist ideas situated within the spectrum of modern Greek "normality", they inevitably have a long-term impact on the "dominant trend" which is not associated with the electoral fate of the party itself (Halikiopoulou et al., 2016).

In many ways, then, the Golden Dawn phenomenon is only the most recent episode in the complex genealogy of banal Greek ultranationalism. It is part of a broader trend of reaction to change and of nostalgia for the allegedly lost purity – cultural, political, social, racial – of earlier times. Golden Dawn's populism has its roots in much more trivial versions of the LA-OS-type³ ultranationalism of the 1990s and 2000s (Ellinas, 2012; Pappas & Aslanidis, 2015). It is also linked to other commonplace views about nation-

³ The Popular Orthodox Rally or People's Orthodox Alarm (Greek: Λαϊκός Ορθόδοξος Συναγερμός), often abbreviated to Laos (ΛΑ.Ο.Σ.), a homonym of the Greek word for people, is a Greek far-right political party founded by journalist Georgios Karatzaferis in 2000 and led today by Nikolaos Salavrakos.

al historical, cultural and geographical specificity, about a threatened racial purity by alleged invasions of certain groups of people and their morals, about cultural incompatibility with specific ethnic, religious and racial groups and about national sovereignty being undermined by alleged foreign centres of power and international conspiracies (Katsambekis & Stavrakakis, 2017). These and other similar ideas may not be part of the regulatory logic of the Greek mainstream, but they remain "dominant" in the quantitative sense of broader social acceptance and *de facto* destigmatisation in the eyes of a significant part of the population. In addition, they are reproduced on the fringes, and not only, of the dominant trend, claiming from time to time – and in several cases enjoying – legitimacy from Greek "mainstream" bodies: political organisations and individuals, media and social networking, statements, and projects by public intellectuals etc.

This is how we ended up with the extreme ideological demands and the transcendental transgressive violence of Golden Dawn: not through a diversion from the dominant trend, but through the synthesis, radicalisation and corruption of already legitimised or destigmatised views of contemporary Greek normality. For this reason, Golden Dawn – whose earlier appeal was based on a series of trivial or nontrivial ideological precursors – has already passed the baton to young, aspiring proponents of populist ultranationalism, inside and outside the "dominant trend" (Vasilaki et al., 2021). Its delegitimisation is organisational and its devaluation has to do with the specific transgressive patterns of behaviour it exhibited. This, however, does not imply the discrediting of its ideological profile as a whole, and even less the discrediting of the key dominant ideas the party had invoked for legitimacy and through which it had successfully addressed the "silent minorities".

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INTRODUCTION

ROSA VASILAKI AND GEORGE SOUVLIS

Mainstreaming far-right discourse in Greece

The conviction of Golden Dawn in October 2020, following a prominent and lengthy court case, described as the most important political trial since those in Nuremberg, was a milestone in the closing of a cycle that had opened in Greece with the economic crisis. Thus, the dramatic fall of Golden Dawn, which was crystallised in its failure to re-enter Parliament in July 2019 and its conviction as a criminal organisation a year later, was a component of a narrative that wanted the country to leave behind for good the years of "crisis", a crisis which was economic and political. This condemnation was also followed by a striking convergence in political and media discourses: This convergence stretched from the so-called "democratic arc" important representatives of which maintained direct links with Golden Dawn, such as some members of the Samaras government – to the so-called mainstream media, which had shown remarkable tolerance towards the neo-Nazi party. The result was the emergence of a new consensus, which now clearly positioned itself in opposition to the neo-Nazi formation, whose practices were described as criminal. However, what was just as striking as the new political consensus was the silence with which the ideas and rhetoric of the far-right organisation were met. The generic term "populism", which was promoted as a metonym for the Far Right, and which deliberately equates it with the far left - in essence, a popularised version of the "horseshoe theory" - obscured the ideological origins of the criminal practices of Golden Dawn, namely aggressive nationalism, racism, sexism, homophobia and antisemitism, in other words, the ideologies of exclusion and discrimination that characterise the Far Right internationally today.

This obscurity, the absence of a discourse on the ideas of Golden Dawn and its impact on society, formed the basis of the research questions that the present volume attempts to explore. The question that runs through the chapters presented here is whether and in what ways far-right ideology has been politically legitimised and socially normalised, and to what extent it

constitutes today a new "common sense" that is not the ideological property of certain extremists, but an entrenched mentality and a regulating factor in political life. During the years of the economic crisis, Greek society found itself at the crossroads between the (far) right and the (far) left. The scale seemed to tip temporarily to the left, with the victories of Syriza in the 2015 elections. However, the rhetoric of "first time left" obscured the ideological convictions of a significant part of Syriza voters, for whom the vote for the left was conjunctural and opportunistic rather than conscious and had little to do with the ideals of a democratic and inclusive society, in contrast to the nationalist "purity" and phobic nationalism that versions of the ethno-populist right adhered to. Thus, despite Syriza's temporary electoral prevalence, and also as a result of the general disappointment brought about by its failure to realise its promises (both in economic terms and in terms of the democratisation of state institutions). Greek society in the long run – as is evident from the published questionnaire undertaken in the context of the present research and presented in the appendix of the volume – seems to be clearly turning to the right. Central elements that constitute the ideological core of Golden Dawn - xenophobia, racism, the belief in the superiority of Greek culture, the belief that neighbouring countries are encroaching on Greece, Islamophobia – seem to have diffused widely.

Of course, this broader "drift to the right" (Camus & Lebourg, 2017) is not just a Greek trend: From the US of the Trump phenomenon, the forms of authoritarian parliamentarism of far-off Modi's India and Bolsonaro's Brazil, to the overt homophobia and xenophobia of Poland and Hungary in Europe, societies seem to have fascistised at a rapid pace. Whether as a reaction to the global economic crisis and the misery produced by the austerity policies imposed by neoliberalism, or as a reaction to the efforts to consolidate the social rights of hitherto excluded and marginalised minorities, the Far Right as a way of thinking seems to be capitalising on the issues in an effective way, a trend reflected both at the electoral level as well as in terms of social trends, attitudes and opinions. The specific form of the Far Right assumed by Golden Dawn, which used both violent practices and discourses, made the recognition of its ideological nature and political goals more obvious and consequently its condemnation easier when it went beyond the limits of tolerance shown towards the Far Right by the institutions of the state. However, the international trend, of which Greece is no exception, suggests that it can promote its agenda through parliamentary institutions, as the socalled "liberal right" moves increasingly to the right, as the examples of authoritarian parliamentarianism mentioned above indicate.

The new Far Right appropriates the discourse on rights by reversing the terms of the debate (for example, "the majority is threatened by minorities"

who should be silent and invisible, the discourse on "men's rights"), thus instrumentalising identity politics (but also showing the limits and dangers of such politics), by selectively recognising certain rights (for example, the case of "pinkwashing", which entails conditional acceptance of LGBTQ claims) and turning them against other marginalised communities (for example, "immigrants or Muslims who threaten women's freedom in the West and/or gay rights"). The common thread of all these elements, which are used instrumentally and at will in the different national contexts in which they manifest themselves, is the invocation of a "crisis of values" and antisystemicism: The new Far Right is presented simultaneously as the guardian of a national tradition threatened by multiculturalism and the demands of inclusion expressed by the marginalised, and, at the same time, as a discourse of resistance, which questions the alleged domination of precisely these marginalised groups who claim recognition, social inclusion and equality. The new Far Right, the "alt-right", as it has come to be known, does not exclusively and primarily advocate violent methods and heinous attacks against its enemies. Its strategy is directed towards the erosion of the state institutions themselves, the systematic dissemination of its ideas and, in this sense, a plan for long-term ideological hegemony through the normalisation of its ideas (Ahmad. 2021).

These insights formed the basis for the research questions and the methodological choices of the present volume. The stimulus and central aim of the research is the way the Far Right infiltrates institutions, the way it shapes them by projecting its logic as "normal" and, finally, the way this "normal" returns to society, thus contributing to its further radicalisation towards the Far Right. The volume focuses on institutions that are considered central to the production and reproduction of the dominant ideology, in general in contemporary nation-states and in particular in Greece because of its particular characteristics. It consists of four chapters, three of which focus on the military, the Orthodox Church of Greece and the media respectively, and a fourth which focuses on contemporary discourses on gender issues. Both the military and the Church have been among the most politically powerful and ideologically influential mechanisms over time since the foundation of the Greek state. Each of these institutions claim to be the gatekeeper of a Greekness - perceived as monoreligious, monocultural, heteronormative, patriarchal – which often presents significant affinities with the traditionalism expressed and "defended" by the Far Right in Greece. The aim of this volume is not to demonstrate that the military or the Church are merely "arms" of a far-right deep state or to claim an absolute identification between the ideologies of the military and the Church – after all, the respective chapters highlight, among other things, the divergence between the

official discourse of the institutions and the informal discourse of the subjects who embody the institutions - but to illuminate the points of convergence and thus highlight their normalising function with regard to the farright body of ideas, attitudes and opinions as shaped during the last decade. In the same vein, the study of the media aims to examine their role in the dissemination and normalisation of a discourse that is largely identified with the far-right categories of thinking and rhetorical patterns. The convergence observed between the "mainstream" and extreme media, combined with their influence on significant segments of the population -and taking into account the very low ratings that Greece scored in terms of press freedom in recent years¹ - can explain, to a certain extent, the diffusion and consolidation of the far-right mentality observed in Greek society today. The study of gender issues differs to some extent from the study of institutions, attempted in the other chapters of the volume, in the narrow sense that gender is not an "institution". However, as gender is a primary field for the articulation and consolidation of power, it has assumed a central role in recent years when it comes to issues around immigration, Islamophobia, individual versus community rights, freedom of speech (Muslim women's attire is perhaps the most prominent symbol of such tensions). In this perspective, the study of gender discourses is essential for understanding the articulation of the new Far Right. In this sense, the chapter focuses not on the study of far-right gender ideology per se, but on examining whether the instrumentalization of gender issues by the Far Right, which can be observed in Europe today, has begun to take root in Greece and to what extent.

At the same time, however, the volume's research interest in institutions goes beyond the formal discourse they produce, without of course considering it of secondary importance, to turn to the subjects who embody these institutions. This interest also guided our methodological choices: To the extent that it was possible given the constraints we faced – the difficulty of access to insulated professional environments such as the military and the Church, conducting the study during the Covid-19 pandemic that limited both mobility and access, for example, in places of worship such as churches – 46 in-depth interviews were conducted with military personnel, priests and members of religious communities as well as members of the feminist and LGBTQI community (for details, see the respective chapters). Adopting the perspective of interpretative sociology and its tradition that prioritises the way in which people make sense of their agency and understand the social world, these interviews aimed to

¹ See Έρευνα αντιλήψεων, στάσεων και απόψεων, Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung-Office in Greece, https://rosalux.gr/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/statistiki-analysi-erotimatologioy_xa.pdf.

highlight the conceptual and rhetorical patterns through which the subjects embodying these institutions reproduce aspects of far-right ideology as "common sense".

Emanating, therefore, out of an interest in the diffusion of far-right ideology and its normalisation in the social body as a mentality, the present volume belongs a broader body of studies on the phenomenon of the Far Right in contemporary Greece, but it diverges from them in terms of its specific aims. The study of the contemporary Greek far-right as an object of inquiry attracted the sustained interest of the research community since the political developments brought it to the fore, when Golden Dawn emerged as the fifth most influential party in the June 2012 elections. This result testified, among other things, to the destabilisation of the post-junta political system, which had been structured around the stable and hegemonic presence of Pasok and New Democracy, the parties that had alternated in power since the fall of the junta, to the extent that this political condition was severely challenged by the emergence of Syriza as the main opposition party on the left as well as Independent Greeks (Anel) and Golden Dawn on the right, which together took 14.43% of the vote. These shifts in the June 2012 elections were indicators of the broader social transformations that had taken place in Greek society after two years of the implementation of memoranda which dismantled the post-junta social contract and the social consensus that derived from it, marking the end of the so-called "Metapolitefsi" (post-1974 regime change period).

Most of the research on the Far Right in Greece until the emergence of Golden Dawn was conducted mainly, though not exclusively, by historians who focused on the different articulation of the phenomenon in the 20th century. The bulk of historical studies focused on the dictatorships imposed throughout the century, hence turning the research lens mainly on aspects of the most important among them, that is the Metaxas regime (1936–1941) and the Colonels' junta (1967–1974).² Up to the 2012 elections, when Golden Dawn was elected to Parliament, far-right political formations in Greece were not marked by a mobilisation from below, similar to countries like Italy, Germany, Spain or Romania, since the Greek far-right movements never fully separated themselves from existing political formations, making the

² Some of the relevant works that fall into this category are: S. Marketos. (2006). Πώς φίλησα τον Μουσσολίνι [How I kissed Mussolini]. Vivliorama; M. Tremopoulos. (2018). Τα Τρία Ε (ΕΕΕ) και ο εμπρησμός του Κάμπελ [The three Es (ΕΕΕ) and the Campbell arson]. Antigoni; S. Ploumidis. (2016). Το καθεστώς Ιωάννη Μεταξά (1936–1941) [The regime of Ioannis Metaxas (1936–1941)]. Estia; T. Vournas. (2011). Ιστορία της σύγχρονης Ελλάδος [History of modern Greece], vol. 6, Patakis; G. Alexatos. (2019). Οι Ελλαδέμποροι: Άκρα δεξιά και φασισμός στην Ελλάδα του 20ού αιώνα [Οi Elladeboroi: Far Right and fascism in Greece during the 20th century]. Aparsisi.

fascticisation of Greek society an effort "from above". This does not entail the lack of right-wing movements or that their presence did not produce tangible political results, but rather that the initiatives from above, such as those of the Metaxas or the Colonels' regimes, after consolidating their power, attracted personalities from the Far Right and organically incorporated them in their formations. Based on the above, it should be noted that contrary to other cases of institutionalisation of the Far Right in the Greek context, authoritarian deviations such as the Metaxas and the Colonels' regimes should be interpreted more as the result of either the institutional inability of the parliamentary system to function effectively within conditions of social and political polarisation, or the fear experienced by certain privileged sectors of the state apparatus in the face of the challenge presented by institutional democratisation processes rather than as the result of political mobilisations from below.

The significant electoral rise of Golden Dawn attracted the interest of social scientists who engage with aspects of social and political reality, since it marked a series of breaks from the Greek post-junta as well as the European context. Although Golden Dawn was not the only far-right party that experienced a significant rise in the European continent during the economic crisis, it was the only party that openly embraced Nazism to enter the European Parliament, recalling memories and analogies from the interwar Weimar period. This turn also marked a break with an institutional taboo that was considered a given for the postwar political contract in Western Europe: The prohibition on the legal formation and, by extension, participation in electoral processes of parties with a declared Nazi background. West Germany was the most typical case; the legal actions it undertook included the banning of the Communist Party of Germany, which was held responsible for the collapse of interwar German parliamentary democracy, being on the other side of the political spectrum. In this context, the election of a Nazi party to the European Parliament interrogated essential aspects of the postwar institutional status quo and forced the European political establishment to look itself in the mirror and decipher whether it was a reflection of its true present self or a distorted representation of an old, forgotten self. In the Greek context, the rise of Golden Dawn disrupted the ideological representation of the Greek people's united rallying and resistance against the German Nazi occupiers during World War II and called on the local political establishment to reflect on how it was possible for parties which embrace the doctrines of the NSDAP and identify ideologically with it to reemerge as so-called political alternatives in a country that had suffered so many losses during the war.

In addition to, but also in conjunction with, its Nazi ideology, it was the political practices of Golden Dawn that systematically differentiated it from

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the other parties of the recent Greek Far Right, such as the Popular Orthodox Rally (Laos), insofar as they included the paramilitary training of its members, political mobilisation from below, collaboration with the Greek deep state and employers sympathetic to the cause, the formation of hit squads and the systematic use of violence against immigrants, other minority groups and political dissidents, up to and including murders, such as that of the 27-year-old Pakistani-born Shehzad Luqman and the antifascist rap artist Pavlos Fyssas. These practices do not separate Golden Dawn in the slightest from its interwar Nazi and fascist counterparts, which were political ideotypes of action for Golden Dawn. Thus, the political practice of Golden Dawn involved not only the entry into the institutions of the Greek state, but also a constant engagement with society itself and its far-right radicalisation.

The first study published during the period of the economic crisis was not on Golden Dawn, but on another Greek far-right party, Laos, which was elected to Parliament in the 2007 and 2009 elections and was a member of the 2011 coalition government of Loukas Papademos. The book, authored by Dimitris Psarras, a journalist and member of the research group Ios (Virus). is entitled Το κρυφό χέρι του Καρατζαφέρη [The hidden hand of Karatzaferis], published in 2010 and known for his studies on the history of the Greek Far Right. In this book, Psarras, examining numerous archives from the press and the broadcasts of key figures in Giorgos Karatzaferis' party, records in detail the course the party from the moment of its formation in 2000 until 2010 as well as the trajectory of its leader during the post-junta period. The research, although useful for the historicity of the phenomenon of the Far Right at the dawn of the 21st century, does not, because of the timing of its publication, capture the social earthquake that took place during the Greek crisis and the role of the Greek Far Right in this process. This particular shortcoming, however, is bridged by the author's next two books, which deal with the case of Golden Dawn, Η μαύρη βίβλος της Χρυσής Αυγής (The black book of Golden Dawn) and *O αρχηγός* (The leader). The first, published in 2012, aims to offer a mapping of Golden Dawn's activities from the post-junta period to the date of the book's publication. In particular, it looks at its historical journey by examining aspects of its ideology, documenting its Nazi ideological character, its relationship with state institutions such as the Church and the police, and its performance in parliamentary elections up to its emergence as the fifth largest party in the June 2012 elections. In his second study (2018), Psarras addresses that which is suggested by the title of the book, namely the leader of Golden Dawn, and focuses on the personal political career of Nikos Michaloliakos as well as the anatomy of his ideology and his violent political practices, arguing that these analyses are necessary in order to understand the function of Golden Dawn within the Greek political system, insofar as it is a party centred around its leader. Neither study, although extremely useful for understanding the historical nature of the Golden Dawn phenomenon and its political function and physiognomy, examines the spread of its ideology in wider society, especially after its conviction by the Greek courts in October 2020.

In the field of political science, one of the first studies on Golden Dawn was conducted by Despina Paraskeva-Veloudogianni, entitled $O \in x\theta\rho\delta\varsigma$, το αίμα, ο τιμωρός (The enemy, the blood, the punisher) (2015). In this study, Veloudogianni draws her methodological tools from the tradition of discourse analysis and approaches Michaloliakos' official discourse from 2012 to 2013, that is, the period when the party had managed to achieve its greatest degree of legitimacy within society. The exemplary analysis of the way in which Golden Dawn's public discourse is constituted does not go beyond the period mentioned, and therefore it cannot account for the transformation that took place in the following years, when the party remained in Parliament. Another important study from the discipline of political science is Daphne Halikiopoulou and Sophia Vasilopoulou's The Golden Dawn's "Nationalist Solution" (2015). The two authors, not content with a structuralist analysis that posits the economic and political crisis that erupted in Greece in 2010 to explain the rise of Golden Dawn per se, place at the centre of their analysis the party's strategic choices, which successfully provided adequate answers to the multiple crises that took place in Greece during the same period, since Golden Dawn's ideology was based on the fascist myth of decline of bourgeois society and of "national renaissance" through its political practices. Their analysis, however, stops at the developments that took place in 2015, so it does not examine the continuation of Golden Dawn's political presence in the following years until its conviction. An extremely useful study from the field of political sociology on the historicity of the phenomenon of the Greek Far Right from the July events³ until shortly before the national elections of June 2019 is Vasiliki Georgiadou's Η άκρα δεξιά στην Ελλάδα, 1965–2018 (The Far Right in Greece, 1965–2018) (2019). Examining the entire spectrum of the Greek Far Right during this period and emphasising the way its parties and their ideologies were constituted, she identifies important continuities between the various political formations to the extent that the one was often embedded in the other. The success of Golden Dawn is interpreted on the basis of both the successful adoption of conjunctural aspects of recent "anti-establishment" parties and of timeless patterns

³ The events that took place in July 1965 which were marked by political instability and eventually led to the imposition of the Colonels' regime in 1967.

of the Greek Far Right. This study too, however, does not examine the resonance of the organisation's ideas in wider institutions of the Greek state and the way in which their promoters have taken them up. Another interesting study is Kostis Papaioannou's Τα "καθαρά χέρια" της Χρυσής Αυγής (The "clean hands" of Golden Dawn) (2013). Although it claims that "the rise of Golden Dawn cannot be seen as an autonomous phenomenon [and it] reflects, but does not encompass, the whole issue of the fascistisation of society and the apparatuses", it does not examine how the mechanisms of the state were fascistised during the first years of the implementation of the memoranda agreements. In addition, there are also monographs on the phenomenon of the Greek Far Right and of Golden Dawn in particular, books that examine specific phenomena such as Golden Dawn's relationship with the Church and its electoral rise, and a number of analyses coming from the left that provide interpretations of the emergence of the above phenomena using the analytical tools of Marxism.⁴ None of these studies, however, address the content emphases and epistemological premises of this volume.

The most relevant study for our research is To "βαθύ κράτος" στη σημερινή $E\lambda\lambda$ άδα και η ακροδεξιά (The deep state in contemporary Greece and the Far Right], edited by Dimitris Christopoulos (2014). This volume examines the way in which the contemporary Far Right and the deep state intersect and intertwine organically with central institutions of the Greek state, such as the police, the judiciary, the military and the Church. Despite the insightful analyses of the chapters contained in the volume, which demonstrate with clarity the above relationship, the volume does not examine the ways in which the actors of these institutions construe the analytical categories of the Far Right and how these categories are reframed within the specific institutional cultures examined, which is the central aim of this volume.

As mentioned above, this volume aspires to contribute to the understanding of the Far Right by making two distinct contributions: a focus on the normalisation and consolidation of far-right ideology, on the one hand, and the highlighting of the informal discourse of the subjects of the institutions examined, on the other. The four essays hosted in this volume are the result of the work of young researchers – undergraduates and recent graduates in social anthropology – who worked on collecting the material and writing the chapters in teams. The editors' aim was, among other things, to

⁴ On the relationship between the Greek Orthodox Church and Golden Dawn, see: D. Pliatsikas. (2019). Χρυσή Αυγή και Εκκλησία [Golden Dawn and the Church]. Maistros; and D. Christopoulos (ed.) (2013). Ο Θεός δεν έχει ανάγκη εισαγγελέα [God has no need for an attorney]. Nefeli; and for Marxist analyses of the Golden Dawn phenomenon, see *Tetradia Marxismou*, (10), Summer 2019 and *Outopia*, (102), January–February 2013.

- contribute to the broadening and democratisation of research culture, especially on issues of political significance, such as the study of the Far Right.
- It is the hope of all authors that the volume, in addition to the research contribution it aims to make, will help to curb the influence of the Far Right and the turn of our societies to the logic and practices of exclusion that derive from its ideology.

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Homonationalism
and femonationalism
in Greece:
When gender identity
politics switch
to the Right

ANDROMACHI KOUTSOULENTI, ANNA MPIRMPILOPOULOU, ELIA PSARA, IRO TSARMPOPOULOU-FOKIANOU, ELLI VOUGIOUKA

The Left and the Right have neither gender nor sexual orientation. But they have ideologies, and they can talk about gender and sexual orientation.

G.D., LGBTQI website manager

ABSTRACT

Recent decades have witnessed the Far Right's tendency to instrumentalise gender issues in the context of neoliberal politics in the Western world. The international literature has conceptualised these phenomena of instrumentalization as homonationalism and femonationalism. The present chapter aims, first, to analyse the rise of such phenomena in Greece and to inquire about the reasons for their belated emergence in the Greek context. It also focuses on the relationship between the feminist and LGBTQI movement and the Left, on the role of the Greek Orthodox Church with regards to gender issues and on the structure of mainstream feminism in Greece. Second, Greece is used as a "laboratory" to study these phenomena, as they are still in the initial stages of their emergence. We consider that, despite the late rise of homonationalism and femonationalism in Greece, these phenomena are a central feature of the identity of the new political discourse of the Right. We submit that in the context of the redefinition of European identity as antithetical to the religious Other, and of the general reconfiguration of the political landscape, discourses about gender and far-right rhetoric tend to increasingly interact. The primary material for this chapter was drawn from semi-structured interviews with individuals from the feminist and LGBT1 community, with the aim to ex-

¹ Henceforth the chapter employs a distinction between LGBTQI and LGBT. With regards to homonationalism, homonormative identities are the ones that are mainly integrated into the political discourse, while queer individuals are mostly found in the field of radicalism and the extra-parliamentary Left.

plore the relationship between gendered subjects and far-right discourse

the ways in which social subjects endorse, reproduce, or resist this discourse – but also to map the course of the Greek Right towards the European experience of homonationalism and femonationalism.

 ${\it Keywords:}\ femonationalism,\ homonationalism,\ pinkwashing,\ Islamophobia,\ LGBTQI$

*All primary sources are cited in Greek in the body of the text. A full list of these sources, also translated into English, is provided at the end of the chapter under the section "electronic sources".

INTRODUCTION

Including gender as an analytical category in the study of normalisation of the Far Right in Greece, which can allow for a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon, may appear an unorthodox choice, since the book focuses on institutions. Indeed, gender is not an institution in the way that church, the military or the media are, for instance. It is reasonable, therefore, to ask how the inclusion of gender contributes towards a deeper understanding of far-right rhetoric and of the arguments that have appeared in Greece, since 2020.

Gender is a privileged field for the articulation of power relations and the production of dominant ideologies. Ideological identities and political positions are formed within the field of gender, while important aspects of Western identity have been redefined in the past twenty years on the basis of "gender issues". In particular, from the freedom wars of "oppressed" women in Afghanistan to the culture wars over "oppressive" headscarves in Europe, gender is becoming a fundamental aspect of the ways the West – and in particular Greece, as far as this chapter is concerned – has redefined its identity. Designating itself as the birthplace-cum-patron par excellence of human rights and emancipation, the West has monopolised the debates about equality and freedom, with gender now being a privileged field within which conflicts are waged over the meaning of these concepts. It would, perhaps, not be an exaggeration to claim that the European political arena is being reconstituted as a whole via the discourse on gender, gender identities as well as social and political rights. While traditionally it was left-wing political parties which exclusively advanced or identified with feminist and LGBTQI claims, increasingly right and far-right political parties in Europe are integrating identity politics into their discourse. The integration and instrumentalisation of identity politics by the Right and Far Right, as well as the shift of women and LGBTQI subjects towards the right of the political spectrum, are reflected in two phenomena: femonationalism and homonationalism. In the European context, the discourse on gender rights is being instrumentalised by politics: on the one hand, Europe constructs its profile as progressive through the projection of rights and equality, while on the other, it defines itself in opposition to its political and ideological Others. This dichotomy is based mainly on the contrast between the West and the Muslim world, where these rights have not yet been established in terms of Western modernity.

This chapter has two objectives: starting from the European experience and the emergence of the phenomena of homonationalism and femonationalism, it focuses, first, on the interpretation of causes which can illuminate the reasons for the belated emergence of these phenomena in Greece. Studying the role of religion, the hegemony of the Left in discourses related to issues of rights, the course of feminist and LGBTOI movements, the chapter analyses what has been labelled as "Greek particularity" as far as the relationship between the neoliberal Right² and gender issues is concerned. In addition, we consider that Greece offers the ideal framework for the investigation of these phenomena right at the moment of their emergence. Precisely because of their late rise in comparison to other Western societies, we are in position to observe these phenomena at the very moment of their rise, and to inquire about the ways and conditions under which they have emerged. It is worth mentioning that the integration of gender identity politics, which in Europe is taking place within the field of the Far Right, in Greece is being materialised by the traditional Right. Research on the relationship between the Right, women and LGBTOI individuals allows for the study of a new trend within the Right in the West: namely, the examination of this new political condition that makes possible the emergence of such phenomena. Moreover, the juxtaposition of the Greek and the European experience offers the possibility of a more comprehensive understanding of both.

METHODOLOGY

Nineteen semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted with feminist and LGBTQI groups active the field of gender politics, as well as with individuals, mainly activists or politicians, selected on the basis of the impact

² We employ the term neoliberal Right in the Greek context to refer to New Democracy (the main right-wing political party, henceforth, ND), which emerged victorious after the parliamentary elections of July 2019, winning 39.87% of the vote.

and influence of the discourses they promote. In addition to these individual interviews, a focus group was also conducted, that is, an interview with two interviewees. The choice of semi-structured interviews was the outcome of the overall research aim of the chapter, which is to explore the interviewees' perceptions of key issues, mainly regarding feminist and LGBTQI issues. Adapting each interview according to each interviewee, we sought to investigate the qualitative differences that link gender identity to the current political conjuncture. The search for interviewees, as well as their final selection, was based, on the one hand, on the relationship of these subjects with seminal groups within the feminist and LGBTQI movements and, on the other, on their involvement with the political process.

It is important to emphasise that our initial plan was to conduct face-to-face interviews, as was originally done. However, at a later stage, we were forced to adapt to the online environment, as due to the Covid-19 pandemic it was not possible to conduct them in person. In addition, we would like to stress that, according to the established guidelines for ethical research, all interviews have been anonymised in order to protect the privacy of interviewees, whose informed consent was sought on every occasion.

THE ORIGINS OF HOMONATIONALISM AND FEMONATIONALISM IN THE INTERNATIONAL LITERATURE

The concepts of "femonationalism" and "homonationalism" were introduced into the international literature a little over a decade ago, and several studies highlighting different aspects of these phenomena in different parts of the Western world have already been published. In Greece, however, the literature that has recourse to this specific conceptual arsenal is extremely limited. The term "homonationalism" has been translated into Greek (Karastathi, 2016), but no research revolving around the concept has been conducted.

It is important to mention that the phenomena of femonationalism and homonationalism are inextricably linked to the concepts and respective realities of Islamophobia and xenophobia. Although there is abundant research regarding the instrumentalisation of the feminist and LGBTQI movement, this section aims to identify the origins of the phenomena of femonationalism and homonationalism during the past thirty years.

In 1993 – during the era that marked the end of Cold War realities and the emergence of new binaries, such as that of the "West vs. Islam" – Whitlock referred to the ethnocentric and middle-class background in what has been labelled as "Western" feminism in her article "White Women, Racism and History" (1993). In the same year, Yuval-Davis (1993) examined the sig-

nificance of gender and the way it affects the analysis of issues pertaining to nationalism and nation-states, as well as the conditions of exclusion and inclusion they enable, in her book *Gender and Nation*. Women's rights and their relationship to race and imperialism, she claimed, are directly related to the idea of the Western white woman and her protection from the coloured Other, as it has been constructed since 1870 (Newman, 1999).

The first decade of this century was marked by an intense debate surrounding the protection of Muslim women from the coloured Other (Newman, 1999). The argument for the protection of women, while it emerged as an ostensibly feminist claim, has been subsequently used to stigmatise and marginalise the Muslim Other. As Delphy states in her article "Gender and Race in Postcolonial France: The Headscarf and the Rejection of Islam", the French state sought to liberate Muslim women from the oppressive and traditional Muslim man "as if overnight politicians had all become feminists and wholeheartedly aligned with women's rights" (2004, p. 69).

In her article "Discourses on the 'veil': Gender, sexuality, nation and the metaphor of the 'other woman'", Athanasiou, who makes an important contribution to the debate on the instrumentalisation of gender, emphasises the gendered dimension embedded in the construction of the concept of citizen. Athanasiou, engaging with the female colonised body, refers to Fanon and demonstrates that "Fanon's essay … designates the female body … as a critical field of struggle in the Algerian War of Independence" (2004, pp. 101–102; Fanon, 1965). It becomes clear that power relations turn gender into a field of controversy, while Athanasiou also employs the term "pseudo-feminism" to address the instrumentalisation of gender by nationalist rhetoric.

The first theorist to introduce one of the two phenomena examined here is Puar, in her book *Terrorist Assemblages: Homonationalism in Queer Times* (2007). Puar was inspired by Duggan's concept of homonormativity to describe how norms of heterosexuality are reproduced among homosexual subjects and to highlight the levels of privilege that govern the LGBT community (Duggan, 2003, pp. 50–51). Puar uses the term "homonationalism", which she defines as a process or as an ideology through which a perceived sexually non-normative subject claims social demarginalisation, equality, representational visibility, or even representational normalcy, by adopting hegemonic nationalist, racial and racist agendas. The term is well-known in academic and activist circles now, both Western and non-Western. It mainly focuses on the case of Israel and its systematic tourism and advertising campaign, which seeks to project the country as LGBTQI-friendly destination, aiming at the resignification of Palestinian occupation (2007, p. 10).

During the 2010s, the issue of Islamophobia and Orientalist discourse remained a constant preoccupation for the relevant literature, while the image of the Muslim man in the West was reconfigured based on Orientalist standards (Bhattacharya, 2008; Semati, 2010; Sabsay, 2012). It is important to point out that up to this point racism and Islamophobia were presented in the form of feminist demands, in terms of protecting Muslim women from oppression. The term "femonationalism" was introduced to the international literature by Farris, in her 2012 article "Femonationalism and the 'Regular' Army of Labor Called Migrant Women". She introduces the term "femocrats" to describe women who undertake the production-creation of feminist applied policies (Farris, 2012). In later years, Puar enriched the existing literature on homonationalism with her subsequent articles, "Rethinking Homonationalism" (Puar, 2013) and "Homonationalism as Assemblage: viral travels, affective sexualities" (Puar, 2015).

In recent years, as issues related to migration and the refugee crisis were systematically presented from the perspective of a "threat to the European way of life", the phenomenon started to emerge in Greece as well and attracted the attention of Greek researchers too (Karastathi, 2016). More recently, in perhaps the most important contribution to the study of femonationalism, namely the book *In the Name of Women's Rights*, Farris defines femonationalism as the endorsement of a feminist agenda by right-wing, neoliberal, and nationalist parties and politicians, and conversely, the partaking of women from feminist quarters in the stigmatisation of Muslim men in light of gender equality (Farris, 2017). Farris highlights what she sees as the paradox of right-wing and traditional anti-feminist parties' endorsement of women's rights and simultaneously the support of feminists and queer individuals for Islamophobic motifs. The association of women with far-right parties – and vice versa – across Europe is also seen as a "paradox" by other theorists (e.g., Gutsche, 2018).

A key difference between old nationalist parties and new ones in Europe is the invocation by the latter of gender equality and LGBTQI issues in an attempt to redefine their political agenda, as will be analysed below (Olsen, 2018; Heimer, 2019). After all, the West has claimed both sexual liberation and gender equality as key features of secularism and as clear markers of superiority over Islam (Scott, 2017).

The Greek literature on the phenomena of femonationalism and homonationalism is rather limited. This can be explained by the cluster of conditions associated with Greek contemporary history and its particular characteristics – examined below – which did not allow for the rise of such trends in Greece until recently.

BRIEF REVIEW OF THE HISTORY OF FEMINISM AND THE LGBTQI MOVE-MENT IN GREECE DURING THE POLITICAL TRANSITION TO DEMOCRACY

To understand the conditions that lead to the emergence of the phenomena of homonationalism and femonationalism, it is important to refer to the history of the Greek feminist and LGBTQI movements, and to identify the continuities, discontinuities and breaks, but also the relationships, between them. The starting point of this brief historical review is the "Metapolitefsi" period, that is, the transition from the military junta that ruled Greece from 1967 to 1974 to the restoration of democratic rule and normalcy, which allowed for new collective subjects to emerge in the political field, claiming political visibility (Repoussi et al., 2017, pp. 9, 25).

THE FEMINIST MOVEMENT

The feminist movements of the post-junta period need to be understood within their historical context, which is the period of restoration of democratic rule, a historical "space" dominated by the Left. The culture of the Left was a structural political element of the post-junta conjuncture within which post-junta feminism was articulated – oftentimes partly identifying with the broader political culture of the period and other times partly opposing it. This claim is predicated, among other things, on the absence of a mass withdrawal of feminists from left-wing parties, in contrast to political developments in the rest of Europe at the time (Repoussi, 2018, p. 11; Kotsovelou & Repoussi, 1989, p. 19–24).

At the outset, that is during the 1970s, the feminist movement was distinguished by its autonomous political presence in relation to the left-wing parties of that period (Steka, 2007, p. 1),³ while many of its demands were realised around the middle of the next decade (Pantelidou-Malouta, 2007, p. 13), mainly from 1982 to 1985 (Varika, 2000, p. 304). The Panhellenic Socialist Movement (Pasok), the political party that dominated the 1980s, played a central role in this process, by endorsing many feminist demands (Steka, 2007, p. 1). The result of this process was the emergence of state feminism.⁴ At the same time, feminists had a strong presence in the so-called Renewing Left – also known as Communist Party of the Interior, a local strand of Eurocommunism (Steka, 2007, p. 1). The shift of the feminist movement towards left-wing par-

³ For more information on the printed activity of the movement, see Michopoulou (1995–1996, pp. 35–40).

⁴ State feminism – also known less frequently as "institutional feminism" was the name given to the phenomenon of promoting policies related to women's issues in the context of state procedures and state bureaucracy (Samiou, 2006, p. 65).

ties resulted in the break between institutional and autonomous feminism. The integration of "feminist discourse" by political parties divided the movement, thus separating institutional feminism from autonomous feminism. Additionally, Pasok's partial implementation of feminist demands, although it did concern key institutional sections (Athanasiou, 2018, p. 21), was perceived as "concessions from above", in the context of the modernisation and development of Greek society (Pantelidou-Malouta, 2007, pp. 13–14; Steka, 2007, p. 1).

The first feminist groups of the post-junta period started emerging in 1975 (Steka, 2007, p. 1) and were associated with so-called "second-wave" feminism throughout the 1980s (Kanaveli, 2016, p. 13). It took around a decade for the second wave to make its presence visible in Greece (Michopoulou, 2018, p. 60). This delay probably contributed to the limited integration of feminist discourse into the central political scene, precisely because it was "younger" in comparison to other countries of the Western world.

Feminism in Greece in the 1970s and 1980s appears as a kind of "deviation" from the "Western model" and is marked by the existence of mass women's organisations, dependent on the political parties of the time, alongside active - yet numerically limited – autonomous feminist groups. A remarkable peculiarity pertains to the fact that such women's organisations developed mainly in countries whose "democratic spaces were limited and under constant threat" (Pantelidou-Malouta, 2007, p. 17). In the Greek case, although the autonomous feminist movement took the lead in terms of bringing about substantial changes in gender issues, it was the large organisations with their party connections – especially the ones which were negotiating with Pasok around issues of equality – which achieved the implementation of certain demands of the feminist movement of the period (Pantelidou-Malouta, 2007, p. 18).

During the 1990s, however, mass women's organisations declined, while women's bodies became the main vehicles for the debate regarding women's issues (Gazi, 2018, p. 85). At the same time, the Greek Right – whose main representative was the New Democracy (ND) party (Alexakis, 2001, p. 103) – realised the need to create its own female audience, established organisations associated with its own ideological framework (Gazi, 2018, p. 85).

Since the turn of the century, small radical groups which differentiate themselves from the "traditional" women's organisations have emerged and have engaged in conversation with contemporary movements, with the purpose of edifying a more populous feminist movement (Gazi, 2018, p. 86), marked by an autonomous-queer feminist character and an interdisciplinary discourse (Kaouni, 2019). At the same time, official state feminism still relies on positions pioneered in the 1980s.⁵

⁵ For example, the General Secretariat for Gender Equality, which was founded in 1985 and

The LGBTQI community originates from the Left G.B., LGBTQI activist

The gay movement appeared immediately after the end of the Dictatorship of the Colonels, influenced by similar movements in the West (Apostolelli & Chalkia, 2012, p. 38), and raised the issue of sexual liberation as a critical political issue (Torpouzidis, 2012, p. 38).

The starting point was in 1976 (Theodorakopoulos, 2005, p. 127), when the Greek Homosexual Liberation Movement (AKOE) was founded, the first gay organisation in Greece (Polykarpou, 2019, p. 60); its leftist and anarchist roots (Theodorakopoulos, 2005, p. 67) were obvious and its main medium of expression was the magazine *Amphi* (Antonopoulos, 2019). As Theodorakopoulos has pointed out, "promoting cooperation with all groups and organisations for the liberation of women, youth organisations and left-wing political parties, cultural organisations and various radical movements, associations of workers, intellectuals, artists and mass popular bodies" had a crucial role in the political agenda of the movement (Theodorakopoulos, 2005, p. 76).

The movement's agenda was sidelined by the state and the political bodies of the time (Petropoulou, 2019) and was exclusively associated with the extra-parliamentary Left, remaining at the opposite end of official feminist policies (Polykarpou, 2019, p. 55). This radical identity can potentially explain the absence of a "normalising" discourse by LGBTQI subjects since it did not allow for a common trajectory with the conservative factions of the movement.

The 1990s was a "silent" decade (Kandsa, 2018, p. 69), while the late 2000s and early 2010s witnessed an explosion of activist organisations and a more dynamic assertion of demands by the community (Kaouni, 2019). Since the mid-2010s, organisations have been putting forward institutional-type claims and collaborating with institutional bodies, while since 2014 the community has entered a phase of introspection and self-criticism, promoting more interdisciplinary and radical policies (Kaouni, 2019).

Nonetheless, the relations between LGBTQI and the feminist movement are far from cordial. The following statement from a prominent figure of the feminist movement is typical:

We have nothing in common with the LGBTQI movement that would allow for a common movement. Some say that the issue is about gender. It is not; we are not about gender, we are about women. (Representative of a large feminist organisation)

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE TWO MOVEMENTS

The two movements, which emerged during the same period, were aligned (Michopoulou, 2018, p. 59) with regards to common demands, such as that for sexual liberation or the self-determination of the body (Bombolou, 2008).6 However, there were also several issues which resulted in a break between the two movements, such as the constant insistence on the issue of female identity on the part of the feminist organisations (Polykarpou, 2019, p. 59). However, contemporary feminist claims and the women who represent them at the level of discourse are turning towards the inclusion of transgender, gay, lesbian and queer individuals in their struggles (Nini, 2021). What transpires, however, from our conversations with the interviewees is that, although there is a certain intention to show solidarity with the LGBTQI movement on the part of feminists, there seems to be no willingness to merge the feminist with the LGBTQI struggle and its claims, since, as we are told, the fields of action and associated claims differ. According to our interviewees, an additional point of tension between the two movements is the issue of sex work, that is, whether this specific line of work should be considered as labour:

Because there are issues, for example on the issue of prostitution; we, as feminists, let's say, we have a disagreement with the LGBTQI individuals. (Representative of voluntary, nonprofit women's organisation)

For their part, individuals from the LGBTQI community seem to confirm that the relationship with the feminist movement is tense:

Look, I was never on good terms with the feminists, just like the feminists have never been on good terms with transgender people. (P.R., LGBTQI politician and activist)

Thus, it becomes clear that the relationship between the two movements began with common demands; however, this relationship is also riddled with oppositions that bring them into conflict, with regards to their respective action and claims.

⁶ See Bobolou (2008, pp. 78, 118, 201) with regards to claims around rape attempts, sexual liberation, the self-determination of the body, femicide and public information.

GREEK PARTICULARITY: THE CAUSES FOR THE BELATED EMERGENCE OF HOMONATIONALISM AND FEMONATIONALISM

The appearance of homonationalism and femonationalism has occurred in Greece with a delay and has the following peculiarity: although in Europe it is the Far Right that has instrumentalised and embraced women's and LGBT-QI rights in an attempt to redefine its identity, in Greece, this "normalisation" of gender-related claims is performed by the conventional Right. We would like to submit that the late arrival of these phenomena in Greece is related to three main causes: the hegemony of the Left within the women's and LGBTQI movements, the role of the church, and the fixation of the feminist movement on the second wave.

THE HEGEMONY OF THE LEFT

As it has been demonstrated in the historical overview above, both the feminist and the LGBTQI movement in Greece maintained closer relations with the parliamentary and extra-parliamentary Left from the outset (Samiou, 2006). This association was experienced by their members more as a necessary condition against a solid national narrative than as an absolute ideological identification:

But basically, I started from the Left and the Riga Feraios organisation [the youth of the above-mentioned Renewing Left] with the other feminists, those of Rigas Feraios. Because at that time we had created this new dilemma, not a dilemma, a kind of problematic with regards to the relationship between feminism and the Left. (M.S., feminist activist and politician)

The political integration of identity politics within the Left also started around the same time. As Vassiliki Polykarpou (2019) notes, quoting Farred (2000), the emergence of identity politics owes its existence to the Left more than to any other movement. In particular, given the long existence of rightwing and centre-right governments in power, left-wing demands seemed to constitute a kind of alterity to the mainstream political narrative, possibly because of the persistence of polarisation which had marked the Civil War in Greece (1946–1949), and the intensity of opposition between the two main political camps. The Right and the Left seem to be defined in a fairly strict way in Greece, reproducing over time those narratives that define their political identities with regards to the nation, the church and gender. Moreover, with the post-civil war trauma and the experience of the military junta, the identity of the Left in Greece was constructed around the basic need for ideological and political survival. On the part of LGBTQI subjects, as a prio-

ri Others in a nonembedded liberal political culture, such as the Greek one, the association with the Left and extra-parliamentarianism is considered as a given and as a necessity:

One view on the issue is that if you're gay, you must support a certain political party, I mean there are very specific parties that are okay, those of the Left. [If you support] anything else, you are a traitor with regards to your identity. (X., LGBTQI politician)

This connection between the human and social rights agenda, on the one hand, and the Left, on the other, places Greece on the opposite end of Western experience, where one sees more and more mainstream political parties integrating a multitude of gender issues into their policies:

What we have also seen in Europe, mainly, is that generally these issues are going a little beyond the traditional Right-Left divide. Right now, there are some European political parties which are not left-wing, and which have also included LGBT issues in their agenda. These may be liberal or centre-right political parties. (X., LGBTQI politician)

Where did the issue find space to articulate itself, where was the ground fertile to talk about LGBTQI issues? Within the Left, and especially within the extra-parliamentary Left. Therefore, de facto, the LGBT movement in Greece is trapped there. (M.L., LGBTQI activist)

Therefore, we observe in Greece a certain hegemony of the Left within the movements as well as a certain identification with radicalism, which makes it harder for the phenomena of femonationalism and homonationalism to develop. Without falling for a deterministic, linear logic, we believe that, due to the fact that these identities remain marginal and excluded from the dominant narrative, they have kept their distance from the Right and Far Right. This is not so much a conscious decision of the LGBTQI subjects – that would lead to an essentialist understanding of their identities – but it is the Right and the Far Right themselves that have made the political choice not to integrate them:

And if it didn't happen in Greece, this is because no offer was made by this party [for the participation of LGBTQI individuals in far-right parties]. (A.K., LGBTQI politician and activist)

The role of the Left is, certainly, twofold. On the one hand, it has historically been associated with movements; yet, on the other, its shortcomings

have played a decisive role in shifting feminist and LGBTQI subjects towards the Right. During the post-junta period, the abovementioned renewing, non-Stalinist Left in Greece was unable – or unwilling – to effectively mainstream LGBTQI rights, thus creating a vacuum:

When AKOE [Greek Homosexual Liberation Movement] was created, let's say, in those times it was the extra-parliamentary Left that helped a little, and the anarchists. The Left was conservative ... In Greece, the Left changed after May 1968, when various movements gathered. But Greece was late to do so. Don't think that the Left ever saw you [the LGBTQI individuals] as an equal. They wanted you to be the victim so as to defend you. You were never equal. (P.R., LGBTQI politician and activist)

The contemporary parliamentary Left, even if it claims to be friendly towards issues of rights, seems inefficient in integrating substantive policies to promote these rights, a stance which alienates LGBTQI individuals. The insufficient promotion of LGBTQI rights by the Radical Left Coalition–Independent Greeks government (the Syriza–Anel coalition) – which ruled between 2015 and 2019 and was hailed as the "first left-wing government" in the history of the Greek state - generated a significant rift in the relationship between the LGBTQI movement and the Left:

The LGBTQI community in Greece has left-wing origins. You know, I still remember Alexis Tsipras saying: "We want civil partnership, possibly even civil marriage [that is, for gay couples] later on. But we will ask the experts about the issue of adoption." Nobody expects anything from the Right, nothing has been promised. From the Left, however, [we do expect things], the Left has always said: "Guys, I'm with you, we're friends." (G.B., LGBTQI activist)

There are serious governments in Europe who have made these shifts in their legal cultures. Merkel's Germany was more progressive than the government of the leftist Tsipras. (G.B., LGBTQI activist)

The Left's inability to integrate the LGBTQI agenda is mainly located in its fixation on the class narrative, which remains almost exclusive, and tends to disregard the new discourses and political practices, such as those related to gender and the environment. The traditional form of the Left seems to have stagnated and, as such, has created a void, currently filled by a Right, which, on the contrary, is not static, but constantly reinvents itself. The Greek political scene has started to experience this shift: the gap concerning

LGBTQI rights – a void unaddressed both by the Syriza–Anel government as well as the Greek Communist Party (KKE) – is currently being filled by the Right (namely the centre-right New Democracy governing Greece since 2019), which has endorsed a progressive discourse and as a result has attracted a significant number of unexpected voters.

THE ROLE OF THE CHURCH

The role of the Orthodox Church in Greece in general, and in shaping the ideology of the Right in particular, is fundamental. Because of the lack of a formal separation of church and state, the church maintains its ability to exert pressure and have a say in official state policies, while acting as a hub of immense ideological and institutional influence (Christopoulos, 2014). Being intertwined with national identity, the church continues to be an important ideological pole of attraction for Greeks. Because of the above, the church has been rather vocal against women's and LGBTQI rights and demands, even managing to reverse government decisions (such as the one regarding sex education in schools). As two of our interviewees stated:

In Greece we have the following different traits in comparison to other European cities ... The presence of the church in the Greek reality is very strong, it is institutional, it is crucial; it is the church that has hindered the use of this information. (G.B. LGBTQI activist)

The church in Greece has always been problematic; the way it has co-shaped modern Greek identity and perceptions around it, as well as the way it has developed an authoritarian character [is problematic]. I feel that it is completely connected to many of the problems that we experience today, and they have not helped us to progress socially. (G.K., LGBTQI activist and politician)

The prominent political, social, and ideological role of the church in Greece, being one of the most basic components of the dominant national ideology, is also a key reason why feminist rights, to a lesser extent, and LGBTQI rights, to a greater extent, have not reached a point of maturity and normalisation. With the church – as a prosthetic limb of the state (Christopoulos, 2014, p. 283) – turning against individuals who deviate from the traditional narrative, marginal identities remain marginal: something foreign, non-normative, a true "Other" (Kosifologu, 2019). As long as fundamental rights remain a product of negotiation, and ranking in terms of equal recognition and treatment remains in one of the lowest positions in Europe, the

majority of LGBTQI subjects, as well as the majority of feminists, find themselves on the opposite side of the dominant religious narrative:

This [the church's stance] could be a key reason for the lack of integration in the political processes and in Greek society. I realise that people in a position of power sees us as an "Other", not as part of such processes. (G.K., LGBTQI activist and politician)

We are still lurking behind, because this discussion has not become "main-stream" yet. (G.B., LGBTQI activist)

The relationship between the Right and religion is not a superficial one, as is the case in other modern European countries. Sticking to traditional structures and narratives, the Right in Greece keeps its distance from LGBT-QI people, reproducing openly or covertly far-right narratives, such as the typical slogan "homeland-religion-family". At the same time, the church has openly opposed issues related to procreation and marriage, but also to reproductive rights, such as the right to abortion. The Greek Church remains conservative and is clearly different from cases like the Anglican Church or other forms of progressive/liberal Protestantism, which are more friendly to nontraditional gender identities. Thus, by reproducing a traditional Orthodox doctrine and maintaining institutional and ideological power, it has acted as a hindrance to the integration of LGBTQI identities into the dominant right-wing narrative.

THE ROLE OF THE FEMINIST MOVEMENT

Finally, a decisive reason for the delayed development of femonationalism and homonationalism in Greece is the fixation of the dominant part of the feminist movement on the second wave. The Greek feminist movement was strongly associated with the Left and with a harsh rhetoric on social justice, which aimed at social solidarity, reproductive rights as well as the renouncement of religion (Kanaveli, 2016). At the same time, the "subject" of second-wave feminism remains the category of woman – perceived in biological terms – a stance which brings the second wave in opposition to the third and fourth waves, but also prevents an alliance with the LGBTQI movement:

We do not agree with the idea of associating women's feminist struggle with the LGBTQI struggle because they are two [i.e., separate movements], because women exist as a biological and social gender. (Representative of a large feminist organisation)

The distance between the feminist and the LGBTQI movement has con-

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tributed to the non-normalisation of LGBTQI issues on the part of an alleged-ly activist and radical political milieu. As the feminist movement became increasingly institutionalised and officially represented, but also distant from LGBTQI demands, these demands remained doubly ostracised in the realm of the extra-parliamentary Left, as an outsider, as feminism's Other. Second-wave feminists became the object of a harsh critique for their conservative attitude towards gender expressions that do not correspond to traditional confines, towards sexual liberation or sex work; their stance in toto towards LGBTQI rights has generated a significant clash with the LGBTQI community:

You can't talk about feminism on the one hand and manipulate on the other - how should a woman behave in the context of feminism, then? A woman can be very feminine in appearance, she can be a bit of – in quotation marks – a slut in appearance, a bit of a tramp. Feminists would look down on her. Exactly as they used to look at trans women. (P.R., LGBTQI activist and politician)

Thus, one can see that homonationalism is extremely difficult to develop in the Greek context: on the one hand, because of the presence of a robust religious narrative that has historically aligned itself with the Right and refused to integrate LGBTQI demands; and because, on the other, of the exclusion of LGBTQI demands from the dominant feminist discourse. As far as femonationalism is concerned, as analysed above, the second wave remained tied up with the Left and its analyses which focus on the concept of social class. Since the post-junta period, feminists have been identified with the Left, broadly conceived:

We as a women's, feminist movement do not identify with any political faction, with any party. Of course, when we talk about social justice, this is certainly a left-wing concept. (Representative of a major feminist organisation)

The hegemony of the Left in the field of feminism in Greece has made it hard to integrate a feminist narrative into right-wing and far-right rhetoric. At the same time, second-wave feminism itself is associated with broader demands for equality and politics. Its ideological connections to Marxism cannot be ignored, thus making it difficult to engage with a right-wing narrative (Polykarpou, 2019). Thus, the Right's and Far Right's obsession with traditional gender narratives regarding the role of women and family, the assault on reproductive rights, and the relationship with the church has made it even more difficult to integrate feminist demands.

It has been demonstrated that sexuality has been an object of classification, segregation and social control throughout time (Foucault, 1976/1978). However, the ways in which power can exploit sexuality is fluid, and this is not necessarily always done under conditions of constraint and repression. Nowadays, when discrimination due to sexual orientation and gender identity tends to become unacceptable, circumstances seem to force that other forms of sexuality be given space, a development which is not neutral, either in terms of its ideological content or in terms of policymaking (Theofilopoulos &Spinou, 2015). Once again, sexuality seems to take the form of a tool for political claims (Foucault, 1976/1978), that is, as will be analysed below, it is used as a tool by any given government, either to forge alliances or to expand the realm of its ideological clout.

Our aim is to highlight this shift through an attempt to historicise the reasons that may lead a state to claim a LGBTQI-friendly profile. To do so, the chapter has recourse to the analytical category of homonationalism. The term intends to account for the ways in which a neoliberal right-wing anti-immigration policy can renew its political image by projecting an LGBT-QI-friendly agenda. The term aims mainly at highlighting the underlying, yet direct, connection between an apparently progressive kind of neoliberal politics and racism. This connection emerges through the convergence between racism and an instrumental exploitation of the sexual Other, hitherto forced into obscurity.

The convergence between national ideology and LGBTQI subjects, in its most simplistic form, refers to LGBTQI subjects who subscribe to nationalist or xenophobic approaches (Marhoefer, 2018). At the same time, it could be seen as a critical approach to the conservatisation of LGBT identities, as evidenced by the path taken so far in the rest of Europe (Colpani&Habed, 2014). In the Greek case, specifically, as mentioned by several interviewees, the fact that one is part of the LGBT community does not directly imply that they have radical political beliefs:

Kasidiaris [one of the most prominent MPs of the notorious neo-Nazi Golden Dawn party] used to say when he was a mayoral candidate that "there are many gay people who will vote for us." (X., LGBTQI politician)

Emphasis is placed on the xenophobic manifestations on the part of LGBT subjects, because at first sight it seems contradictory to belong to the LGBT community while sharing racist or xenophobic views. As one inter-

viewee mentions, it is somehow contradictory for a subject, who falls under the category of "different", to support an ideology or a political position, which feels threatened at its core by any form of diversity, because that "difference" is thought as undermining national integrity:

Of course, being far-right [in Greece] and also being gay is like suffering from an internalised psychological-psychiatric condition ... To think that foreigners and refugees threaten Greece, in a culture where the Far Right thinks that any form of diversity threatens Greece, being gay in the middle of it all? (M.L., LGBTQI activist)

However, the phenomenon of homonationalism is much more complex and is not only focused on the personal political beliefs of LGBTQI subjects. Homonationalism is a modern analytical concept, which allows us to study, from a different perspective, the various policies of recognition and granting of rights to LGBTQI subjects. It also helps us understand the consequences that such neoliberal policies of granting LGBTQI claims can cause. These concessions pertain to a strategy, which promises the enactment of laws that essentially serve the special interests of any given anti-progressive hegemony, that is, the development of biopolitical practices of control, which invest in human rights (Puar, 2013). Thus, homonationalism emerges as another way to protect nation-states and capitalism through sexuality (Puar, 2013).

Relying on a neoliberal economy and promoting capitalist ideals, the "renewed" right-wing political agenda provides legal protection – and thus, social status – to previously marginalised LGBTQI subjects. This process of assimilation of LGBT subjects is by no means free from its ethno-patriar-chal roots: it simply reconstructs them under other forms of normalisation. This normalisation, which until now concerned only a heteronormative model, is now also served by a homonormative model, without, however, replacing it (Puar, 2007). What transpires both from the current Greek political scene and from our interviews is that there is some representation of LGBT subjects in certain political parties; however, even these parties serve a homonormative representation, thus excluding non-acceptable forms of difference:

Trans people, especially trans people, do not have the opportunity of professional development, of participation in the professional arena. They are treated with great prejudice. We know this; it is known. (T.A., LGBTQI activist and politician)

I realised aspects of my identity which were not heterosexual or purely cis as well as the ramifications that these have for a gendered understanding and for my identity in the wider Greek context, which is strictly patriarchal, heteronormative, sexist, misogynistic, cis-centric, that is, transgender experiences do not exist on an equal level of reference. (G.K., LGBTQI activist and politician)

In the same light, homonationalism is employed to analyse the neoliberal right-wing political strategy, which instrumentally uses the LGBTQI identity to promote an ostensibly progressive agenda (Puar, 2015). This occurs when a given government hopes to expand its political clout, but also to present its identity in new terms, with the ultimate goal of making itself more attractive to a wider and more progressive audience. Today, in the effort to build a democratic, liberal, LGBTQI-friendly political agenda, practices of state protection of same-sex desire are emerging. This translates into a conditional legalisation of some of their rights (Luibhéid, 2018). We refer to "certain" rights because these too are always granted conditionally.

Legislation that partially ensures equality, as well as the right to "be a citizen", regardless of sexual orientation, falls under the umbrella of these rights. In the Greek context, for example, the appointment of Nikolas Yatromanolakis as the first openly gay deputy minister represents, for some, a sign of progress (O Νίκος Γιατρομανωλάκης, 2021):

That there is an openly gay member of the government represents some progress. (X., LGBTQI politician)

This process creates a field where other exploitative practices can take place at the expense of another minority. Such a process takes place under the guise of a progressive, secular profile and results in binary, oppositional constructions ("Western" as opposed to the "Muslim" Other), which distort reality (Puar, 2015). The imaginary profile of a fundamentalist racial Other – who is generally considered negatively biased regarding gender issues – is constructed in opposition to the Western "progressive" profile (Scott, 2017). The belief that non-Western countries inevitably have non-progressive perceptions came up several times during our interviews. G.K. specifically mentions the existence of an Islamophobic LGBTQI collective, which believes that if Islam did come to Greece, it would affect the established rights in the West:

They were called ... LGBTQI and allies ... against Islamophobia. And ... I had perceived that this element was very strong ... And non-LGBTQI individuals, allies or non-allies, anyway, who were friendly to the LGBTQI agenda, or I don't know what, who were saying: "Yes, yes, yes, speak up for them,

defend them. When they come over here or," – I don't know what – "when they will have the upper hand in any way, you too will be thrown from the rooftops." (G.K., LGBTQI activist and politician)

The critique of the process which uses the granting of LGBTQI rights as an instance of progressive thinking is done through what has been termed "pinkwashing". Pinkwashing is a critique of the ways in which any given government seeks to divert public opinion from other burning issues, to legitimise its control, but also to win supporters (Ritchie, 2015). As G.K. mentions, for any given candidate, winning voters is a process with an emphasis on the result regardless of the content:

They regard the LGBTQI vote as pure business, and the same goes for the disabled vote and the Black vote, the Muslim vote, and the vote of femininities. (G.K., LGBTQI activist and politician)

Such a reconstruction of a right-wing government makes it more accessible to new potential supporters while highlighting the chaotic and unbridgeable gap with the Islamic world, thus emphasising national and Western ideals. This reconstruction rests on a process of shifting otherness from the gendered Other to the strictly heteronormative racialised Other. In this way, the narrative of progress of LGBT rights keeps being built at the expense of the Other:

I support the citizens who have been here so far. It doesn't mean I want immigrants and refugees. For me it is a step. It may not be a step towards all people and all social groups, refugees and immigrants. But it's one step away from being homophobic on top of everything else. (T.A., LGBTQI activist and politician)

To understand the phenomenon of pinkwashing and to introduce it into the Greek experience, we used as a guideline the Israeli state, in which the instrumentalisation of LGBTQI rights as an instance of progressive thinking is a common practice used to distract the international community from the violation of human rights and international law in Palestine (Ritchie, 2015). It is a deliberately cynical policy of manipulation and exploitation of gay rights, disguised under the name of progress, in order to achieve a positive evaluation of the country at the international level. Nonetheless, homonationalism and pinkwashing are not identical: homonationalism constitutes a holistic analytical category, while pinkwashing is a form of popularisation of homonationalism, which is inspired by homonationalism and might have

not emerged had the theory of homonationalism not existed in the background (Puar & Mikdashi, 2012).

Of course, the fact that the state of Israel has led the way in relation to this practice does not entail that the phenomenon is to be found exclusively in Israel, as the political presence of the Right in Greece demonstrates. The phenomenon seems to be flourishing where there have been institutional changes in favour of LGBTQI rights, but also in any country where there is a rudimentary LGBTQI activist movement, as is the case in Greece. Since 2019 Greece has experienced a strong wave of reactions against the government, which is accused of an ambiguous stance regarding LGBTQI issues that are operationalised for electioneering purposes. A case in point is ND MEP Thodoris Zagorakis, who in 2021 voted against the EU report on the protection of LGBTQI rights – later claiming that this happened by accident – while at the same time the country's prime minister was announcing the formation of a committee to draft a National Strategy on LGBTQI+ equal rights. As he stated:

We are working towards creating for a modern and fair country ... It is unthinkable for Greece to exclude or segregate its citizens. (Kyriakos Mitsotakis, Prime Minister of Greece)

This move, as public opinion pointed out, was reminiscent of pinkwashing practices and was interpreted as an effort to divert attention from other burning issues (Σύσταση Επιτροπής Εθνικής Στρατηγικής, 2021). Another characteristic example reminiscent of pinkwashing practices is the inclusion of openly homosexual subjects affiliated to ND in leading political positions. Considering that LGBTQI individuals are subject to a regime of oppression as minorities, members of the LGBTQI community, while recognising the importance of their inclusion in the political arena, have criticised the right-wing party affiliation and simultaneous lack of community activism of these figures:

I believe in the representation and symbolism in the first instance ... especially for groups which are not sufficiently represented in the political arena. (X., LGBTQI politician)

Yatromanolakis, who used to be in Potami [a former centre-right political party] and is now in New Democracy, was an openly gay candidate anyway. Not with a particularly activist spirit. (T.A., LGBTQI activist and politician) They didn't expect me to join a mainstream party. (G.K., LGBTQI activist and politician, in response to criticism)

In the Greek case, there seems to be a lack of practical institutional claims regarding LGBTQI issues – such as, for example, the right to gay marriage – by those LGBTQI individuals who are active in the mainstream political arena. Without aiming to confine them to their sexual identity, we focus on the neutral political position regarding gender issues because this was a topic that was problematised several times during our discussions. But precisely because being an LGBT political subject does not automatically entail activist involvement, we chose not to focus on the subjects themselves, but on the power structures that absorb them. As T.A. mentions, it is those individuals who do not belong to the community but nonetheless use the community in instrumental ways who are accused of pinkwashing:

Why is Vallianatos [a LGBT activist politician] accused of pinkwashing? He's LGBT, he's a fighter ... Pinkwashing is performed by someone who is conservative, is not LGBT and thus wants to use the identity ... to show that they are close to the community when they are not exactly close. (T.A., LG-BTQI activist and politician)

These statements problematise schemas which regard identities as being strictly divided into a dichotomy of conservatism or progressivism. What is noteworthy is that the process of mainstreaming LGBT identities performs a dual role, which works interactively for both sides. First, the reconstruction of a right-wing government through adopting progressive attributes has an instrumental purpose, as discussed above; however, the very process of reconstruction has a direct impact on the identity of the party itself. This reconstitution, even if performed instrumentally, does not cease to have an impact on the reconstructed profile, which integrates diversity in positive terms. Second, LGBT subjects who partake in such a process also go through a process of reconstructing their identity: an identity which moves away from the strict identification with radical ideologies, to claiming space in other, more conservative political milieus. Finally, the direct identification of LGBT identity with progressive politics and, respectively, the identification of the right-wing government with a strictly conservative profile, do not correspond to contemporary political reality in Greece, since these redefined identities are undergoing a process of reconstruction:

Of course, it is an issue, it must be examined ... whether the Right [is evolving], like all other ideologies, is evolving together with societies to possibly include different aspects of society and become an amalgam completely different from what we knew so far. It is an issue to consider. (G.K., LGBT-QI activist and politician)

The most important work on femonationalism, as already mentioned above, is that of Sarah Farris. The Italian sociologist defines femonationalism as, on the one hand, the exploitation of women's issues for the production of a nationalist politics and, on the other, the participation of specific feminists from academia or organisations in the stigmatisation of Muslim men (Farris, 2017, pp. 12–13). A common denominator in this convergence is the perception that gender relations are more advanced in the West than in the – generally patriarchal – Muslim world. The "us" and "others" dichotomy takes on a more gendered form here. The Muslim man in the Western fantasy embodies a would-be rapist of white women, and the Muslim woman is the passive victim of this man, who needs the protection "offered" to her by the West (Farris, 2017, pp. 41–43).

In the European examples she uses, Farris observes the endorsement of a discourse of gender equality by nationalist/right-wing political parties (Farris, 2017, pp. 10–11). The Muslim woman here is presented as the victim of gender-based violence that she most certainly faces in the Islamic world. Patriarchy and sexism are perceived as generally non-Western problems and categorised as Islamic peculiarities (Farris, 2017, pp. 72–73). Similarly, the Muslim woman embodies the model of the non-Western woman as backward and traditional, and in clear contrast to the modern West. Gender is thus instrumentalised by right-wing nationalism in order to produce an anti-immigrant discourse and an Islamophobic political climate. More specifically, this kind of Islamophobia has gendered ramifications and aims to produce specific gendered cultural stereotypes. The concept of gendered Islamophobia (Perry, 2013) thus helps us to understand the Western paternalistic gaze, which divides and classifies Muslim subjects as traditional and dangerous, and places them in opposition to the developed West.

In the European context, one of the most important personalities embodying femonationalism is Marine Le Pen. The president of the French far-right National Rally (formerly National Front) has succeeded in restructuring the political agenda in her country and in redefining concepts she condemned up until two decades ago. "Women's" rights have been introduced into the National Rally political campaign more systematically since 2012 (Farris, 2017, pp. 38–39). Despite the profile projected by the party, the National Rally has not endorsed a general stance in favour of feminist claims within the French context. This specific kind of pseudo-feminism insists strongly on an ostensible feminist discourse revolving around rights and on the promotion of specific identities – that is, mainly

cis⁷ heterosexual white women – who, although previously stigmatised, are now certainly more privileged in comparison to immigrant women (Farris, 2017).

In the Greek context, as it has already been mentioned, it is not the Far Right but the conservative neoliberal Right which are endorsing a new identity politics. Besides, Golden Dawn, throughout its presence in the political scene, did not shift its orientation and did not hide its opposition to reproductive rights, and to feminist and LGBTQI claims in general (Sakellariou, 2017, pp. 71–73). The incidents of violence and racist attacks, recorded during the period of the refugee crisis (2015–2016) (Kafe et al., 2018, p. 61) by members of Golden Dawn, demonstrated that the Greek Far Right is different from the reformed Far Right emerging in many Western countries. In addition to a strongly xenophobic discourse (Χρυσή Αυγή προς τους ομοφυλόφιλους, 2012), the members of the criminal organisation were characterised by a strong homophobic stance, which did not allow for the adoption of a LGBTQI-friendly discourse. The hate rhetoric emanating from Golden Dawn included both domestic and foreign Others:

Did Golden Dawn readjust their agenda? ... I don't think so, I wouldn't say so. Well, with regards to LGBTQI issues, I would say that it was not adjusted at all, I think this was very clear in all articles, in all statements and in all their practices. And every time there was something organised by the other side, some event, gay Pride, for instance, or anything else taking place in the public space, the reaction was very harsh. And of course, attacks were also recorded by the Racist Violence Recording Network, which were most often attributed to individuals originating in the Far Right against LGBT-QI subjects. Now, with regards to their position, the stance towards women, I think ... I wouldn't say their agenda has changed. Golden Dawn attempted mainly ostensibly, just to keep up appearances, to show that they are interested in women ... However, if one looked in depth at their texts and analyses, the essence did not change. (A.S., academic)

The European trend, therefore, is endorsed by the Right rather that the Far Right in the Greek political context, as the case of the Greek #metoo movement demonstrates, when the New Democracy government officials had voiced an essentialist discourse with a utilitarian purpose in favour of women. On 8 March 2021, Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis praised the *invisible heroines*, talking about *breaking the guilty silence*, and holding meet-

⁷ Cis or cisgender describes a person whose gender identity corresponds to their sex assigned at birth.

ings with victims of sexual harassment (Μπτσοτάκης: Διπλά σημαντική, 2021). However, alongside this discourse on women's rights, the government proceeded with a controversial bill on compulsory co-custody, without making any provisions for cases of domestic violence and gender-based abuse, thus ignoring the concerns and criticism on the part of many feminist organisations, but also from other political parties and MPs (ΜέΡΑ25 για υποχρεωτική συνεπιμέλεια, 2021). The reconstitution of the government's right-wing profile as friendly towards women's and LGBTQI rights was described by many interviewees as a form of pinkwashing since no practical changes had been implemented:

I think it is largely pinkwashing because of the traditional principles of the Right, as presented in Greece in any case. But also more widely, worldwide, we have witnessed [this phenomenon] even in more open societies, such as the Dutch or the German, and even the Spanish one. Societies that have experienced the Enlightenment before or have experienced it in any case. Greece has not even experienced the Enlightenment yet. (A.K., LGBTQI activist)

One common aspect between the European and the Greek case is the obsession with the headscarf issue. The debate on the headscarf was initiated in Greece by political, academic and feminist organisations. On the political scene, members of right-wing parties have made statements referring to the headscarf in order to frame it as a symbol of oppression. In particular, the headscarf is unequivocally presented as a means of oppression and degradation of women's freedom. The hijab is described as a symbol that erases the autonomy of Muslim women and situates them outside the public sphere, while emphasising its imposition on women on the part of men. In one article, Konstantinos Bogdanos, then a ND MP, states (Μπογδάνος: Ερώτηση, 2020):

However, the burqa and the niqab constitute both a security problem, as they can make anyone invisible to citizens and the authorities, as well as a violation of women's rights, when they are forced to wear them, being subject to intimidation and oppression, something unacceptable for the dominant culture of our country and its legal culture.

Bogdanos finishes the article by emphasising that in Greece women must be treated as free and equal citizens. The critique towards such a perspective is twofold: first, it reproduces a perception of Muslim women as subjects without agency, without any scope for personal choice, while Muslim "culture" appears in conflict with the a priori free "culture" of

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"Western" Greece. Second, the endorsement of an emancipatory discourse by a politician who has expressed sexist views in the past, culminating in the targeting of academics in the field of gender studies (Το ακροδεξιό μέτωπο, 2021), and who did not shy away from airing his homophobic views during a television interview should also be noted (Το νέο παραλήρημα Μπογδάνου, 2019). Bogdanos' preoccupation with feminist concerns pertains only to Islam and the need to free Muslim women from the shackles of Islamic patriarchy.

On the other side of the fence, feminist organisations and academics articulated a similar discourse through a different perspective:

Now, if you ask me "what do you think about the hijab and the niqab and the abaya and the burqa?", personally, according to my opinion, the hijab is not a thing, there is no problem. The abaya and the burqa are definitely very unacceptable forms of women's dress code, which display a complete deprivation of social rights. (Representative of a major feminist organisation)

Our interlocutors frequently employed the dress code argument. In the white feminist imaginary, the woman must have a certain appearance, as defined by modern Western ideals (Jonsson, 2014). The dominance of binary oppositions between traditional and modern, between oppressive and liberating, creates the perception of the need to emancipate Muslim women:

Of course, I don't want to see the burga on the streets in Greece, I am going to be honest, I think of it as a moving prison. But, fortunately, there is no [burga in Greece]. (Representative of a major feminist organisation)

As mentioned above, the close relationship between the Greek state and the church has made secularisation a key element in the institutional, second-wave feminist discourse. The headscarf becomes again a symbol of oppression, but also a sign of extreme religiosity, which is opposed to the secularised Western imaginary: "The recent row over women wearing the burkini on French beaches was a telling example of this sectarian interpretation of secularism as laïcisme: not the state's neutrality in religious matters but rather the obligation on the citizens to conform to an anti-religious position embodied by the state. In fact, this form of secularism became the instrument of an anti-Muslim campaign" (Traverso, 2017, p. 47).

The recent burkini ban on French beaches but also the hijab ban in public places were predicated on the argument of separation between religious

worship and the secular state. The headscarf, thus, is not only rejected because it is viewed as a symbol of patriarchy, but also because it essentially challenges the Western secular understanding of the public sphere as allegedly neutral and non-religious. The discourse of secularity was prominent in almost all interviews. The close relationship between Greek society and the church and the targeting of feminism by the latter preserve and reproduce a discourse of incompatibility between secular principles and religious subjects:

I think that the fact that the French school and the French state are secular is very important, and I would like our country to be secular too, but it is not. (Representative of a large feminist organisation)

Here it would be pertinent to refer to the concept of "convergence" analysed by Farris (2017), since it would help us understand the way in which the association of the far-right discourse with feminism takes shape: "The term describes the encounter between different actors and movements in a given space, without them losing their relative autonomy, and without the encounter itself (necessarily) producing identity or homogeneity" (Farris, 2017, p. 5). Convergence occurs either as the instrumentalisation or exploitation of women's rights to advance an anti-immigrant and Islamophobic agenda, or as a so-called "alliance" (Farris, 2017, pp. 14–15). In our case, this convergence occurs through a combination of these two. On the one hand, there is an interest in feminist (women's) issues on the part of the right-wing in Greece, especially in "dense" political periods, like the current one, even if this is not particularly intense and even if this interest is not shared among everyone on the Right. On the other hand, the displacement of otherness allows for the emergence of marginalised female subjects as worthy of protection while excluding other identities, such as that of the Muslim man. The gendered Other thus turns into a racialised Other. The ostensible endorsement of hitherto stigmatised identities enables and legitimises an exclusion in ethnic terms. Exclusion is not necessarily performed through violence, but through a perception of Islam and Muslim countries as a priori homophobic and patriarchal and through a discourse which promotes the imperative need to protect women's and LGBTQI rights and freedom:

It's a fine line between endorsing and letting people assimilate into a society; it is a different thing that aspects of their culture are sexist and homophobic. It's a fine line. And sometimes it can be difficult to achieve, not only assimilation, but the reunification of their culture. It is an issue, indeed, there is a point in asking this question. (T.A. LGBTQI activist and politician)

The gendered Islamophobia produced within this femonationalist framework once again creates binary oppositions. On the one hand, it enables the representation of the Muslim man as aggressive, as a rapist and sexist, and, on the other, it reinforces the victimisation of the Muslim woman. The distinction between the sophisticated West and the generally oppressive Islam based on this gendered dimension is what allows for these narratives of salvation for Muslim women to emerge. Our discussions with the interviewees revealed an implicit yet constant Western fantasy of saving Muslim women. In their discourse, the rejection of the headscarf is perceived as an equivalent of female emancipation and agency. To achieve this emancipation, however, the involvement of the West is necessary (Abu-Lughod, 2013):

Because, obviously, I consider it wrong for them to wear headscarves, but my own rights are not threatened. At least, I think so. I would ... I would really like these women to come to their senses and to ... emancipate themselves and take off the headscarf and the burkini. And don't go around wearing it; obviously, I do consider it an oppression of women. Hiding their face. (M.S., academic, politically active)

It has become clear through the historicisation of the feminist movement that the mainstream, institutional strand of feminism has remained anchored in the theory and claims of the second wave in Greece. The absence of intersubjectivity, which marks feminist second-wave organisations, contributes to the perpetuation of stereotypes which see Muslim women as victims and to the creation of an Islamophobic discourse, which does not necessarily converge with a nationalist one. What is rejected in this discourse is not the immigrant woman per se but the cultural characteristics that are not in line with Greek traditional ideals but also with those advocated by second-wave Western feminism.

In conclusion, while femonationalism has not developed in the Greek context, as in other European countries, the Right has taken steps to redefine its image by introducing a discourse about rights and by attempting to make issues related to the feminist and LGBT communities visible. This effort seems confined to the symbolic level, while it is also marked by a strong reaction to a wider social change; issues of gender and sexual identities are gradually gaining ground, while at the same time there is an increase in incidents of police violence (Lappas, 2021), persistent marginalisation of queer individuals and a targeting of social sciences (Avramopoulou et al., 2021):

Greece as a whole is like this, not just Golden Dawn. I wish it were only Golden Dawn. I am sorry to say that Greece as a whole and almost all political parties are white, well, white, yes, cis straight men and usually also Christian Orthodox, and they also say it openly that I am a Christian Orthodox. So, it's not just Golden Dawn, it goes without saying. Let alone that if you take a look at a survey with percentages, Golden Dawn, because it had few MPs – I think that two of them were women – they did not have the lowest percentage in terms of women's representation in the entire Parliament in the representation of women, for instance. Besides, if you look at the official level, there are no MPs who are openly gay, or openly lesbian, or openly bisexual, not to mention transgender. There has not been an openly gay, lesbian, or bi MP in the Greek Parliament. This is true for all parties, including the progressive ones. None ever, ever. So, it's not just Golden Dawn, unfortunately. I wish that Golden Dawn were the issue. (H., LGBT-QI politician)

CONCLUSION

This chapter aimed to illuminate the emergence of a new neoliberal right-wing ideology which instrumentalises a discourse on gender identities for its own benefit. As it has been demonstrated, these developments, which are mainly taking place within the political space of the Far Right, are embedded in the political priorities of the traditional Right in Greece. For this reason, the chapter focused on the fundamental relationship between the feminist and LGBTQI movements and the Left, as well as the key role of the Orthodox Church and its close relationship with the Greek state. This relationship has contributed to the non-acceptance of "other" gender identities and to their persistent marginalisation.

Due to the belated emergence of femonationalism and homonationalism, we submit that Greece can be used as an ideal field to investigate the ways and conditions under which these phenomena emerge and become normalised. Even if femonationalism and homonationalism can be observed only at their beginnings, it is interesting to observe their evolution in the Greek political context. More specifically, the fact that these phenomena have only just begun to emerge in Greece allows us to examine them independently; however, it would be of particular research interest to follow their evolution. The church's involvement in politics, the evolution of the feminist movement in Greece both institutionally and as a movement (but also in terms of intersectionality), and, naturally, the stance of the Left, are important issues that require further investigation.

As this research has demonstrated, the relationship between gender issues and the Far Right – the Right in the Greek case – is an important aspect that sheds light on the new ways of constructing political formations. In the European context, the Right, as well as the Far Right, has reshaped its profile and has now included discourses on gender issues, sometimes by simply instrumentalising them and other times by integrating them as a fundamental element of its identity. The new inclusion of gender issues from both the Right and the Far Right marks the reformulation of the entire political landscape as we know it. Identity politics, which is gaining increasingly more ground, seem to become normalised and is being reproduced by more and more political fields. We believe that in the years to come, Greece will also follow this trend and, possibly, a Far Right that would integrate gender issues in its agenda is likely to emerge. For the time being, the reshaping of the neoliberal Right gives rise to the phenomena of femonationalism and homonationalism, normalises gendered discourses to some extent, shifts otherness from the gendered to the Muslim Other, and incorporates -as a defining condition for the emergence of these phenomena as such- the gendered subjects to the national "belonging". These political developments open up a research field of analysis, which we believe needs monitoring and further study in the coming years.

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Conventional Media
and "Unconventional"
Discourses: Moral Panic
and the Normalisation
of Far-Right Rhetoric

KATERINA DOUKARELLI, NATASA MPRAESA

■ ABSTRACT

This article attempts to examine the diffusion and normalisation of farright discourse in the "mainstream" Greek media landscape, in the context of the current economic crisis, which creates the conditions and circumstances that led Greek society to a shift towards the Far Right. By adopting the concept of moral panic and applying a comparative methodology, the article examines the discourse production in news bulletins and news broadcasts of the private television channels as well as in newspaper articles and front pages. It attempts a comparison between the discourse of far-right and conventional or "mainstream" media in reporting on the Prespa Agreement between Greece and the Republic of the North Macedonia as well as on the refugee-migration issue during its peak, that is, in 2015 and in March 2020, after Turkey's breach of the agreement with the European Union. The chapter aims to demonstrate the role that media played in the shaping of public opinion through the legitimisation of a farright rhetoric that was articulated in the context of the consolidation of the new power relations that emerged in the Greek political scene after the collapse of the two-party system following the economic crisis that unfolded in the country from 2010 onwards. It achieves this aim through the analvsis of media discourse, which highlights the systematic dissemination of arguments about a "nation under threat", the creation of outcast social groups and a rhetoric of hatred, which contributed to the production of symbolic violence and the physical violence that succeeded it, as a normalising condition.

Keywords: "Mainstream" media, Far Right, populism, moral panic, crisis, radicalisation

* A full list of media material used for this chapter can be found at the end of the chapter under the section "media sources".

This chapter attempts to demonstrate the contribution of the media to the shift in Greek society towards views and trends originating from the Far Right, through the diffusion of its discourse in the "mainstream" media space. It attempts to critically reconstruct the discourse articulated through television and newspapers around two "national" issues that concerned Greek society from 2015 to 2020. Adopting a comparative methodology and taking as its framework the concept of moral panic (Cohen, 1972), the article contrasts the discourses of far-right and "mainstream" media in order to demonstrate their ideological affinities, which, explicitly or implicitly, directly or indirectly, through a semiotic reproduction of structural elements of the far-right ideology (Dalakoglou, 2013), gave rise to the activation of negative dispositions and attitudes among a large part of Greek society, contributing decisively to its far-right turn.

The concept of moral panic presupposes the existence of a social threat that is portrayed by the media in symbolic terms, causing public concern. Addressing this alleged social threat requires political and legal decisions that lead to social and economic changes. Moral panic is perceived as a symptom of the politics of fear and insecurity, which can be shaped through a series of recurring dangers in media or political discourse. This social and media discourse is triggered by events that are presented as a threat to the social moral order, while the collective response to the threat, through the cultivation of a sense of unrest and a belief that things are out of control, is the major stimulus of fear that often turns into panic (Walby & Spencer, 2012). In order to understand the real and symbolic meanings of moral panic, it is important to note the ways in which it affects the nature of the very object around which it is constituted, the pre-existing narratives about risk on which it is based, the ways in which it may intersect with particular concerns in the spatial and temporal context in which it manifests itself, and the ways in which it forms part of a wider social context (Falkof, 2020). The media can create or reinforce it by focusing on the social reaction around an event rather than the event itself, through an often metaphorical and exaggerated discourse, with apocalyptic images and conspiracy theories. The object of moral panic, a scapegoat ("folk devil"), is presented as threatening the values and interests of society within a stereotypical context. At the same time, politicians, journalists, writers, clerics and experts are enlisted as "moral roadblocks" to offer solutions to society that address the causes of moral panic (Davies, 2019).

In this chapter, which uses the conceptual framework of moral panic, we decode the discourse articulated around the conclusion of the Prespa Agreement between Greece and North Macedonia and around the refugee/

migration issue, both at its peak in 2015 and after Turkey's breach of the agreement with the EU on refugees and migrants who were in its territory in February 2020. By adopting this analytical framework, we demonstrate the levers of actual and symbolic meaning-making of these events and the ways in which they activated performativities and fed the social imaginary with stereotypes and cognitive schemas that conversed with the phobic, intolerant and conspiratorial far-right discourse.

Given this specific analytical target, we attempt to demonstrate the dominant discourse around the Macedonia name dispute and refugee/migration issue over the five-year period from 2015 to 2020, including headlines and articles from the newspapers *Makeleio, Kathimerini* and *Proto Thema*; from the news bulletins and current affairs programmes from the TV channels Art TV, Ant1, Star, Skai; and Kyriakos Velopoulos' broadcasts on Kontra Channel and Extra Channel. The media were selected on the basis of their different ideological and political positioning, as they cover a spectrum ranging from the Far Right to the "mainstream" media.

The chapter argues that their rhetoric traced similar and sometimes identical trajectories of meaning, creating a climate of fear and insecurity, which contributed to the creation of a highly political and social polarisation, which led to the legitimisation and even naturalisation of far-right ideology. Following four main axes, we first highlight the production of a discourse that reinforced the sense of an out-of-control situation that seemed to threaten the dominant moral order and Greek national identity and to insulting national pride, thus reinforcing narratives of a "national crisis" and the devaluation of the state and its institutions. Next, we address the way the media perceived and represented Greek national history through an obsessive search for a dominant Greek identity with historical roots in the mists of time, which was associated with Ancient Greece, contributing to the formation of a phobic climate about the integrity of the nation and the security of its citizens. The third axis concerns the production of a discourse that endangered national homogeneity and fostered panic through a moralistic language, constructing the Other sometimes as a "Skopjan"² neighbour who is a threat to Greece and other

Kyriakos Velopoulos was elected MP in September 2007 and October 2009 elections with the Popular Orthodox Rally (Laos) party. In June 2016 he founded the Hellenic Solution (Elliniki Lysi) party. In May 2019, he was elected MEP for Hellenic Solution but later resigned from the European Parliament when he was elected MP in national elections of July 2019. See https://www.hellenicparliament.gr/Vouleftes/Ana-Koino-vouleftiki-Omada/?MPId=7befd423-908f-4667-8acb-a9c083ff6b44.

Skopje is the capital of North Macedonia. However, in Greece the term was used to designate the country during the years of dispute and up until the Prespa Agreement, which settled the issue between the two countries in 2018, was reached. The term is

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times as an unhappy and threatening refugee-immigrant. The chapter concludes with the analytical category of conspiracy theories that served as a thread connecting the dominant discourse around conspiracy myths and the invention of scapegoats. We argue that such practices reinforced the consolidation of moral panic in Greek society as a result of the media's construction and reproduction of fear discourses. This rhetoric contributed to the consolidation of a permanent sense of unrest in a society experiencing a deep fiscal crisis along with feelings of fear and anxiety.

Through this analysis we highlight the way in which "mainstream" media that enjoy high ratings or readership have fed a collective social response, broadening the appeal of nationalism, racism and xenophobia. By adopting a phobic and aggressive discourse and a strongly ethnocentric approach, they intensified the rupture between the *national self* and the *Other*, fostered feelings of fear, insecurity and hatred, thus fomenting and normalising violent practices and creating the conditions for the acceptance and adoption of far-right views by Greek society.

■ LITERATURE REVIEW

The beginning of the 2010s found Europe in the wake of terrorist attacks, mass refugee and migrant movements and a structural fiscal crisis, with far-right parties increasing their political power (Lazaridis et al., 2016) and a nationalist tendency dominating the European political scene (Stănescu, 2018). The understanding of the media as an ideological apparatus for shaping and educating public opinion (Coban, 2018; Herman & Chomsky, 1988) has shifted the focus of academic research to exploring connections between the rise of the Far Right in many European countries and the form and quality of mediated information (Aalberg et al., 2016; Esser et al., 2017; Krämer, 2014; Mazzoleni et al., 2003). The "populism" of the media in the context of their commercialisation (Esser et al., 2017; Krämer, 2014; Mazzoleni et al., 2003) led to an accusatory media discourse against political elites, which seemed to resonate with their audiences. This populism, combined with an appeal to public sentiment (Mudde, 2007; Plasser & Ulram, 2003), was often studied as a factor contributing to the strengthening of the far-right agenda (Doroshenko, 2018), the rise of far-right parties (Berezin, 2009; De Raadt et al., 2004) and the legitimisation of far-right rhetoric (Bos et al., 2011). The existing research has focused on the

still very much in use in Greece by those – politicians, the public, the media – who refuse to recognise the Prespa Agreement and the attribution of the name "North Macedonia".

reciprocal relationship between far-right parties and media and has sought to identify the ways in which far-right politicians used the media space to gain visibility and win voters, and the purposes that the media served by offering them space and time (Bos et al., 2011; De Jonge, 2019; Doroshenko, 2018).

A significant number of studies have focused on the relationship between the media and far-right political ideologies (Forchtner et al., 2013) and phenomena at the core of far-right ideology, such as nationalism (Skey, 2020; Stănescu, 2018) and populism (Alvares & Dahlgren, 2016; Brown & Mondon, 2020; Cammaerts, 2018), while some approaches have illuminated the role that media played in the legitimisation of anti-refugee, anti-immigrant policies and attitudes in the public sphere (Ellinas, 2010). Using this perspective, the research focus has additionally shifted to the "mediation" of the media in increasing racism and xenophobia through the adoption of a phobic and intolerant rhetoric towards refugees and migrants in particular (Boomgaarden & Vliegenthart, 2007; Burscher et al., 2015; Eberl et al., 2018; Georgiou & Zaborowski, 2017; Steinmayr, 2017).

In addition, the new forms of information and communication, such as social media and the internet, have attracted the interest of academic research to a big extent. The quality and validity of the information they provide have often been questioned (Deibert, 2019). Academic approaches have focused on the rise of nationalism and far-right populism through the internet, as new spaces for the political promotion and expression of far-right rhetoric and ideology (Alvares & Dahlgren, 2016; Engesser, Ernst, et al., 2017; Fuchs, 2020; Pajnik & Sauer, 2018; Waisbord & Amado, 2017) by both far-right supporters (Antonopoulou, 2018; Simpson & Duxes, 2015; Winter, 2019) and far-right politicians (Engesser, Ernst et al., 2017; Engesser, Fawzi et al., 2017).

As far as the Greek case is concerned, the academic interest has focused on the ways in which the Greek media represented issues of national importance (Armenakis et al., 1996; Ellinas, 2010; Skey, 2020; Skoulariki, 2007; Tzanelli, 2006), with the main research focus on their role in the political and social spread and naturalisation of a nationalist ideology (Demertzis et al., 1999; Pleios & Fragonikolopoulos, 2010) that shaped the conditions leading to the entry of Golden Dawn into the Greek Parliament in 2010 and the sharp increase in its share in the 2012 elections (Mouka & Saridakis, 2017; Psarras, 2010).

These approaches have shed light on important aspects of the media's connection to the rise of the Far Right and have contributed to the understanding of the role and power of mediated information in the diffusion and prevalence of far-right ideas, attitudes and behaviours. This chapter attempts to analyse this relationship through a direct comparison of the discourse of far-right and "mainstream" media in Greece during the five-year period from 2015 to 2020 around the Macedonia name dispute and refugee/migration issues. It ex-

plores the ways in which "mainstream" media approached these issues, as well as their confluences with far-right rhetoric, as a result of the transformation and reconfiguration of the media landscape in Greece during the crisis period.

■ METHODOLOGY

The methodology of this chapter is based on a thematic analysis, which allows for a dialogical relationship with the data of our research (Tsiolis, 2016). The method was chosen for the potential that it offers to identify and select those themes in line with our research questions (Braun & Clark, 2006).

The sample of our analysis on both the Prespa Agreement and the refugee/migration issue was derived from archival research conducted for the period from 2015 to 2020 in three newspapers, as well as in news broadcasts and news bulletins of private TV channels with a national scope. Specifically, the research focused on the daily conservative centre-right daily newspaper *Kathimerini*, the Sunday newspaper *Proto Thema*, which is positioned politically in what has been described as the extreme centre (Ali, 2015), and the far-right newspaper *Makeleio*.

The TV channels from which part of our material was drawn were Ant1 (conservative/right-wing), Skai (neoliberal), which was the main oppositional media during the Syriza-Independent Greeks (Anel) government (2015–2019), and Star Channel, which from its foundation maintained an "apolitical" profile (Valoukos, 2018) but is now positioned politically in the populist Right. Also, material was drawn from the television channel Art TV (farright) as well as from the programmes of Kyriakos Velopoulos, which were aired on Kontra Channel and Extra Channel. The selection criteria of the media were based on their political-ideological orientation, their readership (newspapers) and their viewing ratings. Employing the concept of moral panic and a thematic analysis, we examined how far-right ideology has permeated Greek society through the "discourse" of the media, setting off the defence mechanisms of a "body" under threat.

■ A BRIEF HISTORY OF PRIVATE TELEVISION BROADCASTING

The media in Greece has existed since the period of the Greek War of Independence (1821–1826) in the form of newspapers (Koumarianou, 2005), while in 1938 the first official radio station in Greece, Athens Radio Station, located in the Zappeion, was inaugurated (Michani toy Chronou (2015). In February 1966, the National Radio Foundation commenced television broadcasting. At the same time, the armed forces acquired their own television channel. In

that way, television became part of providing Greek society with daily information under a state monopoly, a situation that would endure until 1989 (Paschalidis, 2018). Law 1866/1989 legislated for the granting of television licences to non-state entities and marked a new era in informing Greek public opinion. The same law established the National Council for Radio and Television as an independent authority (Law 1866/1989, article 1). Among the conditions stipulated by the law for the granting of television licences to private entities was that they had to have experience in the media field and had to be public limited companies. The first limited company to receive a licence to establish and operate a television channel was Tiletypos SA with MEGA Channel. The shareholders of the company were Christos Lambrakis (Lambrakis Press Group), Vardis Vardinovannis (Mesimvrini), Aristides Alafouzos (Kathimerini), Christos Tegopoulos (Eleftherotypia) and Giorgos Bobolas (Ethnos). This channel was considered to express, politically and ideologically, the space of the "great democratic coalition" (Valoukos, 2018, p. 142). The second television channel to be granted with a licence was Ant1, with Minos Kyriakou, who was active in the shipping industry, as its main shareholder. Ant1 was considered to express the "traditional democratic right-wing alliance and the pro-royalists" (Valoukos, 2018, p. 143). In the first six months of 1990, five other television channels appeared, including TeleCity, owned by the businessman and journalist Giorgos Karatzaferis, which would be renamed TeleAsty and which was granted a nationwide license in 2013 (Diavgeia, 2013), as well as Channel 29, which was subsequently purchased by the Vardinovannis family which launch STAR in December 1993. STAR at that time adopted an apolitical style. The television channel SKAI, owned by publisher and businessman Aristides Alafouzos, was also launched in September 1993. The channel was subsequently sold to businessman Dimitris Kontominas and renamed as ALPHA. In the 2000s, SKAI reverted to the ownership of *Kathimer*ini publisher Aristidis Alafouzos and was relaunched (Valoukos, 2018).

The four private television channels that were granted nationwide television licences in the 1990s, which had shareholders who were entrepreneurs in other business sectors such as shipping, oil, telecommunications, construction and public works, formed the television landscape in Greece along with the two state television channels (Valoukos, 2018).

Performing their role as mediators of current affairs and of politicians' communication with the public through their broadcasts and news bulletins, private TV channels acquired the ability to propagate positions and shape perceptions and attitudes (Kountouri, 2020), thus gaining political influence. It thus became clear that the influence of political parties on the electorate was largely determined by their mediation by the media, resulting in the interweaving of the political interests of parties with the business interests of media owners.

A typical example of the political influence of the media during the same period is the former Italian prime minister Silvio Berlusconi. By investing in media ownership, he managed to form an electoral power that enabled him to rise to the prime minister's office three times, even when he was forced to resign due to unpopular policies, corruption scandals, bribery and tax evasion (Romaios, 2008). A similar example in Greek political reality is the entry of Giorgos Karatzaferis' party Popular Orthodox Rally (Laos) into parliament in the 2007 and 2009 elections (Tsiras, 2012).

The media landscape changed radically in the 2010s, not only because of the development of social media, but also because of the economic crisis, which did not leave the media unaffected. Staff redundancies, over-borrowing, reduced advertising revenues, etc., led to a rearrangement of the Greek media landscape (Kourousi, 2016). Seeking to ensure their existence through the aid of the political system, the media used propaganda as their weapon, trying through the dissemination of selective information to manipulate citizens in a way that they would align themselves with the dictates, goals, aims and objectives of state power (Kourousi, 2016).

On the other hand, the concentration of the media in Greece in the hands of the country's economic elite (Bobolas, Vardinovannis, Alafouzos, Kyriakou) and its control over it not only continued during the economic crisis, but they were joined in the media landscape by new "actors", such as the Giannakopoulos, Marinakis, Kopelouzos, Restis, and Kyriakidis-Lavrentiadis families, which are involved in similar financial activities (Smyrnaios, 2013). At the time of the memoranda and in the context of budget cuts, on 11 June 2013 the Samaras coalition government announced the shutdown of state broadcaster ERT under the pretext that it was opaque and wasting money; it was also announced that the national broadcaster would be relaunched, on an unspecified date in the future, as New Hellenic Radio. Internet and Television (Nerit). Under a joint ministerial decision (Law 3429/2005), on the basis of Article 14B concerning the abolition, merger and restructuring of the legal persons governed by private and public enterprises, as amended by a legislative act, ERT stopped broadcasting, a fact that triggered reactions in Greece (Demetis, 2013) but also in the international media, which called on Samaras to revoke his decision (Kathimerini, 2013, June 13).

Syriza, as the main opposition party, through its leader Alexis Tsipras, called the shutdown of ERT a "coup", while it had already made a series of proposals that would have ended "favouritism" and the "rotten media system" (Enet.gr, 2013, May 27).

ERT reopened in April 2015, under a law passed by the Syriza-Anel government (Poulakidas, 2015). Its radio stations and television channels reappeared, as did its magazine *Radiotileorasi*, and its employees were reinstated.

The Syriza-Anel government, aiming to bring "order" to the media sector. decided that television licences were to be granted after a competitive bidding process. In September 2016, the "battle" for television licenses began at the Council of State, the country's supreme administrative court, with television channels appealing the decision of 1 March 2016 under Minister of State Nikos Pappas' laws 4297/2016 and 4339/2015 (for the licensing of digital terrestrial television broadcasting), considering them unconstitutional and accusing the government of restricting pluralism and transparencv. In November 2017, the government proceeded with a call for tenders for seven more licenses (Eleftheros Typos, 2017, November 27). In September 2018, the National Council for Radio and Television (ESR) declared the following channels as beneficiaries of a nationwide license: ALPHA, Ant1, SKAI, STAR and Epsilon TV. The controversy over the TV licenses resulted in the media turning against the Syriza-Anel government, a fact that became clear in the way they presented both the Prespa Agreement and the management of the migration-refugee issue.

THE SCAPEGOATS

We can conceive of the media as sites of cultural and social processes but also as dynamic fields of political conflict and debate (Spitulnik, 1993). It is important for a critical approach of the "discourse" they produce to bear in mind that media representations are not entirely identical with the social reality they claim to represent. As vehicles for the communication of news information, the media provide a way of seeing the world and a vision of the truth that is derived and shaped by their position and participation in the society to which they belong. In this context, they reshape, redefine and create new realities through processes of evaluation and reframing (Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999).

At a time when the media itself was in crisis, it undertook, through linguistic and visual schemes, to give meaning to the events that created anxiety, insecurity and fear in a large part of Greek society during the fiscal and socio-political crisis, as its normative principles and values seemed to have been shaken and threatened (Coman, 2005). The dramatisation of news, combined with the search for "digestible" information, established the production of a discourse that used linguistic-semantic constructions to create meanings and produce hegemonic representations and interpretations. Ac-

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cording to Fairclough (1992, p. 87), ideologies embedded in discourse are most effective when they manage to naturalize and attain common sense status. Refugees and migrants, our neighbours in North Macedonia and those who contributed to its renaming were target groups around which a discourse was articulated that separated them from the national social body and linked them to the suffering of the Greek people during the crisis period. It was a discourse of hatred that acted as a principle of social organisation, producing socio-political effects (Ahmed, 2004).

During the negotiation of the Prespa Agreement, Greece was portrayed by the media as a deeply pained body. In newspaper headlines, as well as in headlines and chyrons of TV news and newscasts, Greece was presented as "sighing", "ragged" and, ultimately, murdered through a nationalist perspective that sought Macedonia to be an integral part of Greek land and identity (Triandafyllidou, 1998). With sensational headlines and chyrons, melodramatic vocabulary and exaggerated statements, the media framed "apocalyptic" images and "frame-by-frame" footage of the Prespa Agreement against the background of the blue and white flag that once fluttered in the hands or wrapped the bodies of proud Greeks, who were demonstrating for "Alexander's Macedonia" in rallies and marches; at other times it was drenched in blood in fierce clashes with the "traitors" of the homeland. Symbols such as the Greek flag have the power to bridge the gaps in the structure of society by reducing contradictions and conveying emotions such as fear and sacrifice (Balibar & Wallerstein, 2017/1988).

Headline:

Do not proceed with this **crime** (Theodorakis,³ *Ta Nea*, 19 January 2019)

Chyron:

Gioulekas: Greece is being torn apart by the Skopians [19:10]. (Skai News, 6 December 2018)

The mediated journalistic discourse attempted to evoke and legitimise

Mikis Theodorakis was a Greek composer, lyricist, conductor and politician. He is considered one of the most important modern Greek composers. He was also a politician, and was elected MP four times, initially with the Communist Party of Greece and later with New Democracy. He served as a minister of state.

⁴ Konstantinos Gioulekas is a Greek journalist, lawyer, politician and a New Democracy MP. He was deputy minister of education and religious affairs (June 2013–June 2014) under Prime Minister Antonis Samaras. He is currently deputy minister of Macedonia and Thrace.

emotions (Siapera & Papadopoulou, 2021), aided by the power of the image, mobilising reactions, producing sensory vibrations and legitimising identities and boundaries (Stavridis, 2009). Every Greek was expected to feel "rage" against those who signed or supported the agreement, thus betraying the homeland, and "shame" for the "part" of Greece that was lost:

Headline:

The agreement is signed **amid popular outrage** (Lygerou, *Proto Thema*, 17 June 2018)

Headline:

Why we, as Macedonians, **feel deeply offended** (Gerontis, *Kathimerini*, 30 June 2018)

A divisive climate was thus cultivated between the Greek patriotic supporters of the one and Greek-only Macedonia and the anti-Greek "traitors", supporters of the Prespa Agreement, confirming that the "pathological normality" of the Far Right can go hand in hand with "mainstream" (banal) attitudes and behaviours (Mudde, 2010).

Headline:

History takes revenge when it is written by "lackeys". (Spiliotopoulos, *Proto Thema*, 30 January 2018)

Chyron:

Syriza MPs "condemned" as **traitors** [13:30]. (Star News, 25 January 2019)

The same tactics were followed by the media on the refugee/migration issue. With images and sound effects simulating a military conflict, and with impressive headlines, they presented the immigrants as ethno-culturally and religiously "different" and nationally dangerous Others, who were a threat to national homogeneity, public security and law and order. They were presented as "invaders", against whom the country had to be "shielded", but also as "illegals". This enforced perception of refugees and migration as "illegals" and a national threat fostered a climate of fear. The representation of refugees was constructed in terms of racial, religious and cultural otherness as a threat to the social cohesion of the nation and "Western" liberal values, as well as in terms of securitisation and the normalization of military-police type practices aiming to repel them (Kirtsoglou & Tsimouris, 2018).

79 Front page:

The **invasion** has begun – **2.5 million illegal immigrants** ready to storm out of Turkey (*Makeleio*, 12 April 2015)

Chyron:

Moria: a war zone [1:09] [...] **Islands**: a powder keg [3:19] [...] The island [Lesvos] is under siege from migrants [1:54]. (Star News, 4 February 2020)

The discourse of the far-right and conventional media organised the representation of a social reality (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997), in a way that intensified the moral panic in Greek society. Refugees and migrants were represented as dangerous subhumans with animal instincts, thus providing the legitimising basis not only for discriminatory and exclusionary discourses, but also for the prevalence of dominant far-right ideas and attitudes such as racism and xenophobia (Ellinas, 2010). In that way, Golden Dawn's attacks against refugees and migrants seemed to be justified, as they were part of a dominant institutionalised rhetoric and practice (Dalakoglou, 2013).

Front page:

Throw them into the sea, or they will eat us alive. (*Makeleio*, 15 April 2015)

We sit and think **about eating [i.e. annihilating] them**, because **they're eating [annihilating] us** [3:48]. (Lesvos resident, Star News, 4 February 2020)

On the occasion of the Macedonia name dispute and refugee/migration issues, the media discourse was organised around the construction of enemies threatening the Greek national body and the creation of a sense of insecurity and fear in Greek society, both of which are practices associated with authoritarian regimes (Arendt, 2004). Through a directly offensive and abusive language, they intensified the moral panic by legitimising extreme responses, on the occasion of two crucial socio-political issues during the crisis, proposing logics of exclusion but also violent, confrontational policies and practices, in line with far-right ideology. The media contributed to the construction of moral perpetrators and scapegoats responsible for the discontent, insecurity and anxiety of Greek society during the fiscal and socio-political crisis. Thus, the media provided the basis for the reinforcement of a political discourse with nationalist connotations, articulated around the

far-right argumentation of social decline and the need for national regeneration (Halikiopoulou & Vasilopoulou, 2015).

THE CRISIS OF THE NATION, INSTITUTIONS AND THE STATE

A series of changes following the long period of the fiscal crisis that Greece experienced since 2010 transformed social expectations and intensified the insecurities of Greek society. With the national elections in May and June 2012, the political scene was rearranged, as their results revealed the collapse of the two-party system that had prevailed in the country since the post-junta period (Boukala & Dimitrakopoulou, 2016). For the first time, a left-wing party, as Syriza defined itself at the time, became the main opposition party in Parliament and, at the same time, the far-right Golden Dawn succeeded in electing 18 MPs. In order to form a government after the results of the 17 June 2012 elections, the conservative New Democracy cooperated with Pasok, a social democratic party, and Democratic Left (Dimar), which had emerged from a recent split from Syriza, while the 2012 election results prompted the New Democracy leader, Antonis Samaras, to create a more cohesive party identity, diversifying the centre-right ideological orientation of his party in order to attract voters from the Far Right, for which support seemed to be increasing at the time. The coalescence of far-right forces in the core of the Right was accompanied by an attempt to present Syriza as a threat to the national security of the country (Boukala & Dimitrakopoulou, 2016). Nevertheless, in the January 2015 elections, was Syriza defeated New Democracy and formed a coalition government with Anel, a right-wing conservative party. The effort to deconstruct Syriza's political and ideological line continued more intensely in the public sphere and especially in the media, where a dominant moral panic rhetoric led to the consolidation of a deeply held belief that institutions were in disarray, combined with a widespread questioning of the political system and the quality of constitutional democracy in the country. Starting from an anti-government oppositional strategic tactic, the media contributed to the cultivation of a fertile ground for the strengthening of far-right ideology.

The re-election of Syriza in the 20 September 2015 elections pushed the anti-government media to adopt a more aggressive discourse and harden their stance. The moral panic was intensified since the state was presented as "unfortified" against the dangers that threatened it and being unable to react, organise and defend its citizens. The discourse was organised around the deconstruction of the political profile and values of Syriza and the reinforcement of feelings of panic and insecurity in Greek society, rather than

around serious arguments or on the basis of the events themselves. One of the key steps in creating panic according to Davies is the presentation of an event as part of a wider threat that can take the form of an "epidemic". Verbal practices such as the use of medical terms or metaphors contribute to the intensification of anxiety and fear of an ever-increasing danger (Davies, 2019).

Alarm in the country – We are under siege – Millions of illegal immigrants are surrounding the country – The state is unprotected – The social fabric of Greece is at risk, while they are entering from everywhere! (Makeleio, 14 April 2015)

The state is sort of a state, but the mafiosos are not a sort of mafiosos. They know the job. Like germs. One is enough to start an epidemic. (Theodoropoulos, *Kathimerini*, 26 September 2015)

The denigration of the political system and its representatives and the criticism of parliamentary democracy during the country's governance by Syriza-Anel was the focus of a rhetoric by politicians and journalists aimed at hitting the ruling party coalition by "showing" the state's weakness and the inability of its institutions to manage key national affairs. Although from a different starting point, this discourse followed the same line as the far-right argumentation, while in certain aspects it was identified with voices such as that of the leader of Golden Dawn, Nikos Michaloliakos, who repeatedly questioned the country's democratic political system, referring to a "pseudo-democracy" (Ellinas, 2013).

In this context of unrest, the country's situation appeared to be out of control. The Greek nation-state seemed to be shaken, while its democratically elected representatives had lost their authority and credibility, with the prevalence of an anti-establishment and anti-parliamentary rhetoric. An anti-government, extremely abusive and ravaging discourse, part of the bourgeois political system, which was shaken by the end of the bipartisan political system, attempted to damage the kind of parliamentarianism represented the Syriza-Anel coalition government, mimicking the far-right rhetoric of social decline and the need to resurrect the nation (Griffin, 2013/1991).

A manipulation that proves that the institutions for the defence of democracy in Greece are deficient, "popular sovereignty" is a dead letter against any unpopular and anti-national policies and the governments are practically uncontrollable until the end of their term of office. (Parisis, *Proto Thema*, 24 January 2019)

If you want to explain to your children what **amoralism**, **cynicism**, **adventurism**, **what political peddlers**, **what a rabble is** [...] watch last night's debate in Parliament, where the government received a vote of confidence. (Portosalte, 19 January 2019)

Seemingly neutral media have been identified with those on the Right, as part of a wider trend on the global political scene, where centrist political formations are shifting to the Right in an attempt to respond to the demands of the markets. This extremism of the political centre satisfies neoliberalism's demand for a one-party state that serves and promotes the interests of capitalism by promoting the ideological hegemony of the Right (Ali, 2015). Although the distinctive difference between the Left and the Right seemed to disappear after the signing of the memorandum agreement by the Syriza-Anel government in July 2015 and the neoliberal austerity policies it implemented during its term of office, anti-government discourse continued to dominate the media, acquiring an anti-globalisation dimension with nationalist characteristics and an encouragement to return to tradition as the only way out of the crisis. The symbolic revival of the civil war trauma was often deployed through the invocation of a repressed memory (Demertzis, 2011).

The country is heading towards a new social cleavage and civil war. The "komitadji"⁵ of Syriza will not give up political power and will **sell out national territories**. (*Makeleio*, 25 January 2019, front page)

Globalisation, the information society, the society of symbols and tourism pose new threats, as Greece's goods, material and symbolic, landscapes and names, are now sought after [...] How much of Greece will belong to which Greeks? (Prevelakis, Kathimerini, 22 July, 2018)

Anti-government media argued that the government's handling of the Macedonia name dispute and refugee/migration issue showed that that national issues were being "loosely" managed, in an attempt to polarise and reinforce moral panic through a rhetoric of fear. The rhetoric of the conventional media, following the hegemonic ideology of the Right, to which they are attached, constructs differences and conflicts around decisions concern-

Komitadjis were members of various rebel bands operating in the Balkans during the final period of the Ottoman Empire. The term is used here in a pejorative sense to denote those perceived as enemies of the Greek nation.

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ing the country's national interests, accusing those in power of an unpatriotic stance on the basis of a dominant discourse:

In this way [Foreign Minister Nikos Kotzias] did not support, protect or promote the national interests and did not, as he ostensibly sought and declared, make a mutually beneficial and equal compromise, but on the contrary, he fully accepted and conceded, unjustifiably and arbitrarily, all that the neighbouring country unilaterally sought. (Giannos, *Proto Thema*, 14 October 2018)

The construction of "national issues" sought to rally Greek society. However, as society was divided into supporters of the memorandums and those who stood against them (Daskalakis, 2014), this effort was expressed in negative terms, constructing a threat or an enemy. Thus, the media presented the Prespa Agreement and the refugee issue as matters of national importance and organised their representation around a discourse of scaremongering and concern for national identity and social cohesion:

Chyron: Greece is being invaded! The result will be colonisation [...]

There is a new **colonisation by Islamic fanatics** [22:21] (Kontra & Rixi, 7 November 2019)

Chyron: Crescendo of Macedonian ideology

Zaev's provocative propaganda ahead of the referendum on the Prespa Agreement. "**The Macedonian characteristics of the country are being established**," says the Skopjan PM [0:16] (Ant1 News, 30 August 2018)

The identification of the imaginary Greek nation with the geographically delimited Greek state creates antagonistic identities and relations, constituted on the basis of the superiority of the Greek race. The media reproduction of this stereotypical nationalist idea constructed "regimes" of threat and conflict with the ethnic Other. A stereotypically threatening setting was thus organised in which the friend-enemy distinction as the central idea of the Schmittian construct became the fundamental principle for the organisation of identities and relations. With the logic of exclusion, a strategically shaped discourse separated the othered *Skopjan neighbours* or *illegal immigrants* from their ethnic peers, attributing to them threatening and dangerous qualities for the national good through a pervasive symbolic violence (Richardson, 2004).

Chyron: The Ghetto beach of Omonia Square
If you think we're in Bangladesh, you're wrong! If you follow
me, you will see that we are in Geraniou Street, just a few meters from
the centre of Athens [35:36]. (Star News, 23 April 2015)

Chryon: Zaev: "I am Macedonian ... I speak Macedonian" And you now have the gentleman saying, "I am Macedonian, I speak Macedonian"; I'll be damned if he knows how to say "good morning" [in Greek] [4:02]. (Giorgos Aftias,⁶ on Kalimera, 17, February 2019)

Sometimes with fervour and other times with ostensible neutrality, the media framed neoconservative populist views, familiarising their audience with an accusatory and excoriating discourse targeting corrupt governments, the ultimate recipient of which was the very quality of democracy, while the moral panic they orchestrated emotionally oriented Greek society to the search for those responsible for its fragmentation and the collapse of the moral order, through the fomenting of mass nationalism. Using a simplistic and digestible way of telling the "truth", they sought easy, superficial and one-dimensional solutions to multidimensional issues, following the path of the far-right repertoire (Ellinas, 2010).

For what has happened in Greece during the recent years, starting with the plundering of Greece's wealth to bankruptcy since 2009, from Simitis' and Karamanlis' crooks to the memoranda, to the selling off of Macedonia, to the tampering with the referendum, to the non-existence of presidents of the republic to stop this downhill slide. There is only one answer: High treason, everyone [to be tried] for everything [they did], all for them for everything they did. To the courts! [2:35] (George Vlachos,⁷ on Anatreptiko Deltion, 11, June 2018)

The government Syriza-Anel changed the political situation of the country, while the mainstream media gave a platform to far right-wing voices that undertook, through a denunciatory speech with an ultranationalist tone, to identify the enemies of the nation. In this way, the boundary between the far-right and the "mainstream" media became more porous. Moreover, it

⁶ Giorgos Aftias is a journalist, anchorman and financial editor with Skai TV. In 2024, he was elected MEP for New Democracy.

⁷ Giorgos Vlachos is a journalist.

radicalised a large part of Greek society that had been affected by the fiscal crisis, providing it with ideas and symbols of great emotional power in order to defuse its antisystemic anger (Kaufman, 2001). This led to the strengthening of far-right nationalist ideology and the expansion of the possibilities for its diffusion and consolidation (Christopoulos, 2019).

It's not just their ideology. It's their human quality. **They're rogues, guys!** How can we put it, they are not consistent, they sell out their mother, let alone Macedonia [7:16]. (Konstantinos Bogdanos, referring to the Syriza government, on Atairiastoi, 21, January 2019)

And if they sign today, I will say it once and for all, they will be national traitors and nothing more. (Archbishop of Servia and Kozani)

The archbishop, **the very saint of Servia and Kozani**, cannot be any clearer [0:38] (D. Oikonomou, on Simera, 20, March 2018)

The production of an aggressive discourse by the far-right media, which reinforced feelings of anger and encouraged extreme practices, triggered tension, which shaped hostile attitudes while qualifying violent behaviour:

153 scoundrels on the gallows of treason. (Makeleio, 26 January 2019, front page)

The mainstream media's polemical and adversarial rhetoric followed the same course, intensifying social insecurity and anxiety and turning the bitterness of Greek society regarding the country's situation during the crisis into anger. At the same time, far-right perceptions of incompetence on the part of those in power and distrust of the forces of democracy were solidified:

They should tell us if they can protect Greece; otherwise, they are criminally irrelevant people and should get out of here immediately. (Themos Anastasiadis, *Proto Thema*, 14 November 2015)

By shaping the appropriate framework, the media contributed to the consolidation of the rhetoric on the delegitimisation of parliamentarianism,

⁸ Konstantinos Bogdanos is a journalist, poet and politician. In 2019 he was elected MP with New Democracy; he was expelled from its parliamentary group two years later.

which had already emerged at the beginning of the financial crisis, and to the breakdown of citizens' relationship with the political system (Charchalaki, 2019).

The absence of the state is conspicuous, and it is not only us who have been documenting it all this time who mention it, but also the residents themselves [24:46, reporter]. **The state has put up its hands** [25:00, resident] (Star News, 30 August 2015)

At a historical moment for the country, where "it seems impossible to alleviate political, social or economic misery in a manner worthy of man" (Arendt, 1951, p. 459), the ideal solution took on a nationalist connotation, with the need for social cleansing and the demand for national rebirth appearing as the only solution (Mann, 2004; Halikiopoulou & Vasilopoulou, 2015).

If all the citizens be united, with Golden Dawn at the forefront of this effort, the problems can be solved [33:24]. (Ilias Kasidiaris, on Star News, 25 August 2015)

Golden Dawn will be the next key opposition party within the Greek parliament, **the only national resistance against the sellout of Greece** [18:52]. (Ilias Kasidiaris, on Star News, 30 August 2015)

THE REPRESENTATION OF HISTORY

"DON'T FALSIFY HISTORY, THERE IS ONLY ONE MACEDONIA"

During the protest rallies organised around the country on the occasion of the conclusion of the Prespa Agreement between Greece and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (Fyrom) in June 2018 and its ratification by the Greek Parliament on 25 January 2019, the slogan "Don't falsify history, there is only one Macedonia" received a lot of media attention. However, which history was being falsified and how close is it to the history of the Balkan people? Which "Greek history" was threatened and how was it represented by the media?

With the demise of traditional empires and the emergence of new political entities, national identity offered the members of modern societies a sense of belonging, ensuring social cohesion through the creation of an "im-

⁹ Ilias Kasidiaris is a former MP who was among those convicted of creating and running the Golden Dawn criminal organisation. He later founded the party *Ellines gia tin Patrida* (*Greeks for the Homeland*).

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agined" community of the nation (Avdela, 1999, p. 32). The relevant literature on the phenomenon of nation-state formation conceives the nation as a "construct". In this reasoning, the Greek nation-state was formed within the historical conditions shaped by modernity in the wider region. The media representation of the nation fails to understand the nation as a social process and "construction" by systematically promoting a nationalist understanding of history, according to which Greece is endangered by neighbouring nations, which even usurp its name.

The dispute between Greece and Fyrom over symbols, names and cultural heritage had already begun in 1992, with the latter appropriating the Vergina Sun for its flag, a symbol found on King Philip's tomb and associated with the Macedonian dynasty (Zahariadis, 1994).

Headline:

The Vergina Sun: Why is it so important and why do all the barbarians want to steal it from us? (Makeleio, 19 January 2018)

The statue¹¹ will remain in its place as a sign of friendship [...] a sign will be placed at the base of the monument saying that it belongs to the ancient Hellenistic period and is part of the world's cultural heritage [5:46]. (Star News, 14 June 2018)

By adopting a nationalist reading of history and expressing an essentialist conception of the nation, the media reproduced the "myth" of the latter's historical continuity with the glorious past. Attempting to substantiate and establish the conception of Macedonia's Greekness and uniqueness, they linked it with antiquity. The themes of antiquity, the golden age, the superiority of national civilisation, the periods of the civilisation's decline and the national hero are key elements of the nationalist narrative (Özkırımlı, 2013). The linking of the new Greek state, which was established in 1833 (Kostis, 2013), with antiquity and especially with the geographical region and the name of Macedonia was a necessary condition serving the nationalist ideology of the "Great Idea" (Heraclides, 2019). This link is consistently repro-

¹⁰ The definition of the nation as an "imagined" community of people belongs to Benedict Anderson, according to whom the nation is "an imagined political community — and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign" (Anderson, 1997, p. 26).

¹¹ The statue of Alexander the Great, which is located on the central square of Skopje, the capital of North Macedonia.

¹² The "Great Idea" called for the liberation of areas where Greeks lived. From the first decades of Greek independence, nationalist ideology was identified with the binary "national state-irredentist Hellenism" (Dertilis, 2013, p. 355).

duced through the media, not only by those belonging to the far-right nationalist spectrum, but also by those that are considered "centrist" and "serious":

And yet, the scientifically unchallenged subject is delineated by three features only:

- 1. Ancient Macedonia is Greece and nothing else.
- 2. There are no international documents, treaties from antiquity to the present day which accept the alleged three Macedonias, ¹³ as some people inside and outside Greece propagate.
- 3. **Today's Fyrom**, the former Yugoslav Vardarska, brutally **stole the name of Macedonia of the Greeks under Tito.** (Romanos, Kathimerini, 29 March 2018)

The domestic press presented the association of Macedonia with antiquity in opposition to the historicity of the origins of the inhabitants-citizens of North Macedonia. Citing historical sources, the media informed the public that the appearance of Slavs in the region of Macedonia dates back to between the 6th and 7th centuries:

[King Basil I, founder of the Macedonian Dynasty,] **persuaded the Slavic nations to abandon their old customs** and taught them the Greek language, made them subjects of lords under Roman law, honoured them with his baptism, freed them from slavery to their own oppressors and trained them to campaign against the enemies of the Romans. (Stoukas, Proto Thema, 17 June 2018)

The issue of the name of the neighbouring country had been part of the debate on "national issues" since the 1990s (Skoulariki, 2007), and, as is the case with all "national issues", any disagreement is perceived as a "betrayal" (Karpozilos & Christopoulos, 2018). Seeking to present the Prespa Agreement as treacherous to the homeland, far-right media used an emotionally charged language aimed at fostering hatred, anger and fear of the other (Siapera & Papadopoulou, 2021), legitimising violent acts targeting those who supported it. The main recipient of the accusations of treason was the Syriza government and the MPs who supported it:

¹³ The Macedonian Question was the subject of a dispute between Greece, Bulgaria and Serbia in the mid-nineteenth century. Caught up in this conflict was a Slavic-speaking population. Most of this population became a new nation called Macedonia, which was not accepted by the other three countries (Heraclides, 2019, p. 11). Yugoslav Macedonia was called Vardar Macedonia (Danforth, 1999, p. 92).

The puppets of **collaborationism** handed over our Macedonia to the Albanian Slavs under the bogus name of North Macedonia [...] At eight meters like Beloyannis.¹⁴ (Makeleio, 13 June 2018, front page)

According to Özkırımlı (2013), part of the nationalist narrative is the presentation of the superiority of the national culture, a condition which in the case of the Greek media, both far-right and mainstream, was expressed through the promotion of the domestic culture as "superior" through the strategic devaluation of the Other and the representation of the North Macedonian nation as "non-existent". The refusal of the Greek side to recognise the language of the neighbouring country lies in the fact that the language is a constituent element of its identity. If the Greek side recognised the Macedonian language, it would also recognise the Macedonian nation (Karpozilos & Christopoulos, 2018).

If I am not afraid of Skopje, why don't I impose my will? If I am not afraid of Skopje and it is a powerless state, a fart I call it bluntly, a hybrid state, how can I lose my heritage, name, history and Macedonia? [11:43] (Velopoulos, on Kontra & Rixi, Kontra Channel, 22 January 2019)

Despite the given and indisputable fact that a Macedonian nation has never existed [...] nevertheless, there is an attempt, deliberately and hypocritically, to support a newly founded phony nation, language, history, culture and intransigent irredentism, using the geographical term Macedonia as a vehicle. (Spiliotopoulos, Proto Thema, 30 January 2018)

After the creation of Federal Yugoslavia, the political leadership worked to create a Macedonian national consciousness. **The first grammar of the "Slavo-Macedonian" language was published only in 1952.** (Iliadou-Tachou, Kathimerini, 18 August 2018)

Despite the fact that the role of organic intellectuals, 15 according to

¹⁴ Nikos Beloyiannis was a Greek national resistance (against Nazi occupation) leader and leading cadre of the Greek Communist Party. He was arrested on 20 December 1950 and was taken before a court-martial on charges of violating Compulsory Law 509/1947, which criminalized the Greek Communist Party. He was accused of treason, allegedly having transmitted information to the Soviet Union. Despite national and international outcry and calls for clemency, he was executed on 30 March 1952.

¹⁵ According to Gramsci, organic intellectuals play an important role in disseminating

Gramsci, is to disseminate in a covert way the desire of the rulers in order to gain the consent of the citizens, in the case of the Prespa Agreement, they acted in the opposite way. It was particularly striking that the mainstream media followed the same rhetoric as the far-right one on the issue of the name of North Macedonia:

Headline: **The truth** about our Macedonia

Skopje will never be accepted in the Greek popular consciousness with the name Macedonia, because our Macedonia has existed in the hearts of Greeks as an integral part of our national sovereignty for 2800 years. (Anthimos, Archbishop of Thessaloniki, *Kathimerini*, 12 August 2018)

A resounding "no" from thousands of people to the use of the term *Macedonia*, snapshots that stood out and the decisive intervention of Mikis Theodorakis¹⁶ [00:04]. (Ant1 News, 4 February 2018)

Since the 1990s, the public debate has focused on the claim for exclusive use of the name Macedonia and the culture associated with the region by the Greek state (Skoulariki, 2007). The position that Macedonia is "one and Greek only" has been propagated and reproduced not only by the media, but also through songs and marches, which were aired by TV news broadcasts. The song "Makedonia Ksakousti" [Renowned Macedonia] was broadcast at the beginning of SKAI's programme Kalimera on 26 January 2019, one day after the ratification of the Prespa Agreement by the Greek Parliament. One of the guests on the show was New Democracy deputy leader Adonis Georgiadis, 17 who claimed that Macedonia was Greek only:

The term geographical Macedonia is a Slavic invention and not a historical reality [...] The word Macedonia, the word Macedonian, no matter what decisions the Greek Parliament takes, and even if 140 countries, or

the beliefs of the ruling class and ideology, by gaining the consent of the citizens. They may include priests, academics, etc. (Smith, 2006).

Mikis Theodorakis was a world-known composer, lyricist and politician. He was associated with the Left and a Communist Party of Greece from 1981- 1990. However, he ran as an independent candidate within the centre-right New Democracy party in 1989, and he did take a vocal nationalist stance vis-à-vis the Macedonia name dispute and the Prespa Agreement.

¹⁷ Adonis Georgiadis has been deputy leader of New Democracy since January 2016 and was development and investment minister from 2019 to 2023. He is currently the Greek Minister of Health

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140 planets say so, it still remains a Greek word. (31:36) (Adonis Georgiadis, Kalimera, 26 January 2019)

The strong resistance of Greek society to accepting the use of the term "Macedonia" by the state of North Macedonia was expressed through rallies that took place across Greece both in the 1990s and in 2018–2019, which were covered by the entire press:

Chyron: Combative spirit, thousands of people in Syntagma Square

Hellenic Police estimate: 140,000 demonstrators in 50,000 square meters [4:38]. (Ant1 News, 4 February 2018).

Headline: Highlights from the rally for Macedonia: **All generations** were there! (Proto Thema, 4 February 2018)

In addition, the views and positions of important politicians of the 1990s were presented. In particular:

Konstantinos Karamanlis:¹⁸ "There is only one Macedonia and this Macedonia [in tears] is Greek." Andreas Papandreou:¹⁹ "People of Macedonia, it is your name they are trying to challenge. Our name is our soul" [00:57]. (Simera, 8 June 2018)

During the public debate on the Prespa Agreement, the media reproduced the voices of Golden Dawn MPs, presenting them as patriots and defenders of the Greek identity of Macedonia:

Tension was caused a while ago inside the parliament during the vote on the ratification of the Prespa Agreement, and more specifically, at the moment when the "returnee" [sic] Konstantinos Barbarousis was voting. **The Golden Dawn MP said**: "**No to treason.**" (Proto Thema, 25 January 2019)

The media, investing in the sensitivity of Greek society towards "national" issues, formed a framework for the representation of "reality", which was

¹⁸ Konstantinos Karamanlis (1907–1998) served as prime minister from 1956 to 1963 with the National Radical Union and from 1974 to 1980 with New Democracy. He served two terms as President of the Hellenic Republic.

Andreas Papandreou (1919–1996) was the founder of Panhellenic Socialist Movement (Pasok) and served as prime minister from 1981 to 1989 and from 1993 to 1996.

based on the use of "ethnocentric" stereotypes that are central to the value system of the new Far Right (Tsiras, 2012, p. 32).

THE MEDIA'S DISCOURSE ON THE "OTHER"

This section attempts to highlight the way in which the Greek media constructed and reproduced cultural otherness, adopting a rhetoric of hatred, which is a characteristic of far-right journalism. The language of hate is involved in the processes by which society perceives the "self" as male, Christian and ethnically pure (Siapera & Papadopoulou, 2021) and, in this context, otherness is perceived as a threat.

In each historical context, otherness is differentiated. In the 1990s, with the influx of immigrants from the former Eastern Bloc countries and, especially, from Albania, the threatening "foreigner" was the Albanian. Albanophobia was the social phenomenon of moral panic that manifested itself at that time (Karydis, 1995). Since 2015 there has been a shift in the subject of migration. The arrival of populations from war-torn countries in the Middle East (for example, from Syria) formed a new threatening otherness embodied in the person of the Muslim refugee-migrant.

When, in the 1990s, the Macedonian issue became a "national issue" in the country's political and social life (Heraclides, 2019, p. 13), the media cultivated a sense of panic using simplistic stereotypes. The use of the term "national issues" instead of "foreign policy" and the characterisation of North Macedonia as a "provocative small state" intensified the tension, thus deflecting attention from the inability of the Greek governments to manage this issue (Skoulariki, 2007).

The Macedonia name issue returned to the forefront in 2018, culminating in the signing of the Prespa Agreement. The opposition media, in their attempt to undermine the government's policy aimed at concluding an agreement with the neighbouring state, constructed otherness through the attribution of derogatory characterisations of both the people and the political leadership of the neighbouring country, presenting them as unreliable:

Headline:

They will go to bed as **Gypsy-Skopjans** and will wake up as Europeans. (Pollatos, *Proto Thema*, 8 June 2018)

Chyron:

They declare themselves Macedonians. Skopjan officials don't even keep up appearances [1:55]. (Ant1 News, 30 August 2018)

In Greece in 2015, both the media leaning politically and ideologically to the Far Right and the mainstream media widely used the pejorative term "illegal immigrant" ["lathrometanastis"] in their vocabulary. This neologism was first introduced in the 1990s, replacing the category of "foreigner" (Karydis. 2015).

Headline:

Chaos in Lesvos, with the repeated uprisings of **illegal immigrants** in Mytilini. Alarm on the island – What Golden Dawn says. (Makeleio, 21 July 2015).

These poor people who arrive on the islands under miserable conditions, even if they are really refugees [...] are still **illegal immigrants**. (Kasimatis, Kathimerini, 16 April 2015)

In the "discourse" of the media, Greece is presented as a country under siege and as an unprotected state. The "folk devils" take the form of refugees and migrants, causing "moral panic" in Greek society (Cohen, 1972).

Headline:

Shocking-news! **Illegal immigrants from 77 countries** who have nothing to do with the Syrian war **are storming into our country**! Dedicated to the traitors in Parliament who are fixated with illegal immigrants! (Makeleio, 28 February 2016)

Headline:

Guard Greece's borders or leave. (Themos Anastasiadis, *Proto Thema*, 14 November 2015)

The mainstream media during the "eruption" of the refugee crisis referred to "irregular" migrants and not "illegal immigrants". However, they underlined the size of the migrant-refugee flows, sometimes through the use of metaphorical language and sometimes by exaggerating the number of people entering the country. The use of the linguistic elements of metaphor and exaggeration helps to capture and represent "reality" through a different perspective (Tsakona, 2014).

Several migrant boats at the port of Piraeus today as well [2:13]. (Ant1 News, 21 April 2015)

The propaganda discourse of the media, which is situated between a pragmatic²⁰ and conceptual level,²¹ aimed to essentialize the objects – the people – to which they refer (Pleios, 2001). The attacks of "jihadists" on 11 September 2001 on the World Trade Center in the USA and the 7 January 2015 attack on the *Charlie Hebdo* magazine in Paris fuelled the debate on the "clash of civilisations", while Muslims were categorised as terrorists and were represented as such by the media:

Headline:

Dealing with **Islamic terrorism**. (Stagos, Kathimerini, 27 March 2016)

Chyron:

The terrorists of our times are Muslims [12:18]. (Velopoulos, on Kontra & Rixi, 7 November 2019)

In addition, the media reproduced the stereotype that migrants and refugees are transmitters of infectious diseases. Thus, by characterising them as "health bombs", the media cultivated a feeling of insecurity and a negative perception of the Other among citizens. In Nazi Germany, the Other was also portrayed as a transmitter of diseases: Jews were associated with syphilis and had spread it to America through emigration (Voglis, 2009).

My son, twenty policemen and port officers in Chios have contracted **tuberculosis**, what can I say to these people? [46:26] (Velopoulos, on Apokalyptiko Deltio, Extra Channel, 21 July 2015)

Headline:

Lesvos: residents denounce the "health bomb" of Moria's reception and identification centre. (Goulas, Proto Thema, 18 June 2020)

Chyron:

It's unknown where the thirty-five coronavirus-positive migrants are [3:15]. (Skai News, 9 September 2020)

Propaganda, combined with the constant influx of migrants, reinforced xenophobic and racist attitudes and behaviours. The political handling of the

²⁰ Pragmatic discourse is that type of discourse which records the fact itself, it is mainly scientific discourse which uses a strictly technical language (Pleios, 2001, p. 67).

²¹ Conceptual discourse is when the "speaker" represents an event, not attempting to record it as such, but to turn it into a vessel of meaning (Pleios, 2001, p. 82).

refugee/migration issue intensified the feeling that the "foreigner" had come to stay, increasing fear (Lialiouti et al., 2017). Based on the binary dichotomy of "us" and "Others", the self in these narratives, even in those of the mainstream media, is portrayed as hospitable, merciful and as giving towards the Other. In contrast, the Other is portrayed as ungrateful and barbaric:

There have been desecrations, there has been damage to many churches, not only in Moria [...] and we cannot understand how these people to whom we have offered hospitality [...] we have offered them everything imaginable [...] we have been treated in this way, that is their "thank you" [0:25]. (Kalimera Ellada, 10 February 2020)

A key component of the core of far-right ideology is the "nation"; the existence of multicultural societies is a threat to national integrity (Georgiadou, 2004). Through the constant repetition of the alleged erosion of culture by immigrants, fear of the agent of immigration is reinforced, causing "cultural panic" (Noble, 2012).

You can imagine the lives of today's children in the colourful multicultural puzzle that will only typically be labelled Greece. (Makeleio, 8 October 2019)

They are opening backdoors to constantly fill and alter our population [...] so instead of conducting pushbacks on illegal immigrants, they are conducting pushbacks on Greeks from Greece [11:15; 12:04]. (Velopoulos, on Kalimera Ellada, 27 February 2020)

On the occasion of the events on the Greco-Turkish border in Evros in early 2020, the migration issue was presented as an "asymmetrical threat" in the discourses of the far-right and mainstream media, legitimising the actions of the competent Greek authorities – army and police – for the securitisation of the borders (Kirtsoglou & Tsimouris, 2018).

Headline:

Government Council for Foreign Affairs and Defence: **Asymmetrical threat from Turkey – Border reinforcement, asylum suspended for one month.** (Proto Thema, 1 March 2020)

The policy of containment and deterrence with the substantial participation of Europe is an one-way street. (Stagos, *Kathimerini*, 5 March 2020)

Chyron: 96

Evros **on alert**: *Greece* **expands the** [**border**] **fence** and stops illegal migrants [0:07]. (Ekriktiko Deltio, 6 March 2020)

The media presentation of migration as a "manifold threat", on some occasions attributing to otherness the "label" of the criminal-terrorist and on Others of transmitter of "contamination", was a component in the construction of a "moral panic", resulting in the strengthening of fear and insecurity towards the subjects of migration (Karydis, 2015). The normalisation of far-right ideology and its legitimisation were expressed through attitudes and practices of the indigenous population that opposed either the establishment of refugee reception centres or the right of refugee children to access education:

Headline:

Riots, walkouts and referendums in schools over refugee children. (Michalaros, Proto Thema, 20 October 2016)

Headline:

Strong reactions to the refugee issue

On Sunday at noon, about **400 people**, **residents of Malakasa** and the surrounding areas, **tried to block the highway** calling for the **removal of migrants** who often cause trouble in the village. (Georgiopoulou, Kathimerini, 2 June 2020)

THE OTHER SIDE OF THE TRUTH

By overemphasising or silencing voices and idealising or demonising individuals or groups according to the interests they may serve or, conversely, threaten (Anonymous, 2021), mass media have the capacity to determine how the public thinks, learns and feels towards a specific issue (Lang & Lang, 1966, p. 468, as cited in McCombs & Shaw, 1972). Fear, insecurity and uncertainty, emotions in which we find the roots of ideological extremism (McGregor et al., 2013), combined with the adoption by a section of the media of a hostile attitude towards the policies of the Syriza-Anel government, which seemed to threaten Greek national identity and the territorial integrity of the Greek nation-state, formed the context in which a conspiracy-based and anti-government discourse was reproduced, thus reinforcing far-right radicalisation. It would appear that this discourse was not only able to fill an emotional void in Greek society, but it also gave its recipients the explanations they were looking for (Kossowska & Bukowski, 2015):

I ask myself the following question which makes not only me, but other people as well, make very strange associations. Very insidious associations [...] In any part of the Greek territory that is contested and greyed out²² by the Turks, we have new fire fronts all the time [9:49]. (Chios,²³ Ekriktiko Deltio, 28 February 2020)

Individual cases and groups of people were sometimes perceived as nationally dangerous and at other times as despicable. At the same time, the media took it on itself to claim the existence of shadowy decision-making centres and to target, through hate speech, those who "covet" the national well-being. After educating their audience in a national culture with shared attitudes, values and moral qualities, creating a unified "cognitive framework", they then managed to communicate hegemonic ideas and beliefs that were easily accepted (Giddens, 1997). The propaganda organised by the media around the settlement of the Macedonia name dispute undermined the legitimacy of the state and its institutions through the articulation of a public discourse and perception with ideas that devalued the institutions of democracy and questioned the principles and values of the Greek constitution. A project of national crisis was thus constructed that could only be resolved through the implementation of authoritarian measures, a logic similar to that of fascist regimes (Mosse, 1975).

All the parties of Parliament, all together, made a secret agreement, a conspiracy, and brought about this result [...] **They sold out our language**, **our culture**, **[our] Macedonia** [2:10] (Ekriktiko Deltio, 25 February 2019) http://www.tapolitika.gr/person_item.php?id=142&category=all&order_type=desc0

For this week, which will culminate, in my opinion, on Thursday, when the 154 Syriza-Anel MPs will raise their little hands, lined up, silent, unheard, like soldiers or rather like followers of a sect that is their parliamentary group [...] This week I expect everything [1:49]. (Aris Portosalte²⁴, Today, 11 June 2018)

Gray Zones is a unilateral term of Turkish foreign policy to describe waters and islets in the Aegean Sea where Turkey disputes the accepted sovereignty of Greece.

²³ Stefanos Chios is a Greek journalist, founder of the newspaper and webcast *Makeleio*. Since 2016 he has been working as a TV commentator with Art TV, through which he broadcasts his news reports.

Aris Portosalte is a Greek journalist at the Skai TV channel and was the executive director at the SKAI 100.3 radio station from 2007 to 2013.

"Revealing" news bulletins and reports with exclusive "documents" and information from unclassified secret journalistic sources "shed light" on the "truth", turning migrants into "illegal immigrants", Greece's geographical neighbours – with their "irredentist" motives and often "incompetent" and nationally dangerous politicians – into scapegoats, opening the door to farright populism and strengthening its political power (Vadhanavisala, 2020).

Dozens of **Turkish** volunteers in NGOs of unknown origin are on our islands at the moment and **are walking around with European passports**, mostly Dutch. Similarly, there are many Iraqis with Danish passports [26:50]. (Star News, 7 February 2020)

The migratory flows – anyone who doesn't notice this will be a hypocrite – are controlled in a certain way by Erdogan. Do you want to say by Turkey? By Turkey. Do you want to say by the "deep state"? By the "deep state". By the secret services? [4:00] (Konstantinos Bogdanos, appearing on Simera, 7 October 2019)

Misinformation can weaken the integrity of liberal democracies by disrupting the common narrative that unites their societies, through polarisation, tribalism and ultimately fragmentation (Boxell et al., 2017). The media spoke of underground deals, secret meetings and foreign decision-making centres that appeared to have the power to make malicious and unpopular decisions and actions (Sunstein, 2014).

Chvron:

Stealthily, without anyone knowing anything, the people's leader agreed with Zaev [8:16].

Chvron:

At the final stretch, **under the orders of the Americans and Germans**, they are selling off our Macedonia [13:50]. (Anatreptiko Deltio, 11 June 2018)

The Greek government and the foreign minister launched in November 2017, unexpectedly, senselessly and under obvious pressure from the international community, secret diplomatic negotiations. (Giannos, Proto Thema, 14 October 2018)

The future of the country seemed to be undermined in an organised way by institutional leaders and foreign powers, which reinforced the social disdain towards the state and its institutions, favouring the transmission of a message underlying the urgent need for the emergence of a powerful leader with a "sacred mission"; a leader, who would be able to lead the country to the top of Western civilisation, an idea that is at the core of fascist ideology (Halikiopoulou & Vasilopoulou, 2015).

The interest of the party has again become the driver. Of course, **Mr Tsipras is satisfied**. (Papadimitriou, *Kathimerini*, 19 June 2018)

The media's logic of organising and framing the news is linked to the attempt to achieve immediacy and emotional closeness with their audience through an ambivalent process. Through the dramatisation of the news, the presentation of "live" testimonies and explanations by "experts", they captured the interest of their audience, while simplified meanings, simplistic explanatory schemes and ideas – core elements of the appeal of far-right rhetoric – became the organisational and strategic components of the production of a "post truth", where facts have little impact on the formation of public opinion, as the boundary between truth and falsehood becomes increasingly porous and permeable. According to Pleios (2018), falsehood is a structural component of "news", as it is structured in the light of opinion and aims to reproduce, or challenge established stereotypes. Such risks are likely to preserve and reinforce moral panic in society (Garland, 2008).

Greece, therefore, is faced with what is **essentially a military operation by Turkey, an invasion of migrants and refugees** [20:34]. (Savvas Kalenderidis, military analyst, author, Ant1 News, 28 February 2020)

The provocative and aggressive media discourse fuelled feelings of hatred and cultivated logics of discrimination and exclusion among the public, while familiarising it with an ever-more intense "criticism of the corrupt governments" (Nagopoulos, 2019). This favoured the polarisation of Greek society, as it undermined the role of democratic institutions, thus contributing to the rise of far-right anti-democratic populism (Center for American Progress, 2018).

The communist bandits, in collaboration with the gypsies from Skopje, were bribed with a truckload of money for the falsification of our history. (Makeleio, front page, 8 June 2018)

They gave up Macedonia, they got a smidgeon of debt extension. (*Proto Thema*, front page, 24 June 2018)

With unfounded and often absurd claims, they reproduced conspiracy

myths, constructing an obscurantist way of thinking that undermined the quality of democracy, pointing out those who threatened the purity of the Greek "race" and culture and endangered the integrity of the Greek nation-state. This had the effect of deepening the gap between the Greek "people" and dangerous and utterly hostile Others and reinforcing racist, xenophobic and nationalist ideas (Wilson, 2019).

Chyron: NGOs believed to be behind riots

Experts on migration and security issues, and even ordinary residents of Lesvos, believe that **the riots** on the island were **instigated** [7:45] [...] **They seem to have been organised**. I believe, the **NGOs** make money [8:08, testimony of a Lesvos resident].

Chyron: It looks like a REDBLUE exercise scenario [8:44]

We saw **a group of migrants**, several thousand in number, moving in three different directions so that they could confront the police, **breaking up its forces and basically reducing its cohesion** [8:54]. (Alexandros Nicklan, security expert, on Star News, 4 February 2020)

The Greek media exploited the existing concern for national and social fragmentation – to which they had actively contributed – to consolidate a morbid panic about an "alienated" social reality, which led Greek society to its radicalisation towards the Far Right. The refugee/migration issue and the settlement of the Macedonia name dispute were ideal topics and gave the media the opportunity to satisfy their thirst for attracting audiences and increasing their profits, while the politics of fear they pursued mimicked the dominant strategy of the Far Right (Wodak, 2015).

CONCLUSION

This chapter has attempted to demonstrate the contribution of conventional or "mainstream" media to the far-right shift in Greek society, focusing on the period between 2015 and 2020. Employing the concept of moral panic, we examined the ethical and political framework through which an attempt was made to control the social uncertainty during the fiscal and socio-political crisis, the power relations that had already been formed since the collapse of the two-party system in Greece in 2012, and the tensions that culminated in 2015, with the passing of the third memorandum bill by the Syriza-Anel government. It was argued that the symbolic and actual conceptualisation of the Prespa Agreement, as well as the refugee/migration issue by the seem-

ingly neutral media, fed the social imaginary with meanings and stereotypes, which intensified anxiety and insecurity through cognitive schemas with nationalist and populist features and a phobic oppositional discourse quasi-identical with far-right ideology.

The study focused on mainstream television and print media, which make claims to ideological neutrality, and contrasted the discourse they used to describe the events regarding the Prespa Agreement and the refugee/migration issue with the discourse of far-right media. This allowed us to demonstrate, through a comparative analysis of media discourse, the mechanisms they used which contributed to the dissemination of messages about a "nation under threat" and the creation of scapegoats.

In particular, the analysis demonstrated that the discourse used by the conventional media was identified with the hate speech of the far-right media, favouring the expansion of the base of racism and xenophobia while contributing to the normalisation and naturalisation of forms of symbolic and physical violence and the diffusion of far-right ideology in a large part of Greek society.

About ten years after the entry of the far-right Golden Dawn into the Greek Parliament and only a few months after its condemnation as a criminal organisation, it seems that far-right ideology has crept into the normality of the Greek society. The retreat of liberal democracy and the cultivation of prejudices in a strategic and implicit way by the media throughout the crisis have activated negative suspensions that have established the vulnerability of democracy and the need for constant vigilance and a struggle to defend it.

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"Without an Army, There Is No Homeland": Far-right Rhetoric in the Military

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■ ABSTRACT

From the end of the 19th century until the fall of the Junta regime in 1974, the army, as an institution inextricably linked to the Greek institutional reality, functioned as a mechanism that contributed to the production, consolidation and reproduction of the dominant state ideology, operating, among others, as a central pillar of state power. In particular, from 1949 onwards, the army was established in the collective unconscious of the Greek people as the winner of the ideological and political conflict of the civil war, as the main exponent of the "ideology of national mindedness" (εθνικοφροσύνη) and as the institution responsible for its preservation and reproduction. With the advent of the crisis during the last decade, the ideological, social, political and economic context of Greek society has changed, through transformations that are also reflected in the military and, by extension, in their members' perceptions on key social issues. More precisely, the members of the military experience the changes brought about by globalisation, the economic crisis, the recognition and acceptance of identities beyond the national one as a form of moral disintegration. The perception of themselves as the protectors of the nation, combined with the experiencing of social change as a crisis of values, has made far-right rhetoric easily acceptable and integrable. This chapter makes an attempt to document and analyse the discourses developed by military officers since 2010, during the period of crisis in Greece. In particular, the chapter bases its analysis on the unofficial dis-

¹ Before 1949 (that is, the end of the Civil War in Greece), the ideology of "national mindedness" refers to the development of a bourgeois class consciousness, to social conservatism and to anticommunism. After 1949, this ideological scheme is mainly constructed around the exclusion of communists from the ideological body of the nation. During the military junta (1967-1974) faith in the military governance is also added to the ideological "construction of "national mindedness" (Papadimitriou D, 2006). The equivalent in the international context can be found in the anti-communist discourse during the Cold War which saw communists as the ultimate Others and as enemies of the nation par excellence.

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courses of military staff, as collected through semi-structured in-depth interviews, questionnaires, research on military-themed websites, broadcasts and newspapers, which reflect and shape the views of specific audiences, and often deviate from the official institutional and public discourse. These discourses exhibit continuities and discontinuities over time, while demonstrating their affinity with structural homologies of the contemporary Far Right, such as nationalism, the uniqueness of the nation, otherness, irrationality and conspiracy theories. Through the analysis of these discourses, the chapter shows that far-right ideology circulates, is embodied and is reproduced through the institution of the military.

Keywords: army, military officers, ideology, right-wing discourse, nationalism, nationalism, Otherness.

■ INTRODUCTION

The decade of crisis led to the radicalisation of Greek society, both towards the left and towards the right. Electoral data shows that the shift to the left was expressed by the electoral victory of Syriza in 2015 and the shift to the right through the rise and establishment of the neo-Nazi organisation Golden Dawn as a political force. The latter was demonstrated also through the rise and election into the Greek parliament of parties belonging to the political space of the post-fascist Far Right (Popular Orthodox Rally [Laos], Greek Solution) and the populist right (Independent Greeks [Anel]). Our working hypothesis is that despite the unanimous renunciation of the actions of Golden Dawn and its condemnation as a criminal organisation, the group's ideas and rhetoric have not been substantially delegitimised. Moreover, no longer being the monopoly of an "extreme" party, far right-wing discourses have been diffused and legitimised in the public sphere.

Any study on the adoption of far-right rhetoric expressed by the very subjects who staff what are often seen as the backbone institutions of so-called institutional patriotism - a term that functions metaphorically as an accepted and refined version of the Far Right – would be incomplete without an examination of military's officers' discourse, as subjects of a space marked by intense ideological, political and symbolic traits, as will be analysed below. The aim of this chapter is to examine the ways in which military officers incorporate, recycle, reconstruct and express far-right rhetoric and discourses, on the one hand, as members of a society that seems to be turning to conservativism, and, on the other, as members of the military institution. Regarding the second interconnection – and although the relationship be-

tween the military and the Far Right has been analysed by other researchers (Christopoulos, 2014) – the chapter focuses mainly on the discourse and social perceptions of the subjects, rather than on the institution itself.

Thus, the study of the discourses of military officers in an environment of national and transnational crisis is crucial for a better understanding of the normalisation of far-right rhetoric. In this chapter, after referring to the existing literature regarding the military, a brief periodisation will be attempted in order to highlight the history of the army in Greece, a move which can contribute to understanding its present condition as well. Then, the discourses and rhetoric of military officers will be analysed, and the conclusions of the research will be presented regarding the causes of the reproduction and dissemination of such discourses and the ways in which they intertwine with far-right rhetoric and, thus, normalise it.

METHODOLOGY

This research used, among other things, semi-structured, in-depth interviews with officers, both male and female, of all ranks, officers and non-commissioned officers, of all three branches (Navy, Army, Air Force) of the military, without, however, analysing their particular characteristics. As the kev aim was to explore the ways with which the subjects themselves incorporate and reproduce aspects of far-right discourse, the interviews focused on the subjects' perceptions of a range of relevant social issues. Thus, this research is informed by the Weberian approach of interpretive sociology (Fulbrook, 1978). This approach was considered as the most appropriate for understanding "bottom-up" perceptions and exploring the informal discourse of a significant institution of Greek society. The primary material consists of fourteen individual interviews and one focus group with four interviewees. Interviewees were selected through the snowball sampling method due to the difficulty of contacting military officers. The crucial contribution of a member of our research team who holds the dual status of researcher and military officer ensured a greater willingness and openness on the part of the interviewees as to the aims of the research. Suspicion, reluctance to expose themselves and the fear among active officers to talk openly about political and social issues were the central difficulties faced in collecting the primary material. At the same time, the Covid-19 pandemic presented further challenges which led us to conduct more than half of the interviews electronically, via Skype. Drawing insights from key questions posed by Fassin and Becker regarding "whose side are we on?" (Becker, 1967), but also considering issues related to research ethics and deontology, we tried to cope with

the difficulties that arose given that the research object is *a priori* negatively charged, by ourselves and society at large. In our research, we tried to understand the ways in which far-right discourse is produced and reproduced, and its identification with the perceptions it promotes, through our encounter with our own "Other", namely the military officers. To protect the interviewees, anonymity and confidentiality were ensured, and all participants were made aware of the research protocol in order to obtain their consent.

THE MILITARY IN SOCIAL SCIENCE LITERATURE

In attempting to study the main lines of research of the existing literature on the association of the military with the Far Right, we identified a gap in the literature regarding the topic. The literature regarding the role of the army in Greek society can be schematically divided into two categories, one sociological and one historical, which entails that the epistemological starting points for each of them is necessarily different.

With regard to the first category, in some of the first important relevant studies, that is John Johnson's edited volume, *The role of the military in under-developed countries*, Lucian W. Pye (1962) and Manfred Halpern (1962) presented the military as an agent of modernisation. While these studies were published in Greece in 1971, they do not focus on the Greek case. However, George Kourvetaris' (1969) doctoral thesis, *The Contemporary Army Officer Corps in Greece: An Inquiry into its Professionalism and Interventionalism*, which also follows the same line of thought, treats the Greek military as an agent of modernisation. James Brown's (1974) study The Military Society in Greece also adopts a sociological perspective, without, however, examining what happened during the post-coup period.

Constantine Danopoulos's (1984) Warriors and Politicians in Modern Greece focuses on the role of the military in the postwar political scene, shifts the attention to the pursuit of professional and corporate interests when it comes to the army's involvement and the intervention in political events, which is far from the focus on the subjective perceptions of the social actors themselves. From a different perspective, Dimitris Charalambis (1985) in Army and Political Power. The Structure of Power in Post-Civil War Greece places the military within the wider political context and attempts a Marxist analysis which makes politics dependent on class, thus arguing that the activation of the military apparatus within the context of the bourgeois state of emergency was unavoidable (see also Veremis, 1985). Spyros Sakellaropoulos (1998) in The Causes of the April Coup, 1949-1967: The Social Context of the March Towards Dictatorship offers a similar analysis and interpretation,

arguing that the Colonels' dictatorship was the result of the reaction of the ruling class and the army to the radicalisation of society and its opposition to a regime "based both on the highly unequal distribution of wealth and on the institutionalisation of a legal framework (the state of the nationally-minded people), characterised by the strong presence of institutional and extra-institutional repressive apparatuses" (p, 24). Again, both of these studies do not focus on the way in which the military personnel perceived the historical processes in which they themselves were key figures.

In another historical-sociological analysis, Nikos Mouzelis in *Modern Greek Society: Facets of Underdevelopment* (1978) and in *Politics in the Semi-periphery: Early Parliamentarism and Late Industrialisation in the Balkans and Latin America* (1987) examines the relationship between early parliamentarism and late industrialisation in Greece, arguing that the transition to bourgeois democracy and to forms of wider political participation took place through the expansion of political patronage networks.

In both these works Mouzelis also refers to the triangular power structure in the post-civil war period (army-monarchy-government) and identifies the army as the central pillar of this structure. In examining the Colonels' coup d'état in 1967, he considers that the causes for the imposition of the dictatorship were initiated by the agents of patronage. However, these studies do not examine the relationship between the military and the post-junta Far Right, let alone the way in which the military perceived the shifts that occurred in the period following the collapse of the authoritarian regime.

Rejecting the structuralist approaches to the role of the military and employing an epistemology deriving from rational choice theory, Yaprak Gürsoy (2017) in *Between Military Rule and Democracy: Regime Consolidation in Greece, Turkey, and Beyond* offers an extremely interesting analysis with regards to military interventionism which argues that officers, politicians and businessmen prefer democracy, authoritarianism or short-lived coups, depending on the degree of threat they feel that their interests face from each other as well as from the lower classes. The power of the elites in relation to the opposition, which is partly determined by the coalitions they form among themselves, plays a role in the success of military interventions and the stability of regimes. This study, however, despite its focus on the way subjects perceive historical shifts, ends the analysis of the phenomenon with the fall of the Colonels' regime.

Turning to the research originating in the field of history, Thanos Veremis (2000) in *The Army in Greek Politics* also starts from the most recent dictatorship in modern Greek history, the 1967–1974 Colonels' junta, examining the history of military interventionism in Greek political life. He notes

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an increase in the frequency of military interventions from 1922 to 1936, which he links to the weakening of parliamentarianism in Europe in general. He concludes, however, that in all cases, with the exception of 1967-1974 (but nonetheless including the Metaxas dictatorship of 1936-1941), the military played the role of regulator, while its interventions aimed at replacing the political fraction that held power rather than a full takeover by the army itself. The study lacks generalisations and clear epistemological preferences, insofar as it relies on the tools of traditional historiography.

Victor Papakosmas also addressed military intervention in the political sphere in his study *The Army in the Political Life of Greece: The Coup of 1909 and Its Effects to the Present* (1981), in which he examines the military coup of 1909 and its effects on subsequent developments of Greece. The "revolution" of 1909 was widely accepted both by conservatives who emphasize the contribution of the Military League in the preparation for the victorious operations of the Balkan Wars of 1912-1913, and by liberals who point to the social and economic developments as a result of the rise to power of Eleftherios Venizelos. It offers an account of the political, social and economic realities of the time as well as the organization of the military and concludes that the intervention of 1909 was ultimately not a "revolution", since it did not bring about any substantial change in the structure of power in Greece. This study, however, mainly examines the outcome of the events of the 1909 military coup, with little reference to the political developments of the following decades and the role of the army in these.

The only example in the Greek literature directly related to the research interests of the present work is Dimitris Christopoulos' (2014) edited volume, Mapping Ultra-Right Extremism, Xenophobia and Racism within the Greek State Apparatus. The contributors - Christopoulos, Dimitris Kousouris, Clio Papapantoleon, Demosthenis Papadatos-Anagnostopoulos and Alexandros Sakellariou – attempt to link the four state institutions under examination - the police, the judiciary, the army and the church, respectively - with extremely conservative power apparatuses and their relationship with farright elements, whose political lineage goes back to the Nazi collaborators, who escaped punishment and went on to become the pillars of the post-civil war state. In particular, Papadatos-Anagnostopoulos in his chapter on the army attributes the rise of the Far Right and the neo-Nazi Golden Dawn mainly to the radicalisation of the right and its constant presence within the state apparatus. The author argues that the state is charged with the implementation of a programme of "creative destruction" in order to subjugate the power of labour. The implementation of this programme requires the fragmentation of the social body and its nationalisation/homogenisation. In the nationalisation process, the army plays a crucial role, being the agent that has articulated the hegemonic nationalist ideology over time. It seeks to "identify the currents that connect the military with a process of reversal of the democratization process during the post-coup period – a reversal that, in conditions of crisis and extensive 'creative destruction', takes on fascist features" (2014, 79). In this study, too, however, the views and perceptions of the military personnel vis-à-vis the issues discussed are not addressed.

In the course of the literature review, we were constantly contemplating on the reasons for the absence of studies regarding the relationship between army officers and the military in general with the Far Right, when the army and its officers are a target group of voters for the parties and formations of the conservative/right-wing political spectrum and especially its post-fascist and ultranationalist variations.² We came to a twofold conclusion, the first part of which concerns the military personnel as the subjects of the research and the second part the researchers themselves.

It is a fact that the army is an extremely insular, impermeable and therefore uncharted social and professional entity. This is primarily due to the difficulty researchers have in permeating and penetrating the "barriers" around the institution, as well as the reluctance of officers to talk openly about social or political issues, especially to people who they have not known for a long time. This reluctance is the result of both the constitutional requirement of Article 29, paragraph 3, which prohibits "Manifestations of any nature whatsoever in favour of or against a political party ... by those serving in the military", and the officers' reluctance to engage in such discussions, which lie outside their professional remit and may expose and reveal their personal positions and perceptions. In addition, the researchers themselves approach the military as a single, monolithic social space and the officers as undifferentiated in their perceptions. Therefore, the research engagement with the institution is limited to macro-analysis and the collection of information, either from retired military officers or from printed content and websites of "military" interest.

The opportunity we had to engage with active officers at all levels of the hierarchy and all branches of the military offered access to a discourse that is the product of an unmediated documentation of the will and beliefs of the

² It is well known that the parties of the nationalist and populist right attempt to monopolise and appropriate every event that takes place to commemorate instances of military collective memory, such as the annual event to honour the memory of the crew of the Navy helicopter which crashed on 31 January 1996 during the operations of the major incident between Greece and Turkey known as the "Imia Crisis"; ditto with the annual commemoration event for the military operation in Vitsi and Grammos, which was the decisive episode for the outcome of the civil war and the victory of the National Army.

subjects. With our contribution, as reflected in this chapter, we believe that, in this way, we offer a new methodological approach and perspective to the presentation of the perceptions prevailing within the structure of the military, bridging the existing literature with the social and political reality expressed "from below" through the analysis of the discourse of military officers.

HISTORICAL REVIEW OF THE ROLE OF THE ARMY IN GREECE

In order to understand the cultural determinants of the army's ideas, we must look back at the history of the Greek army and the conditions of its formation, in order to identify its continuities and discontinuities, since the end of the nineteenth century, when its organisation was systematised. Thus, through the historical study of the role that army played, as well as its relationship with political power and society, it is possible to observe continuities and discontinuities in terms of nationalism, as well as the normalisation of far right-wing ideas and discourses, often expressed under the ideological umbrella of "patriotism". By periodising contemporary Greek history in order to identify these intersections, one could argue that the era was marked by the following six turning points: (1) The reconstruction of the army from the defeat of 1897 until the Balkan wars; (2) the interwar period and the tensions between the military and the Greek political system (3) the civil war and the post-civil war condition; (4) the seven-year military dictatorship of 1967–1974; (4) the post-junta period and the restoration of democracy; (6) the period of crisis, since 2010.

THE PERIOD UP TO THE POST-JUNTA PERIOD

From the end of the nineteenth century in particular, politics and the military in Greece began to consolidate around stable features associated with what has been defined as national and state integration. The reforms promoted by the government of Charilaos Trikoupis were radical, since, as Kostis (2013, p. 490) remarks, "it was about to radically change the nature of the Greek state and lead it to a new reality: the national state". In the context of these reforms, important attempts were made to reconstruct and organise the army in order to modernise it and make it capable of coming to terms with the new conditions. After the defeat of 1897 in the Greco-Turkish War, the army continued to be successfully reshaped; indeed, by the end of the Balkan wars "the army had emerged as the pre-eminent national force, which had succeeded in bringing Greece close to the realisation of its irredentist dreams" (2013, p. 598). However, with the end of the Balkan Wars and the

country's entry into World War I, the great conflict between the Germanophile King Constantine I, who supported the country's neutrality, and Prime Minister Eleftherios Venizelos, who supported the country's entry into the war alongside the Entente, took place. This conflict, which was known as the National Schism, involved the biggest part of the Greek society, assuming the dimensions of a civil war. In several phases from this point onwards and throughout the interwar period, the army became relatively autonomous from political power, playing a decisive role in the political affairs of the country, a fact that is illustrated by the successive military coups as well as by General Pangalos' dictatorship of 1924-1925 and the dictatorship of Ioannis Metaxas, who seized power in 1936 in agreement with King George II.

The interwar period was followed by the Nazi occupation, the national resistance and the civil war, historical processes determined by both international political developments and the internal political dynamics of the country, which in turn would forge the political and social physiognomy of the country in the following decades. With the end of the civil war and the defeat of the communist side, Greece transitioned into the post-civil war, Cold War state, which included several facets of "anti-communist" ideology (Sakellaropoulos, 2011) and "Greek-Christian national mindedness" (Nikolakopoulos, 2001). The army, as the guarantor of the country's security, fully embodied this dominant ideology. Communism, which had always been treated with hostility by the state, became the main enemy of the country and the army in the postwar period, which formed its ideological identity in opposition to a perceived as hostile and antithetical Other.

In the social sphere, the military personnel constituted a social elite, which enjoyed special privileges during the seven-year Colonels' dictatorship (Tyrovouzis, 2001). Nepotism was the key process through which professional upward mobility was achieved, and thus many sons of military men followed the profession of their fathers. Thus, the institution of the traditional family continued to remain important in this particular professional path, while under law military officers were entitled to a marriage dowry.

The great social and political mobilisations from 1960 to 1967 led a small military group to implement what had been planned since the 1940s, namely the seizure of political power (Sakellaropoulos, 2011). The military junta of Colonel Georgios Papadopoulos overthrew the parliamentary political system on 21 April 1967 and imposed a dictatorship. Papadopoulos "represented more than anyone else the groups that had rallied around anti-communism" (Kostis, 2013, p. 776).

However, the dictatorship, after its failed attempts to present a more popular face, combined with the failed coup of junta member Dimitrios Io-

annidis to overthrow the Cypriot president Archbishop Makarios in July 1974, collapsed.

THE POST-JUNTA PERIOD

The events in Cyprus demonstrated clearly that democracy had to be restored immediately. The government of national unity, established on 24 July 1974 under Konstantinos Karamanlis, undertook the transition to democracy. An extremely important factor for the transition to democracy was the management of the army's image by the new government. Excluded from an amnesty, the initial perpetrators of the coup were tried and convicted, and "the dictatorship was presented, be it rightly or wrongly, as being based on a group of officers rather than a movement based on the army hierarchy, so that the latter was not necessarily held collectively responsible for the national catastrophe in Cyprus" (Kostis, 2013, p. 800). It is obvious, therefore, that the beginning of the post-junta period meant a radically different situation for Greece and for the army.

This was the effect of mainly two factors. First, because of internal developments in the country but also because of international developments, that is the relative decline in the intensity of the of the Cold War, the belief in the threat of communism declined. Second, with the transition to democracy, the new Constitution of 1975 and the country's "march towards Europe", the military's intervention in the political life of the country ceased, as political normalcy was restored, without the participation of the monarchy and the army (Sakellaropoulos, 2001). In addition, "the restoration of parliamentarianism blew the whole post-civil war structure apart, which was based on the role of the military as guarantor of "national mindedness". Thus, the military was marginalised as a necessary act in restoring political normalcy" (Psyllas, 2008, p.11). In 1983, admission to military schools started to go through the process of the Greek University entrance exams, thus creating a system where the selection of cadets was based on meritocracy, in which all males, without exception, would have the right to participate. Gradually, from 1991 women began to be admitted to military schools, initially to the "professional" officer schools, while since 2002 they can be admitted to all "combat" military schools.

The army, of course, continues to play the role of the guardian and protector of the nation, but the term "national mindedness" now has a negative connotation, and the national narrative has been redefined in the light of the advent of a globalised society. Particularly with the rise of Pasok to power in 1981, hegemony shifted from right to the left and symbolism changed at all levels. In other words, a huge ideological break took place. Social percep-

tions and popular representations of army officers has undergone changes following this shift. First, the social body now includes civilians who were persecuted by the military junta. The new electorate that was formed voted based on the left-right opposition (Kostis, 2013, p. 810). Second, the systematic control exercised by the Pasok government over the entire public sector, the party's penetration of the state (Kostis, 2013, p. 813) and the general culture it created, as well as the impossibility for the military to continue to intervene in political life, created an environment in which the military, which until a few years previously formed a very powerful elite, was reshaped as a public service. The power of the military as a traditional elite remains, of course, but it has diminished. This social shift in the representation of the military is significant. This is important as it formed the context of the intensely "silent" 1990s, as well as of the first decade of the twenty-first century and up to the break out of the economic crisis in 2010, and as it may shed some light to the popularity of anti-systemic or even far-right discourses in the military personnel.

With the "Imia Crisis" (see note 2) in 1996, a landmark year in the modern history of the military, many media discourses further escalated the tension, created confusion and reinforced views about the perceived necessity of military action (Mastrogeorgiou, 2007).

The twenty-first century started with events that came to redefine the narrative on the nation. In the early 2000s, an intense church-state conflict began over the issue of the inclusion of religious affiliation on new identity cards. Euroscepticism emerged, old contradictions in the national imaginary were "awakened", with "the West" and globalisation analysed in religious and nationalist terms (Sakellariou, 2014). In 2001, an important event with a global impact, the terrorist attack on the Twin Towers, gave birth to a new rhetoric, one of securitisation, in which Muslims are portrayed as the absolute Other.

In the domestic political sphere, the murder of Alexis Grigoropoulos by a policeman in the ideologically charged area of Exarchia in Athens in 2008 stirred up a storm of reaction and a wave of unprecedented unrest. In many military camps in Attica and other large urban centres, military personnel and soldiers were instructed to avoid wearing military clothing when leaving camp, as the uniform was a symbol ideologically charged for a certain part of the Greek society and could be "provocative".

FROM THE BEGINNING OF THE FINANCIAL CRISIS TO THE PRESENT

Greece's entry into the International Monetary Fund's support mechanism essentially marked the end of the post-junta era and the beginning of the period of economic crisis. The passage of the memoranda of understanding

with the "institutions" (Eurogroup, ECB, IMF) through the Greek parliament and the austerity measures resulted in many waves of protest. At the same time, however, in the context of the anti-memoranda discourse and the condemnation of the parties in power which led the country to the brink of economic disaster, there was a noticeable rise in anti-systemicism, Euroscepticism, populism and the Far Right (Stasinou, 2020).

Military officers, like many other civil servant groups, took a big financial hit, with their salaries being cut by up to 50 percent, while the general economic situation made their everyday working conditions more difficult. The rumours of a possible coup and the demobilisation of several generals in 2011 (Papadopoulos, 2012), combined with a frenzy of anti-memoranda and anti-systemic discourses in several military-themed magazines and websites, created an explosive mixture.

Under the Syriza-Anel coalition government, the refugee-migration crisis reached its peak. The army was asked to take over a large part of the rehabilitation and management of refugees and migrants, with the construction and support of the first reception structures. This assigned task created a moral panic in the public discourse on whether the military should be involved in the hotspots. Many military-themed news sites viewed the military's involvement in the migration issue negatively, considering it was not within the scope of its responsibilities. However, there were also many criticisms that reproduced far-right tropes, decrying the decisions of the political authorities to turn the military into "servants of illegal immigrants" (Xiras, 2019).

In February 2020, and the gradual spread of the Covid-19 pandemic, the army undertook the task of preventing the influx of migrants on the Evros border, an event that garnered widespread publicity, since it was also reproduced by many European media. In Greece, the handling of the issue was perceived positively, in the context of a growing rhetoric of securitisation.

DISCOURSES OF MILITARY OFFICERS

The section focuses on the analytical categories derived from the discourses of the subjects themselves based on the interviews they provided us. In the semi-structured, in-depth interviews, interviewees were asked to position themselves on key ideological motifs around which the discourse of the Greek Far Right is constituted, and to give their personal views. On the one hand, the analytical categories that emerged can often be identified with the official discourse of the military, the official military press, newspapers of retired officers, news websites and military broadcasts. On the other hand, we believe that these perceptions, although they may be key facets of the

ideological constitution of the military, are in constant interaction with social reality and, by extension, with the ideological shifts that occurred in Greek society. Finally, the way in which the analytical categories are decoded demonstrates the ways in which far-right discourses and rhetoric are diffused, incorporated and reproduced by military personnel, substantiating ideological identifications and affinities between the discourse of the subjects under examination and the Far Right.

"IF WE WERE SWITZERLAND...": THE SUBSTANTIATION OF GREEK PECULIARITY

One of the central issues discussed both in public discourse and within the military is the conscription of men in Greece. On this issue, Greece seems to differentiate itself from the majority of European countries that have favoured a purely professional model with voluntary conscription since the late 1990s.³ Most of the interviewees acknowledge the greater effectiveness of a professional model, but maintain objections to its complete abolition – with 90% in favour of conscription and 72.5% in favour of increasing it due to Greece's particular geopolitical position.⁴

The irrational reduction of the term of service and its replacement by the equally irrational recruitment of permanent soldiers in the military, in a country like our homeland, which is directly or indirectly facing territorial claims by neighbouring states... (Ethniki Icho, 2021)

This Greek peculiarity is substantiated in various ways: population decline and therefore understaffing of the military, a geopolitically and geographically advantageous position and a poor relationship with neighbouring countries. This last factor is the most crucial. The unfriendly relations with neighbouring countries, and especially with Turkey – the so-called "bad neighbour" – are perceived as forcing Greece to face a constant threat, making the presence of the military necessary to ensure the territorial and national integrity in an armed conflict scenario:

Therefore, national defence, the army, is something necessary. Since we also have a neighbour who is a peculiar one. Switzerland, for instance ... (G. T., Navy)

Our homeland's position does not allow us to be relaxed. If we were Swit-

This transformation is called total professionalisation. See, Irondelle (2011).

⁴ The survey, which was carried out as part of this research, is included as an annex in this volume. All percentages used in this chapter are drawn from the aforementioned survey.

zerland, let's say, we wouldn't have such problems, but now we face threats on all borders. (P. S., Navy)

This existing concern about Greek-Turkish relations has intensified, in the eyes of the interviewees, in recent years due to the refugee crisis, which was also perceived as a national threat based on a series of explanations, such as population decline, the economic burden on the country and the perceived connection of migration with crime (87.5%) as well as their perception as a hybrid threat that is magnified by cultural and religious differences. Thus, refugees and migrants are perceived as the threatening Other.

Greece's peculiarity, then, is based on its geographical position, on its geopolitical relations with its neighbours and especially with Turkey, but not only. The 2018 Prespa Agreement⁵ confirmed for many the national threat and the expansionist tendencies of the neighbours:

Along with the name, the Skopjans have acquired rights that will backfire on us. From their rights in the Aegean to I don't know what. (A. N., Navy)

Similar views are expressed in the military press:

There is one and only National Demand on behalf of the great mobilisation: may the rulers in charge not dare to sell off the name of MACEDONIA. EAAS actively contributed to the success [of these mobilisations]. (Ethniki Icho, 2018)

There is only ONE MACEDONIA and it is GREEK. (Ethniki Icho,2018) According to the results of our questionnaire, 72.5% of the military personnel believe that the country is under invasion, while 82.5% agree with

The Prespa Agreement, signed on June 12, 2018, resolved a long-standing dispute between Greece and Macedonia over the latter's name. Under this agreement, The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia agreed to change its name to the Republic of North Macedonia, both domestically and internationally. This change was a significant step towards resolving tensions that had persisted since North Macedonia's independence from Yugoslavia in 1991, as Greece had objected to the use of the name "Macedonia", since this was considered part of its own historical heritage. In exchange for the name change, Greece agreed not to block North Macedonia's applications to join international organizations such as NATO and the European Union. The agreement also specified that the official language of North Macedonia would be "the Macedonian language", and the nationality of its citizens would be "Macedonian/citizen of the Republic of North Macedonia". It acknowledged that the terms "Macedonia" and "Macedonian" would refer to different histories and cultures in each country. The agreement was ratified by both countries' parliaments in January 2019, despite domestic opposition, and North Macedonia's name change was officially promulgated on February 12, 2019.

the phrase "we used to sleep with open doors".⁶ These feelings of constant danger and insecurity, on the one hand, makes – in their view - compulsory military service necessary and, on the other, demonstrates the importance of the military for national security.

WITHOUT AN ARMY, THERE IS NO HOMELAND

A view, then, that recurs strongly in the discourse of the military officers starts to make sense, given what is discussed above: the irrevocable importance of the army for the existence of the nation. The army as an institution and its members are perceived as the guardians of the nation and the main pillars of its protection. Moreover, as many of the interviewees argued, "without an army, there is no homeland":

And the army separates⁷the preservation of ideas and democracy in Greece. (G. T., Navy)

It is a vocation. Especially for our country, because all countries are not the same and, of course, the latest developments in recent years confirm what I will say, namely, that without the military there would be no nation, no state at all. (L. M., Air Force)

This phrase, first, confirms on the level of national imaginary the identification of the territorial boundaries of the country with the "essence" of the country itself, reinforcing the vision of "one state, one nation". By conceiving the "homeland" through its geographical delimitation – which requires its defence by the military – the interviewees consequently foster popularised nationalist notions of what defines Greekness and Greece. At the same time, the perception of the army as crucial to national security, and therefore closely linked to national "essence", reveals a peculiarity in the perception of the army as a profession: The military is not perceived as just

The phrase "we used to sleep with open doors" is often used to evoke a sense of nostalgia and to convey the idea that there was a time when people felt safer in their communities. It refers to a past era when trust among neighbours was perceived to be stronger and crime rates were perceived to be lower. This expression can reflect changes in societal attitudes towards safety and security over time, highlighting a contrast between past and present perceptions of community and trust. The phrase is also used in reference to the false security constructed during the military junta of 1967-1974.

⁷ The word "separate" is used here to indicate that the role of the army is not to intervene in the internal affairs of the state and/or the government but rather to safeguard the foundations of democracy. This separation of powers is meant to prevent the repetition of historical occurrences where the army overtook government.

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another profession, but as a vocation of the highest importance and honour.⁸ Although a large proportion of the interviewees highlight the professionalism and the technocratic nature of the profession, they do not disassociate the army from the notion of a vocation, considering it to be strongly differentiated from other professions. These differences concern both the nature of the profession itself and the traits that characterise the ideal of the military personnel: a sense of duty, high ideals, discipline and patriotism.

Indeed, the issue of patriotism seems important, as a large number of the interviewees agreed that this aspect is a decisive factor in choosing to pursue this profession, as the high demands and the upcoming risk can only be compensated by the satisfaction of giving back to one's country:

Well, I love my country, of course. Because, if you don't love your country, you don't go to a military school, it's very simple. (L. M., Air Force)

Of course, always love for the country, because it's not a profession that you can approach purely on the level of livelihood. (D. P., Army).

All this shows that in the imaginary of the officers the army is not perceived as a mere professional career, but as a complex field of concepts and ideals that differentiate it from the rest of the society.

The feeling of patriotism is highlighted as a necessary condition for choosing this profession, but at the same time the military itself operates in a way that seeks to foster and develop this sentiment. In other words, individuals and institution interact and create a strong link between the military on the one hand and the nation and national ideals on the Other:

The feeling of patriotism increases when you work for your country. I think that this way of life influences the social perceptions of a person. (A. C., Navy)

If you have this feeling, even a little bit, [the army] will harvest it, increase it, foster it, magnify it a lot. If you don't have it at all, I think it's more likely that the school itself will expel you. (L. M., Air Force)

Definitely, definitely. The history courses that you take, the connection with religion, all of this creates a grid that I think enhances the sense of patriotism. If you have it, it will strengthen it. (D. P., Army)

⁸ Out of the fifteen interviewees, thirteen officers explicitly stated that the military profession is a vocation.

As an institution relatively isolated from the rest of the society, by its nature but also because of its position within the state apparatus, the military is perceived as something incorruptible. According to our interviewees, on the one hand, the political and economic corruption that plagues the Greek state has not infiltrated the military officers and, on the other, the army has not been corrupted by the social crisis, which is perceived as a crisis of values:

As long as the army is remote from the political "mainstream", so to speak, it is a sterile environment and is not subject to bad criticism. (G. S., Navy)

The crisis of values, according to the interviewees, is rooted in many social changes: the break-up of the nuclear family and the increased entry of women into the labour market, low birth rates, new forms of family life (single-parenting, non-heteronormative families), the presence of religions with different manifestations of faith and piety, the lack of patriotism and other ideals:

We don't care about the homeland, we don't care about religion, we don't care about the family; I think it's getting worse and worse for religion and the homeland. (A. N., Navy)

The subjects' perception regarding the crisis of values is important because it coincides with a deeply embedded logic underlying far-right ideological patterns, namely, that changes are not analysed in sociological terms, but in terms of a national crisis. In this respect, globalisation is not perceived as a new social condition of financial capitalism, but as a national crisis, a threat from the "outside" that endangers the nation.

The crisis of values thus appears as the antithesis of traditional – and in this case, Greek – values, as something foreign, the product or even the cause of a new order of things:

The crisis of values is intertwined with globalisation. And the new role models that have been established. They have nothing to do with the values we once had as a nation. We don't have the same national consciousness we once had. We have moved away from the religion we were most attached to. (I. P., Air Force)

This crisis, which is seen as destroying Greek society, can be traced to political and ideological decline, radicalisation, violence, the lack of discipline, while its causes vary: from Europeanisation and Americanisation to

the "New World Order" (see below) and demographic change. In the face of these new conditions, the army is perceived as the guardian of a more traditional way of life and social integration:

History is a fact, the military the gatekeeper. The history of the Greek Army and the military is the history of the Greek nation. (D. P., Army)

Thus, the army, although a constituent part of society, is being claimed as a separate entity, introducing a logic of particularity that demonstrates its lack of normalisation as a profession like any other. This is mainly achieved through its positioning as a vocation, as discussed above:

It's definitely not a job. It's not an 9-5 job and I'm off. (Z. P., Air Force)

Certainly, the personnel of the military belong to a special category. (D. P., Army)

THE ARMY'S RELATIONSHIP WITH GREEK SOCIETY

Due to the weight of the Colonels' junta which lasted for seven years, in which the army played a prominent role, the military is identified with dark, undemocratic moments of Greek history in the collective memory. This, combined with the strong national, patriarchal and traditional connotations that accompany the profession, influences the way the army is viewed:

In older times, I can't say [the army] was entirely well accepted. Because after the dictatorship, the people, let's say, when they saw military officers, they used to say: "You're responsible for what happened." (K. X., Army)

On the contrary, the right and Far Right of the political spectrum seem to be more receptive to the rhetoric of the military (Christopoulos, 2014) either via the adoption of similar views or, as many of the research subjects mention, via the misinterpretation of such views:

Perhaps some, from the political extremes, from the Far Right, would like to recruit military personnel. (D. P, Army)

The relationship between the army and its citizens is changing across the country. In border areas, where the official state is weak, the presence of the army is stronger and, given the lack of infrastructure and response from the relevant institutions, they are called on to cover the needs of local society (public works, medical care, security), thus creating a closer relationship with it. On the other hand, in bigger towns and cities, the army's presence and contact with the population is less close:

In the villages further north, the army does many things for the local population. The only, let's say, thing in terms of public services that exists in some remote villages is the nearby camp where they can go to the doctor ... so they link the two that way, so to speak. There is more army in Thrace than in Athens. (K. P., Navy)

At the same time, the political tensions with Turkey and the migrant-refugee crisis made the army more visible in everyday life, while the assumption of responsibilities for the enforcement of order by the army falls within an outward trend where the army is exiting the camps and police duties are assigned to it (Christopoulos, 2014).

ANTI-SYSTEMICISM AND IRRATIONALITY

The crisis of trust in the state, institutions, media and official discourse is a useful analytical category to understand the ways in which key perceptions are constructed. The lack of trust in political transparency and the functioning of institutions is strongly present in the official and unofficial discourse of military personnel. The relationship between the military and the concept of the nation-state is important in this respect. Since the founding of nation-states in the nineteenth century, the army has been interwoven with their establishment and protection. Thus, in an increasingly globalised, internationalised and decentralised environment, subjects experience the new conditions as a crisis of nation-states. This condition was intensified during the period of Greece's economic crisis, where national sovereignty was further diminished. The political crisis, therefore, is internalised by military officers and manifests itself as lack of trust, precariousness and introversion:

I have no trust. What is happening right now is being directed. (A. C., Navy)

I'm outraged by the media coverage which, of course, is systemic. (G. T., Navy)

The catalyst for the acceleration of the spread and the visible rise of irrationalism and anti-systemicism was the economic crisis and the period of the memoranda, where parties and media lost society's trust, while far-right populism emerged rapidly – for example, 75% of our interviewees prefer the internet as their main source of information, over the mainstream media, in

which they have no trust. Since then, the state's handling of the refugee and migration issue (where existing policies were perceived as too permissive), the handling of the Prespa Agreement (which was perceived as treasonous by 55% of our sample), and the Covid-19 pandemic have escalated the intensity of the phenomenon. Anti-systemicism and irrationality are not peculiar features of the army but rather reflect the broader institutional crisis which includes the military as well.

The anti-systemic discourse is accompanied by irrationalism and conspiracy theories, which are personified in the so-called "New World Order":

Governments take instructions from elsewhere ... from the New World Order ... The only company in charge, which is Israeli, undertook three tasks: the formation of Lenin's communist movement ... then we had the beginning of the feminist movement, so that the education given to children would be systemic ... so that kindergartens would be created. In the kindergarten they were being taught what the New World Order dictates. (G. T., Navy)

The "New World Order" is defined as a new political and social condition that dismantles existing social structures, subdues national freedoms and identities and imposes new gender, religious, cultural and ideological patterns:

In the New World Order there is no concept of the nation, the concept of the state, there is the concept of an assemblage and a belief, and it is usually Israeli interests, Jewish interests. (G. T., Navy)

Yes, so immigration is the New World Order, it is, unfortunately. The purpose is to replace populations. (L. M., Air Force)

In these narratives, the tools of the new order are globalisation, massive population movement (refugee and immigration crisis), the efforts to limit the role of the church, and the opposition to national ideals. These elements constitute what 72.5% of our sample perceive as cultural alteration. This hybrid threat is perceived as an organised project by obscure and ambiguous agents (antisemitic references are also present in such discourses) and its target is, among others, the Greek nation:

To have a large influx of immigrants in Greece is to change the population in the future so that the religious traditions and values of the Greek people are to be slowly abolished. (G. T., Navy)

While they are coming into Greek territory, they will be assimilated, so it will be negative, because the Greek element will be lost. That is, if all these

people really stay here and others continue to come, yes, that will happen. (A. N., Navy)

Finally, regarding the adoption and reproduction of far-right rhetoric in the military, our findings indicate that there is a qualitative difference regarding age but also the different branches of the military. As Christopoulos concludes, "the ultra-right presence within the military mostly reaches younger recruits and the lower ranks" (2014, 75).

FEMININITY, MASCULINITY AND GENDER PERCEPTIONS IN THE MILITARY¹⁰

Gender is an important analytical category and a sphere where power is articulated in every society. Thus, Greek society appears to be dominated by strictly defined gender roles and stereotypes, gender discrimination, homophobia and sexism (Ralli, 2020). The church is also important for the construction and reproduction of gender biases in the Greek context, as is the heteronormative, nuclear family, which has an immense symbolic value, while the demonisation of feminism prevails.

The great victories of the 1970s and the rise of the left to power had thrilled women. In less than twenty years, feminists had a real triumph to exhibit. The number of divorces is systematically increasing, and traditional marriage is losing its content. With contraception and abortion, the women of the West have found themselves holding unprecedented power in the history of mankind. (Ethniki Icho, 2021)

Gender bias, of course, is also visible in the discourse of the military personnel, especially with regard to the entry of women into the army, which is not compulsory and is not supported except in exceptional circumstances. Most interviewees – irrespective of gender¹¹ – argue that women's enlistment should not be mandatory:

For women, huh? Mandatory, no, but I think there should be a choice. Do we not say "Women and children to the rear"? (A. C., Navy)

⁹ While Christopoulos indicates the qualitative differences in ultra-right discourse within different ranks, we found that this is also true amongst branches. Rank, age and branch are also influential in the diffusion of this discourse.

¹⁰ When employing the term "gender" in this chapter, we refer mainly to traditional, cis, heteronormative meanings of gender, as all the interviewees are cis, straight subjects, the majority of them men. Thus, when we refer to gender and gender roles here, we do not claim that we cover the whole spectrum of gendered constructions and possibilities, but that we are trying to look at the ways in which subjects perceive their gender and gender roles, primarily through the construction of masculinity and femininity.

¹¹ In general, we did not find a significant difference of opinion between men and women interviewees.

It is interesting to note that the discourse of urgency and danger (as discussed above) regarding Greece's peculiarity is pushed aside here in order to maintain gendered narratives and stereotypes in relation to women:

I do not buy the idea of equality and other similar notions, I have always seen women as women, so I think that if we had a young girl in the submarine, me and any other person when we were young we wouldn't see her as anything else but a woman. (G. S., Navy)

Moreover, women, although they have now joined almost all branches and corps of the military, are considered unsuitable for more combat-oriented positions, due to "nature", "biological" differences and the maternal role. ¹² In other words, although there is an orientation towards professionalisation, as mentioned above, the entrenched, traditionalist gender roles have maintained their hegemony:

They [women]should be placed in specific positions ... doing other stuff, for me personally, the role of a mother comes first, it is the most significant role, and then being a soldier. (G. T., Navy)

You claim a right, you won't get that right, because if I give it to you, everything stops working; imagine now an aviator, there's an invasion from Turkey and she has to go and intercept and say: "I'm having my period." (A., $\Pi.O.E.\Sigma$., Panhellenic Federation of Military Unions)

The wife, the sister, the mother has another social role for me. These are the models with which Greek society has been nurtured for decades, perhaps for centuries. (Z. P., Air Force)

Similarly, people with a different sexual orientation or gender identity are associated with deviance and defiance, and are asked to perform their identity heteronormatively and covertly to avoid becoming victims of discrimination (see Bulmer, 2017):

I don't care what the other guy does in his bed, it doesn't even concern me, he should be reliable in his work. (S. M., Navy)

In general, I have no problem with anyone's sexual preference. I have a problem with him trying in a vulgar way to impose his sexual preference in public. (G. G., Navy)

 $^{12\,}$ On the relationship between patriarchy and biological discourse, see Potts & Campbell (2008).

Of course, this attitude falls, on the one hand, into covert homophobic perceptions and, on the other, into the male homogeneity that the army's discourse invokes. In an environment where masculinity is produced and projected, homosexuality must be disguised in such a way that it does not challenge the heteronormative doctrine. For example, 87.5% of our sample declare themselves against same-sex couples having children, while only 52.5% declare themselves in favour of their right to marry. One can see through the responses mentioned above that gender is a particularly important element for the constitution of the identity and character of the military, with the construction of masculinity holding a central role.

Being a traditionally masculine and male-dominated profession, the military is closely linked to the construction and reproduction of toxic masculinity (Hinojosa, 2010). By identifying it with the ideals of the military officer's role – which stresses discipline, strictness and brevity - masculinity is presented as a necessary condition and goal (Roynette, 2020). But how does the military construct this masculinity? We submit that the mandatory military service as a key point, which functions as a "rite of passage" (Turner, 1967) from the realm of youthfulness to the realm of mature masculinity. Moreover, as repeated by the interviewees, "you enter the army as a boy, and you become a man":

It is good for every man to be completed within the framework of a barracks. What was created from ancient Sparta to now. (G. T. Navy)

Twelve months is a short time, conscription should have been 40 months so as to learn what is to be learned, to become a real man. (G. S., Navy)

Military service, a social initiation ceremony, especially in times when there are no equivalent processes at the social level that bring one to adulthood, to have the equivalent of what was performed in the old days, when we lived in tribes, the coming-of-age ceremonies. (C. P., Navy)

The importance of military service plays a central role in the construction of male identity in Greek society. Apart from being a privileged position for men, it is considered as necessary for completing the male identity:

The main thing is that it "took me in" as a child and made me a man in a very short period. (S. M., Navy)

Following that, we could also add that the experience of military service links the man's role to the nation in a particular way, reproducing the ideology and institutional reality of patriarchy: Men are presented as protectors of the nation and its weak elements, as a combat group to defend and attack. Although, of course, not all subjects share these identifications, we maintain that the goal of military service is to produce these relations between male

and national identity, which are grounded precisely in stereotypical notions of masculinity:

The young man will contribute to his country and the country will offer to the young man the means for his future life. (S. M., Navy)

Compulsory military service, then, for me, is the supreme good that you can offer to your country. (Z. P., Air Force)

Don't ask what the country can do for you, ask what you can do for the country. (S. M., Navy)

Moreover, military service as a social space and time creates an idealised sphere of masculinity, through and thanks to the reproduction of "broculture" (Sorcher, 2013). In the imaginary, the military is the place where men acquire the closest friendships, where their masculine identity is completed and affirmed and where national duty is repaid. In addition to that important aspect of the military in the life of men the military itself is founded on masculinity (Reit, 2017). Given this, it is no coincidence that most military personnel have families, often with many children, reproducing a traditional family model:

The specific value system that existed in Greek society was basically the family. A family with Christian ideals. (Z. P., Air Force)

You know very well how many times the slogan "homeland-religion-family" has been misinterpreted. If we sit down and discuss it together, it is a tradition that has been in Greece for years. (L. M., Air Force)

These gendered categories and conceptualisations are, in our view, in perfect harmony with the traditional precepts adopted and promoted by farright discourse. At the same time, these traditional "values" are often seen as being lost to the new norms, as analysed with regards to the "New World Order". Here we could also draw on fears of population decline to understand the relations between gender and ethnic continuity (ethnopatriarchy). Contested gender roles (with the entry of women into the labour market) result in the phenomenon of population decline, which, combined with the perceived hybrid threat of population replacement as a result of the entry of refugees and migrants, and the migration of highly skilled Greeks abroad (brain drain), are translated as catastrophic for national homogeneity and continuity:

But the homeland is being lost. (L.M., Air Force)
The population in Greece will decrease. Both men and women have professional careers that are often put above the family. (I. P., Air Force)

Soon Greece will be left without Greeks. How many Greeks are emigrating in order to find a better life and how many immigrants are coming to Greece? (A. N., Navy)

THE CONSTRUCTION OF OTHERNESS

Although non-traditional gender identifications always constitute an otherness (De Beauvoir, 1949), we consider that in the perception of our interviewees the most important form of otherness is the religious and ethnic Other. There is a clear shift in the origins of ethnic danger from the Cold War communist danger to the danger of belonging to a religion Other than the dominant one. The religious Other is fully personified in the Muslim Other, as in Europe; otherness is primarily constructed through cultural-religious references, specifically Islam (Mirhosseini, 2015). Although religious and ethnic minorities serve in the military and have been integrated into Greek society, Islam is seen as an insurmountable otherness that prevents effective integration:

We are now talking about immigrants with a different worldview and perception, because, as we know, Islam is a value and political system beyond the religion. (G. G, Navy)

These existing prejudices are reinforced by the tense relations with Turkey. The Turkish state is seen as instrumentalising the migration and refugee issue to exert political pressure on Greece, while there are many who consider that the people who are entering the country pose a direct threat to national security. Religious identity here is the hallmark of the "inimical" Other, who in complicity with the Turkish state will declare war on the country from within:

With the issue of religion, it's another matter. In another country we wouldn't discuss it, in Greece it's a bit complicated ... national identity ... probably citizenship alone is not enough for one to be considered Greek, so he can serve his country. No, because maybe we haven't made them to feel like real Greeks, they feel like Turks. (S. M., Navy)

They are waiting for an order, "kill the infidels", 25,000 people, of course, these may be women and children, but all of them can take a knife ... It may

not happen, but they have this "belief", whether they are Muslims or atheists, it is not a big deal for them to kill, and the Muslims are waiting for that. (R. S., Air Force)

This regime of fear, suspicion and othering of religious difference is in dialogue with the more general trend of Islamophobia that is developing and manifesting itself across all European states (Sajid, 2005). It is also worth noting the shift from antisemitism to Islamophobia (Green, 2010; Hafez, 2019) and the way in which they interact in a globalised environment with conspiracy theories. At the same time, the military institution itself is concerned about its own security, by not placing Muslims who enlist in key positions, a point that reflects existing perceptions:

They can't be Muslims ... they don't take a gun. They were in the [army health centre], because they don't do guard duties there, you see? (R. S., Air Force)

So they're not going to place them in some critical areas of expertise, right? That's what I mean. Because there might be a suspicion there that something might go wrong. (L. M., Air Force)

The state, in the event of, I don't know, a conflict, because it may not be sure what role a Muslim may play, makes some plans. Okay, I can understand that. (K. X., Army)

A shift in the construction of otherness can be detected at this point: The absolute Other is no longer marked mostly by colour, ethnic identity, even gender, but by the religious identity of Islam. This shift is in line with the European trend, but at the same time it is supported by more traditional constructions of threatening otherness, which in Greece are constituted on the basis of ethnicity: primarily Turkish and, secondarily, other neighbouring Balkan identities, such as Bulgarian and Albanian. Indicatively, 92.5% of our sample consider all Greece's neighbouring countries as hostile. Otherness in the Greek context is not founded on the basis of race, as in the former colonial powers, but on the basis of ethnic antagonisms:

Greece is threatened by all its neighbours, in different ways. We have an arc around us, as I described, Turkey-Albania-Skopje-Bulgaria, which are all enemies, no one is a friend, right? (K. M., Air Force)

Apart from this religious difference, which is insurmountable for many, the construction of national identity is the only factor that can bridge the multiple identities of others. With national-ethnic homogeneity seeming increasingly weak, our interviewees suggest that national consciousness is the most important factor capable of overcoming differences. The only exception to this rule can be, as it was analysed, the Muslim religious identity. We maintain that the potential of national identity to fill the gap created by the increased presence and visibility of otherness is a new element that necessarily arises from the social conjuncture of the last decade:

Not being a Christian does not mean that you are not Greek and you don't love Greece. You can be whatever you wish and love Greece. Because the basic thing about being a military officer is to love Greece. (A. Ch., Navy)

The feeling of patriotism is possibly more ideological than other characteristics ... what did our ancient ancestors and Isocrates say? Who is a Greek? Greeks are those who have a Greek education. (G. T., Navy)

Although the narrative of a nation-state remains ideal, globalisation and the population movement make it increasingly elusive. In this deconstructed reality, national consciousness functions as a link that holds the community together. By emphasising the importance of national identity, the military is linked to far-right rhetoric, creating alliances with important ideological consequences. At the same time, it demonstrates once again, as discussed above, that national consciousness and the military profession are closely linked.

CONCLUSIONS

We can draw three main conclusions regarding the structure of the institution and the way it determines the adoption and reproduction of this rhetoric from our research on the discourses of military officers and their relationship with far-right rhetoric. The structure of the institution and its association with national protection and integrity, as reflected in the attitudes of the military, constructs a constant sense of danger and threat. Through the viewing of neighbouring countries as negatively inclined towards Greece and the sense of national duty they fully embody, the military personnel find themselves in a constant state of uncertainty and danger.

This perception of reality makes far-right rhetoric easier to be embraced, as the notions such as the risk of cultural alteration, national invasion, and the hybrid threat presented by the refugee-migration crisis are recurrent in the discourse of the military personnel. Alongside these notions, most inter-

viewees perceive a series of social changes as a gradual degradation of values and ideals, personified in the concept of the "New World Order". They experience the social changes brought about by globalisation, the economic crisis, the gradual integration of Greece into European institutions and the greater recognition and acceptance of individual identities (gender, race, religion, etc.) as decay. Thus, the experience of social changes in terms of crisis constantly interact with the crisis of the nation-state in the contemporary globalised, internationalised, decentralised societies. With the military being interwoven with the nation-state (since the emergence of nation-states in the nineteenth century), the diminishing role of the latter is experienced as a crisis by the former, which was intensified during the period of the economic crisis, with the decline of Greek sovereignty.

On the other hand, we consider that this perspective is consistent with the rhetorical motifs of the Far Right, where social changes are not analysed in terms of a sociological crisis, but in terms of a crisis of the nation. These considerations develop close affinities with far-right narratives, as military officers embody the need to protect a stereotypical, "traditional" understanding of national identity and reproduce dichotomies such as "us-them", "old-now", with an ideal past juxtaposed against an increasingly worse present and future.

Because of its position and its connection to the nation, the army as an institution embodies far-right rhetoric in a specific perspective, that of nationalism. Otherness, intolerance and prejudices, the adherence to conservative discourses, are permeated by a sense of duty to the nation. In this way, external threats are experienced by the interviewees as something that threatens the nation as a unit; new social conditions (such as new family forms or unfamiliar forms of religious expression) are presented as something that threatens national values, and new European norms are contrasted with national ideals.

The anchoring of all these discourses in nationalism is not accidental. In the national context, otherness is based on national narratives and national policies, especially with regard to the relationship with the Other. Thus, otherness in Greece is not identified, for instance, with racial categorizations (as in former colonial powers), but with policies concerning national borders and national dynamics in the Balkans. For this reason, the discourses of threat are perfectly in line with the nationalist doctrine, while racism is directed at ethnically different neighbours.

There are also two very interesting points, concerning the shift in the construction of otherness. Religious, gender and ethnic diversity can be superseded by ethnic similarity and consciousness. In the eyes of the interviewees, national consciousness and the relationship with the homeland is the defining condition that can embellish all other differences. In this way, the concept of the nation and the relationship with it are over-emphasised,

while the importance of national education and patriotism is underlined. This perspective marks a new shift in the institution of the military, as we argue that while a few years ago these differences were considered insurmountable, they can now be overcome by national identity and consciousness. This shift is fundamental to the structure of the army, as love for the nation is considered an unparalleled prerequisite for the profession. The only exception to the above perspective is Islam, with Muslim identity being, for the subjects of our research, an insurmountable otherness. In the Greek case, Islamophobia, on the one hand, follows the European example and, on the other, is fuelled by Greek-Turkish relations, demonstrating that even this form of discrimination is permeated by national interests and politics. Thus, although the prejudice against Islam is not a Greek monopoly, it is mainly formed based on geopolitical conditions and on the representation of the Muslim Other as *a priori* hostile to Greece.

Perhaps the key observation to understand how our research reaches these conclusions, is the fact that the Greek military is not fully professionalized. The military is not a profession like all others, and this is the root of many of the particularities that mark this institution. The military is determined by strong symbolic, political and ideological implications that define both its relationship with Greek society and politics, and the way the officers perceive themselves. The military profession is perceived as a vocation of supreme honour, as it is inextricably intertwined with the national duty to protect, while officers see themselves as gatekeepers of Greekness, of national "essence", in social conditions that are constantly changing. This perception of the military institution turns it into a realm outside society, with its own representations, its own culture and its own ways of functioning.

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Far-Right Rhetoric and the Church of Greece

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ABSTRACT

Since its foundation in 1833, the Orthodox Church of Greece has been an integral part of the state apparatus and a very important body for legitimising and consolidating the official state ideology, as it was formed around the turn of the 20th century.1 Within this context, the relations of interdependence between church and state, although prioritised in favour of the latter, led to conflicts between the clergy and political power, especially after the strategic shift of the Greek state towards "European integration" in the 1980s and 1990s. For the first time in the history of the modern Greek nation-state, "Helleno-Christianity" seems to be losing its ideological hegemony, thus threatening the primacy of the church with regards to key issues in Greek society. The cultural syncretism that has inevitably arisen from the globalisation of the economy and the influx of migration in Greece has led a large part of the church body to more conservative political positions and discourses. This chapter attempts to highlight the role of the church in the normalisation of aspects of far-right ideology, but also in the dissemination of its ideas, which is the outcome of the influence that this institution exerts on Greek society as a body shaping collective consciousness. To support this argument, the chapter focuses on the informal discourses of the subjects that make up this institution through an analysis of semi-structured interviews, articles from Greek Orthodox websites and from relevant media publications. This discourse differs from the official institutional discourse of

¹ This formation of the Greek national identity was shaped by the methodological scheme introduced into Greek historiography by Konstantinos Paparrigopoulos and Spyridon Zambelios. Their works established a connection between classical antiquity and the Eastern Roman Middle Ages for the first time, aiming at producing the image of a timeless and undivided "Hellenism", that is, the image of a Greek nation whose glory far exceeds that of the newly created Greek nation-state of the nineteenth century. For the threefold scheme of Greek nationalism, see Koubourlis (2021).

the Orthodox Church, exhibiting in some cases a significant affinity with far-right rhetoric regarding issues of gender, foreign or domestic politics and perceptions of cultural and religious otherness.

Keywords: Church of Greece, Helleno-Christianity, far-right discourse, nationalism, otherness

*All primary sources are cited in Greek in the body of the text. A full list of these sources, also translated into English, is provided at the end of the chapter under the section "electronic sources".

■ INTRODUCTION

In examining the rise of the Far Right in Greece, both during the period of the so-called Greek crisis as well as before it, the important role played by figures belonging to the church in spreading and legitimising its ideas cannot be ignored. From the close relations with dictatorial regimes of the past to the recent support for far-right political formations among both the church hierarchy and clergy, this chapter aims to highlight the contribution of the country's most important religious institution, the Church of Greece. to the normalisation and spread of far-right rhetoric in Greek society. The church's contribution to the spread of these ideas stems from the combination of its historically conservative character and the prominent institutional position it enjoys within the Greek state. Therefore, the discourse expressed by members of its hierarchy acquires a special secular significance, which allows the church to play a decisive role in shaping the collective consciousness of Greek society. The central argument of this chapter is that, despite the electoral decline of Golden Dawn - Greece's neo-Nazi political party, which experienced a significant share of popularity in the crisis years - and its conviction as a criminal organisation by the Greek justice system, the discourses that facilitated Golden Dawn's rise as a political force remain particularly influential, having spread within Greek society, while the church is not exempt from such trends either. While in the past there have been attempts to map the relationship between the church and far-right ideology, the present research differs from the existing literature in that it focuses on the discourse of the very subjects who make up this institution instead of the institution itself. By focusing on the informal discourse of members of the church, we attempt to bring to the fore those lines of reasoning through which aspects of far-right discourse are reproduced and normalised within its realm.

In our view, any research on how far-right rhetoric has permeated and consolidated itself in Greek society to the extent that it is considered by a large part of Greeks as "common sense" could not but include the Orthodox Church. Because of its special relationship with the Greek state and its long tradition as a vehicle for the reproduction of conservative and, at times, farright positions, the church projects the ideal of Helleno-Christianity as a response to the danger posed to the nation by communism, the Left, as well as the processes of globalisation in the early twenty-first century (Sakellariou, 2014, p. 284). Even the most moderate arguments expressed by the largest part of the church do not contradict the official ideology of the Greek state and Greek national identity, as it was formed in modern times. The preservation of a monocultural and, in some cases, even a monoreligious nation-state constitute the main objective of those who express more moderate views, and who emphasise the issue of "cultural incompatibility" between the native Greeks and the migrants arriving in the country. Cultural homogeneity is a taboo for most of Greek society and, by extension, the church (Sakellariou, 2017, p. 4; Karamouzis, 2004). This also results from the fact that most of the priests who agreed to grant us an interview considered the cultural assimilation of immigrants to be the best policy solution for immigration, highlighting the possible risks for the position of women and the individual freedoms arising from foreign religions, such as Islam, and from other cultures of the "exotic" Orient.

Following a more detailed presentation of the methodology employed for this research and a brief review of the historical trajectory of the church, which is deemed necessary for a better understanding of the current situation, the main sections of the chapter embark on the examination of the discourses expressed by the subjects themselves vis-à-vis the edification of national identity as well as the representation of the Other with the context of this precise national identity, of cultural otherness, anti-immigrant discourse and gender relations.

METHODOLOGY

For the needs of the present research, we initially proceeded with semi-structured, in-depth interviews with priests but also with believers who maintain a close relationship with ecclesiastical circles. In an attempt to explore the relationship of the church with the Muslim and Jewish communities, we conducted supplementary interviews with individuals from both religious communities. Semi-structured interviews were chosen in order to achieve two main objectives related to the research process: the

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first objective was to limit, as much as possible, our influence over the answers of the interviewees, in order to be guided by them in our examination of aspects of the phenomenon under consideration, which we might have ignored had we followed up with closed-ended questions. Our second objective aimed at covering some key issues related to the present research, such as the subjects' views on issues of gender and sexuality, religion, immigration, foreign and domestic policy. In order to collect the primary material, we contacted a total of nineteen individuals, thirteen of whom agreed to be interviewed, and nine dioceses (Paronaxia, Alexandroupoli, Florina, Thessaloniki, Glyfada, Komotini, Serres, Piraeus, Athens), all of which either refused to be interviewed or declined to respond. Regarding the interviewees, eight belong to the Greek Orthodox Christian community, two to the Muslim community and three to the Jewish community.

Interviews were conducted entirely online due to measures in effect at the time against the spread of Covid-19. The interviewees were selected using the snowball sampling method, as places of worship remained closed during the pandemic, making it difficult for us to get in direct contact with priests. An additional difficulty encountered by the research was the reluctance of members of the church hierarchy to grant an interview, limiting our sample to the lower clergy. The research followed all ethics protocols, including anonymity and informed consent (the research protocol was delivered to the interviews before the conduct of the interview).

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE CHURCH AND THE FAR RIGHT IN THE RELEVANT LITERATURE

The aim of this chapter is to demonstrate the normalisation of far-right and nationalist discourse within the Church of Greece and the way in which it constitutes one of the main pillars of Greek nationalism. Our bibliographical research showed that only a small number of works relate to the expression of nationalist discourses by the church as an institution. Most of the publications addressing the relations between the Christian Orthodox institutions and nationalism concern the Russian Orthodox Church (Mitrofanova, 2017). The discussion about the relations between the church and the Greek state is mainly limited to the question of the imposition of the state on the church (politocracy), and not so much to the means used by the latter to legitimise the official national ideology of the state. The bibliography mostly comprises works from the fields of the social, political and legal sciences as well from the field of theology.

The central bibliographical current of "politocracy" is represented by Sotiris Mitralexis' *Church–State Relations* (2019), which addresses chiefly the economic aspect of such relations and aspires to become the basis of a discussion for a possible separation of church and state. Athanassios Karyamis' *Manifestations of Politocracy: The State's Brute Interventions in the Elections of the Primates of the Church of Greece* (1833–1974) follows the same line of thought, using both legal and theological argumentation to demonstrate the interventions of the state in the church's internal affairs, but also the ways certain hierarchs were involved in the political developments of the country. Finally, Charalambos Andreopoulos' 2017 work *The Church under the Dictator-ship* offers a detailed record of the arbitrariness exhibited by the Regime of the Colonels (which ruled Greece between 1967–1974) and of the ways the church and Christian organisations became a mechanism for legitimising the dictatorship.

The edited volume The "Deep State" in Greece Today and the Far Right (Christopoulos, 2014), is perhaps the most relevant to this research publication, even though it focuses on the institution per se, while our research revolves around the subjects themselves and addresses the institution of the church as an agent of behind-the-scenes activity which enables the promotion of far-right ideas. The Macedonian Issue (1878-2018), by international relations scholar Alexis Heraclides (2018) deals with the Macedonia naming dispute and the disagreement between Athens and Skopje from 1992 to 2018 as well as the Prespa Agreement.² The Black Book of Golden Dawn, by journalist Dimitris Psarras (2012), is a thorough investigation of the neo-Nazi party's trajectory, with references both to its relations with the church and the high-ranking priests who maintained a friendly stance towards the organisation. Philologist Stavros Zoumboulakis' study Golden Dawn and the Church (2013) is a short essay based on a collection of interviews and journals by the author and provides information on the relationship between Golden Dawn and the church from a personal and conservative perspective.

² The Prespa Agreement, also known as the Treaty of Prespa, is an agreement reached in 2018 between Greece and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, resolving a long-standing dispute between the two. It replaced the Interim Accord of 1995 and resulted in the FYROM's constitutional name changing to the Republic of North Macedonia erga omnes.

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THE CREATION OF THE CHURCH AND ITS TRAJECTORY TOWARDS THE 21ST CENTURY

THE RUM MILLET ("ROMAN NATION")

After the conquest of Constantinople by Sultan Mehmed II the Conqueror, the Ottoman Empire entered a new phase in its history, in which the effective management of the numerous non-Muslim populations was the main pillar for its transformation. The millets – ethno-religious communities with a distinct administrative system from the one governing the Ottomans yet included in their empire – were created for this reason. They were headed by milletbaşi, who held the highest priestly office of each religion (Karamouzis, 2004; Stavrianos, 2006 [1958], p. 210). All the Orthodox Christian populations of the empire, regardless of ethnic group (Greeks, Serbs, Albanians, Bulgarians, etc.), were subject to the Rum (Roman) Millet, whose leader was the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople. The main responsibility of the patriarch was the control of the flock, so that it followed the sultan's orders without rebelling, as well as the collection of taxes and their delivery to the Ottoman authorities (Kostis, 2013, pp. 50–51).

The patriarchate greatly influenced the daily life of the Orthodox populations throughout the territory of the empire, as it had heightened judicial jurisdiction over them both in community and private matters (Kostis, 2013, p. 45), while also taking care of their education through the creation of educational institutions, but also of their religious instruction, an extremely important issue for premodern societies. In this way, religion played a decisive role in shaping and delimiting a collective identity through a power relation between the populations of the empire and the central authority, where Muslims were the dominant and Christians the subordinates (Anagnostopoulou, 2000, p. 344).

THE CREATION OF THE CHURCH OF GREECE

The spread of the ideas of the Enlightenment and the French Revolution in the Balkan Peninsula was the most important factor for the emergence of Greek nationalism initially, and in the following decades of the nineteenth century for the other Balkan nationalisms as well. The modern Greek national identity was built on the basis of the Orthodox identity as it had emanated from the historical experience of Rum Millet. Therefore, after the success of the Greek Revolution and the creation of the Greek nation-state, the newly established political power attempted to control the religious life of its citizens through the creation of a now national church. The Ecumenical Patriarchate, being a supranational imperial institution, could not serve the inter-

ests of the newly formed nation-state, so the drastic reduction of its influence over the Orthodox citizens of the Kingdom of Greece was almost imperative for the new national planning. In 1833, the autocephaly of Church of Greece was proclaimed, largely due to the German professor Georg Ludwig von Maurer, who was a member of the regency council that ruled Greece during the minority of King Otto, and Archimandrite Theoklitos Farmakidis (Karyamis, 2020, pp. 27, 56). As a result, the church would maintain in doctrinal, but not administrational, unity with the Patriarchate, while its head would be King Otto, who would hold "supreme ecclesiastical authority" (Mitralexis, 2019, pp. 23–24; Karyamis, 2020, p. 56).

In July of the same year, the Holy Synod, the main decision-making body on ecclesiastical matters, was created, consisting of the heads of all the dioceses of the Greek state, where the archbishop of Athens and All Greece would be first among equals. At the same time, in order to achieve better control of the decisions of the Holy Synod by the state, a royal commissioner was also appointed; without the commissioner's signature no synodal decision would be valid (Karyamis, 2020, p. 56; Mitralexis, 2019, p. 24). In the same period, most church lands came under the jurisdiction of the Greek state, without the latter compensating the church, thus creating a relationship of direct economic dependence of the church on the state (Mitralexis, 2019, pp. 98–99). The main objective of the now nationalised church would be the cultivation of law-abiding Christian citizens, loyal to the official ideology of the nation-state (Karamouzis, 2004, p. 11).

FROM THE BALKAN WARS TO THE POST-CIVIL WAR STATE

In 1850 a compromise was reached between the Ecumenical Patriarchate and the Church of Greece, where the former recognised the autocephaly of the latter. This compromise primarily served the Greek nation-state, as it sought to exploit the strong Greek-speaking diplomatic and economic networks of the patriarchate, which had formed in the 18th century (Kostis, 2013, pp. 31–95), using them as a counterweight to the emerging Bulgarian nationalism in the disputed region of Macedonia. In this case too, the religious component played the most important role in shaping the national identity of the Christian Orthodox inhabitants of Ottoman Macedonia. Those communities that remained loyal to the Ecumenical Patriarchate were included in the sphere of influence of Greek nationalism, while those that turned to the Bulgarian Exarchate were included in the Bulgarian sphere of influence. The conflicts were bloody and ended with the division of the Macedonian lands among a number of Balkan states after the end of the Balkan wars (Kechriotis, 2008, pp. 32–33).

The church, having an important position in the legitimisation of state ideology and political power, was also drawn into the vortex of the political confrontations of the periods of the National Schism³ and the interwar period. The archbishops of the Holy Synod were divided into Venizelists and anti-Venizelists,⁴ while they ascended or were deposed from the archbishop throne depending on which faction maintained political power at a given period of time (Mitralexis, 2019, pp. 26–29). The culmination of these conflicts was the annulment of the election of the Venizelist Archbishop Damaskinos following pressure from the Metaxas regime in 1938 (Mitralexis, 2019, p. 29).⁵

After the disastrous outcome of the Greco-Turkish War (1919–1922) in Asia Minor, which resulted in the abandonment of the "Great Idea",⁶ the Greek state found itself in a disadvantageous position when faced with the spread of socialist ideas among the working classes in the urban environments. The 4th of August Regime (1936–1941) of General Ioannis Metaxas tried to cover this weakness through the creation of ideological scheme of the "Third Greek Civilisation", which comprised the first Greek civilisation of Ancient Greece and the second Greek civilisation of Byzantium (Karamouzis, 2004, p. 365; Andreopoulos, 2017, p. 48) with the third being the Metaxas regime itself. The main vehicle for this effort were the various Christian organisations that were created during the interwar period. These brought together both believers and theologians of the church to engage in social work but also – and mainly – religious and political indoctrination (Andreopoulos, 2017, p. 55). Preeminent among these organisations was the

³ The National Schism, or Great Division, was the splitting of society, political order, governing and military powers of Kingdom of Greece during 1910–1922 between two radically opposed political camps supporting the respective parties of World War I: the western Allies of the Entente headed by Prime Minister Eleftherios Venizelos versus the German-led Central Powers headed by King Constantine I.

⁴ Venizelism was an interwar broad political movement, with an agenda of urban modernisation, Westernisation and the fulfilment of Greek irredentism, represented in the political scene by the Liberal Party (Komma Fileleftheron). The political movement drew its name from the Greek politician Eleftherios Venizelos (1864–1936). Its main opponent, the anti-Venizelist camp, was represented by the Popular Party (Laikon Komma), led by Panayis Tsaldaris (1868–1936) during the interwar years. The party was essentially the main proponent of conservativism in Greece at the time.

⁵ The dictatorial regime – also known as the 4 August Regime – that ruled Greece from 1936 to 1941 led by General Ioannis Metaxas.

⁶ The "Great Idea" or "Meghali Idea" is an irredentist concept that expresses the goal of reviving the Byzantine Empire, by establishing a Greek state, which would include the large Greek populations still under Ottoman rule after the end of the Greek War of Independence (1821–1828) and all the regions where large Greek populations were residing (parts of the Southern Balkans, Asia Minor and Cyprus).

Fraternity of Theologians–Zoi" ("Life"), which organised its members into communes and imposed strict rules on social behaviour, requiring that members transfer their property to the organisation (Moustakis, 1983, pp. 16–17; Andreopoulos, 2017, p. 55). Religious organisations were driven by anti-communism and social conservatism to such an extent that they considered women's suffrage to be "pseudo-civilisation", as social roles were seen as determined by biology and Christian theology (Karamouzis, 2004, p. 340).

During the Greek Civil War,⁷ the church sided with the National Army and against the rebels of the Democratic Army⁸ since, in the church's view, communist ideology threatened the three pillars of Greek national identity, namely, patriotism, religion and family (Sakellariou, 2014, pp. 285–286). The ideological tools employed by the "Third Greek Civilisation" remained in use throughout the period of the failing parliamentary democracy until the military coup of 21st April 1967.

HELLENO-CHRISTIANITY AND THE POST-JUNTA PERIOD

The rise of a group of colonels to political power of Greece after a successful coup d'état on 21st of April 1967 brought to the fore the ideology of "Helleno-Christianity", which, with minor variations, was essentially identical to the one promoted by the Metaxas regime thirty-one years previously (Andreopoulos, 2017, pp. 46–47). It is no coincidence that one of the leaders of the coup, Colonel Georgios Papadopoulos, attended the lectures of the Christian organisation Elliniko Fos ("Hellenic Light"), which was presided over by King Paul and Archimandrite Ieronymos Kotsonis, who after the coup ascended to the archbishopric throne (Andreopoulos, 2017, pp. 47–50).

The coupling of Greek national identity with Orthodox Christianity was the main constant of "Helleno-Christianity", and this is clearly manifested in the slogan "Greece of Greek Christians" – one of the most popularised political maxims of the junta – where religion was nationalised as an effective tool in the ideological war against the Left. Archbishop Ieronymos and the entire ecclesiastical apparatus supported the 21st of April regime, apart from

⁷ The Greek Civil War took place between 1946 to 1949 and was between the forces of the official Greek Army, supported mainly by the United Kingdom and the United States (wining side) on the one hand, and the forces of the Democratic Army of Greece (losing side), supported by Communist Party of Greece, on the other.

⁸ The Democratic Army of Greece (DSE) was the army founded by the Communist Party of Greece during the Greek Civil War (1946–1949). The Communist Party was also the main driving force behind the National Liberation Front (EAM), the main resistance movement during the Nazi occupation of Greece.

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some exceptions who opposed the regime's attempts to control the church's administration but were not essentially opposed to the ideology it promoted, like Archbishop Augoustinos Kantiotis of Florina (Andreopoulos, 2017, p. 54), whereas Archbishop Ieronymos publicly stated that: "We are very grateful to the army for saving Greece from destruction on 21 April" (Andreopoulos, 2017, pp. 51–52).

The events at Athens Polytechnic in November 1973,⁹ the replacement of Papadopoulos by Brigadier General Dimitrios Ioannidis and the anticipated replacement of Ieronymos by Seraphim Tikas as archbishop caused strong reactions within church circles and especially within certain Christian organisations such as Zoi, a leading member of which wrote in their magazine of the same name on 16 December 1973:

The so-called anger of the youth, which was fostered and organised by anarchist and communist agents, reached an explosive point in our time. With long hair and ragged clothes, a few students, and more workers and builders, barricaded themselves into the Polytechnic, they took on the streets with subversive slogans, with barricades, with arson and explosions, they spread havoc everywhere they've been. (Moustakis, 1983, p. 110).

The fall of the dictatorship in the summer of 1974 and the consecutive electoral victories of the Panhellenic Socialist Movement (Pasok) throughout the 1980s marked a shift, both in terms of the official ideology of the state and in terms of its relations with the church. In the summer of 1979, Greece completed its accession procedures to the European Economic Community (EEC). From this point, the European perspective became the main adversary of "Helleno-Christianity", which has striven to maintain the ideological hegemony of the state (Paraskevaidis, 1997; Kessareas, 2010).

HELLENO-CHRISTIANITY AND ARCHBISHOP CHRISTODOULOS

Christodoulos' relations with the Far Right can be traced back to the time of the Dictatorship of the Colonels, when he was secretary of the Holy Synod,

⁹ The Athens Polytechnic uprising occurred in November 1973 as a massive student demonstration expressing the popular rejection of the Greek military junta of 1967–1974. It began on 14 November 1973, escalated to an open anti-junta revolt, and ended in bloodshed on 17 November after a series of events starting with a tank crashing through the gates of the Athens Polytechnic.

FAR-RIGHT RHETORIC ANDTHE CHURCH OF GREECE

while he was elected archbishop shortly before the fall of the regime. During the post-junta period, his contacts with far-right organisations continued, especially with the far-right newspapers *Eleftheros Kosmos* [Free World] and *Stochos* [Aim], while his speeches were dominated by a strong nationalist and far-right undertone, which included the cultural superiority of the Greek nation, the call for the protection of everything Orthodox and Greek from foreign forces, the identification of religion with nationality. (Christopoulos, 2014, pp. 290–291)

With the ascension of Archbishop Christodoulos to the episcopal throne in 1998, the church became extroverted and its attention vis-à-vis the enemies of Helleno-Christianity shifted from the Left to the globalising forces of the European Union (EU) and modernising government policy. A rather telling example of this new logic is the identity card issue. In 2000 the Pasok government of Prime Minister Kostas Simitis, following EU mandates, discontinued the specification of religious affiliation on Greek identity cards. Christodoulos and his followers reacted against this government decision, which was perceived as an attempt to alter their national-religious identity, and organised protest rallies. In this way, the church attempted to emancipate itself and oppose the state, disrupting the relations of cooperation and subordination of the former to the latter (Christopoulos, 2014, pp. 292–293).

"Our Church does not accept the cultural aspect of globalisation, which aims at the homogenisation of peoples, the flattening of traditions and of the particularity of different peoples," said Archbishop Christodoulos in a speech on the issue of identity cards at the rally that took place on Syntagma Square, in central Athens, attempting to defend a monocultural model of identity, such as Helleno-Christianity. "The Church's response to globalisation is not only the defence of our national identity; it is mainly the church's proposal with regards to the spiritual level. Anyone who thinks he is becoming European through uniformity and flattening, he should know that he is becoming a second-class European" (Koukoumakas, 2020). It becomes obvious that, according to Archbishop Christodoulos, the EU and the compliance with its laws aimed to degrade Greek national identity while the main thrust of his argument revolved around the defence of Helleno-Christianity.

This was the first case of the church, or the ecclesiastical discourse, deviating from official state politics, and it was done in the name of defending the national ideology. The church, essentially, opposed the state, because it considered that the state was not protecting the identity it promoted since its establishment. After Christodoulos' death in 2008 and the ascension of Ieronymos to the archbishopric throne, church–state relations were normalised (Christopoulos, 2015, p. 293).

The breakup of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in the early 1990s and, more specifically, the creation of a state on the northern border of Greece called the Republic of Macedonia triggered the reaction of Greek nationalism against the neighbouring country, whose name was perceived as a threat to the territorial integrity and history of Greece (Heraclides, 2018, pp. 162–163). As expected, the church, considering itself as the core of Greekness, had intense involvement in the name issue, adopting an alarmist stance and discourse.

The church, which has historical relations with New Democracy (ND), the main right-wing party in Greece (Christopoulos, 2014), readjusted this relationship to the new realities emerging in 1992, that is, the large rallies for the name issue (Psarras, 2012, p. 217), which were held as an expression of opposition against the choice of name by the newly independent neighbouring country, with notable participation. Ecclesiastical and secular forces, mostly drawn from the grassroots level of the conservative political spectrum, took to the streets at the great rally of Thessaloniki on 14 February 1992 (Heraclides, 2018, pp. 178–179), at which the Archbishop Panteleimon of Thessaloniki declared: "For us, and especially those who reside in our Macedonia, there is no name issue. This issue exists only for the enemies of our homeland and to whom we say that Macedonia was, is and will remain Greek" (Ιερά Μητρόπολη Λαγκαδά, 2012). These events were spearheaded by the Archbishop Christodoulos of Dimitriados-Almyros, the future archbishop. The convergence of neo-nationalism and the church.

A preview of what was going to take place in 1992 was the decision of Archbishop Augoustinos Kantiotis of Florina to excommunicate the film director Theo Angelopoulos for his film *The Suspended Step of the Stork* in December 1990. The film's plot revolved around the disappearance of a politician and his recognition by a journalist in a migrant camp on the northern border of Greece. The premise of the film angered the archbishop, who considered the actors to be "Skopje agents". When the crew arrived in Florina for filming, they were greeted by black flags and offensive caricatures, while soon there were rallies by the archbishop's followers and the excommunication act (Georgakopoulou, 2010). "The script is written in such a wicked way,

¹⁰ Christodoulos was Archbishop of Athens and All Greece and the primate of the Autocephalous Orthodox Church of Greece, from 1998 until his death, in 2008.

¹¹ Skopje is the capital of North Macedonia. However, in Greece the term was used to designate the country during the years of dispute and up until the Prespa Agreement, which settled the issue between the two countries in 2018, was reached. The term is still very much in use in Greece by those – politicians, the public, the media – who refuse to recognise the Prespa Agreement and the recognition of the name "North Macedonia".

so that it allows antinational and anti-Christian messages to transpire," argued Archbishop Augoustinos in an interview, stating that the opposition to the film had to do with defending the ideology of Helleno-Christianity. In the same interview, he also touched on the topical name issue: "While Greece is fighting against the Skopians, Mr Angelopoulos' film utters: 'Down with the borders!'" (Episkopos Episkopos, 2011). The situation was obviously also related with historical developments at the time, such as the collapse of the Eastern Bloc and the migration flows (Kotzamanis and Androulakis, 2009). But it was also determined by the historical past, such as the impact of the Macedonian Struggle¹² and the ethnological composition of Macedonia during the first decades after its incorporation by Greece (Heraclides, 2018), the settlement of refugees (Mavrogordatos, 2017) and the civil war (Kalyvas & Marantzidis, 2016). In Florina, a region with a "complicated history", these developments were perceived as an ethnoreligious threat.¹³

The tension and the intervention of ecclesiastical bodies with regards to the name issue continued in the period from 1992 to 2018. In a letter to US President George W. Bush, Archbishop Christodoulos expressed his opposition to the use of the term Macedonia by the neighbouring country (Mourtos, 2018). In 2011, Archbishop Anthimos of Thessaloniki called for a violent reaction upon hearing of the establishment of a Slavic-speaking radio station in Meliti, Florina:

Those who stayed here then [meaning after the Civil War] are of Greek descent, brought up in their own ways, it is the Skopjan propaganda from abroad which incites them ... and they try to create this issue ... If they say "yes" and they do it, at least I, with forty more brothers, must go to Florina and smash everything (Noiazomai, 2011).

The emphasis on the Greek origin of the Slavic speakers and the talk of foreign propaganda echo the spirit of the rallies. But they are also opening communication channels with the Far Right: Golden Dawn, for instance, had

¹² The Macedonian Struggle was a series of social, political, cultural and military conflicts that were mainly fought between Greeks and Bulgarians who lived in Ottoman Macedonia between 1893 and 1908. The conflict was part of a wider rebel war in which revolutionary organisations of Greeks, Bulgarians and Serbs all fought over Macedonia.

¹³ In the first half of the 20th century, military operations, ethnological rearrangements and ethnic conflicts took place in the wider Macedonia region in the context of national rivalries between the Balkan states and the two world wars, with the Slavo-Macedonian minority being the main protagonist. Memories of the conflicts, culminating in the Greek Civil War, defined historical memory in Macedonia, especially as far as the winners are concerned. See Heraclides (2018).

recourse to similar practices, such as the intervention against the publication of a Greek-Macedonian dictionary in 2009, when members of Golden Dawn, led by Ilias Panagiotaros (a prominent member of the party and an MP from 2012 to 2019) attempted to disrupt a talk organised by Ouranio Toxo (Rainbow)¹⁴ on the Macedonian language (Elliniki Katharsis, 2012).

The signing of the Prespa Agreement on 18 June 2018 (Heraclides, 2018, p. 318) resolved the name issue by changing the constitutional name of the Republic of Macedonia to the Republic of North Macedonia. The agreement was concluded between the foreign ministers of Greece and North Macedonia, Nikos Kotzias and Nikola Dimitrov. This development triggered fierce reactions on the part of the church and other ecclesiastical and religious bodies (Heraclides, 2018).

Despite the initial ambiguous position of the Holy Synod¹⁵ and despite Archbishop Ieronymos distancing himself, the church, in the end, participated in the large rallies that took place in Athens and Thessaloniki in the first two months of 2018 (Με την παρουσία της Εκκλησίας το συλλαλητήριο για τη Μακεδονία, 2018). Archbishop Anthimos of Thessaloniki, who had initially taken an ambivalent position, shifted his position later and even addressed the rally, as Panteleimon had done in 1992, telling demonstrators: "We ask God to rest the souls of the thousands of Greeks who have sacrificed themselves to defend our Macedonia ... Macedonia is Greece and Greece is Macedonia" (Το συλλαλητήριο για το «Μακεδονικό», 2018; Μητροπολίτης Άνθιμος, 2018).

A familiar pattern employed by prominent hierarchs consists in the identification of the Left with national treason, which implies atheism and statelessness, while the recognition of a state named Macedonia is seen as national treason threatening the Orthodox faith. Archbishop Amvrosios of Kalavryta, known for his relations with Golden Dawn (Psarras, 2012, p. 213), expressed anti-Left and anti-government rhetoric in his personal blog on 7 February 2018: "The rally for our Macedonia was ultimately a very a strong slap for the Tsipras government!" while the speech by composer Mikis Theodorakis, who was historically associated with the Left but had taken a conservative turn in the 1990s, at the rally in Athens was central in supporting his argument:

¹⁴ Rainbow is a political party in Greece advocating the recognition and the rights of the ethnic Macedonian minority in Greece.

¹⁵ In Eastern Orthodoxy the Holy Synod is the highest authority in the church and it formulates the rules and regulations regarding matters of church organisation, faith, and order of service.

Mr Theodorakis' words threw all the atheists and those who harbour no love for their country into disrepute. [He called out the] leaders of the Left, all of them! First, he called those who rule us today "ethnonihilists"; second, he described the Syriza government who rules our Greece today as "fascists"; third, he evaluated those who rule our country today as the "most cunning, deceitful and dangerous form of the left-wing" (Αιχμηρή παρέμβαση Αμβρόσιου, 2018).

Characterisations such as "atheists", "traitors" and "nationless", common in the far-right vocabulary, underlined the reasons why the Greek people needed to rally and express their strong opposition to the agreement, according to Archbishop Amvrosios, whose words reflect the church's perception of the Left that was established during the civil war (Το συλλαλητήριο για το «Μακεδονικό», 2017).

Following a similar reasoning, Archbishop Seraphim of Piraeus spoke about the obligation of the church to position itself against "a state which is wretched, an antichrist and inimical to the faith", in the event of the implementation of the agreement (Polygenis, 2018). Following in the footsteps of Archbishop Christodoulos, he made it clear that the recognition of a state under the name of Macedonia was a threat to the faith and identified the leftwing government of Syriza with Stalinist totalitarianism: "Since the day before yesterday, the Piraeus Church has been broadcasting a message about the unacceptable, fascist and Stalinist decision of the Syriza–Anel [Independent Greeks] government as reflected in article 220 of the bill submitted to Parliament for voting" (Το συλλαλητήριο για το «Μακεδονικό», 2017).

The above statements are indicative of the extreme reaction on the part of the church towards the Prespa Agreement. However, there was no lack of moderate reactions and statements expressed on the part of "heretical" voices, or individual views on the part of priests or other persons connected to the church or ecclesiastical circles.

A typical moderate case is that of Archbishop Chrysostomos of Messinia: "I consider, like everyone else, the wish of every Greek citizen to participate in any rally in order ... to express the popular will on this particular issue, as a given and as something to be respected." He also noted: "When in fact these rallies are organised, in order to serve persons and purposes 'from outside and from inside', then the church cannot have a reason to participate, nor a way to be present. Let's think a little more and reflect on the future of the institution and not the achievement and satisfaction of our personal pursuits and visions" (Μπτροπολίτης Μεσσηνίας Χρυσόστομος για συλλαλητήρια).

The above position expresses the opinion that the church does not have to participate in political issues and defend the name "Macedonia", as it has

no competence over this issue. However, this distancing does not translate into consent to the Prespa Agreement, as seen below:

"A trap the church fell into is that it had no business defending the name of Macedonia. As citizens, let's say that we want ... I do not want to position myself politically" (ND, priest).

In other cases, the agreement is seen as a means to settle international affairs; yet there is an alarming stance with regards to the irredentist aspirations of the neighbouring countries, a view shared by all voices, moderate or not, including Archbishop Ieronymos:

That is, when you recognise a Macedonian nation, which is essentially identified with the existence of this state, and when you are not bothered that it is called a Macedonian nation, without such a thing ever existing in history. This is the source of many problems and irredentist dangers in the future ... What is truly recognised is not their Slavic identity but a different national identity, and we accept this and enshrine it with an international treaty. Beyond that, however, yes, there had to be some sort of agreement, that's a fact. (PS, priest)

The above statements make manifest the distancing on the part of the majority of the official church; however, one cannot discern any intention of disagreement or rupture vis-à-vis the rallies, or any recognition of the Republic of North Macedonia by its constitutional name. What transpires is simply a certain opposition to the intervention of the church in secular-political affairs. In short, the church gives its tacit consent: the moderate stance endorsed by certain ecclesiastical agents amounts to a kind of acceptance of nationalist discourse. Therefore, any differentiation or disagreement between extreme and moderate voices lies at the level of tactics and communication, as the extremists align with the extreme nationalist discourse directly linked to the Far Right, while the moderates, even if they distance themselves to a significant degree and condemn extremist views, they still articulate their view around the tacit or open opposition to the existence of a state named "Macedonia" on the northern border of the country because it is seen as a threat. The role of the ideology of Helleno-Christianity has been internalised and endorsed by the majority of the church and is reproduced accordingly, which is obvious in the case of the "Macedonia" name issue.

THE TRANSITION OF GREECE FROM A SENDING TO A RECEIVING COUNTRY

For much of the 20th century, Greece was a sending country, with immigrants heading mainly towards the economically developed countries of northern Europe, Australia and the USA. This condition changed in the 1990s with the fall of the communist regimes, as the country began to receive a large number of immigrants from the former Eastern Bloc, mainly neighbouring Albania. In 1991, 1.63% of the total population of Greece had foreign citizenship; ten years later, this percentage had risen to 7%, with 75% of this increase due to immigration from the former socialist countries (Kotzamanis & Androulakis, 2009, pp. 110–113). The beginning of the millennium was also marked by a shift in the immigration profile of the country, with most new arrivals coming from Asian and African countries.

The biggest challenge, however, would begin in 2015, when, as a result of the Syrian Civil War and other conflicts, 856,723 people arrived in Greece through the sea border, with the vast majority of them heading to other EU countries (Sakellis et al., 2016). The Greek state was unable to manage the resulting humanitarian crisis on its own, and the Greek Orthodox Church proved to be a useful ally complementing the existing state institutions. The NGOs Apostoli ("Mission") and the Support Centre for Returnees and Immigrants were the main vehicles through which material, legal and psychosocial support materialised (Trantas and Tseligka, 2020). However, despite the official stance of the Orthodox Church, there was no lack of extreme views originating from certain ultraconservative members of the church hierarchy and from some members of flock, as we will see below

IMMIGRATION AS A THREAT TO NATIONAL SECURITY

Following the attack on the Twin Towers in 2001 and the subsequent "War on Terror", the Cold War argument which claimed that national security issues should also extend to nonmilitary threats was revived in the political debate of Western countries (Lazaridis and Wadia, 2015). Although no terrorist attack related to Islamic fundamentalist organisations has occurred in Greece, the fear of such a possibility exists and there is no lack of voices, mainly on the Far Right, proposing increased border controls under the pretext of terrorism. Already in 2014, in a letter addressed to the ministries of Interior and Finance, Golden Dawn warned of an orchestrated plan to occupy Greece and Cyprus by ISIS terrorists who were entering the country as refugees and called on the government to impose strict border controls

(Zaroulia, 2014). These concerns appear to be shared by various Christian Orthodox news sites, which speak of upcoming jihadist strikes in the country as part of a wider plan for a holy war against Christians by Muslim immigrants. These websites (for instance, *Romfaia* or *Orthdoxos Typos*) are ecclesiastical news agencies, which do not belong to the Orthodox Church of Greece, but to private individuals; therefore, they do not express official church positions. In these ecclesiastical outlets, immigration is for the most part presented as part of an organised plan orchestrated by foreign powers, which aims to harm Greece and Christian Orthodoxy. The following excerpts are indicative:

It seems that Erdogan needs and uses the migration flows as a siege engine and as pressure tool against Greece and Europe, in the context of his neo-Ottoman aggression and expansionist plans. In fact, many, interpreting the events, argue that the crimes of the holy war will continue on the part of many – not all of them of course – among the Muslim immigrants who already are in Europe or are on their way to Europe, with their well-known religious motto contained in their faith: War of believers against unbelievers (Rerakis, 2020).

The most dangerous thing is, according to TCS (Tech Central Station), that there are other immigrant groups which are even more receptive to al-Qaeda propaganda, mainly Arabs and Pakistanis. Extremists from their country of origin bet more on them and, after crossing the Greek border together, they begin proselytising. Their purpose is to create an al-Qaeda nucleus in Athens, which can cause an uprising (Αμερικάνικο Ινστιτούτο TCS, 2013).

However, such views were not limited either to the Far Right or to a portion of Christian Orthodox columnists but were also reproduced by members of the Holy Synod. For instance, Archbishop Amvrosios of Kalavryta stated in 2017 that:

The state is trying to integrate the children of immigrant-occupiers into public schools. Some Greek parents refuse to accept it, and some accept it! The trouble has already begun. Meanwhile, the so-called immigrants, who are in fact dispatched conquerors, already started their criminal activity! They attack, steal, injure or even kill innocent Greek citizens (Aµβρόσιος: Απεσταλμένοι κατακτητές οι δήθεν μετανάστες, 2017).

Archbishop Seraphim of Piraeus followed a similar line, when, a year earlier,¹⁶ he spoke about what he saw as an upcoming danger for Europe, arising from immigration, in a television interview with a privately owned broadcaster:

The Moroccans cross all of North Africa and arrive in Kastellorizo, because they know that here, they can get their papers sorted in order to continue their journey. The common denominator in all of this is that they are all Muslims. This generates dangers for Europe. Islam is not a religion that accepts difference. In Islam, God is the Quran. The problem is not humanitarian, it is ontological (Πειραιώς Σεραφείμ: Κίνδυνος για την Ευρώπη, 2016).

Although our interviewees avoided such extreme tones, one of our interlocutors, who is the founder of a Christian Orthodox news website, justified Islamophobia as a reaction to the terrorist attacks of recent years, essentially shifting the responsibility to the victims of such discrimination:

Question: Do you think there is Islamophobia in Europe? And if there is, is it justified?

Answer: It exists because they created it. When you chop off a head for nothing, how can there not be? You haven't seen it in Greece. If you see your aunt being slaughtered in Greece, then you will understand that you too will be Islamophobic. They created this thing. Had they not created it, there would be no Islamophobia. (PE, founder of a Christian Orthodox news website)

However, it is important to emphasise that Islamophobia did not develop on the European continent as a reaction to the recent terrorist attacks, but goes back to the 1980s and 1990s, when the European Far Right – spearheaded by the French Front Nationale and the Belgian Vlaams Belang – placed Islam at the core of what they perceived as an immigration problem (Kallis, 2018). As far as Greece is concerned, the Islamophobic discourse was initially expressed through Laos, ¹⁷ from its foundation in 2001 until its electoral decline in 2012, while it acquired clear biological and racial characteristics

¹⁶ Amvrosios, the Archbishop of Kalavryta and Aegialia, resigned from his position in 2019 citing his advanced age. The statements hosted in this section were made while he still held the position of archbishop.

¹⁷ The Popular Orthodox Rally, whose abbreviation Laos also means "people", is a Greek far-right political party, founded by journalist Georgios Karatzaferis in 2000.

with the emergence of Golden Dawn as a political force (Sakellariou, 2019, p. 201). The transition from the Islamophobic rhetoric of Laos to the racist violence of Golden Dawn is also evidenced by the following excerpt from our interview with a member of the Muslim community:

Karatzaferis [the Laos leader] had all the features of the Far Right except for the paramilitary groups. That is, there were partnerships, he had relations with the Egyptian priests, the Copts, and you could see that he was guarded by Golden Dawn members. They had demonstrated against the Egyptian immigrants on Syntagma Square. The rhetoric was becoming bolder but what made a difference was the entry of Golden Dawn to Parliament. They [Golden Dawn] gained immunity, and the attacks were daily. There were the standard attacks, the attacks on the train platforms, where they went and beat up immigrants, tore up their papers and took whatever money they had on them. This was part of the daily life of the immigrants, who did not report it after a certain point despite us urging them to do so. (AS, member of the Muslim community)

SCENARIOS ABOUT DEMOGRAPHIC AND RELIGIOUS "ALTERATION"

However, the biggest concern with regards to national security when it comes to immigration does not seem to be terrorism, but the belief that these people, either willingly or not, are participating in an organised plan to depopulate and culturally alter Greece. Such scenarios do not constitute a novelty for the Greek political scene. As early as 2001, the Laos leader Giorgos Karatzaferis spoke of a coming threat to Christianity Orthodoxy and the demographic composition of the country should a large number of immigrants acquire legal status (Sakellariou, 2019, p. 201). Archbishop Christodoulos had expressed himself in a similar tone:

Today there are about one million [immigrants]; in a few years they will exceed three million. In combination with the demographic problem of the Greeks and although our culture and religion do not allow us to say "Foreigners out!", on the other hand, you realise the lurking danger of turning, after a while, into refugees in our own homeland (Demetis, 2016).

Although these predictions were never confirmed, as Greece remained and remains an overwhelmingly Christian Orthodox country, the events of February–March 2020 on the Greek–Turkish border provided an opportunity for this kind of rhetoric to come to the fore again. On 28 February 2020, Tur-

key's announcement that it would no longer block migrants heading to the EU, combined with Greece's decision to close its borders, led thousands of people to gather at the border of the two states in an unsuccessful attempt to enter Greece. The incidents that broke out between refugees and the Greek security forces attracted the attention of the media, which characterised the situation as an "invasion" and an "asymmetrical threat", thus contributing to the creation of a climate of insecurity and presenting the refugees as pawns of the Turkish political leadership (Kokkinaki, 2021, p. 19). The church's stance vis-à-vis these developments was to support the decisions of the government while also to express sympathy with the refugees. However, it was made clear from the start that the humanitarian crisis would come second to national security. Archbishop Ieronymos' comments after a visit to a military unit at the Greco-Turkish border in March 2020 are indicative in that respect:

I pity these souls who are pushed here, because they become tools in the hands of others ... Our people love you [the security forces] very much and felt proud these days, even after seeing these tragic scenes, which are often projected to create [false] impressions (Papadimitriou, 2020).

However, the unofficial discourse of clerics differed from the church's official position in certain cases, openly characterising these events as an attempt at asymmetrical war on the part of Turkey. All the priests who granted us an interview considered the closure of the Greco–Turkish Evros border crossing, as well as the increased militarisation of the border with Turkey that followed, as the right thing to do:

If it hadn't been for the images we saw in Evros last March. That is, the buses arriving from the interior of Turkey, groups of immigrants, or refugees, or whatever one wants to call them, attempting to enter Greek territory here and now, yes, I would say, it is an overreaction. However, under these conditions and when these people are used up to a point in the logic of an unorthodox war – I'm talking about Greco–Turkish relations now – Greece should clearly also take its own measures. (PI, priest)

On the one hand, you say that the borders should be protected ... Especially because they are coming from Turkey and Erdogan is playing scary games, if he frees two million refugees to come to Greece, this is a problem which is not only demographic, but also national, economic, everything ... Whatever we say about the issues of multicultur-

alism, when it comes to Turkey it becomes a national issue, the threats are enormous, so it is a very complex issue. (P.Ch., priest)

The above excerpts justify Greece's closed border policy based on an alleged threat to national security, arising from the assumption that refugees are being used as instruments of an "asymmetrical war" waged by Turkey against Greece. But apart from speculation about an economic and demographic disaster, no explanation is presented as to how this informal war is taking place or how the ethnic composition of Greece would be affected, when, even at the height of the migration crisis, in 2015–2016, only 57,000 of the one million people who had entered the country ultimately stayed in Greece (Sakellis et al., 2016).

THE ATHENS MOSQUE ISSUE

The first signs of tension appeared with the request to build a mosque in Athens ahead of the 2004 Olympic Games, as the city's Muslim inhabitants did not have an official place to pray, forcing them to resort to informal places of worship. The church was in favour of the construction of a site of worship but expressed objections regarding its location and the construction of a Centre for Islamic Studies, hinting at an alleged connection of similar centres with terrorism (Sakellariou, 2014, p. 295). Like in the case of the migration crisis, in this case too there was an ultraconservative fraction of the members of the Holy Synod who did not follow the official line of the church. Presenting Islam as generally violent and incompatible with the Greek constitution, Archbishop Seraphim of Piraeus requested that no mosque be built in Athens (Sakellariou, 2019). In December 2013, Archbishop Amvrosios of Kalavryta followed a similar line, when he stated on his personal website: "The mosque, which is being attempted to be built somewhere in Votanikos [a city centre districtl with money from the state treasury, i.e., the Christian Orthodox people, is just the beginning of the territorial sovereignty of Islam at the expense of our country" (Amvrosios, Archbishop of Kalavrita and Aigialia, 2013).

The mosque was finally completed in 2020, with the state satisfying almost all the objections of the church on the issue, as the building is not accompanied by a cultural centre, nor does it have minarets.

ISLAM, EUROPE AND THE INCOMPATIBILITY OF CULTURES

One of most debated issues when it comes to immigration is integration into the host country. Archbishop Ieronymos' statement that "Islam is not a religion, but a political party" and that Muslims are "people of war", which he hastened to correct, was heavily criticised on social media (Bonis, 2021). Dis-

cussing the ways in which immigrants could be integrated into Greek society, some of our interviewees declared that this would be impossible because of the different cultural background between European and Muslim countries.

Now we see the problems, because these populations cannot be assimilated, on the one hand, because they do not have the background of the social claims that the European peoples have, and they are two hundred years behind. The example of the headscarf is typical. To have a country that pioneered women's rights and is now faced with the fact that it cannot convince, cannot assimilate a large part of the immigrants who want their girls to wear headscarves. (B.Ch., priest)

Look. To start with, there is no reason to want to assimilate people who have a different culture. What is needed are rights, but these rights as well as Europe's positions must originate primarily in the Christian history of Europe, such as the issues of equality, rights, acceptance of difference ... If tomorrow – I'll say the simplest thing – a group of people from a different culture arrives, who consider women to be inferior, who think that women have no right either to speak or to go out on the street, this cannot be accepted in the public space by a state that has struggled for hundreds of years to achieve this. It cannot go back because of political correctness. (P.N., priest)

These two excerpts present two different worlds, each culturally homogenised, with the European one emerging as tolerant and democratic, and the Muslim one being marked by intolerance and oppression. As a result, Muslim immigrants are presented as living in a different historical time, as if their religion has not allowed them to enjoy the same rights stemming from Europe's Christian history and, in the logical extension of this line of thought, Muslims appear as culturally inferior. However, this scheme cannot but be ahistorical and invented in the context of an Orientalist logic, as in both cases it presents a multitude of ethnicities as a single whole, ignoring the cultural differences between them, as well as their historical trajectory so far. Sakellariou's observation that "the racist and intolerant discourse of the Church … is expressed in terms of cultural superiority-inferiority" (Sakellariou, 2014, p. 287) is confirmed in this case, as it can be seen in the above passages.

THE GENDERED DIMENSION OF ISLAMOPHOBIA

A crucial element in the argument that Islam is backward and a threat to human rights is the perception of the position of women, who are presented as equal to men in Christian Europe and as subordinate and victims of exploitation in the Islamic Orient. Central to this argument is the headscarf as a symbol of oppression, with its presence in countries such as France being used as yet another example of the incompatibility of the two lifestyles. Our interlocutors, although they seem to consider women's rights as an important social achievement, do not recognise Muslim women as autonomous beings who can choose to wear headscarves; they address the issue in monosemantic terms and consider the donning of the headscarf as oppressive by definition. The example used by one of our interviewees to substantiate his point that women are pressured by male family members to endorse the headscarf as a way to dress is typical:

Question: Should women take off the headscarf?

Answer: Well, about your question, the women who wear the head-scarf. I had two female students with headscarves when I taught a lesson for an hour for the first year of high school ... At some point, then, I asked them: "Well, isn't the headscarf bothering you?" "Yes, sir, it bothers us. But our father insists we must wear it." This is the reality. Now for the majority of immigrant women who wear headscarves, etc. I have the impression that it's a matter of instigation to a certain degree. That is, they have been told that you will wear headscarves, so that they know that Islam is also present in the society here. It is a way to show the presence of Islam. (P.A., priest)

The clerics' discourse, as expressed in the passage above, attempts to appropriate an emancipatory rhetoric characteristic of the feminist movement regarding the issue of gender equality, by subsuming it into its own Orientalist way of viewing Muslim women as helpless beings who are unwittingly oppressed via the headscarf. They thus act as the unsolicited saviours of these women whom they want to liberate from their religiously and patriarchally imposed dress (Abu-Lughod, 2002). Therefore, the headscarf issue and, by extension, gender equality become in this way yet another argument in favour of the alleged cultural incompatibility of Europe and the Muslim world.

GENDER, RELIGION AND THE CHURCH

The Church, being a powerful institution since the foundation of the Greek state, could not but express an opinion on gender issues as well, taking into account both the emergence of postsecular feminism (which attempts to reconcile feminist claims with the dictates of religious faith; see Braidotti, 2008;

Mahmood, 2005; Vasilaki, 2016), as well as gender roles, which are increasingly changing and deviating from tradition. The main purpose of women, according to the Church, is to be the partner of the Greek man and, above all, the mother of the children they will bring into the world; this is how they fulfil their highest purpose and ensure the existence of the Greek nation and national identity – a position also reflected in the ideology of the Golden Dawn, the most prominent case of far-right rhetoric of recent years (Theofilopoulos and Karabelias 2016). These social developments, along with the traditionalism governing the Church's ideology on gender issues, lead to an interesting paradox: while the church attempts to adapt to changes in society, it simultaneously seeks to preserve the traditions of premodern societies, especially regarding gender roles and, by extension, the family which is tasked to ensure the continuity of the Greek race. Greece, therefore, presents this peculiarity in comparison to other European countries, as the slow response to feminism, to the new positions and demands of women in society, but also belayed acceptance of the LGBTQI+ community, which questions the foundation of gender identities and roles, is largely based on the very close relationship [the state] maintains with the Church, as mentioned above. This new reality of changing gender dynamics, preoccupies the entire political spectrum, with the object of contention being, among other things, the degree of involvement of the Church in the deliberation of such issues, which are becoming more and more complicated and hard to solve.

One such issue is the civil union of homosexual couples. Civil partnership became legal for heterosexual couples only in 2015 in Greece. Greece was condemned by the European Court of Human Rights for discrimination against homosexual citizens and, finally, in December 2015, it also legalised civil partnership for same-sex couples. The Church's reaction was not uniform, but in any case, it was noticeable (Michos and Figou, 2019). A significant part of the clergy was opposed to civil marriage and to civil partnership before its extension to same-sex couples, as they are considered bonds not blessed by God. This point of view is also echoed in far-right discourse - the example of Golden Dawn is again typical here - which considers marriage and the traditional nuclear family as the supreme institution for the preservation of the Greek state and its religion (Theofilopoulos and Karabelias, 2016). When the legislation was reformed to include samesex couples, the Church took a clear public political position, claiming that the legislation legitimises an "abnormal" bond, misleading society into considering it "normal" (Papageorgiou, 2017). A number of more conservative clerics went so far as to announce that politicians who voted in favour of this legislation would not be admitted to church. Taking for granted that most Greeks are Christian Orthodox and that such a bill is immoral and contrary to the Christian Orthodox faith, they also claimed that the bill would be automatically contrary to the Constitution, which is based on the Bible and which does not allow same-sex relationships (Michos and Figou, 2019). However, despite these official statements on the part of the hierarchy of the governing body [of the Church], our research discovered that the lower clergy's views deviate from the official line and are quite varied, which may imply that certain new perspectives with regards to gender issues are emerging "from below".

Question: Do you think that the Church finds it hard to reach out to particular social groups, such as homosexuals or trans people?

Answer: Look, in our parish we have young people who had no relationship with the Church but started being interested with the way the Liturgy is performed. Also, we have six or seven people who are gay and come to confess, they come to chat, and they are completely accepted. I can say this because they told me so, that is, before they got to know our parish, they maintained their distance from the church. I am happy for them. (P.A., priest)

Question: What is your opinion on civil partnership for same-sex couples and about child adoption by same-sex couples?

Answer: Well, our Church probably disagrees with civil partnership, because quite simply ... as is the case with civil marriage or anything else that is not blessed by the Church for its members. Beyond that everyone is free to choose what they think [is appropriate] ... Eh, all choices are respected, but this is not something that can fulfil the purpose of existence of sexes and what the Creator requires [from us]. (P.I., priest)

Other interviewees said that a person's sexuality is of little concern to them as long as they maintain their faith, are in a committed relationship, and ideally if, despite having accepted their sexual orientation, they do not engage in homosexual acts. Others mentioned that, if they were allowed, they would even perform a religious wedding for a same-sex couples provided the relationship was monogamous and committed:

What is important is to be a member of the Church of Christ and that you define yourself as a Christian. But this also entails something else. I have seen in my personal experience some cases of people trying to combine their faith in Christ with the fact that they realise they are gay ... I will say the same thing I told you before on another occasion. Because this is a new situation, and we will have to see how it

unfolds in the future. But I think this emphasis on rights [that is, the right to gay marriage] is shallow ... Marriage, so to speak, is a sacrament in which two people have their relationship blessed by Christ. The issue is not, say, whether certain forms of sexual relationships are legalised by the Church. I think that this attempt to focus on sexual practices is uncomfortable. The question is whether any relationship between two people makes them better people, brings them closer to each other and to God, and that remains to be proven. For homosexuals and heterosexuals alike, so... (P.E., priest)

Adoption of children by same-sex parents is an issue that emerged as even more sensitive in our interviews. The Church is not ready yet to accept a state-recognised relationship of same-sex couples, let alone acknowledge and accept them as parents:

I think that the adoption of children [by same-sex couples] could, at some point, become a self-evident fact in society and it won't be an issue anymore after fifty years ... In the present time though, because it is a hard social issue to address, I believe that some children enter a transitional phase and some of them pay the price for it ... These are significant issues, we cannot give an answer ... These situations require recourse to psychologists, it is not only a matter of ethics. (P.N., priest)

With regards to the issue of gender transitioning, the Church officially condemned the implementation of the relevant law, arguing that gender identity is not a matter of choice but given by God, and that such a process could lead to an increase in mental health disorders, negatively impact young people, and threaten the institution of the family, and by extension, potentially undermine social cohesion. (Bonis, 2017; Schmitz, 2017). These views, however, are not confined solely to the Church, but they are also shared by the Right. During the debate on the gender identity recognition bill in Parliament in 2017, the current prime minister and leader of New Democracy, Kyriakos Mitsotakis, stated that a psychiatrist advised against gender transition before the age of eighteen, citing a case of a young child who desired to transition because extraterrestrials had told them to do so (Νόμος του κράτους, 2017). Hence, claiming concerns about the age thresholds in the bill (which proposed to allow people from the age of 15 years old to transition), New Democracy voted against bill, while Golden Dawn also opposed it on the grounds it was "unconstitutional" (Ενσταση αντισυνταγματικότητας κατέθεσε n Χρυσή Αυγή, 2017). In the past, Golden Dawn had publicly stated that "after the immigrants, it's your turn", referring to the LGBTQI+ community.

It is also important to examine the roles that the Church still attributes to women for the reproduction of the Greek Christian individual. It is noteworthy that, while the Church seems to wish to adapt to the societal changes, in order to keep up with contemporary times, by taking a moderate stance on some issues, it is evident within its discourse that gender roles remain distinct still to this day. This is not only the case of the Greek Orthodox Church, but it was also noticed in our interviews with members of the Jewish community:

To be sure, religion has standards. I believe that women have a very important role, more important than the man, because of the characteristics of the feminine nature, which is softer, more sensitive, and has a special connection with the child. Essentially, in the Jewish religion women have shown so far that in all situations that relate to matters of faith, they have always been better than men, and that is why they do not have to follow as many commandments as men do, because they have a deeper, innate faith. Hence, I generally believe that women are the pillars of the household, as they are the ones instilling emotional growth required during their formative years. At the same time, if they are in position to do so, there is no problem for them to work, but this should not be at the expense of their family. (LT, member of the Jewish community)

The prevailing opinion among religious circles is that women are more sensitive, tender, and flexible and predisposed to personal accomplishment via motherhood and the creation of a family (Papageorgiou, 2017). A career woman is simply considered a selfish woman, while the Church deems abortion a mortal sin considering it to be murder (Archbishop Christodoulos, 2002). These views are also echoed in Golden Dawn's discourse, as abortion is characterised as infanticide, while Golden Dawn's political program states that it aims to ban abortions, with no exceptions for health reasons or in the case of rape (Theofilopoulos and Karabelias, 2016). However, these stances are not limited to far-right quarters, but are also accepted more widely by the Right, with the most recent example being the case of the New Democracy MEP Stelios Kympouropoulos voting against the right to abortion in the European Parliament (Ψήφισε κατά των αμβλώσεων ο Κυμπουρόπουλος, 2021).

Similar views – yet with a certain variation – were expressed by our interlocutors from the Jewish and Muslim communities on the issue of abortion:

Islam recognises special reasons which would allow a woman to have recourse to an abortion. For instance, when she is at a very young age

or very old age, which endangers her life and the life of the child. Nevertheless, practically speaking, there are no restrictions in the Islamic world. (A.S., member of the Muslim community)

Eeh, abortion is something that also exists in Judaism, like divorce. It's not something we want, it is an extreme situation and it requires very specific conditions for it to be implemented, but the principle of the Jewish religion is life. Abortion is permitted in cases where the mother's life is threatened by the foetus, not because the pregnancy is unwanted. [It is allowed] only in extreme cases. Ultimately, the Jewish religion is much more tolerant of contraception. (N.Ch., member of the Jewish community)

I do not agree with abortion. Now, of course, I have never been pregnant, and I have never been in the position of having to decide whether to keep a child when I am not certain whether I can financially support raising it. I mean, I will never judge a woman who gets an abortion ... Now it is partly a murder, in the sense that one way or another, if you are pregnant, something has happened. (L.T., member of the Jewish community)

It is also noteworthy that both representatives of the Christian Orthodox and the Islamic faith demonstrate a certain hesitancy towards the feminist movement, yet this stance also varies in terms of degree:

Question: So, do you think that feminism as a movement – with many claiming that it has now become excessive and extreme and threatens certain social institutions – threatens Christianity or the institution of the Church?

Answer: It does not threaten the institution of the Church, the Church has not been threatened by the Crusades, will it be threatened by Femen? I see something different in feminism. I see that these women are losing their purpose. That is, they could be fighting other things, and they are fighting the wrong things. (P.E., founder of a Christian Orthodox news website)

First of all, given my age I think that the feminist movement is threatened by itself. I mean, we live in polarising times. [The feminist movement] is uncertain about its course of action right now, because it has to adapt, since in previous years the movement attempted to impose itself. That is, you had to have certain characteristics, to be a feminist; otherwise, they would show you the door. (A.S., Muslim community member)

This suspicion or even ambivalence towards contemporary feminism is indicative of the paradox that the leaders and the clergy of monotheistic denominations are called upon to face today, as underlined above. This paradox lies between the prevailing traditionalism anchored in patriarchal precepts, on the one hand, and the modern and postmodern claims made by women (and also the LGBTQI+ community), which de facto impose a certain degree of modernization, on the other.

☞ CONCLUSION

In analysing the official and informal discourses of the representatives of the Orthodox Church of Greece, it became evident that the establishment of a national church in the mid-nineteenth century followed the precepts of secularisation, as they were disseminated through the ideas of the Enlightenment, which resulted in the alignment of the Church with both the religious and the national identity.

The racist and intolerant discourse expressed by members of the Church, especially regarding the religious and national Other, does not seem to be articulated on the basis of an alleged racial superiority of the Greek nation over other nations, but, as Sakellariou had aptly observed (2014, p. 287), "it is expressed in terms of cultural superiority-inferiority". This kind of rhetoric is evident in the passages that refer to Islam and to cultural incompatibility, which our interviewees present as an insurmountable obstacle to the integration of Muslim immigrants into European society. The Greek and European identity, alongside the principles of human rights and freedom, is portrayed as a derivative of Europe's Christian history according to out interviewees and is constructed in opposition to the assumed violence and lack of freedom that is attributed to Muslim populations.

The far-right and nationalist discourse on the part of members of the Church regarding the Macedonia name dispute is articulated on the basis of an alleged threat to national identity emanating from granting the name "Macedonia" to a state situated on the northern border of the country. What contributed to this stance are the strong ties that a significant part of the Church maintains with the Far Right as well as the Church's role in the shaping of Greek national identity per se. Even those moderate voices, who distanced themselves from the Far Right or even condemned it, and who declared their opposition to the protests related to the name issue (rallies, etc.),

were limited to stating that the church does not have the authority to intervene in political matters. This distance, however, translates into their silent consent to the aforementioned actions and the consolidation of the role of the church as the exponent and guardian of Greek Christian national identity, directly linked to Greek nationalism.

As for the perceptions formed with regards to gender issues, for the most part the Church attempts to appear as receptive and increasingly progressive, not only to keep up with the times and the societal changes it requires, but also to oppose itself to the "patriarchal and backward Islam", which is also considered a national threat. This stance, however, does not prevent the Church from frequently expressing conservative views which impose limits to women's lives, attempts to control them in almost every aspect of their lives, thus delineating and legitimising its own logic of normalcy.

The endorsement of aspects of far-right ideology does not imply, of course, that our interviewees necessarily belong to the political space of the Far Right. Our research sample is not large enough to draw definite conclusions for the Church of Greece as a whole; yet it did attempt to identify and highlight certain prevailing trends. The reluctance on the part of clerics from the upper echelons of the church hierarchy limited our sample to the lower clergy. Future research that would also include the senior ranks of the hierarchy could potentially illuminate further aspects of the normalisation and dissemination of far-right rhetoric within the Greek Orthodox Church.

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AFTERWORD

DIMITRIS CHRISTOPOULOS

"Whoever is not afraid the face of the monster, means that they have begun to resemble it."

Whoever is not afraid the face of the monster, means that they have begun to resemble it.

MANOS HADJIDAKIS

Twenty-seven years ago, here in Central Europe we believed that Europe was our future; today we feel that we are the future of Europe.

VICTOR ORBAN
Prime Minister of Hungary, 2017

Orban's words are not presumptuous. They reflect the mood and conviction of a politician that the time has come to pour the concrete of his agenda into the fragile European edifice. Agenda setting is perhaps the most long-term strategic moment. Because, even if you don't ultimately decide what exactly will happen, you have set the limits both on the left and the right, beyond which there can be no political decisions. You have created the issues and the famous non-issues. The non-issues, the ones we just don't talk about, are usually the ones that encapsulate violence and the imposition of silence and oblivion. They embody a power relation that is overwhelmingly in favour of enforcement.

A major part of the contested political "becoming" remains in the no-go zone of public consultation and is settled by decisions which (either because of their nature or because of their motives) cannot be made public. The object of non-decision is that which is not discussed. It is a "a means by which demands for change in the existing allocation of benefits and privileges in the community can be suffocated before they are even voiced; or kept covert; or killed before they gain access to the relevant decision-making arena; or, failing all these things, maimed or destroyed in the decision-implementing stage of the policy process" (Bachrach & Baratz, 1970, p. 44, in Kaitatzi-Whitlock, 2007, p. 35). It is indeed these decisions that, in the final analysis, constitute the hegemonic relations precisely because "there is something much

more in the unspoken than in the spoken" (Attali, 1976, p. 77). Simply put, if the decision decides the political question, the decision or non-decision decides what *should not* be a political question, *precisely* because it remains a major political stake, whose management involved a prominent role for violence. The Pontic Genocide decision is pre-eminently a non-decision. The Pontic Genocide is eminently a non-issue, for example. We have decided that a genocide has taken place and there is no room for conversation. We decided that in Thrace there are Muslims, not Turks, and that was the end of discussion. We decided that "Macedonia is Greek" and that's it. Here are some telling examples.

When at some point, as a minister, Nikos Filis¹⁸ questioned the validity of the verdict on genocide, it was considered a desecration by the raging crowd in Syntagma Square (Christopoulos, 2015). In front of this crowd stood the (then) opposition MP Giorgos Koumoutsakos, who was lynched under the chants of the slogan "Scumbags, traitors, politicians". Koumoutsakos, as soon as he was released from the hospital, stated with candour that "the moral author of his lynching was Nikos Filis and his statements". That is, the man was beaten up, his life was put in danger, but then he pointed his finger towards Filis: he was the one who led the crowd who were justifiably indignant and turned against him (that is, Koumoutsakos).

I think this is the most interesting thing: that the victim of brutality did not have the fundamental courage to turn against his assailants, but he also targeted the minister who had blasphemed. In non-issues, then, what matters is not so much what one says, but simply the fact that one (doesn't) say(s) it. According to the official – diplomatic or otherwise – discourse, there is no room for choice between alternative ways of perception, in the context of a consensual-pluralist perspective with regards to these issues. National issues are *non-issues*. What is desirable at all costs with regards to non-decision issues is that these are not included in the political agenda in ways different to those perpetually accepted. To dispute them is something like blasphemy. And it is punished via the use of force to inhibit their entry, either by preventing them from rising, or by threatening sanctions of intimidation or coercion, or, finally, by allowing them to defuse (Bachrach & Baratz 1970, pp. 42–46). Such means of preventing public consultation have been commonly used in the past and are still used today. Thus, a hidden agenda of non-issues is created, the content of which cannot be subject to any mechanism of sociopolitical control or accountability by organised political

¹⁸ Nikos Filis is a Greek politician and journalist. He held the office of Minister of National Education and Religious Affairs from 23 September 2015 to 5 November 2016 under the Syriza–Anel coalition government (2015–2019).

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forces or institutions, nor can it be studied in terms of scientific research for reasons related to the alleged "nationally sensitive" nature of non-issues in Greece. The sometimes furious reactions, when these issues are "stirred up" by researchers, journalists or politicians – for example, in the Filis case – are outcomes of the hidden agenda. Simply put, disagreements on political issues are generally tolerated and expected. Disagreement in setting the agenda by highlighting those points that have no place in its official version – and belong strictly to the invisible side of the agenda – is neither expected nor tolerable.

The book in hand attempts successfully to do that and breaks the silence and oblivion. It talks about the non-issues while attempting to document – based among other things on the discourse of the subjects themselves – the heterogeneous nature of the new Alternative Right in Greece combined with the consolidation and normalisation of the traditional far-right discourse.

The physiognomy of the new Far Right of the 21st century does not resemble the putschists of the 20th century; it does not resemble Papadopoulos, Franco, Pinochet and the rest of the army officers. It resembles more all these well-heeled alt-right youths as well as those who are not so young, who would swear they are democrats, but at the same time would spew venom against all those who are weak, against minorities, and so on. The main problem is that this kind of Alt-Right is shifting the agenda by leading people who have nothing to do with it to be drawn into its choices. The key quality of the modern Alt-Right is its contagiousness to people who think they are immune to its influences, yet, ultimately, they end up like the Alt-Right, if not worse. How can one explain that a democratic judge, like the President of the Hellenic Republic, is photographed in front of the fence built on the Greek-Turkish Evros border as a tool to prevent the entry of refugees and immigrants? How can one explain that a little later the same person offers her patronage as head of the Greek state to a congress of gynaecologists on female subfertility and fertility, which turns out to be a grotesque business of fascist discourse? How can one explain that the representative of the Greek Alt-Right par excellence, Konstantinos Bogdanos MP, in July 2021 prevents the awarding of a person, whose commendation had already been announced by the Presidency of the Republic, and then publicly congratulates himself for his achievement, thus demeaning the institution?

What do I mean to say? Antonis Samaras, the most right-wing prime minister to ever had headed the Third Hellenic Republic, went to the Evros border, and was photographed at the fence, but no one was surprised. The far-right MP Bogdanos acted in accordance with his conscience when he did "what needed to be done" so as the rescuer of refugees and migrants would not be awarded. However, how is it possible for the Foreign Ministry to ex-

pose the head of state in such manner, even if we assume that the rescuer's name found itself on the list of awardees by mistake? And how does the president put up with it, thus degrading herself? These are the cracks in the edifice of democracy, through which the polity is slowly being poisoned. Be careful, though! It is not cancelled. In the final analysis, "people get the government they deserve", as Tocqueville said. Wise words.

Let's forget coups and tanks, then. The army is the guardian of the polity now. Fascism, however, is "a process without a subject", to paraphrase Althusser. This edited volume does not speak to or about the protagonists of the process of mainstreaming the far-right discourse. The volume speaks with and about the background actors, namely the anonymous agents who are likely to get angry if someone labels them as "far-right".

This is the novelty that makes the book stand out in Greek literature.

It is a pleasant position for an author to see that one of his books opens the way for others. This is how I felt when I was asked to write the afterward of this volume. In 2014, I edited an exhibition – also under the auspices of the Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung – which turned into a book in Greek under the title *The Deep State in Greece and the Far Right*. I perceive the book at hand as a continuation and as an attempt to explore new areas, such as gender issues, but also to expand the research into the issues we were dealing with at the time, such as the military and the church. I am happy research-wise, yet sad politically-wise.

The crucial question that stays with the reader upon completion of the study of this book is the following: does someone who supports positions that are firmly or loosely classified as belonging to the realm of the Far Right be necessarily also classified as a far-right subject? Do we risk committing the same mistake like those nationalists who would regard those centrists who were disagreeing with their practices as communists? Are we in danger of succumbing to some kind of pan-fascism? Just as the nationalists used to see the centrists who disagreed with their practices everywhere as the snake of communism, are we making the same mistake? I consider the question – or rather the answers to this question – to be of major strategic importance for the developments that are currently taking place.

The second question is more strategic, more political, that is: is it sensible, namely is it politically expedient, to classify anyone and everyone who might make a racist comment, reproduce a nationalist creed, a stereotypical perception, and so on, to the Far Right? At the end of the day, we live in Greece, a country where nationalism generously bathes in its light the whole spectrum of the electorate without significant distinctions.

This is a critical challenge that researchers concerned with the mainstreaming of far-right discourse must grapple with. The authors of this vol-

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ume do just that. They rightly point out that the endorsement of aspects of far-right ideology does not entail that these subjects necessarily belong to this political space, whether this concerns the church, the military, or the media.

Yet, the findings of the research, whether this concerns the discourses articulated by priests, journalists, or army officers, do not lend themselves to complacency. The argument that, despite the electoral decline of Golden Dawn and its condemnation as a criminal organisation by the Greek courts, the discourses that elevated Golden Dawn as a political force remain particularly influential having spread within Greek society is confirmed.

In this short afterword we referred to non-issues. The vilest non-issue, however, is the one that creeps into most of the assumptions of contemporary far-right discourse: that it doesn't exist. It is us who are "hypersensitive", "excessive", even suspicious. That everything goes well, and if not, in any case, we will sort things out in the usual way. We will hide something, we will recall something else, we will insist on something different. And life will go on. However, it shouldn't be that way. Manos Hadjidakis, when asked why he was so angry with the tabloid *Avriani* (which was not called "farright" by anyone at the time, not even its most sworn enemies; everybody was stuck with the label "populist"), answered prophetically: "Whoever is not afraid the face of the monster, means that they have begun to resemble it."

Long live Manos Hadjidakis, then!

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After Golden Dawn: The diffusion and transformations of far-right thinking

The survey was conducted by DISSENSUS-social research **Principal investigators:** Rosa Vasilaki and George Souvlis

Statistical analysis: Trifonas Lemontzoglou

Research assistants: Nikos Antonakos, Anna Mpirmpiropoulou, Natasa Mpraesa, Katerina Doukarelli, Andromachi Koutsoulenti, Stefanos Liakakos, Monica Namia, Vasilis Nikitakis, Giorgos Papakonstantinou, Elia Psara, Iro Tsarmpopoulou-Fokianou, Elli Vougiouka

ROSA VASILAKI, GEORGE SOUVLIS AND TRIFONAS LEMONTZOGLOU

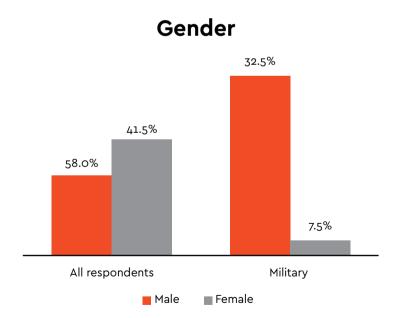
The completion of the Golden Dawn trial in October 2020 concluded the process of the organisation's social delegitimisation that had begun some years previously. The entire political spectrum, more or less, including parties that had maintained direct relations with Golden Dawn leaders in the past, welcomed the conviction. The convergence of the entire political spectrum under the so-called "democratic arc" in opposition to the criminal Nazi organisation, mass protests and the unanimity of the media seemed to construct a new kind of consensus in the opposite direction: the social tolerance that enabled Golden Dawn to emerge as a regulatory factor during the ten-year economic crisis in Greece gave way to a wide convergence opposed to its practices, which were henceforth characterised as criminal. Nonetheless, the ideas it fostered were not equally condemned, and this was the trigger for this opinion poll. In other words, the aim of this survey was to examine whether the ideological patterns on which Golden Dawn relied - and which were adopted in various versions by all political variants of the Greek right - have persisted since its conviction, to look at the impact of Golden Dawn's ideas on the perceptions of Greek society, and to explore how far-right discourse pervades everyday life and permeates attitudes and views that are gradually being normalised.

More specifically, the questions of the opinion poll were formulated around topics which, following qualitative research and the review of the relevant literature, were found to be pivotal to the ideological discourse of those political formations that called for the return to a specific idea of "Greekness" on the basis of "conservative" traits. This survey, conducted by the research group DISSENSUS-social research, is part of a broader study – reflected in the chapters presented in the volume at hand - which examines the extent to which the far-right rationale and ways of understanding social realities have permeated everyday discourse.

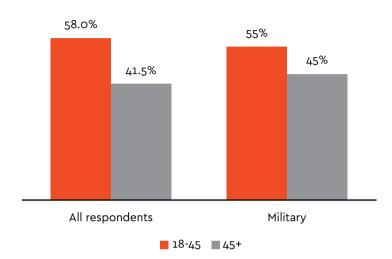
The questionnaire focused on a research gap, namely the dissemination and wider acceptance of central issues stemming from far-right and ultra-conservative discourse, whether this originates in far-right political parties or in so-called civil society (for example, organisations or associations) whose stance on social matters is not necessarily progressive. At this point, it should be stated, however, that the study does not imply that whoever agrees with the individual statements presented in the questionnaire necessarily professes far-right views in general. Our aim is rather to further explore whether the modern "agenda" of the Far Right – which rejects a social shift to more tolerant and inclusive attitudes, stances and laws, while experiencing this shift as a "crisis of values" – has penetrated everyday discourse. In other words, we look at how these extreme opinions, which are formulated negatively, through phobias and exclusion, become "self-evident" and come to determine what is perceived as "common sense".

In terms of methodology, the questionnaire was prepared as a survey with a choice predominantly between two options, such as "yes"/"no", "I agree"/"I disagree". It is true that the option "neither" or "no opinion"/"no answer" was not included (although in some cases, respondents left some questions unanswered, most probably because they did not relate to the choices we offered), and that a Likert-type scaling would provide us with a more complex mapping of trends and stances. However, our goal was to challenge participants to take a position between polarised dilemmas in order to ensure a clear point of view with regard to the perceptions which the questionnaire sought to research.

The sample – which aims at capturing the trends and the social impact of far-right thinking rather than drawing a direct statistical analogy with the actual population - includes, in addition to the questionnaire respondents, a focus group from the military. Since the military have often been identified with conservatism in the collective social consciousness, and, furthermore, they profess to be the protectors of an established and largely anachronistic Greekness. our goal was to determine whether there is a divergence between them and Greek society as a whole. The survey was carried out nationwide from 15 November to 15 December 2020, mainly focusing on Athens and its suburbs. A total of 621 questionnaires were completed, 40 of which exclusively by military personnel. Of these 621 questionnaires, 428 were submitted electronically, whereas 193 were completed manually. The original target was to complete all questionnaires by hand; however, the preventative measures against Covid-19 overturned our initial plans. The electronic questionnaire was circulated through the research team's extensive network, with particular emphasis on capturing different ages, genders and educaThe survey's sample is distributed as follows: 41.3% of all respondents were men, whereas 57.5% were women; 58% of the sample belonged to the 18-45 age group, whereas 41.5% were 46 or over; 33% of the sample had completed primary and/or secondary education, 49.7% of the sample had completed third-level education, whereas 16.7% of the sample had advanced to postgraduate and/or doctorate level; 83% of respondents lived in Attica and Piraeus, whereas 14.3% resided in the rest of the country. A large percentage of the sample, approximately 69%, got its information from the internet, which emerges as the dominant media, with social media accounting for 58%. Television came third with 36%, then radio with 23%, whereas 13% relied on newspapers (offered as a multiple-choice question).

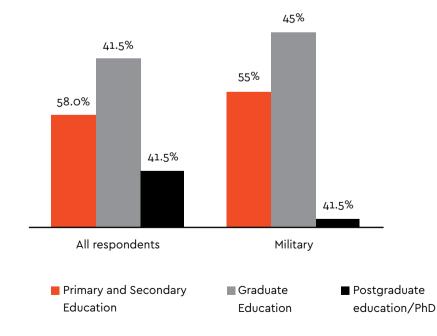


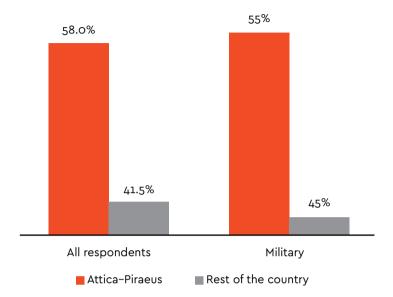
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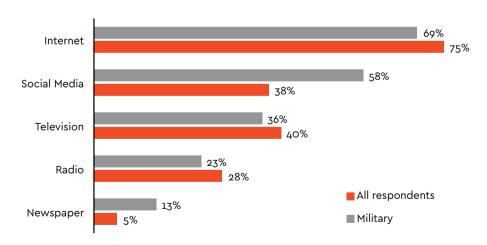
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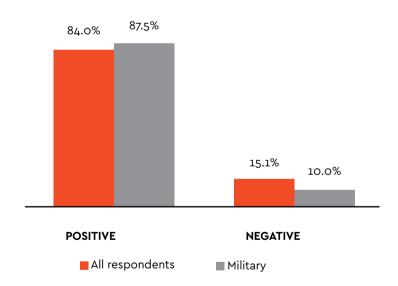
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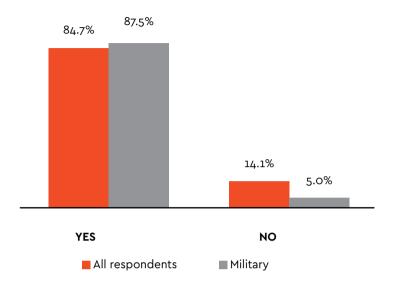


Questions 1–3 seek an assessment of Golden Dawn and its activities in the wake of its conviction. A particularly interesting finding with regard to these questions is the overwhelming rejection of Golden Dawn across Greek society, except for specific parts of the sample: 84% of all respondents endor-

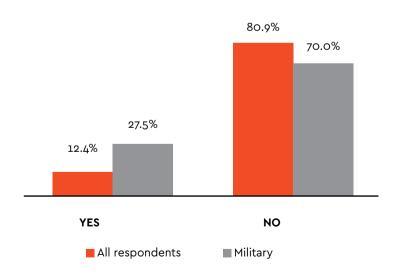
sed the outcome of the trial, 84.7% believed that Golden Dawn was indeed a criminal organisation, whereas only 12.4% believed that it did some good. The sample from the military follows a similar pattern concerning the first two questions (in fact, its percentages are higher than the ones from all respondents), whereas there is a rather significant divergence as regards the third question, given that 27.5% considered that Golden Dawn did some good. The spontaneous responses about "the good things that Golden Dawn did" are also particularly interesting. Characteristic responses included that "they helped poor people", "protected defenceless citizens", "denounced scandals and machinations", "worked selflessly for the Greeks", "gave priority to the Greeks" and "fought against illegal immigration". These statements indicate that insofar Golden Dawn is valued by a number of Greek citizens, its main advantage is based on its perceived prioritising of those Greeks who feel marginalised and threatened, and on its portrayal of the political system as filthy, corrupt and indifferent towards its citizens.

1. WHAT IS YOUR OPINION ON THE OUTCOME OF THE GOLDEN DAWN TRIAL?





3. DO YOU BELIEVE GOLDEN DAWN DID SOME GOOD?



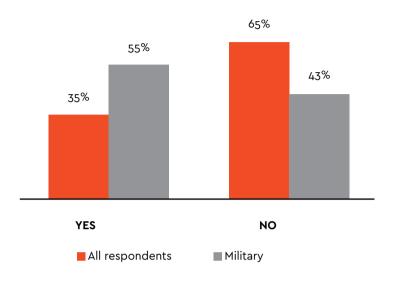
Nevertheless, as we stressed above, our aim was to go beyond the conviction of Golden Dawn as a criminal organisation, and to investigate the

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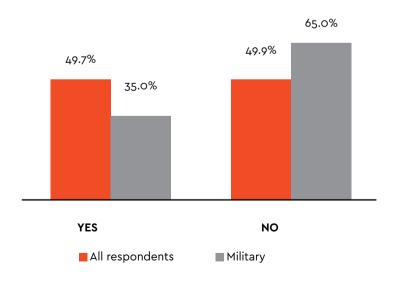
pervasion of reasoning processes which could be described as the far-right standpoint. The following questions thus focus on the issue of cultural identity, religious identity, internal and external security, perceptions of sexual identity and difference, and understanding of antisemitism.

Thereafter, questions 4–11 focus on cultural identity and cultural difference. At this point, it begins to appear that despite Golden Dawn's unanimous condemnation, some perceptions central to the Far Right's universe of values are embraced to a significantly larger extent. Some 35% of all respondents believe that Greek civilisation is superior to others, whereas this view reaches 55% within the military, and 47% among respondents who have completed secondary education. With regard to whether Greece is a racist country, 49.7% believe that it is not, with this share reaching 65% among the military, and without any major discrepancies concerning the other general characteristics of the sample. When asked if they believed that Greece was in danger of cultural alteration, 57.1% of all respondents answered positively, with this share reaching 72.5% within the military, and 68.8% among those who had completed secondary education, whereas it is also noteworthy that in each subcategory of the sample, over 50%, that is, the majority, believed this was the case. With reference to whether children born to non-Greek parents in Greece should be able to acquire Greek citizenship, the overwhelming percentage (76.8%) of all respondents was in favour. Again, this share was significantly lower within the military (52.5%), with the majority being in favour even in this case. This finding may indicate a positive shift in the treatment of second-generation immigrants, and the perceptions concerning their integration into Greek society. However, 62.6% (and over 50% in each subcategory examined) and an overwhelming 90% of the military believe that the number of immigrants in our country is too high. Moreover, 58.5% of all respondents (with over 50% in each subcategory examined) and a staggering 87.5% of the military, as well as 71.9% of those who have completed secondary education believe that immigration is related to crime. In this spirit, a significant part of society seems to have appropriated the derogatory vocabulary employed by Golden Dawn, since 50.1% of all respondents and 72.5% of the military agree with or use the term "illegal immigrant" (lathrometanastis, a pejorative term with particularly negative connotations in the Greek language). It is noteworthy that the public recognizes a difference between immigrants and refugees (89.5% of all respondents, without significant divergence among the various parts of the sample). It seems that despite the unanimity concerning the criminal conviction of Golden Dawn, a significant part of the population perceives cultural difference as a threat and despises it (for example, Greek civilisation is superior, immigrants are associated with crime) but does not necessarily

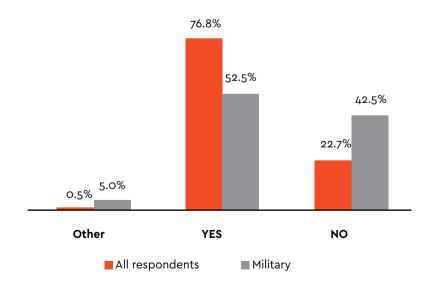
4. DO YOU CONSIDER GREEK CIVILISATION TO BE SUPERIOR TO OTHERS?

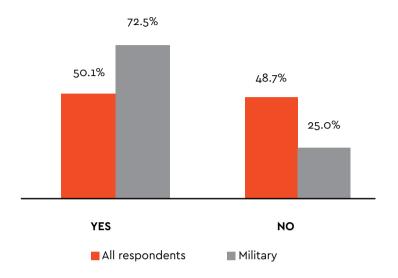


5. IS GREECE A RACIST COUNTRY?

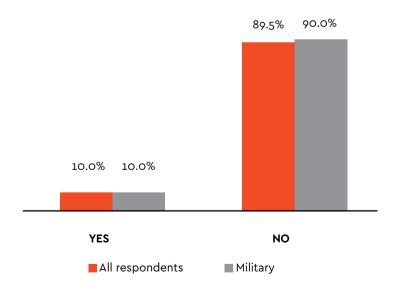


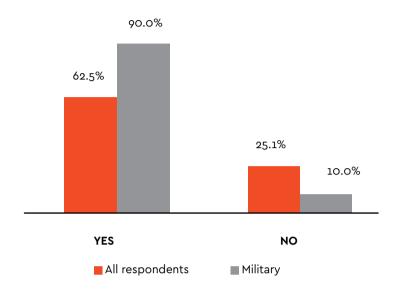
7. SHOULD CHILDREN BORN IN GREECE TO NON-GREEK PARENTS BE ABLE TO ACQUIRE GREEK CITIZENSHIP?



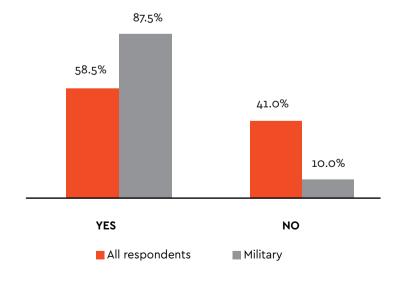


9. ARE REFUGEES AND IMMIGRANTS THE SAME THING?



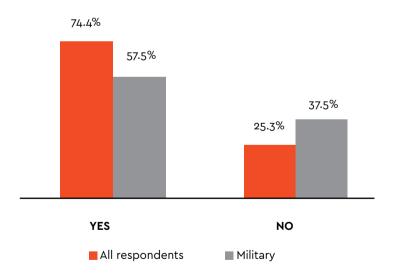


11. DO YOU BELIEVE IMMIGRATION IS RELATED TO CRIME?

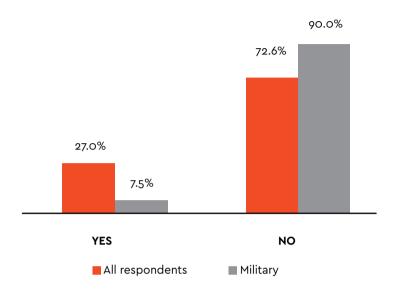


Questions 12–16 focus on the issue of religious identity and religious difference. What is interesting here is that despite the fact that a significant share, namely 74.4% of all respondents, agree with the separation of church and state, only 27% want to remove religion (a subject primarily focused on Orthodox Christianity) from the school curriculum, even though 81.1% wish that the subject include other religions. Such discrepancies are likely to indicate a discrepancy between religion as an element that is considered a key component of Greek cultural identity and the church as an institution, which does not seem to enjoy similar appreciation. In relation to the issue of religious diversity, a significant shift seems to have taken place, since 61% of all respondents agree with the establishment of non-Christian places of worship in their city, with this percentage being, however, strikingly lower, namely 35%, in the military. It is also interesting that the majority of respondents, that is, 61.3% of all respondents, believe that Islam threatens the freedom of women in the West, which indicates a significant diffusion of stereotypical Islamophobic perceptions in Greece, a trend that is also rising in Europe at large.

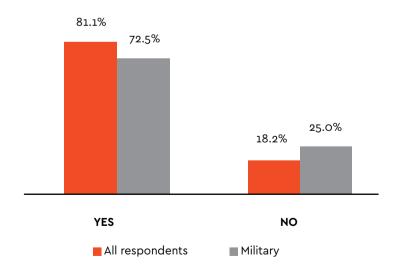
12. DO YOU AGREE WITH THE SEPARATION OF CHURCH AND STATE?



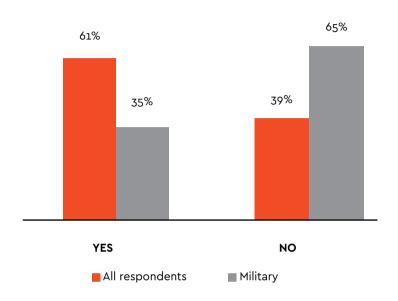
205 13. SHOULD RELIGION BE REMOVED AS A SUBJECT FROM THE SCHOOL CURRICULUM?



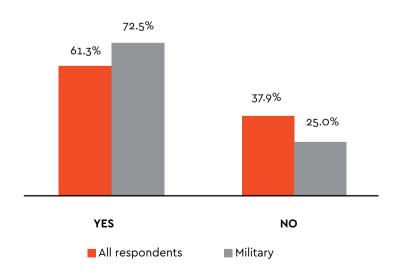
14. SHOULD OTHER RELIGIONS BE INCLUDED IN THE SUBJECT OF RELIGION IN SCHOOL?



15. DO YOU AGREE WITH THE FOUNDATION OF NON-CHRISTIAN PLACES OF WORSHIP (FOR EXAMPLE, A MOSQUE) IN YOUR CITY?

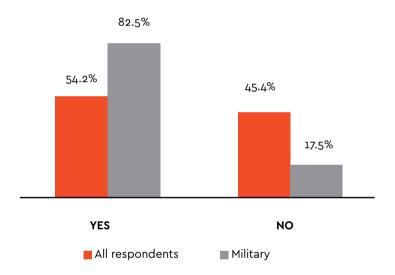


16. DO YOU THINK THAT ISLAM THREATENS THE FREEDOM OF WOMEN IN THE WEST?



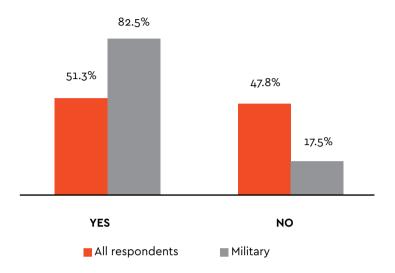
Questions 17–18 focus on the issue of internal security and policing. More specifically, 54.2% agree that "we used to sleep with the doors open",¹ an expression emanating from the semantic and emotional universe of the Far Right, which indicates a nostalgia for an imaginary "security", and probably explains why 51.3% agree with the increased policing practices applied by the government, whereas the military again exhibit much higher percentages (82.5% in both questions).

17. DO YOU AGREE WITH THE STATEMENT "WE USED TO SLEEP WITH THE DOORS OPEN"?



¹ This locution is commonly used to whitewash repressive practices and restrictions of human rights and personal freedoms, contrasting those as less important in comparison with the sense of security that such practices are alleged to guarantee. As such, the locution is often used to express preference to dictatorial regimes in contrast to democratic and constitutional governance.

18. THE NEW GOVERNMENT HAS CLEARLY INCREASED POLICING. DO YOU AGREE WITH THIS PRACTICE?

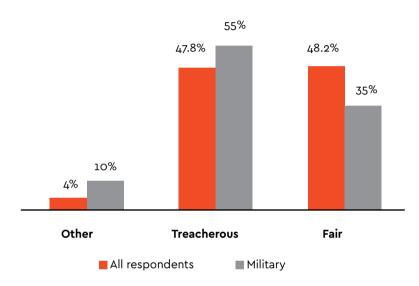


Questions 19–23 focus on the issue of external security and perceptions regarding neighbouring countries. It is noteworthy that the Prespa Agreement² is still divisive, with 47.8% considering it "treacherous" and 48.2% considering it "fair". The divergence among subcategories is important here: for example, 44% of respondents with higher educational level consider the agreement to be "fair" whereas with 62% of respondents with lower educational level consider it "treacherous". The negative perceptions are even more intense regarding neighbouring countries, which 68.5% believe are hostile towards Greece (a share that reaches 95.5% in the military, as expected, to some extent). In this perspective, 46.1% of all respondents consider, after evaluating the March 2020 events in Evros,³ that the country was invaded, whereas the respective share reaches a striking 92.5% among the military. The notion that neighbouring countries covet Greece and that international agreements are a betrayal and not a compromise due to geopolitical realities, as well as an implicit perception that refugees are "invad-

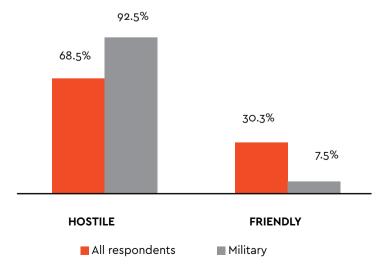
² The Prespa Agreement was signed on 12 June 2018 between Greece and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, resolving a long-standing dispute over the latter's name, which was henceforth recognised as the Republic of North Macedonia).

³ The events at the Greek-Turkish border along the Evros river began on 28 February 2020 when Turkey declared that it would open its borders with the EU and not prevent refugees and migrants from crossing into Europe, an announcement that immediately prompted an influx of migrants and refugees to its border with Greece.

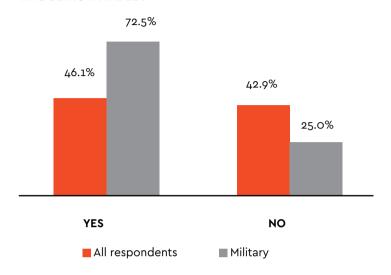
19. WAS THE PRESPA AGREEMENT TREACHEROUS OR FAIR?



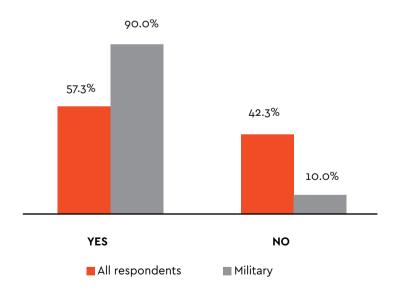
20. DO YOU CONSIDER NEIGHBOURING COUNTRIES TO BE FRIENDLY OR HOSTILE TOWARDS GREECE?

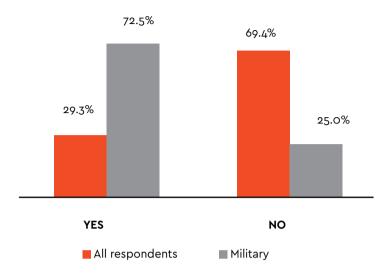


21. AFTER THE EVENTS IN EVROS, DO YOU THINK THAT GREECE WAS BEING INVADED?

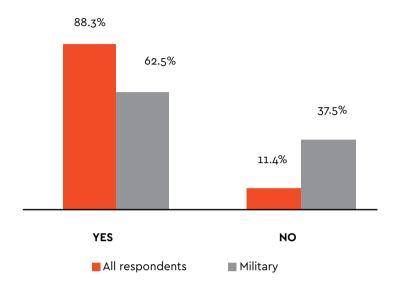


22. DO YOU AGREE THAT MILITARY SERVICE SHOULD REMAIN COMPULSORY?

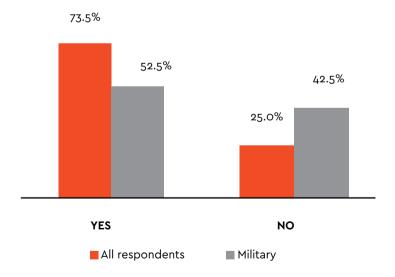


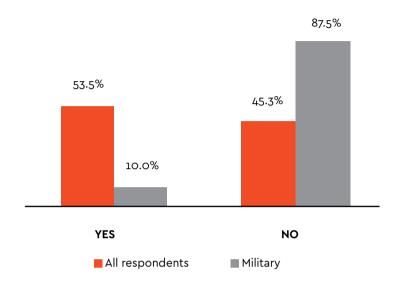


Questions 24–26 focus on the issue of sexual identity and difference. This is perhaps the issue where we observe the most significant shift: 88.3% of all respondents believe that homosexuals should have equal rights (as well as a significant 62.5% in the military, who until recently had extremely rigid views concerning gender issues). Similarly, 73.5% support the right of homosexuals to marry (the respective share is also high among the military, reaching 52.5%), whereas the share drops to 53.5% as regards the issue of child adoption (and a mere 10% in the military). These findings lead to two types of conclusions: First, that despite the reactions of recent years, primarily those emerging from within the church, Greek society is beginning to mature when it comes to matters concerning sexual identity. Secondly, findings also indicate that the concept of "rights" is still largely construed as an abstract principle, and does not always translate into specific established rights, such as marriage and child adoption.

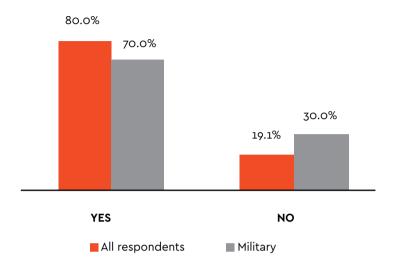


25. DO YOU THINK THAT HOMOSEXUALS SHOULD HAVE THE RIGHT TO MARRY?

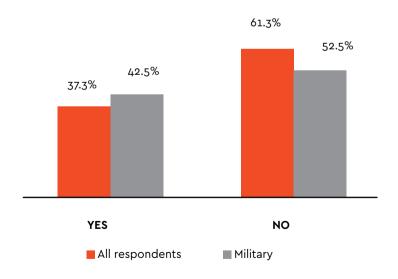




Questions 27–28 focus on the issue of antisemitism and the perceptions of "Jews". There is an interesting finding here: while an impressive 80% of respondents state that they know what antisemitism is, 37.3% declare at the same time that "Jews" are behind dark centres of power, which probably suggests either a conscious antisemitic stance or essentially ignorance of what antisemitism is and what it means. Here we observe again a discrepancy between general ideological categories, for example, racism or antisemitism, and the specific components that constitute them, for example, that immigrants are to be held responsible for the increase in crime or that "Jews" are omnipotent and have access to dark centres of power.



28. "JEWS" ARE OFTEN ACCUSED OF BEING BEHIND DARK CENTRES OF POWER. DO YOU AGREE?



In conclusion, what emanates from the sample overall is that women and respondents with a higher level of education tend to have a more "progressive" profile, whereas the military and respondents with a lower level of education appear to be the most "reactionary". It is also noteworthy that older respondents appear in some cases to be "more progressive" than younger ones, a finding which probably indicates a shift of some younger respondents towards more conservative views.

What is perhaps the most interesting finding is that according to the correlation tables (Kendall rank correlation coefficient), those who display "reactionary" behaviour on one indicator almost always respond in the same "reactionary" way when it comes to other relevant indicators. On the contrary, those with more "progressive" characteristics in a number of indicators show low and very low levels of "reactionary" traits as regards other relevant indicators. For example, respondents who believe that crime and immigration are related, that Greece is being invaded, that Golden Dawn is not a criminal organisation, that Greek civilisation is superior, and those who disagree with granting citizenship to immigrant children, who agree with or use the term "illegal immigrants", who consider the Prespa Agreement to be treacherous, who agree with increased policing, and who believe that we used to sleep with the doors open, also agree with extending military service, disagree with granting homosexuals equal rights, consider Islam to be a threat, think that Jews are behind dark centres of power, would not want a mosque in their city, consider that neighbouring countries are hostile, do not consider Greece to be a racist country, etc. In short, "reactionary" perceptions seem to be strongly - and statistically significantly - intertwined. The gender factor was not found to be statistically significant with regard to aforementioned perceptions, while it is interesting that a high level of education is almost never statistically correlated with such "reactionary" attitudes. Conversely, respondents who agree with the right of homosexuals to marry and to adopt children, those who see the outcome of the Golden Dawn trial as positive, those who agree with granting citizenship to immigrant children, those who disagree with or do not use the term "illegal immigrants", and those who disagree with increased policing, seem not to be statistically correlated with various "reactionary" perceptions, such as wishing to extend military service, linking crime with immigration, the view that Greece is being invaded, or that Islam is a threat to women's freedom, or the perception that "Jews" are behind dark centres of power, as well as the opinion that the Prespa Agreement was treacherous, and that Greece is not a racist country. Finally, the sample established that a high educational level is statistically correlated with "progressive" (non-reactionary) perceptions in most cases.

These findings provide some preliminary indications that the examined perceptions constitute, in fact, a structured ideology and do not occur "separately" or individually within society as a whole. Often enough, significant parts of society, approximately 50%, have incorporated views originating in the far-right way perception of social realities, and, in this sense, the normalisation of far-right views is perhaps Golden Dawn's most notable and disturbing legacy.

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