

**YOUNG PEOPLE'S
TRAJECTORIES THROUGH
ANTI-ISLAM(IST) AND
EXTREME RIGHT MILIEUS:
COUNTRY LEVEL REPORT
GREECE**

**Young
Orthodox Greeks with
Islamophobic/anti-Muslim
views and attitudes**



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DARE: Dialogue about Radicalisation and Equality

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Executive Summary

The study of Islamophobic/anti-Muslim views, attitudes, behaviours and sentiment in Greece is embedded in debates about the influences and effects of contemporary processes, such as globalisation, multiculturalism, immigration and secularising trends and pressures, upon the mainstream Greek-Orthodox national identity and culture as well as its crystallisation in the 'Fatherland-Religion-Family' ideology. It also generates questions about and problematises the relationships between religion, national identity and nationalism, violence and politics.

Our research documented the existence of widespread Islamophobic/anti-Muslim ideas, views and attitudes among Greek-Orthodox youth. These ideas, views and attitudes originate from the mainstream Greek-Orthodox national ideology and identity and its crystallisation in the right-wing 'Fatherland-Religion-Family' ideology. Here traditional anti-Turkish/anti-Muslim nationalism is synthesised with contemporary grievances about perceived threats and injustices regarding economic hardship, globalisation, multiculturalist policies, immigration and secularising pressures. Islamophobic ideas, views and attitudes are diffused throughout the entire milieu and include the basic ideological elements identified by social research as characterising the ideology of anti-Muslim movements.

Thus, Islam is perceived and understood as a backward, aggressive, expansionist and violent religion which is characterised by fanaticism, intolerance and even hatred toward non-Muslims and particularly toward Christians. Such prejudiced and hostile representations of Islam racialise Muslims, presenting them as radically foreign and incompatible with European and Western civilisation and culture. These representations are permeated by a vision of a clash of civilisations between the Christian nations and the Islamic world that dates back to the Crusades and today threatens Europe and Greece with Islamification through immigration and the feared mixing of peoples and cultures. The contemporary media imagery of Islamist extremism's violence has a corroborative effect on this representation.

In this context, our research located a segment of the investigated milieu within which the racialising dynamic of Greek-Orthodox Islamophobia is radicalised through integration to far-right, authoritarian, militaristic and violent political programmes and goals. The radicalised Islamophobic/anti-Muslim segment of the milieu is defined by the existence and operation of a network consisting of individuals, groups, formal and informal civil society associations, political parties and institutional niches that amalgamate Orthodox zeal, Greek-Orthodox nationalism, far-right authoritarian politics and militarism. The network constitutes the source of Islamophobic/anti-Muslim radicalism within the studied milieu and brings together Orthodox zealots, who view themselves as 'soldiers of Christ', Greek-Orthodox far-right activists, militarists and neo-Nazi Golden Dawners in a common struggle for the protection of 'faith and fatherland' from the threat of Islamification and for the propagation of nationalist and authoritarian far-right political programmes that are seen as the proper response to the perceived threats and injustices which globalisation, multiculturalism, immigration and secularism are seen to generate against the Greek-Orthodox majority. The interplay of Orthodox zeal, far-right politics, right-wing extremism and militarism within this network is central in the radicalisation of mainstream Greek-Orthodox Islamophobia and constitutes the decisive factor that differentiates the radicalised and the non-radicalised segments of the milieu.

1. Introduction

This report presents and discusses the findings of the ethnographic research conducted in Athens (Greece) as a case study of Islamophobic/anti-Muslim radicalism and extremism among young Orthodox Greeks. Islamophobia (i.e. anti-Islam/anti-Muslim views, attitudes, behaviours and sentiment) is understood here as a form of racialisation (Vakil, 2010: 276; Klug, 2012: 675) and ‘a form of cultural racism’ (Kaya, 2011: 3-4) that functions as an ideology that propagates negative views and attitudes toward Islam and Muslims (Allen, 2011: 290) and is interwoven with xenophobia and anti-immigrant views, attitudes, behaviours and sentiments (Kaya, 2011; Hafez, 2014; Kaya and Tecmen, 2019; Hüseyinoğlu, 2015).

Islamophobic/anti-Muslim views, attitudes, behaviours and sentiment in Greece are embedded in the mainstream Greek-Orthodox national identity and culture and its crystallisation in the mainstream right-wing ideological triptych of Fatherland-Religion-Family. This is a consequence of the nationalisation and politicisation of Orthodoxy within Greek state institutions, as well as of the traditional anti-Turkism of Greek institutional national ideology. Religion and nationalism are inextricably interrelated within mainstream Greek Orthodoxy while the latter’s institutional form (i.e. the Church of Greece – CoG) represents a vital source and an emblematic guardian of Modern Greek-Orthodox national ideology and identity (Kokosalakis, 1987; Chrysoloras, 2004 and 2010; Kitromilides, 1998; Prodromou, 2017; Paparizos, 1991; Papastathis, 2015; Sakellariou, 2008; Manitakis, 2000; Gazi, 2011). In this respect, mainstream Greek-Orthodox identity and nationalism are exclusively anti-Islam/anti-Muslim as they are structured around a national narrative that perceives and understands Turkey and Turks as the nation’s existential enemies and Islam as the enemy’s religion.¹

Such interweaving of nationalism and religion within Greek-Orthodox national ideology, identity and culture is paradigmatic of what A.D. Smith has theorised as the ‘sacred’ dimension of nationalism’ arguing that, in the context of modernity, nationalism has assumed the form of religious belief and has become ‘a form of political religion’ (Smith, 2000: 792; 2001: 35; 2003: 24). Within this conceptual framework, Greek Orthodoxy constitutes a vital source of both the sacralisation of Greekness, that is of the feeling and the experience of being Greek, and its distinction from the profane other (in the Greek case, Turkey and Islam) which threatens it (Gellner, 1983:56; Smith, 1999a: 336–9, Smith, 1999b: 130).

The traditional (through anti-Turkism) anti-Islam/anti-Muslim sentiment within Greek-Orthodox national ideology and identity has been heightened during the past three decades, as consequence of the pressures exerted on Greek society and culture by wider processes, developments and phenomena. Globalisation, multiculturalism, secularising trends and pressures and, since the early 1990s, Greece’s gradual transformation from a migration-sending country to a receiving one. The ever-increasing influxes of Muslim immigrants/refugees, has repeatedly triggered concern and worry within Greek-Orthodox public discourse. The latter treated such processes and phenomena as sources of risks and threats for Greece and Orthodoxy as well as for Greek-Orthodox national identity and the Fatherland-Religion-Family ideology. In this context, the Greek-Orthodox public discourse repeatedly stressed the danger of the contamination and alteration of the ideologised ethnic and religious homogeneity of Greek society and national culture, as result of the country’s exposure to globalisation, multiculturalism and immigration. Such fears were exacerbated by the increased visibility of Islamic fundamentalism and Islamist extremism pre- and post- 9/11, thus, enriching and modernising the traditional Islamophobic characteristics of Greek-Orthodox identity and national ideology with the theme of ‘Europe’s and Greece’s Islamification’ through immigration and Islamic fundamentalism.² Such concerns and worries were repeatedly

¹ Section 2 ‘Setting the Scene’ discusses the interrelation of Orthodoxy and Modern Greek national ideology and identity.

² Indicative examples of such Greek-Orthodox concerns and fears in public discourse can be found in: Kariotoglou, 2000; Pharos, 2000; Giannoulatos, 2000; Vassiliades, 2002; Zizioulas, 2003; Albanis, 2003; Ignatios, 2008; Gnlika,

expressed by prominent members of the Church of Greece and fuelled institutional and informal opposition to the construction of the Athens Mosque (Anagnostou and Gropas 2010; Sakellariou, 2011; 2015a, 2016a; 2020a and 2020b; Huseyinoglu, 2015).

Moreover, political cynicism and disaffection with the functioning of democracy, along with authoritarian tendencies, right-wing nationalism and anti-immigrant xenophobia and racism all rose gradually within the two pre-crisis decades (Pizanias, 1997; Demertzis and Armenakis, 2001; GSY, 2000 and 2005; Koulaidis and Dimopoulos, 2006; Georgiadou, 2008). These trends and phenomena were exacerbated during the ten-year economic crisis (2009-2018) and established a strong link among Greek-Orthodox nationalism, far/radical-right politics, anti-Muslim sentiment and anti-immigrant attitudes. Both the pre-crisis rise of the anti-immigrant and Islamophobic Greek-Orthodox radical-right and the intra-crisis political success of violent, neo-Nazi, anti-immigrant/anti-Muslim extremism represent symptomatic outcomes of the complex and profound transformational pressures and processes (as well as of their institutional and political management) that both Greek society and the Greek-Orthodox national ideology and identity have undergone during this thirty-year period (Ellinas, 2012; Tsiras, 2012; Doxiadis and Matsaganis, 2012; Triantafillidou, & Kouki, 2012 and 2013; Ioannou, 2013; Vassilopoulou and Halikiopoulou, 2015; Vadoros, 2018; Kaya and Tecmen, 2019).

DARE's ethnographic methodology situates the investigation of young people's anti-Islam/anti-Muslim radicalisation and non-radicalisation within the socio-cultural and political environment in which the 'accepted racism' (Hafez, 2014: 479) of Islamophobic/anti-Muslim discourses and attitudes are endemic and the individuals come into contact with radical/extreme messages and engage (or not) with them. For this purpose, the concept of the 'milieu' as 'the people, the physical and social conditions, the significant events and networks of communications in which someone acts or lives and which shape that person's subjectivity (identity), choices and trajectory through life'³ is employed and aims to capture the complex, situational and dynamic interaction between the cultural and political context and the individual in anti-Islam/anti-Muslim radicalisation. Within this conceptual and methodological framework, the selection of the milieu for the study of anti-Islam/anti-Muslim radicalisation in the Greek case was guided by the regular presence in and the cultural pertinence of Islamophobic views, discourses and attitudes with Greek Orthodoxy.

The selected milieu of 'young Orthodox Greeks with Islamophobic/anti-Muslim views and attitudes' consists of Orthodox young people, affiliated either with the mainstream Church of Greece (CoG) or with the Church of the Genuine Orthodox Christians (GOC), and the organisations/groups and the events/activities in which they participate. Being the native socio-cultural environment of Islamophobic/anti-Muslim views and attitudes, it offered the opportunity to investigate young people's anti-Islam/anti-Muslim potential radicalisation within the socio-cultural environment where the relevant views and attitudes have systematic presence. Moreover, the selected milieu is characterised by a special relationship with right-wing and far-right ideology and politics through the historical and contemporary ties between Greek-Orthodox nationalism with both the right-wing and far-right ideological triptych of 'Fatherland-Religion-Family and the anti-immigrant far/extreme right nationalism. In this respect, the selected milieu also offers the opportunity to investigate the potential interplay between religion and far/extreme right-wing ideology and politics within Greek-Orthodox Islamophobic/anti-Muslim radicalisation.

The selected milieu, then, constitutes the native socio-cultural and political environment within which individuals and groups may come into contact with radical/extreme anti-Islam/anti-Muslim and anti-immigrant far/extreme right views, attitudes, messages and behaviours and may (or may not) engage

2009; Papageorgiou and Samouris, 2012; Albanis, 2014; Vassiliades, 2015.

³ DARE Concept Note: 'Milieu' (Extended). The shorter versions of the definitions of DARE's core concepts can be found at : <http://www.dare-h2020.org/concepts.html>

with ideological/attitudinal and/or behavioural radicalism. As such, it allowed us to investigate the potential existence of Islamophobic/anti-Muslim radicalism along DARE's approach to it; as the complex, non-linear, outcome of 'a process by which individuals or groups come to embrace attitudes, or engage in actions, that support [symbolic or physical] violence in the pursuit of extremist causes'.⁴ In this respect, DARE's emphasis on symbolic or physical violence in the pursuit of extremist causes was crucial in recognising and locating radicalism within the milieu.

Moreover, DARE's theorisation of the process of radicalisation within a particular milieu through the notion of 'radicalisation trajectories' seeks to analyse 'Individual pathways shaped by structural, group and individual factors that may lead individuals towards extremist attitudes or behaviours but also to non-radicalisation and de-radicalisation'. Thus, DARE's focus on the process of radicalisation seeks to analyse and understand 'the intersection of societal (macro), group (meso) and individual (micro) factors in individual trajectories' towards or away from radicalism⁵ aiming at the integration of 'why' and 'how' questions pertaining to radicalism in the specific socio-cultural and political environment where the structural and situational/interactional roots of individual and/or group radicalism can be examined and potential pathways towards it can be traced. However, it should be noted here that, due to the high levels of suspicion and caution that the researchers faced during fieldwork in the milieu, limited (or no) personal and family information, beyond socio-demographic data, was collected. Most of the informants in the milieu, especially those found to endorse radical/extremist views and attitudes, were reluctant or refused to disclose and discuss such information about themselves and about their familial and peer environment. In this respect, the biographical dimension of the individual radicalisation trajectories was not explored and consequently, the discussion of the radicalisation process focuses mainly on the sources of radicalism within the milieu.

Within this conceptual/theoretical framework, our ethnographic research focussed on the investigation of the following research questions, which are derived from both DARE's general research framework and from the specific framework and questions pertaining to anti-Islam(ist) and extreme right milieus.

- Are there any cases of radicalisation found in the selected milieu?
- How do ideological and extra-ideological factors shape radicalisation or non-radicalisation trajectories?
- How do Orthodoxy and Greek-Orthodox national ideology and identity influence radicalisation or non-radicalisation trajectories?
- Are far/extreme right-wing ideology and politics present within anti-Islam/anti-Muslim radicalism/extremism in the milieu?
- How do sustained inequalities and perceived injustice impact upon radicalisation?
- How do young Orthodox Greeks understand 'radicalism', 'extremism' and how do they evaluate them?
- What is the role of social relationships in facilitating radicalisation of ideas and behaviour?
- Why do some young people become engaged in violent extremist ideologies while others in similar structural locations take non-radicalisation trajectories?

For the exploration of these research questions, the ethnographic fieldwork in the selected milieu employed individual semi-structured in-depth interviews with a biographical dimension, discussions with individuals and groups and participant observation in meetings and events of various formal and informal groupings within the milieu; these ranged from Sunday Schools and Sunday Sermons in local parishes,

⁴ DARE Concept Note: 'Radicalisation' The short versions of the definitions of DARE's core concepts can be found at : <http://www.dare-h2020.org/concepts.html>

⁵ DARE Concept Note: 'Trajectories'. The short versions of the definitions of DARE's core concepts can be found at : <http://www.dare-h2020.org/concepts.html>

Orthodox youth associations and groups through to Greek-Orthodox religious and far-right paramilitary associations, groups and organisations.

In the following sections of this report we present and discuss the findings of our ethnographic research, arguing that Islamophobic/anti-Muslim radicalism/extremism was found to be present within the investigated milieu. It was represented by those individuals and groups that accepted and justified the use of symbolic and/or physical violence against Muslims and immigrants within a Greek-Orthodox religious, ideological and political amalgam consisting of Orthodox zeal, nationalism, political authoritarianism and militarism and identifying with far/extreme-right political goals.

The report starts by setting the scene in the historical and contemporary context of Greek-Orthodox Islamophobic/anti-Muslim culture and politics and proceeds to locate the studied milieu (Section 2). The details of the field research conducted are set out in Section 3 together with a socio-demographic overview of the respondent set. Section 4 presents the key findings from the study. It starts (subsection 4.1) with an exploration of respondents' own understandings of 'radicalism', 'extremism' and terrorism, also examining the respondents' views and attitudes toward these terms and evaluations of them. The section continues with the two subsections (4.2 and 4.3) that discuss social relations and gender in relation to the radicalised and the non-radicalised segments of the milieu. The following subsections (4.4, 4.5 and 4.6) discuss the ideological and extra-ideological dimensions of radicalisation, focussing on the radicalised and the non-radicalised segments of the milieu in order to highlight both their shared and the differentiating cultural/political/emotional content. This emphasises the centrality of a special cultural/political/emotional mixture of Orthodox zeal, Greek-Orthodox anti-Muslim nationalism, far-right politics and militarism in differentiating the two segments of the milieu, as well as the radicalised one's propensity to anti-Muslim/anti-immigrant violence. The following subsection (4.7) considers the role of inequalities and perceived injustices in radicalisation and non-radicalisation while the final subsection (4.8) locates the source of radicalism and radicalisation within the milieu in a network of individuals, groups, political parties and institutional niches, within which the process of radicalisation takes place and the composing ideological and identity ingredients of Greek-Orthodox Islamophobic/anti-Muslim radicalism guide anti-Muslim/anti-immigrant action. Finally, Section 5 concludes the report by connecting the research findings to aspects of the wider debate on Islamophobic/anti-Muslim radicalisation.

2. Setting the scene

2.1 Historical context

Anti-Muslim and anti-Islam sentiment, attitudes, discourses and behaviours have a long and institutionalised presence in Greece. They are closely connected and intertwined with the ideological appropriation of Greece's Ottoman historical past in the context of the institutional discourses on Modern Greece and national identity while, at the same time, they are interwoven with the contingencies of the ever-present geopolitical rivalry between Greece and Turkey (Sakellariou, 2015: 45; Heraclides, 2011:8-9; Chrysoloras, 2004; Draculic, 2009: 243, 248; Grigoriadis, 2009: 53-60). As a result, such attitudes are embedded in mainstream national identity discourses and institutional structures such as the political system, the military forces and the Orthodox Church.

Modern Greek national identity and ideology are structured around the idea of an unbroken ethnic/national continuity that connects the Greek nation and people from antiquity, through the Middle Ages to Modernity and the present (Tsoukalas, 1995; Kokkinos, 1998; Vergopoulos, 1994; Kitromilides, 1998; Veremis, 1999). The idea of three thousand years of unbroken historical and cultural continuity incorporates Islam and Muslims as the existential enemies of Christian-Orthodox Greece. The latter is represented in the mainstream national identity and ideology by Byzantium, the Christian-Orthodox Eastern Roman Empire that became part of the Ottoman Empire for four centuries after it was conquered

by the Ottoman Turks. According to the mainstream national narrative, in the nineteenth century and after four centuries of slavery, the Christian-Orthodox Greeks (descendants and heirs of the Christian-Orthodox Eastern Roman [Byzantine] Empire) rebelled against the Muslim Turks, reclaiming their national and religious freedom (Chrysoloras, 2010; Heraclides, 2011; Kitromilides, 1998; Veremis, 1999, Skopetea, 1988). This narrative incorporated Orthodoxy in Modern Greek nation-state building and shaped Modern Greek national identity and nationalism through the nationalisation of Orthodoxy, the integration of the Orthodox Church into state institutions and its transformation into a central source and emblematic guardian of the unifying national ideology that the newly formed Greek state needed. (Kitromilides, 1989: 165-167 and 177-185; Chrysoloras, 2004: 42-45; Maniatis, 2000: 21-23; Paparizos, 2000: 97-98; Karagiannis, 1997: 34-43; Papastathis, 2014: 225-237; Ierotheos, 2000: 6-11 and 27-35; Günel and Selin Balci, 2019: 132-137; Stauning Willert, 2014: 39-52).

The dual process of the nationalisation of Orthodoxy and of the Church's integration within state institutions, not only proved instrumental in Modern Greek nation-state building through the totalising effects of the intergenerational reproduction of Greek-Orthodox national identity and nationalism but it also reproduced and consolidated its anti-Muslim, anti-Islam and anti-Turkish characteristics and components in Modern Greek culture and public sphere (Heraclides, 2011; Tsitselikis, 2012 and 2016; Mavrommatis, 2008; Sakellariou, 2014; Athanassiadis, 2015; Fragoudaki, 1997; Demetriou, 2004; Günel and Selin Balci, 2019; Stauning Willert, 2014). Moreover, The Greek-Orthodox national ideology and identity, enriched with the Interwar and post-WWII state anti-communism, constituted the core of mainstream Greek-Christian/Greek-Orthodox nationalism. The latter has been crystallised within the traditional right-wing ideological triptych of 'Fatherland-Religion-Family' with which the vast majority of the historical and contemporary right-wing - as well as far-/extreme-right social and political forces - have, to the present, been identifying (Gazi, 2011; Kokkinos, 1984; Davalas, 2008; Tsiras, 2012; Georgiadou, 2019; Sakellariou, 2008; Moustakis, 1983; Psaras, 2012; Fragoudaki, 1997 and 2013; Bournazos, 2009; Marketos, 2006; Kornetis, 2015; Sakellaropoulos, 1998; Sarandis, 1993). The long and strong connection of the Orthodox Church with the Greek state, its nationalist Greek-Orthodox identity and its dominant right-wing ideology of 'Fatherland-Religion-Family' created strong ideological and political relationships between the Church of Greece and the conservative/right-wing social and political forces that dominated the Greek state during the entire historical period from the Interwar years up to 1981. These relationships had also facilitated the ideological and political appropriation of Orthodoxy and of the Church of Greece by the two emblematic twentieth century authoritarian regimes⁶ in their effort to win popular and institutional support through their identification with the Greek-Christian/Greek-Orthodox national identity and the 'Fatherland-Religion-Family' ideology. Both of them have been continuously mobilised against left-wing and/or communist radicalism or even against attempts to liberalise the Greek political system (Mavrogordatos, 2003; Sakellariou, 2008, 2014, 2019; Prodromou, 1995; Moustakis, 1983; Bournazos, 2009; Petrakis, 2006; Aggelis, 2006; Gazi, 2015; Doxiadis and Matsaganis, 2012; Kokosalakis, 1987; Paparizos, 1991).

In this context, anti-Muslim and anti-Islam attitudes remained a permanent ideological element shared by both the Orthodox Church and the right-wing/far-right social and political forces. However, a number of factors (such as, the undisputable prevalence of Orthodoxy within the population, the limited presence of Muslims in the country, the ideological and institutional preoccupation with the 'internal left-wing and/or communist- enemy' and the traditionally good relations of the Greek state with Arab countries) kept anti-Muslim and anti-Islam prejudice and sentiment mainly at the discursive/ideological level for a long time. Nevertheless, there were two major exceptions to this tendency. The first one concerns the, always under institutional suspicion and surveillance, Muslim minority of Thrace. Located in the northeast part of Greece, neighbouring Turkey, the minority consists of about 120,000 Muslims who inhabit the

⁶ These are the 1936-1940 para-fascist dictatorship (a.k.a. the 4th of August regime or the Metaxas dictatorship) and the 1967-1974 military dictatorship (a.k.a. the 21st of April colonels' dictatorship).

region together with a Greek Christian majority (Tsitselikis, 1999; Ktistakis, 2006; Katsikas, 2012)⁷ and are still today caught between the two neighbouring counties' rival nationalisms and geopolitical antagonisms. The second one concerns the negative stance of both the Greek state and the Orthodox Church of Greece toward the construction of a Mosque in Athens (Sakellariou, 2015a, 2016 and 2020b; Anagnostou and Gropas, 2010; Antoniou 2003 and 2010; Ioannou, 2013; Hatziprokopiou and Evergeti, 2014; Tsitselikis, 2012; Günal and Selin Balci, 2019; Dragonas, 2013; Günal and Selin Balci, 2019; Kaya and Tecmen, 2019; Papastathis, 2015).

The situation started to change gradually during the 1990s following Greece's exposure to globalisation pressures and challenges. The multiple migratory waves towards Greece (initially from Albania and other Balkan and Eastern European countries and then increasingly from Asian and African countries) blurred the country's image of ethnic, religious and cultural homogeneity constructed by the Greek-Christian/Greek-Orthodox national identity and undermined the hegemony of the 'Fatherland-Religion-Family' ideology. At the same time, Greek nationalism was further strengthened, first, following post-1989 geopolitical developments in the Balkan region and, second, in relation to the intensification of the Greece-Turkey rivalry over the Aegean Sea.

The early 1990s were marked by the re-emergence of the so-called 'Macedonian dispute' as consequence of the dissolution of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. At that time and for almost three decades, the use of the term 'Macedonia' as a country name was disputed between Greece and the neighbouring Republic of Macedonia. The dispute echoed long lasting conflicts among the late 19th and early 20th centuries Balkan nationalisms, during the long process of the Ottoman Empire's decline and dissolution and had led to the 1912-13 Balkan Wars, the end of which found the ancient geographic region of Macedonia divided among Serbia, Greece and Bulgaria. The antagonism among Balkan nationalisms over the region of Macedonia continued in the following decades with most notable developments being, first, the WWII attempt of Bulgaria, then Nazi Germany's ally, to take over parts of the Greek region of Macedonia during the 1941-1944 during the German occupation of Greece and, second, the formation of the Socialist Republic of Macedonia within the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. The latter transformed the 'Macedonian issue' into a minor Cold War dispute between Yugoslavia and Greece over the use of the term 'Macedonia' as a country name. This dispute remained largely unimportant in terms of international relations until the end of the Cold War era when, in 1991, the Socialist Republic of Macedonia gained its independence from Yugoslavia and changed its name to Republic of Macedonia. This development was met with strong Greek objections over the use of the term 'Macedonia' by the neighbouring country and sparked nationalist fervour in Greece, with large populist rallies led by the Orthodox Church and mainstream political parties. The dispute remained unsettled for almost three decades fuelling and sharpening Greek nationalism during this period as it became a recurring theme of nationalist discourse in mainstream and far-right political agendas. It is worth noting here that it was this climate of exacerbated nationalism that fuelled and underlined Golden Dawn's transformation in 1993 from a marginal neo-Nazi gang to a political party with growing outreach to young people (Ellinas, 2010 and 2012; Tsiras, 2012, Psaras, 2010, Psaras, 2012). The dispute was finally settled in 2018 when the two countries agreed on the name Republic of North Macedonia and signed the Prespa Agreement, despite large nationalist protests supported by far-right political forces, the Orthodox Church and the mainstream party of New Democracy. The nationalist reaction to the Prespa Agreement was at its peak during fieldwork and repeatedly emerged, both in the events that the research team attended and in the

⁷ Thrace's Muslim community, along with the Greeks of Constantinople in Turkey, was protected by the 1923 Treaty of Lausanne which exempted them from the mandatory population exchanges between Greece and Turkey. Signed in the aftermath of Greece's defeat in Asia Minor, the Treaty included a section on the 'Protection of Minorities', which contains a series of provisions to guarantee the rights of the minority populations in both countries. Despite the protection, Muslims of Thrace have faced integration obstacles, discrimination and social exclusion due to their religion, but also due to their ethnic background, which is mostly Turkish.

discourse of our respondents, and often included accusations of national treason and calls for popular rebellion against the government.

The geopolitical rivalry between Greece and Turkey over the Aegean Sea has also been a constant source of nationalist fervour, especially since the 1974 Turkish invasion and occupation of north-western Cyprus. The 1996 'Imia crisis' (named after the Greek Aegean islet that was claimed by Turkey) was the third major incident after 1974 (the other two took place in 1976 and in 1987) that brought the two countries to the brink of military conflict. The 'Imia crisis' was marked by the aggressive military challenging of Greek national sovereignty and by the death of three Greek military officers in circumstances which are still disputed today. War between Greece and Turkey was eventually avoided due to international intervention but the repercussions of the crisis were extreme for Greek politics and nationalism. The traditional anti-Turkish and anti-Muslim nationalist attitudes were further heightened and they were systematically exploited politically by the far right, which accused the then government of treason for avoiding active military confrontation to defend Greek national sovereignty. In particular, the neo-Nazi Golden Dawn, continued to accuse the entire political system as unpatriotic and submissive to Turkish aggression while annually commemorating the 'heroic military officers that sacrificed their lives at Imia in 1996'.⁸ Moreover, in this period, the nationalist rhetoric about the 'Turkish/Muslim threat' was intertwined with xenophobic/anti-immigrant discourses and attitudes that spread following the socio-political challenges that led to considerable immigration flows.

Both the 'Macedonian dispute' and the 'Imia crisis' took place in a period when Greece was gradually transforming from a migration sending country to a host country, facing a substantial immigration inflow, initially from Balkan and East European countries and gradually from Asian and African ones too. This transformation was institutionally and politically managed by focussing on security over integration policies, and thus contributing to the emergence and spread of strong xenophobic and racist anti-immigrant sentiments and attitudes. Initially, such sentiments and attitudes targeted mainly immigrants of Albanian origin but, by the end of the 1990s, all non-EU immigrants had been added to the widespread, derogatory, label '*lathrometanastes*' ('illegal immigrants') normalising xenophobia and racism within mainstream Greek culture. The substantial increase in arrivals, usually through Turkey, of Muslim immigrants from Pakistan, Bangladesh, Iraq, Afghanistan, Syria, and Indonesia, among other countries of origin (Antoniou, 2003; Triandafyllidou and Kokkali, 2010; Triandafyllidou and Kouki, 2013) was met by Greek-Orthodox and right-wing discourses as a potential national threat. Focusing on differences in language, religion and cultural heritage, Greek-Orthodox and right-wing groups insisted that these populations lacked the basic criteria for inclusion in Greek society and would thus undermine, Greece's ethnic and cultural homogeneity and pose a potential threat to national sovereignty (as they could be used by Turkey in order to challenge it). In these discourses, globalisation and multiculturalism were systematically treated as national dangers stigmatising immigrants as being responsible for rising unemployment and crime rates and for the downgrading of their residential areas (Doxiadis and Matsaganis, 2012; VANDOROS, 2018; Sakellariou, 2014; Kirtsoglou & Tsimouris, 2018; Triantafyllidou, & Kouki, 2012 and 2013; Ioannou, 2013; Vassilopoulou and Halikiopoulou, 2015; Kaya and Tecmen, 2019).

At the same time, political cynicism and discontent with the functioning of representative institutions and parliamentary democracy, coupled with significant authoritarian and nationalist tendencies, were building among Greek youth and the general population (Pizaniyas, 1997; Givalos, 1997; Kafetzis, 2000; GSY, 2000 and 2005; Demertzis and Armenakis, 2001; Koulaidis and Dimopoulos, 2006; Spourdalakis and Papavlassopoulos, 2008; Kontiadis and Anthopoulos, 2008; Vassilopoulos and Vernardakis, 2015). This

⁸ Imia 2020: Rally and demonstration of honour by the Golden Dawn', February, 1, 2020, <http://www.xrisiavgi.com/enimerosi/view/imia-2020-sugkentrwsh-kai-poreia-timhs-apo-thn-chrush-augh-fwtoreportaz>

trend had its roots in the late 1980s-early 1990s crisis of Greek Keynesianism and the consequent disintegration of social and welfare policies that caused unemployment and poverty to rise in a period of considerable immigration influxes and Greece's difficult integration in the post-Cold War globalisation era through the EU. Thus, the 1990s and the 2000s marked the period when the growing discontent with the political system and the representative institutions, intertwined with heightened nationalism and xenophobia, produced the, often theorised under the notion of 'ethno-populism' (Theodoridis, 2004; Pappas, 2015; Stavrakakis, 2017; Andreadis, Stavrakakis and Demertzis, 2018), Greek-Orthodox and right-wing reaction to the social, cultural and political challenges that globalisation, multiculturalism, immigration and secularising pressures generated in the Greek society and political system. The conflict between the Church of Greece and the Greek state about the registration of religious affiliation in the state identity cards⁹ and the emergence of far-right, nationalist, anti-Muslim and anti-immigrant political parties are illustrative examples of the Greek-Orthodox and right-wing reactions to such challenges.

The 2000-2001 dispute between the Church of Greece and the Greek government about the removal of religious affiliation from state-issued citizen identity cards synthesised globalisation and secularising pressures in a conflict over the importance of Orthodoxy in Greek national identity and culture in the context of globalisation. In 2000, the Greek government, following the 1997 signing of the Schengen Treaty by Greece, and attempting to enforce the requirements of the 2472/1997 personal data protection law¹⁰, announced the removal of religious affiliation from the new bilingual (Greek and English) citizen identity cards. This announcement was met with outright rejection by the Church of Greece which interpreted it as an attempt to challenge the status-quo in Church-state relations in the context of a political move toward a 'religious-neutral state' propagated by the EU and the proponents of globalisation. The Church insisted that Orthodoxy is integral to the Greek national identity and that Orthodox citizens should be able to voluntarily register their religious affiliation on their identity cards while the government emphasised the need to protect the citizens' private information such as religious affiliation. The Church focussed on the dangers of the weakening of the ties between the Church and the state and of the undermining of the importance of Greek-Orthodox identity in the public sphere as consequence of Greece's adjustment to globalisation pressures through EU decisions and regulations that were indifferent toward the Greek-Orthodox national identity. The Greek government, for its part, was eager to stress the 'European' profile of Greece as part of the country's deeper integration in the EU and its accession to the Eurozone. The conflict climaxed when Christodoulos, the charismatic Archbishop of Athens and, then, leader of the Church of Greece presented himself as the guardian of Greek-Orthodox national identity, which was seen as challenged by the local and European supporters of the separation of the Church from the state and of the 'religion-neutral state'. For this purpose, he organised large protests in which he raised the banner of the Greek revolution against the Ottoman rule and called for a referendum on the issue, collecting more than three million signatures in support of it. The conflict ended when the Greek President and the Council of the State ruled out the Church's demand. The 'identity card conflict' encompassed the Greek-Orthodox worries and fears regarding the repercussions of Greece's integration in globalised and globalising formations, such as the EU, on national identity and ideology and on the state-Church relationships, affirming the Church's strong influence on millions of Greek voters and highlighting the ideological, social and political power of institutional Orthodoxy. (Papadopoulou, 2000; Dragonas, 2013; Molokotos-Liederman, 2017; Manitakis, 2000; Stavrakakis, 2002 and 2003; Günel and Selin Balci, 2019).

⁹ Smith, H. (2001) Greek church causes fresh identity crisis, theguardian.com, 29-8-2001, available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2001/aug/29/greece>

¹⁰ The 2472/1997 Law incorporated the Directive 95/46/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 October 1995 on the protection of individuals with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dir/1995/46/oj>

Moreover, the Archbishop of Athens, Christodoulos, became an emblematic figure for Greek-Orthodox nationalism, strengthening the Church's relationships with the right-wing and radical right parties, particularly New Democracy and the, then, newly formed Popular Orthodox Rally (LAOS) respectively. During fieldwork we found out that his reputation and legacy were still alive and celebrated in the studied milieu. His name was mentioned several times by our informants who viewed him as a radical who defended Orthodoxy and the Church and stood up against the supporters of globalisation and of the 'religion-neutral state'.

The founding of Popular Orthodox Rally (LAOS) is another example of the Greek-Orthodox and right-wing response to the challenges that the Greek-Orthodox identity and national ideology was facing at the turn of the century. In the context of heightened Greek-Orthodox, nationalist, xenophobic and anti-Muslim/anti-immigrant sentiments and attitudes, LAOS was formed in 2000, after a number of politicians and party officials left the mainstream right-wing New Democracy party as result of the latter's turn to more centre-right positions and policies. LAOS emphasised law and order and the 'Fatherland-Religion-Family' ideology and it combined the traditional anti-Muslim/anti-Islam attitudes of Greek-Orthodox anti-Turkish nationalism with conspiracy and anti-immigrant/xenophobic discourse highlighting the danger of Europe's and Greece's Islamification through immigration. The party attracted traditional right-wing and far-right voters that were disenchanted with the centre-right turn of New Democracy and had strong connections with the Church of Greece, the police and the military (Ellinas, 2010 and 2012; Tsiras, 2012; Vassilopoulou and Halikiopoulou, 2015; Kolovos, 2005; Georgiadou, 2008 and 2019; Psaras, 2010). In 2007 LAOS entered the Greek Parliament, but in 2012 it collapsed electorally as consequence of the party's support for the harsh austerity policies which were imposed in the context of the economic crisis. The majority of LAOS' voters moved to New Democracy and the neo-Nazi Golden Dawn while its most prominent MPs joined New Democracy, two of whom were appointed as government ministers.

LAOS was the first parliamentary party in three decades that synthesised anti-immigrant discourse and politics with the traditional anti-Muslim/anti-Islam characteristics of Greek-Orthodox, anti-Turkish nationalism as well as with the 'Fatherland-Religion-Family' ideology within contemporary xenophobic/anti-immigrant far-right political agendas. However, it was Golden Dawn (GD) that solidified this combination, enriching it with neo-Nazi authoritarianism, racism and violence, and established it at the centre of its ideology and political programme focusing on it a great part of its political activism. Having been founded in the 1980s, as a neo-Nazi periodical connected to a small group of like-minded militants that systematically attacked leftists and immigrants, Golden Dawn evolved during the 1990s, into a neo-Nazi anti-Muslim/anti-immigrant political party. During the early 2000s, it established its activist headquarters in parts of the Municipality of Athens with high Muslim immigrant presence. Golden Dawn's (GD) Islamophobic discourse viewed Islam as inherently violent and expansionist, the eternal enemy of Europe and of the West and incompatible with western values, while Muslims were regarded as unable to be integrated into western societies. Moreover, it systematically interpreted immigration as invasion and Muslim immigrants and refugees as an invading army that, together with Islamist terrorism, was attempting to take over and Islamise Christian nations. Golden Dawn's neo-Nazi ideology was initially hostile to Christianity and Orthodoxy, endorsing and propagating the revival of Greek pagan 'ancestral religion'. However, after its electoral success in 2012 (when GD won almost 7% of the vote) and attempting to curb suspicion and even hostility among Orthodox clergy and laics, the party's leadership moved to present GD as the guardian of Christian-Orthodox Greece against globalisation, multiculturalism, immigration and secularism. In GD's ultra-nationalist rhetoric, these trends, processes and phenomena represented aspects of a global plot against Christian nations, orchestrated by the enemies of Christianity, mainly global elites, atheists, liberals, leftists, Freemasons and Jews/Zionists. In this framework, GD praised anti-Muslim/anti-immigrant policies in Europe and openly supported political leaders such as Marine Le Pen in France, Matteo Salvini in Italy and Victor Orban in Hungary, among others, for their courage to stand up against the 'Islamification of Europe'. Identifying with a 'white-and-

Christian-Europe' and with Greek-Orthodox nationalism and the 'Fatherland-Religion-Family' right-wing ideology, GD turned to the creation of alliances with ultra-nationalist and zealous parts of Orthodoxy such as parts of the Genuine Orthodox Christians (GOCs), of the Monastic Republic of Mount Athos as well as with high clergy and laics of the mainstream Church of Greece (Sakellariou, 2020a and 2020b; Vassilopoulou and Halikiopoulou, 2015; Kirtsoglou & Tsimouris, 2018; Zouboulakis, 2013a and 2013b; Sakellariou, 2013 and 2014, Pliatsikas, 2019). The 2012 incidents at 'Hitirio' theatre¹¹ in Athens, where Golden Dawn MPs and activists joined forces with Orthodox zealots and attacked the director and the actors of a theatrical performance that they saw as blasphemous to the Christian faith, had been the first major example of GD's turn to militant Orthodoxy. The party subsequently gained the support of a number of Church of Greece's prominent Bishops, many of them known for their far-right political preferences, and of many priests and laics, but after the murder of the young antifascist rapper, Pavlos Fyssas, and the arrest of the party's leadership for forming a criminal organisation, the majority of the mainstream Church of Greece maintained distance from GD, while the voices that rejected and condemned any relationship and connection between the Church with the party multiplied. Nevertheless, a number of Orthodox zealots and their Greek-Orthodox groups and associations continued to support and collaborate with the party. The 2016 four-month protest-occupation of the site¹² designated for the construction of the Athens Mosque by Golden Dawn activists, Greek-Orthodox far-right paramilitaries and Genuine Orthodox Christians (GOCs) has been the most important outcome of the continuing alliance between Golden Dawn and Orthodox zealots.

The 2009-2018 economic crisis and the dire consequences of successive austerity programmes that had been implemented during this period in order to tackle the Greek government's inability to service its debt, had profound social and political consequences. The lasting recession and the high unemployment and poverty rates highlighted the inability of the implemented policies to tackle the crisis leading to the delegitimisation of the mainstream bipartisanship of the Greek political system, which was largely seen as responsible for the crisis. These policies were planned and implemented in successive waves from May 2010, when the first loan contract was signed between the PASOK centre-left government at the time and the country's debtors, to enable the Greek government to continue repaying the country's debt. The long austerity period that was introduced was characterised by large public budget cuts, high salary and pension reductions, high taxation of incomes and the abolition of labour rights and welfare services which, resulted in plunging the Greek economy into deep recession (INE-GSEE 2011). The burst of unemployment, poverty, homelessness and suicides, as well as the dismantling of the already anaemic, social welfare services peaked between 2012 and 2016 and had a profound impact on the living conditions of the national population (ELSTAT 2013c, Matsaganis et al. 2012, Bank of Greece 2012, Hauben et al. 2012, Petmesidou 2011, Petmesidou 2013). Young people were among the first and most severely affected parts of the population (Malkoutzis 2011: 1-3). According to official figures, unemployment for the 15-24 age group reached 49.9%, while for the 25-29 age group it was 34.0% in the fourth quarter of 2011 (ELSTAT 2013a); since then it skyrocketed to 57.2% for the 15-24 group and to 43.8% for those between 25-29 years old (ELSTAT 2013b).

In this context of economic hardship, the failure of the mainstream policies to establish a coherent and effective integration framework for the ever-increasing number of marginalised immigrants, heightened

¹¹ 'Protest by Golden Dawn, religious groups cancels theater premiere', ekathimerini.com, 12/10/2012, available at: <https://www.ekathimerini.com/145367/article/ekathimerini/news/protest-by-golden-dawn-religious-groups-cancels-theater-premiere>

¹² Mary Atkinson, 'Authorities move against 'paramilitaries' occupying site of first mosque in Athens', middleeasteye.net, available at: <https://www.middleeasteye.net/fr/news/greek-paramilitaries-storm-site-first-mosque-athens-571154215>; Niki Kitsantonis, 'Protest at Athens Mosque Site Ends With 15 Arrests', .nytimes.com, 4/11/2016, available at: <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/11/05/world/europe/protest-at-athens-mosque-site-ends-with-15-arrests.html>

both discontent for the mainstream political forces and further spread xenophobic and stigmatising views and attitudes which portrayed immigrants and refugees as the ‘enemy-within’ that exacerbate the sufferings caused by the crisis and threatens the Greek-Orthodox culture and Greek national sovereignty. Thus, Golden Dawn built its political and activist agenda upon wider grievances related to immigration, economic hardship/social exclusion, crime/security as well as the functioning of the political system and of the representative institutions. Demonstrating its willingness to act outside institutional barriers and in the streets, using intimidation and violence against ‘the nation’s and the people’s enemies’, GD succeeded to attract a significant part of the nationalist, xenophobic, anti-Muslim/anti-immigrant voters that were now disillusioned with the ruling political parties of New Democracy and PASOK, which had been in power since 1974. In response to such developments, and trying to limit vote losses to far-right parties, the mainstream ruling parties intensified the securitisation of migration policies and the anti-immigrant tone of their public discourse. Thus, closed camps for immigrants’ incarceration were created¹³, large scale police operations against immigrants were launched¹⁴ and anti-immigrant public discourse was sharpened as mainstream political leaders publicly stigmatised¹⁵ immigrants as ‘tyrants’ of the Greek society and called for the need for locals to ‘re-occupy’ the Greek cities from the immigrants.

The incorporation of openly racist and anti-immigrant policies and discourses by the mainstream ruling parties helped disseminate authoritarian, xenophobic and racist anti-immigrant discourses and attitudes to wider political audiences, facilitating the receptivity of far-right policies and solutions. Within this period, grievances about the supposed favouring of immigrants/refugees by social services and policies, encapsulated into the GD slogan ‘there is no other racism but the racism against the Greeks’ spread widely. GD’s activism found a way toward larger audiences through the party’s racist ‘solidarity only for Greeks’ activities in which food distributions and blood donations organised by the party systematically excluded immigrants (Koronaïou and Sakellariou, 2013). It was also in this period that anti-immigrant violent attacks and pogroms led by GD and other far-right groups and organisations exacerbated.¹⁶

¹³ See for example: Nielsen, N. ‘Greece opens first migrant detention centre’, EUObserver, 30/4/2012, available at: <https://euobserver.com/social/116083>; Silverstein, A. ‘Greece plans to send illegal immigrants to 30 camps’, The Works, 29/3/2012, available at: <https://www.pri.org/stories/2012-03-29/greece-plans-send-illegal-immigrants-30-camps>; Karamanidou, L. and Kasperek, B. ‘Hidden infrastructures of the European border regime: the Poros detention facility in Evros, Greece’, RESPOND, 8/3/2020, available at: <https://respondmigration.com/blog-1/border-regime-poros-detention-facility-evros-greece>

¹⁴ See for example: ‘Greece: Abusive Crackdown on Migrants. Police Sweeps, Invasive Searches, Arbitrary Detention’, Human Rights Watch, 12/6/2013, available at: <https://www.hrw.org/news/2013/06/12/greece-abusive-crackdown-migrants>; Laurence, P. (2015) ‘Operation “Xenios Zeus”: A strategy for deterring immigration through detention, intimidation and violation of migrants’ rights’, Athens Social Atlas, available at: <https://www.athenssocialatlas.gr/en/article/operation-xenios-zeus/>

¹⁵ See for example: ‘Samaras steps up rhetoric, blasts migrants and opponents’, eKathimerini.com, 3/5/2012, available at: <https://www.ekathimerini.com/141293/article/ekathimerini/news/samaras-steps-up-rhetoric-blasts-migrants-and-opponents>; ‘Head of Muslim Union labels Samaras Greece’s biggest racist’, eKathimerini.com, 21/9/2012, available at: <https://www.ekathimerini.com/144821/article/ekathimerini/news/head-of-muslim-union-labels-samaras-greeces-biggest-racist>; Joanna Kakissis, ‘Reclaiming Xenophobia: The Rise of Ultra-Nationalism in Greece’, Time, 30/10/2012, available at: <https://world.time.com/2012/10/31/reclaiming-xenophobia-the-rise-of-ultra-nationalism-in-greece/>

¹⁶ See for example: Cosse, E. ‘Greece’s Epidemic of Racist Attacks’, The New York Times, 26-1-2012, available at: <https://www.nytimes.com/2012/01/27/opinion/greeces-epidemic-of-racist-attacks.html>; jailgoldendawn, ‘Trial on Golden Dawn’s “battalion squads” in Metamorfofi: the Kontomus case’, 15/02/2014, available at: <https://jailgoldendawn.com/2014/02/15/trial-on-golden-dawns-battalion-squads-in-metamorfofi-the-kontomus-case/>; AFP, ‘Greek neo-Nazi on trial for murdering Pakistani immigrant’, 19/12/2013, available at: <https://www.dawn.com/news/1074848/greek-neo-nazis-on-trial-for-murdering-pakistani-immigrant>; Mac Con Uladh, D. ‘Golden Dawn leaders orchestrated 2011 pogrom in Athens, lawyers say’, Enet, 01/09/2014, available at: <https://jailgoldendawn.com/2014/09/02/golden-dawn-leaders-orchestrated-2011-pogrom-in-athens-lawyers->

Golden Dawn's political appeal and violent street activism against immigrants and political opponents rose dramatically during the first five years of the economic crisis (2009-2013) until the arrest and prosecution of its leadership for forming a criminal organisation following the murder of a young anti-fascist rapper (Kirtsoglou, 2013; Dalakoglou, 2013; Triantafyllidou, & Kouki, 2013; Ellinas and Lamprianou, 2016; Lamprianou and Ellinas, 2017; Paraskeva-Veloudogianni, 2015; Papastathis, 2015; Teperoglou and Tsatsanis, 2014; Vassilopoulou and Halikiopoulou, 2015; Georgiadou, 2013 and 2019; Koronaïou et al, 2015; Sakellariou 2015b; Tsiakalos, 2015). After GD's leadership was arrested in 2013 and until the eruption of the 2015 so-called refugee crisis, the incidents of far-right anti-immigrant/anti-Muslim violence had significantly decreased (Greek Ombudsman, 2013; RVRN annual reports, 2012- 2013, and 2014). However, this proved a short-lived trend. The large influx of, mainly Muslim, migrants/refugees fleeing from Middle-East war zones as well as from other Asian and African regions and attempting to reach the EU countries from 2015 onward, signalled the return of far-right anti-Muslim discourse and activism (Sakellariou, 2015a, 2016a, 2016b, 2017, 2020a and 2020b; Tsitselikis and Sakellariou, 2017 and 2018; Kirtsoglou and Tsimouris, 2016 and 2018; Huseyinoglu, 2015; Huseyinoglu and Sakellariou, 2018).

2.2 Contemporary context

During fieldwork, the contemporary context in Greece was dominated by heightened nationalist and anti-immigrant/anti-Muslim sentiments and attitudes. These had been fuelled by the escalation in Greece-Turkey relationships, the heated political controversy about the signing of the Prespa Treaty to resolve the 'Macedonia dispute' and the failure of the enforced, security-centred and closed-border, policies to tackle the pressures that the continuing flow of immigrants/refugees put on local communities and on the Greek social policies and services, particularly following the 2015-2016 'refugee crisis'. It is important to note here that these developments were taking place in a period when the Greek economy, political system and society were severely traumatised by the 10-year economic crisis (2009-2018) and recession, the consequences of which - high taxation, unemployment and poverty - were still felt by a significant part of the population.

The 2015-2016 so-called refugee crisis that followed Germany's decision to open its borders to large numbers of migrants and asylum seekers fleeing from Middle-East war zones¹⁷ dramatically increased the numbers of immigrants/refugees arriving to Greek borders, especially to the Greek Aegean islands neighbouring to Turkey. The situation escalated further due to the closed-border policies enforced by the

[say/](https://www.npr.org/2012/08/12/158371570/migrants-targeted-amid-rise-of-greek-extremists?t=1603791251751); Joanna Kakissis, 'Migrants Targeted Amid Rise Of Greek Extremists', npr, 12/8/2012, available at: <https://www.npr.org/2012/08/12/158371570/migrants-targeted-amid-rise-of-greek-extremists?t=1603791251751>; 'Greece: Alerts and Updates List, Monitoring Extremism, European Hate Crime Early Warning System, available at: <http://www.red-network.eu/?i=red-network.en.countries&id=8>

¹⁷ Vasagar, J., Robinson, D., Byrne, A. (2015) 'Germany braced to receive 800,000 asylum seekers', ft.com, 19-8-2015, <https://www.ft.com/content/1099e22c-467e-11e5-b3b2-1672f710807b> ; AFP, (2015) 'Germany on course to accept one million refugees in 2015', theguardian.com, 8-12-2015, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/dec/08/germany-on-course-to-accept-one-million-refugees-in-2015> ; Traynor, I. (2015) 'Europe split over refugee deal as Germany leads breakaway coalition', theguardian.com, 30-11-2015, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/nov/29/germanys-plan-to-strike-eu-wide-refugee-sharing-deal-stalls> ; Engler, M. (2016) 'Germany in the refugee crisis – background, reactions and challenges', vocaleurope.eu, 11-5-2016, <https://www.vocaleurope.eu/germany-in-the-refugee-crisis-background-reactions-and-challenges/> ; Dockery, W., (2017) 'Two years since Germany opened its borders to refugees: A chronology', dw.com, 4-9-2017, <https://www.dw.com/en/two-years-since-germany-opened-its-borders-to-refugees-a-chronology/a-40327634> ; Trines, S. (2017) 'Lessons From Germany's Refugee Crisis: Integration, Costs, and Benefits', wenr.wes.org, 2-5-2017, <https://wenr.wes.org/2017/05/lessons-germanys-refugee-crisis-integration-costs-benefits>; Ayoub, M.A. (2019), "Understanding Germany's response to the 2015 refugee crisis", *Review of Economics and Political Science*, Vol. ahead-of-print No. ahead-of-print. <https://doi.org/10.1108/REPS-03-2019-0024>

Visegrad countries, on the one hand, and the 2016 EU-Turkey Deal, on the other.¹⁸ These developments led to the entrapment in Greece of an ever-increasing number of migrants and refugees exacerbating the pressures put both on the already severely weakened, by the consequences of the economic crisis, social policies and services and on the abilities of the local communities to offer assistance to the arriving migrants and refugees. The establishment of densely and in poor, even deplorable, conditions populated refugee camps and hotspots in Greece, especially those on the neighbouring to Turkey, Greek Aegean islands, highly reinforced the nationalist anti-immigrant/anti-Muslim discourses about the 'Muslim immigrant invading army', the 'threat of Islamisation' and 'the exploitation of Muslim immigrants by Turkey against Greek national sovereignty'. In this context, Greek-Orthodox anti-Muslim/anti-immigrant xenophobia and nationalism were revitalised in the public sphere through public events (such as the 'We remain Greek and Orthodox' one¹⁹) about the threat that immigrants, refugees, Islam and the secularisation of public education represented for Greek-Orthodox identity. The supposed threat of Greece's and Europe's Islamification was also used to justify the 2016 four-month protest occupation of the designated site for the construction of the Athens Mosque by GD activists, Greek-Orthodox paramilitaries, far-right groups and Orthodox zealots, clergy and laics. Xenophobia, Islamophobia and concerns about public health triggered the protest-occupations of public schools organised by primary education pupils' parents, often with the support of far-right activists, who opposed the admission of migrant/refugee children in primary public education. This was fuelled by ideas of cultural incompatibility, as well fears about infectious diseases that would supposedly be spread in school by the children asylum-seekers living in the harsh and unhealthy conditions of the refugee camps.²⁰ As the numbers of migrants/refugees trapped in camps and makeshift shelters continued to rise, particularly on the Greek Aegean islands neighbouring Turkey, the local communities became susceptible to xenophobic/anti-

¹⁸ Elena López-Dóriga, 'Refugee crisis: The divergence between the European Union and the Visegrad Group', unav.edu, 12-6-2018, available at: <https://www.unav.edu/web/global-affairs/detalle/-/blogs/refugee-crisis-the-divergence-between-the-european-union-and-the-visegrad-group> ; Ivanova, D. (2016) 'Migrant crisis and the Visegrád group's policy', International Conference KNOWLEDGE-BASED ORGANIZATION Vol. 22, No 1, pp. 35-39, Available From: Sciendo <https://doi.org/10.1515/kbo-2016-0007> ; Stepper, P. (2016) 'The Visegrad Group and the EU agenda on migration: A coalition of the unwilling?', COJOURN 1:1, pp. 62-82, István Hegedűs Györgyi Kocsis Kata Nagy András Schweitzer Zsófia Stahl Erzsébet Strausz Erik Uszkiewicz Zsuzsanna Végh Zsófia Vidák and Alena Krempaska Christian Kvorning Lassen Peter Weisenbacher, The Refugee Crisis and the Reactions of the Visegrad Countries. Annual Report, September 2016, Friedrich Baumann Stiftung, Hungarian Europe Society, available at: https://www.europesociety.hu/sites/default/files/the_refugee_crisis_and_the_reactions_of_the_visegrad_countries_final_version_g.emma.pdf; Kondylia Gogou, 'The EU-Turkey deal: Europe's year of shame', amnesty.org, 20-3-2017, available at: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2017/03/the-eu-turkey-deal-europes-year-of-shame/>

¹⁹ This public event was organised by associations of Orthodox theologians and clergy as well as by Greek-Orthodox associations and the Holy Metropolis of Thessaloniki, the Bishop of which participated as one of the event's keynote speakers. In this event, a retired General of the Greek Army gave a speech about the 'ongoing Islamification of Europe and Greece (refugees, immigration, demography)'. See, 'Streaming: Event in Vellideio for our Orthodox Faith 14/2/2016', Holy Metropolis of Thessaloniki, youtube, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8TsY9ggg5qg&feature=emb_logo; see also 'We remain Greek and Orthodox. Event at Thessaloniki in 14/2/2016', enromiosini.gr, <https://enromiosini.gr/ανακοινωση-παλαισμενου-με-ελληνο-και-ορθοδοξοι-εκδηλω/> and 'We remain Greek and Orthodox'. Proceedings of the one-day event at Vellideio Conference Center, Thessaloniki, 14/2/2016, Thessaloniki: Editions To Palimpsiston, 2016 (in Greek).

²⁰ 'Parents at northern Greek elementary school oppose admission of refugee children', ekathimerini.com, 20-9-2016, available at: <https://www.ekathimerini.com/212175/article/ekathimerini/news/parents-at-northern-greek-elementary-school-oppose-admission-of-refugee-children> ; Simon Rau and Bill Van Esveld, "Without Education They Lose Their Future". Denial of Education to Child Asylum Seekers on the Greek Islands", .hrw.org, 18-7-2018, available at: <https://www.hrw.org/report/2018/07/18/without-education-they-lose-their-future/denial-education-child-asylum-seekers> ; 'Refugees trapped on Samos: A humanitarian crisis with no end in sight', saegean.org, 17-12-2019, available at: <https://saegean.org/en/refugees-trapped-on-samos/>

immigrant discourses and attitudes, despite their initial empathy towards migrants/refugees. Thus, grievances about increased criminality and deprivation of the local touristic economy due to the concentration of large numbers of immigrant/refugees were mixed with Islamophobic and anti-immigrant fears about supposed dangers and threats regarding the alteration of the islands' cultural character and Greek-Orthodox identity and also the fear of Turkey exploiting the migrants' arrival to challenge Greek national sovereignty on the Greek Aegean islands.²¹ It is worth noting here that all our informants stressed that they were deeply concerned about the dangers they saw in the current situation of the Greek islands urging for closed-border and deportation policies while the more radicalised among them emphasised the need to prepare for the violent suppression of a supposed immigrant revolt against the locals.

Furthermore, other developments connected to Greece's relations with the neighbouring countries of Albania, North Macedonia and Turkey heavily contributed to the heightened Greek-Orthodox nationalism during the fieldwork period. The Prespa Agreement which had settled the long-lasting 'Macedonian dispute' was the most debated political controversy at the time of the fieldwork. Large protests against the agreement, organised by Greek-Orthodox associations and supported by the Church of Greece, the Genuine Orthodox Christians, the monasteries of the Monastic Republic of Mount Athos, far-right parties and organisations and New Democracy party, took place during the field research. The signing of the agreement was very often condemned as treasonous act in Sunday Sermons and in public events of Greek-Orthodox associations and all of our informants mentioned it as a nationally dangerous development. Moreover, the so-called 'Katsifas incident' which took place in October 2018, when a young Greek-Orthodox nationalist (Konstantinos Katsifas), a member of Greek minority living mainly in South Albania (North Epirus, for Greek nationalism), was killed by Albanian police after firing at them with a military rifle. Golden Dawn and other far-right organisations, Greek-Orthodox associations, nationalist politicians and Church of Greece and Genuine Orthodox Christian clergy presented him as a contemporary national martyr and held commemorative events to honour what they saw as a 'sacrifice for the nation'. It is in the context of such a commemorative public event at the centre of Athens that we met Father Daniel and his Golden Dawn activists while the Orthodox Youth Group devoted one of their meetings to commemorate the 'national hero' and his 'sacrifice'. Finally, the worsening of the Greece-Turkey relations, especially following the 2016 attempted coup in Turkey had significantly contributed to heightening the anti-immigrant/anti-Muslim sentiments and attitudes at the time of the fieldwork. All the informants connected the troubled relationships of the two countries with the influxes of immigrants and their confinement on the Greek islands. They emphasised the national dangers they saw in such developments and urged for mass deportations of immigrants/refugees, complaining that the EU migration policies had turned 'Greece into a depository for migrants'.

²¹ "Samos SOS: We demand the liberation of the capital city of our island", samos24.gr, 7-4-2019, available at: <https://www.samos24.gr/σάμος-sos-απαιτούμε-την-απελευθέρωση-τη/> (in Greek); Ingeborg Eliassen and Stavros Malichudis, 'Europe's refugee regime pushes external borders to the limit', .investigate-europe.eu, 19-2-2020, available at: https://www.investigate-europe.eu/en/2020/europes-new-refugee-regime-pushing-external-borders-to-the-limit/?ie_s=ga&pk_campaign=en-minor-migrants&pk_source=google&pk_medium=cpc&gclid=Cj0KCCQAwMP9BRCzARIsAPWTJ_EpnhilD7XSp1uNmhsar5o9WeQv9M70ZtMfv6gBGGPIa8MNY03pM4aAuS9EALw_wcB; Florian Schmitz, 'Huge migrant influx scares off Greek island tourists', dw.com, 23-6-2019. Available at: <https://www.dw.com/en/huge-migrant-influx-scares-off-greek-island-tourists/a-49323145>; Schmitz, F. Refugee crisis in Greece: Anger and foreboding grow on Lesbos, 02.03.2020, dw.com, <https://www.dw.com/en/refugee-crisis-in-greece-anger-and-foreboding-grow-on-lesbos/a-52615534>

2.3 Locating the ‘Young Orthodox Greeks with Islamophobic/anti-Muslim views and attitudes’ milieu

The milieu under study consists of Greek-Orthodox young people and the organisations/groups and events/activities in which they participate. The latter range from Orthodox youth associations and unions, Orthodox summer vacation camps, Sunday Schools or general population Greek-Orthodox organisations and groups that include young people, through to Sunday Sermons in Orthodox Churches as well as various events hosted by Greek-Orthodox organisations, associations and groups. The milieu includes Orthodox Christians of the mainstream Orthodox Church (“Church of Greece”- COG), anti-Ecumenist Orthodox zealots affiliated either to the Church of Greece or to the ‘Genuine Orthodox Christians’ (GOCs) which represent an Orthodox Christian branch that is independent from and critical of the Church of Greece as well as the Greek-Orthodox groups, associations and organisations that we encountered during fieldwork.

2.3.1 The Church of Greece (CoG)

The Church of Greece is a state institution with administrative autonomy. It is widely considered to be a vital institutional guardian of the Greek-Christian culture that comprises of the foundation of modern Greek-Orthodox national identity and nationalism and the core of the traditional conservative/right-wing ideology of ‘Fatherland-Religion-Family’. Functioning as a state institution that represents and reproduces the Greek-Orthodox national identity and the ‘Fatherland-Religion-Family’ ideology, the CoG has incorporated the traditional Greek-Orthodox anti-Muslim/anti-Turkish nationalism and it has developed and maintains close connections and strong relationships with right-wing social and political forces. It also collaborated with and supported the two emblematic authoritarian regimes of modern Greek history, namely the para-fascist interwar dictatorship and the late 1960s military dictatorship. Since the restoration of parliamentarism in 1974, the CoG’s leadership has been committed to representative democracy and its hierarchy has been enriched with more liberal voices. However, the CoG continues to include and harbour within its clergy a considerable number of ultra-nationalist and authoritarian figures and voices. As a result, a number of prominent Bishops as well as clergy and laics have articulated xenophobic, anti-immigrant/anti-Muslim public discourse (that is sympathetic to and supportive of far-right parties such as the neo-Nazi party of Golden Dawn) and supported nationalist demonstrations and protests on issues about Greece’s relationships with neighbouring countries (Albania, North Macedonia and Turkey).

The CoG exercises great political and cultural influence over other state institutions, such as the armed forces (military and the police), the educational and the judiciary systems as well as over civil society. Its influence is exercised through active involvement (institutionalised or not) in the shaping of public policies (some recent examples include the Church’s intervention in public debates over issues of religious education in public schools, LGBT rights, even Greek state foreign policy). Its civil society organisations have demonstrated their ability to mobilise great numbers of people in support of the CoG’s views, values and demands, while its charities and philanthropic work embed the Church and its representatives in the fabric of everyday life.

2.3.2 The Anti-Ecumenist Orthodox zealots

Such discourses and attitudes are particularly evident among the CoG clergy and laics who articulate anti-Ecumenist criticisms against the CoG’s leadership and hierarchy. These criticisms originate from zealot Greek-Orthodox clergy and laics affiliated either to the mainstream CoG, to the Greek Church of the Genuine Orthodox Christians (GOCs) or to the constitutionally recognised Self-Governed Monastic Republic of Mount Athos (also known as Hagion Oros- “Holy Mountain” or “Athonic Republic”) and they accuse the CoG leadership, hierarchy and clergy as having fallen into the heresy of Ecumenism, through which they betray the traditional Orthodox dogma established by the Holy Fathers and the ecclesiastical

Orthodox tradition. The core of their criticism against the mainstream CoG centres around the communication and collaboration between different Christian dogmas (especially with Catholicism) and even more so among Orthodox Christianity and other religions, which they outright reject.²² They call such attempts ‘the heresy of Ecumenism’ and they see the CoG’s attempts to establish dialogue and collaboration between the Christian Churches and dogmas as an attempt to subjugate Greek Orthodoxy to Ecumenist pressures originating from Catholicism, globalisation, multiculturalism, secularisation and the ‘New World Order’. They firmly believe that the ‘Ecumenist heresy’ is a plot orchestrated by the enemies of Orthodoxy and true Christianity (Jews, Zionists, Masons, global elites, Soros, global bankers, atheists and Satanists) who conspire against Christianity in general and Christian Orthodoxy in particular. According to such criticisms, the Church of Greece has become ‘Pope and Catholic friendly’ and has lost its traditional religious content, as result of the Ecumenist heresy. This, in turn, prevents it from fulfilling its spiritual, national and social role. They anti-ecumenists call for a radical change of the Church of Greece’s route and mind-set and for a return to the roots of orthodoxy, calling on clergy and laics to reject and abandon those priests and Bishops who support Ecumenism.

2.3.3 The Genuine Orthodox Christians (GOCs)²³

The *Genuine* Orthodox Christians (GOCs), who are known for their religious zeal, constitute a part of Orthodoxy in Greece. They self-identify as *Genuine* Orthodox Christians (GOCs) and their status among mainstream Orthodox people in Greece is peculiar, as they are recognised as Orthodox but are considered to be ultra-conservative and even exhibiting fundamentalist attitudes.

They are organised in a separate Orthodox Church hierarchy with their own Bishops and clergy, who are not public employees as is the case of the CoG hierarchy and clergy. Their church is a second, parallel and independent Orthodox Church that neither receives official state support nor is it represented within the Greek state. Their relationship with the mainstream Church of Greece (CoG) is antagonistic at the level of religious institutions and hierarchy, while at the level of religious practice they are identical, with the exception of the religious calendar they use - the GOCs use the “old” Julian Calendar instead of the “new” Gregorian one which was adopted in 1923. From 1924 onward, a part of the orthodox clergy hierarchy and population in Greece refused to follow the ‘new’ calendar and gradually formed the Church of the *Genuine* Orthodox Christians of Greece. Today they are organised in Episcopacies comprising local temples, monasteries and associations, otherwise identical to those of the mainstream CoG. They also maintain close relationships with zealots of the CoG, as well as with the monastic population of the Monastic Republic of Mount Athos.

The GOCs are very active in religious, social and political issues and in the course of the previous three decades they have exhibited high levels of activism in respect to public issues. They adopt a very strict and ‘agonistic/zealotic’ and even ‘activist’ attitude in respect to religious belief and they demand

²² See Fr Maximos Lavriotes, Current Greek Orthodox Attitudes to Ecumenical Relations, CEWERN, available at: <https://www.faithineurope.org.uk/orth-ecum.html>. For the dialogue among Orthodox Churches and Christian dogmas see ‘Relations of the Orthodox Church With the Rest of the Christian World’ in ‘The official texts of the Holy and Great Synod: Encyclical, Message and Decisions’, Orthodox Academy of Crete, <https://www.oac.gr/articlefiles/SYNODOS/Relations%20of%20the%20Orthodox%20Church.pdf>, see also ‘The official texts of the Holy and Great Synod: Encyclical, Message and Decisions’, Orthodox Academy of Crete, <https://www.oac.gr/en/agia-kai-megali-synodos/message-of-the-holy-and-great-council-of-the-orthodox-church-p143.html>. For the criticism of the Genuine Orthodox Christians on Ecumenism see ‘The True Orthodox Church and the Heresy of Ecumenism. Dogmatic and Canonical Issues’, ecclesia.goc.en, available at: https://sites.google.com/view/ecclesia-goc-en/information/articles/ecclesiological#h.p_xuS2TajK55yF and ‘Anti-Ecumenism’, Church of the Genuine Orthodox Christians of Greece, Holy Metropolis of Oropos and Phyle, available at: https://www.imoph.org/Theology_en/AntiEcumenism.html

²³ See Church of the Genuine Orthodox Christians of Greece, ‘Historical’, ecclesia.goc.en, available at: <https://sites.google.com/view/ecclesia-goc-en/information/articles/historical>

Orthodox doctrine and their own interpretation of it to form the basis and content of public and private life. For this attitude they have been characterised as ‘Orthodox fundamentalists’. During the crisis they often joined forces with clergy and followers of the mainstream CoG, especially those supporting the far right, in protests and demonstrations over public issues such as religious catechism in the educational system, LGBT rights, immigrants and refugees in Greece, the construction of the Athens Mosque, even foreign policy issues, such as the relationships of Greece with its neighbours. The GOCs are often supporters of the two main historical authoritarian regimes in Greece, they see themselves as the core of Greekness and Orthodoxy and they express strong support for the military forces. During the crisis a part of the GOC clergy developed a close relationship with the neo-Nazi party of Golden Dawn, joining forces on issues such as LGBT rights, foreign policy issues, the construction of the Athens Mosque and protests against ‘blasphemous’ works of art, theatrical performances etc.

2.3.4 The Orthodox zealots in the Monastic Republic of Mount Athos (Holy Mountain)

The Monastic Republic of Mount Athos is an Orthodox Christian spiritual centre that encompasses an entire peninsula of 33,042 ha. It is forbidden to women and children and has enjoyed a self-administered status since the Byzantine times, with its first constitution signed in 972 by the Byzantine Emperor. Today, the Monastic Republic maintains its self-administered system under Greek Constitutional Law. The latter recognises the administrative authority of the twenty Holy Monasteries that make up the Holy Community while retaining the sovereignty of the Greek state.

The Holy Community is affiliated to the Orthodox Patriarchate of Constantinople in Istanbul and has, since the 14th century, endorsed the principles of quietism, according to which the monks are devoted exclusively to prayer as the only way to experience God’s grace. In early 1970s, many Holy Monasteries had opposed the attempts of the Orthodox Patriarch of Constantinople to establish communication with the Pope and Catholicism, accusing him of endorsing the Ecumenist heresy. Although the issue was eventually settled, one of the opposing monasteries, the Esfigmenou Holy Monastery, had refused to recognise the settlement; it stopped participating in the Holy Community and changed its affiliation from the Orthodox Patriarchate of Constantinople to the Church of the Genuine Orthodox Christians. The Holy Community condemned this development as symptom of zealotism and demanded that the monastery be evacuated and the monks leave the Holy Mountain. This demand was rejected by the leadership of the zealots who occupied the premises of the monastery. Since then, and despite numerous attempts by the Holy Community to expel the anti-ecumenist zealots from the Esfigmenou Holy Monastery, this remains occupied and under the control of the Genuine Orthodox Christians.

In its attempt to build alliances with parts of Greek Orthodoxy, Golden Dawn developed close relationships with the squatting zealots of the Esfigmenou Holy Monastery. In 2017 Golden Dawn MPs, together with Serbian nationalist MPs, visited the Esfigmenou and other monasteries and had meetings with monks supporting Golden Dawn. The party also supported the Esfigmenou zealots both in protests and in Parliament.²⁴ During fieldwork, we encountered and discussed with the leader and the members of a Greek-Orthodox association (the ‘Greek-Orthodox Group’), the leader of which (Father Gabriel) had

²⁴ ‘On a mission to Mount Athos, P. Eliopoulos together with H. Kasidiaris and Serbian MPs’, *magnesia247.gr*, 16-11-2017, available at: <https://magnesia247.gr/sto-agio-oros-iliopoulos-kasidiaris-servoi/> (in Greek); ‘Golden Dawn MPs in the protest for the Esfigmenou Monastery’, *newsbeast.gr*, 1-2-2017, available at: <https://www.newsbeast.gr/politiki/arthro/2561946/vouleftes-tis-chrisis-avgis-sti-sigkentrosi-gia-ti-moni-esfigmenou> (in Greek); Petros Vassiliades, ‘Golden Dawn and Esfigmenou Monastery’, *ekklisiaonline.gr*, 17-10-2020, available at: <https://www.ekklisiaonline.gr/nea/chrysi-avgi-ke-moni-esfigmenou/> (in Greek); ‘Golden Dawn siding with the monks of the Esfigmenou Monastery’ Golden Dawn youtube channel, 9-12-2014, available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EaKPPEc88Z8> (in Greek); Stavros Tzimas, ‘What were the Golden Dawners doing at Esfigmenou Monastery?’, *kathimerini.gr*, 2-11-2020, available at: <https://www.kathimerini.gr/society/561139378/ti-gyreyan-oi-chrysaygites-sti-moni-esfigmenoy/> (in Greek)

been a monk in Esfigmenou Monastery. The militant Orthodox banner of the Esfigmenou Monastery (reading 'the slogan 'Orthodoxy or Death') was decorating the Greek-Orthodox Group's meeting place while leaflets advertising the local elections candidacy of another Genuine Orthodox Christian priest (Father Daniel) with Golden Dawn were distributed by the group. Father Gabriel was one of the keynote speakers in the public event organised by several Greek-Orthodox associations (Thomas' 'Military Union' among them) against globalisation, Ecumenism and the New World Order.

2.3.5 The Greek-Orthodox groups, associations and organisations

These groups span from Orthodox religious youth groups affiliated to the Church of Greece and attracting mostly university students to quasi-political groups such as Father Gabriel's 'Greek-Orthodox Group' which endorse a militant/zealotic version of Orthodoxy and propagate far-right nationalism and authoritarianism to far-right paramilitaries such as Thomas' 'Military Union', or even neo-Nazi groups of activists such as Father Daniel's group of Golden Dawn activists. The militant/zealotic and connected to far-right Greek-Orthodox groups and associations are comprised of Orthodox zealots (affiliated either to the Church of Greece or to the Genuine Orthodox Christians), far-right activists and former soldiers of the Greek Army, especially from the commando forces. They are unequivocally anti-Ecumenists and hostile to Muslims and immigrants/refugees while they justify far-right and anti-Muslim/anti-immigrant violence in the context of a supposed defensive war against the 'enemies of the faith and the nation'. It is worth noting here that two of the Greek-Orthodox groups that we encountered during fieldwork (Thomas' 'Military Union' and Father Daniels 'group of Golden Dawn activists) had organised and carried out the 2016 four-month protest-occupation against the construction of the Athens Mosque. The coincidence of Greek-Orthodox nationalist, xenophobic, anti-Islam/anti-Muslim discourse and attitudes with militarism and far-right and fascist ideas and political agendas within some of the Greek-Orthodox groups and organisations that we encountered during research in the milieu, designates them as an important source of anti-Islam/anti-Muslim right-wing radicalism.

3. Field Research

The field research started in September 2017 following the receipt of ethical approval from Panteion University. In preparation for entering the field, the World Wide Web and the social media were used and personal contacts were mobilised in order to locate possible starting points such as organisations, groups, events, gatekeepers and active members or important figures of the milieu. Accessing the milieu and conducting interviews and participant observation proved complicated and slow as researchers were often met with suspicion, reluctance and rejection. We negotiated access for field research with clergy and laics in a number of parishes of the Church of Greece (CoG) and of the Genuine Orthodox Christians (GOCs) as well as in Orthodox youth organisations and groups where we attended sermons, meetings, catechism and other events. We also participated in public events organised by Greek-Orthodox clergy and laics groups and associations as well as by Golden Dawn. We conducted 17 individual interviews and completed 15 field diary entries recording participant observations in sermons and catechism, Orthodox youth group meetings and events, discussions with individuals and groups and public events organised by Greek-Orthodox associations and by the Golden Dawn.

3.1 Data collection

The aim of the ethnographic research was to investigate the meanings, the experiences and the socio-psychological aspects of the process and of the trajectories of radicalisation and non-radicalisation. In this respect, the researcher needs to organise fieldwork within a reflexive methodological and conceptual framework where, on the one hand, data collection proceeds as a process of sustained inquiry (Wolcott,

1995: 249) and, on the other hand, identities, roles and subjectivities are able to be negotiated (Coffey, 1999:57) in the process of the meaning and experience of investigation. For this purpose, the combination of qualitative methods, such as semi-structured interviewing and participant observation, offers the possibility of investigating ideas, views, values, perceptions, attitudes and emotions and understanding personal and social experiences in order to share, and make sense of, the world of others (Mishler, 1996; Mason, 2003: 83-131; Grawitz, 2006: 235-279; Rubin and Rubin, 1995: 1-5).

We negotiated interviewing and participant observation in 19 parish-churches of Athens that were under the supervision of either the mainstream Church of Greece or of the Church of the Genuine Orthodox Christians, as well as in 5 Orthodox youth associations and groups. We also attended three public events organised by Greek-Orthodox associations, by the party of Golden Dawn and by a group of Golden Dawn activists led by a GOC priest.

Overall, we conducted 17 interviews with Orthodox young people including 14 males and three females. Among them we interviewed:

- a young GOC priest (Father Daniel), active Golden Dawn member and leader of a group of Greek-Orthodox Golden Dawn activists.
- a young Orthodox male and far-right activist (Fotis) who we met at 3 events that we attended during fieldwork and was introduced to us by Thomas, the leader of the Greek-Orthodox paramilitary group the 'Military Union'. Fotis was also member of the 'Military Union';
- a young Orthodox male member of a small nationalist/far-right party (Pantelis) introduced to us by an Orthodox theologian in public secondary education;
- three young Orthodox males, members of the new Democracy party, (Giorgos, Antonis and Anargyros) that we met during attendance in mass/sermons/catechism;
- three (3) young Orthodox males (Kimonas, Theodoros and Kyriakos), who were residents in an Orthodox boarding house for non-Athenian male students in University schools in Athens and also members of the 'Orthodox Youth Group'. The latter is a formal Orthodox male students' group, in which we also conducted participant observation; it is affiliated to the 'Christian-Orthodox Club', a non-profit formal religious association, founded in 1960, developing multifaceted activities throughout Greece and connected to the CoG.

The remaining 8 individuals that we interviewed were met either in mass/sermons/catechism in various parish-churches or introduced to us by Orthodox clergy and laics.

It should be noted here that the total number of respondents included in the study is 21, as we also draw on interviews and discussions with four important persons in the milieu (Father Tryfonas, Father Gabriel, Thomas and Jacob). These individuals were included in the respondent set as, although they did not meet the age criterion, they proved important, not only as gatekeepers, but also as leading figures within religious and activist Greek-Orthodox groups. Additionally, we draw on two group discussions with members of such groups: a) the members of Father Gabriel's 'Greek-Orthodox Group' and b) Tryfonas' GOC followers ('spiritual children') in a GOC chapel of Athens. These group discussions, as well as individual discussions and participant observation, are included in the overall 15 field diary entries listed below:

- two sermons by a GOC priest (Father Tryfonas) in his parish-church regarding the therapeutic power of Orthodox faith for mental illness and the threat of Greece's Islamification;
- a discussion with the same GOC priest (Father Tryfonas) about his views on Islam, Orthodoxy, Islamist and anti-Islam radicalism and extremism, immigration, Islamification, globalisation, multiculturalism, and contemporary threats for Greece and Orthodoxy;
- a group discussion with three GOCs (Gerassimos, Anthimos and Nikos) selected by the same GOC priest (Father Tryfonas) who identified them as his 'spiritual children';

- three (3) meetings/events of the 'Orthodox Youth Group' about divine punishment, Islamic faith and the state-Orthodox Church relationship;
- a meeting/event of the 'Orthodox Girls' Group' about the influx of immigrants/refugees in Greece;
- a 'No Mosque' event organised by Golden Dawn in which Father Daniel and his Greek-Orthodox Golden Dawn activists as well as Fotis were present;
- a nationalist event in central Athens organised by a Golden Dawn activist GOC priest (Father Daniel) in which Fotis was also present. The event was commemorating the 'Katsifas incident', a recent terrorist incident in South Albania between a young nationalist of Greek origin (K. Katsifas), member of the Greek-Orthodox minority in South Albania, and the Albanian police that resulted in Katsifas' killing by the Albanian police after the former had attacked the latter with a combat rifle;
- a public event against globalisation, Ecumenism and the New World Order organised by Greek-Orthodox associations (the 'Military Union', the 'Greek-Orthodox Group and others) in Athens in which Thomas, Father Gabriel (keynote speaker) and Fotis were present;
- two discussions with the leader (Thomas) of the armed paramilitary Greek-Orthodox association (the 'Military Union') who had co-organised the public event against globalisation, Ecumenism and the New World Order;
- a group discussion with the leader (Father Gabriel) and members of the 'Greek-Orthodox Group' (Nektarios, Theodore, Kaynan, Thaddaeus, Thomas - the leader of the a/m 'Military Union'- and Dassios). The group was also among the co-organisers of the a/m public event against globalisation, Ecumenism and the New World Order and its leader (Father Gabriel was one of the event's keynote speakers;
- a discussion with an Orthodox theologian teaching Orthodox faith and catechism in public secondary education.

It should be noted here that, during the actual fieldwork, a much larger number of meetings and discussions with gatekeepers and possible respondents as well as of attendances in mass/sermons/catechism and other activities and events was required in order to overcome hesitation, suspicion or outright rejection and to be allowed to do research in this milieu. Thus, although such meetings and attendances in milieu activities did not result in interviews or in participant observation, they were necessary in order to locate and approach individuals and groups who might agree to discuss and work with the research team.

Finally, taking photos of individuals, groups and places was either avoided on the part of the researchers, given the high level of suspicion encountered, or not allowed by the participants. Nevertheless, 24 still images were taken at the Golden Dawn 'No Mosque' event, as well as from a nationalist rally in the centre of Athens in which a large number of Orthodox clergy and laics participated. This rally was protesting against the Prespa Treaty signed between the Greek and the North Macedonia governments resolving a long-standing dispute over the latter's use of the term 'Macedonia' as the official name of the country as well as regulating relations between the two countries.

Table 1: Data set

	Number	Total length or brief description (as appropriate)	Average length
Respondent memos	21	n/a	n/a
Audio interviews	17	1599 mins (26 hours and 45 mins)	94.05 minutes
Field diary entries (total)	15	n/a	n/a
Still images	24		n/a

3.2 Access, researcher-respondent relations and ethical practice

The anti-Muslim/Islamophobic Greek Orthodoxy is composed of identities, groupings and institutions strongly connected to some of the most heated and conflictual debates in Greek public sphere. Conducting fieldwork in this milieu proved a slow, unstable and complicated process involving continuous negotiation of identities, aims and objectives as well as of trust and access. Suspicion, rejection, even hostility and provocation were not rare reactions to our attempts to access individuals and groups, in order to discuss with and interview them and to be accepted for participant observation. Being present but not pressing or activating defensive reactions as well as showing patience, honesty and interest was indispensable for managing widespread suspicion, reluctance, fear or aggression. The individuals and groups in the Islamophobic Greek-Orthodox milieu were often suspicious of our motives for doing research on anti-Muslim radicalism and it was not uncommon to encounter perceptions of social scientists as agents of 'hostile' institutions (such as academia and the EU) who 'spied' on the beliefs and actions of individuals and groups in order to learn about them and use this knowledge against them. Stigmatisation, prejudice, even feelings of being persecuted and repressed often surfaced among the individuals and groups that we approached and had to be managed in relation to the field research.

In this context, informing individuals and groups about the project's goals and objectives and reassuring them about anonymity was always necessary but often not enough to alleviate suspicion, fear and hostility. In some cases, the suspicion or even hostility toward the researchers was related to suspicion and hostility toward media reporters and journalists, so we had to assure possible informants that their interviews or the discussions with us would never be published as full text or under their real name in the media. In all cases, we clarified that only fully anonymised extracts of their interviews may be published for purely scientific purposes. Further, we informed interviewees that their discourse would not be censored in any way and that they are free to refuse to answer questions that they felt uncomfortable with. Personal acquaintances that vouched for us proved very helpful as well as the conduct of preliminary informal discussions about the project before the actual interview. The young age of one of the members of the research team in some cases seemed to be reassuring for young people, while the institutional position (Dean) of the leader of the research team helped in one case to overcome suspicion. Continuous presence in the milieu was also helpful in some cases as it familiarised individuals and groups with the research team. All interviewees were fully informed about the project's rationale, goals and objectives before the actual interviewing and, in all cases, they chose the option of verbal informed consent (as provided for in the ethical approval) at the beginning of each interview and following a brief recapitulation of the content and purpose of the research.

Nevertheless, questions about the researchers' religious and political beliefs and affiliations were often asked. The researchers responded giving the option to discuss informally about their own views after the interview. In such cases, the atmosphere was more relaxed and the discussions usually covered current public issues and political developments in which the researchers attempted to bring forth aspects of the issues discussed that appeared neglected and undervalued clarifying, at the same time, aspects of the interviewees' views. In some cases, the researchers were accused (along with the entire of academia) of being intruders and hypocrites who covered under scientific interest their true goal which was to spy on Greek-Orthodox patriots in order to inform their 'bosses', in academia and the EU, about those resisting globalisation and the New World Order. Father Tryfonas and his group of GOCs, the members of Father Gabriel's Greek-Orthodox Group, as well as some of the members of the 'Orthodox Youth Group' were among those who openly expressed such fears and suspicions towards the researchers. For example, a member of Father Gabriel's 'Greek-Orthodox Group' was seen to covertly take photos of the researchers during the initial contact with the co-organising Greek-Orthodox Associations at the end of the event against globalisation, Ecumenism and the New World Order (Field Diary), while Father Tryfonas' suspicion and reluctance to discuss with us was apparent in his repeated postponement (but not rejection) of a proposed discussion with him as well as in his unwillingness to give us permission to approach his GOC

followers for interviewing. He only agreed to discuss with us after three-months continuous attendance at his sermons/catechism and when we informed him that the proposed discussion would be directed by the Dean of Panteion's School of Social Science and leader of the research team. After the discussion with him, he continued to avoid giving his permission to conduct interviews among his followers for a couple of weeks and, when he did, he insisted on pre-selecting for us the members of the groups that could talk to us. Father Tryfonas' 'spiritual children', as he labelled them, refused to give individual interviews, but agreed to participate in a group discussion within the church's premises, during which they were very careful not to disclose personal or family information. The leader of the 'Orthodox Youth Group' also insisted on preselecting for us the members of the group to be interviewed. Although they all agreed to give individual interviews, they were very laconic about personal and family information. Similarly, Fotis, Father Daniel and the members of Father Gabriel's 'Greek-Orthodox Group' avoided and/or refused to disclose such information. The tendency of the respondents to give laconic or no personal or family information is reflected in the inability to populate the respective nodes (especially those concerning family relationships and backgrounds) and prevented us from analysing radicalisation as a process.

Sometimes, the researchers felt tested and provoked by individuals and groups and in two cases the researchers were alarmed that the situation could be threatening. In one such case, the researcher was accompanying Father Daniel and his Greek-Orthodox Golden Dawn activists in the GOC priest's car heading for his house/office to interview him, but when the car entered a neighbourhood known for its strong militant anti-fascist movement, Father Daniel decided to provoke the local antifascists with Golden Dawn's official anthem at full blast in order to 'piss off the dirty anarchists' as he said. He did this until the car left the neighbourhood and paid no attention to another GOC priest, who, sitting on the passenger's side, who asked him to lower the sound volume while we were crossing the specific area. Leaving the neighbourhood, he turned to the researcher saying 'we are Golden Dawners, as you have probably realised'. In the second case, the researchers, who visited Father Gabriel's 'Greek-Orthodox Group' meeting place in order to interview Father Gabriel, as had been agreed, found themselves to be questioned about their religious beliefs and political views by six members of the group while Father Gabriel was absent. The situation became alarming when one of the group members accused the researchers of spying and demanded to stop the process and leave. The atmosphere lightened when Father Gabriel appeared and changed the agreed plans from interviewing him to discussing with the entire group. In a number of other cases (mainly public events such as rallies and protests), the researchers were asked to leave the area because 'this is not a university and you have no business here', while during a telephone discussion with the leader of a group that opposed the construction and opening of the Athens Mosque, they were warned not to call again, because 'the situation could get complicated'.

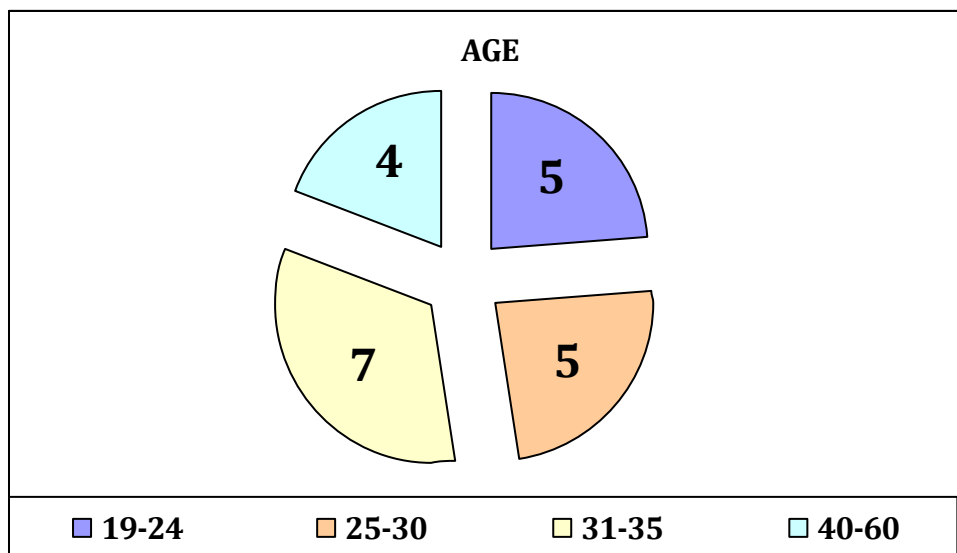
3.3 Data analysis and socio-demographic portrait of the respondent set

During fieldwork, the agreed interview schedule was followed in most cases. However, in the case of group discussions, there was more flexibility, although keeping in mind that the themes included in the interview schedule should be covered. In some cases, the respondents asked to be given a copy of the recorded interview and the researchers satisfied this request. In some cases, the length of the interview caused fatigue to interviewees but others expressed their satisfaction at being able to discuss such issues at length and in detail. Some respondents told us that they were surprised to see members of academia interested in and willing to discuss their views without judging them.

The final number of Level 2 nodes that were actually populated was 15 (68 level 1 nodes), all of which came directly from the interview schedule. Given the widespread reluctance to disclose details of their personal life and familial background, such information is often laconic or incomplete and the respective Level 2 nodes were not populated.

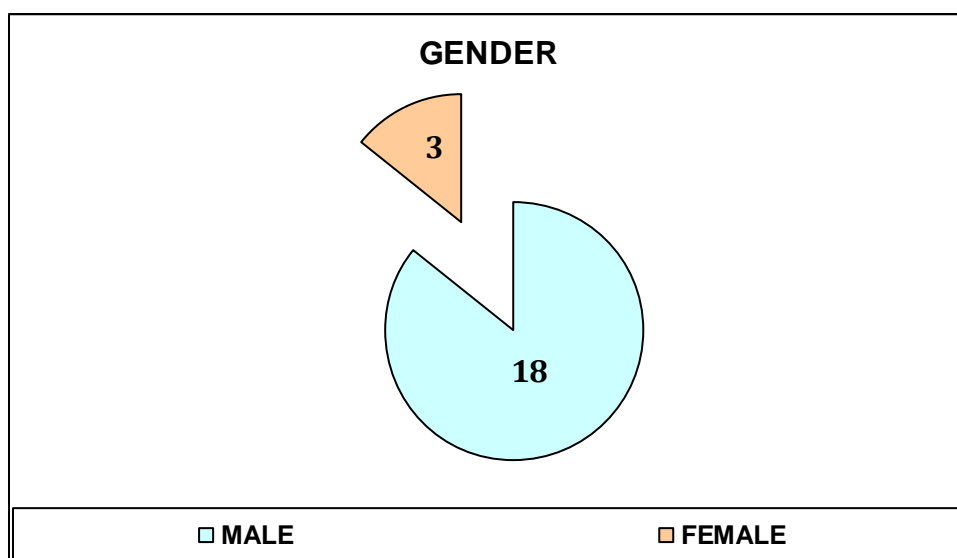
Regarding the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents, all of them were of Greek nationality and Christian-Orthodox in terms of religious faith. Their age varied from 19 to 60 years old: 5 were in the 19-24 age range, 5 in the 25-30 one while 7 were in the 31-35 age range. Finally 4 were from 40 to 60 years old. (Figure 1). These 4 individuals were included in the respondent set, although they did not meet the age-range criterion, because they proved important not only as gatekeepers but also as leading figures within religious and activist Greek-Orthodox groups.

Figure 1: Age



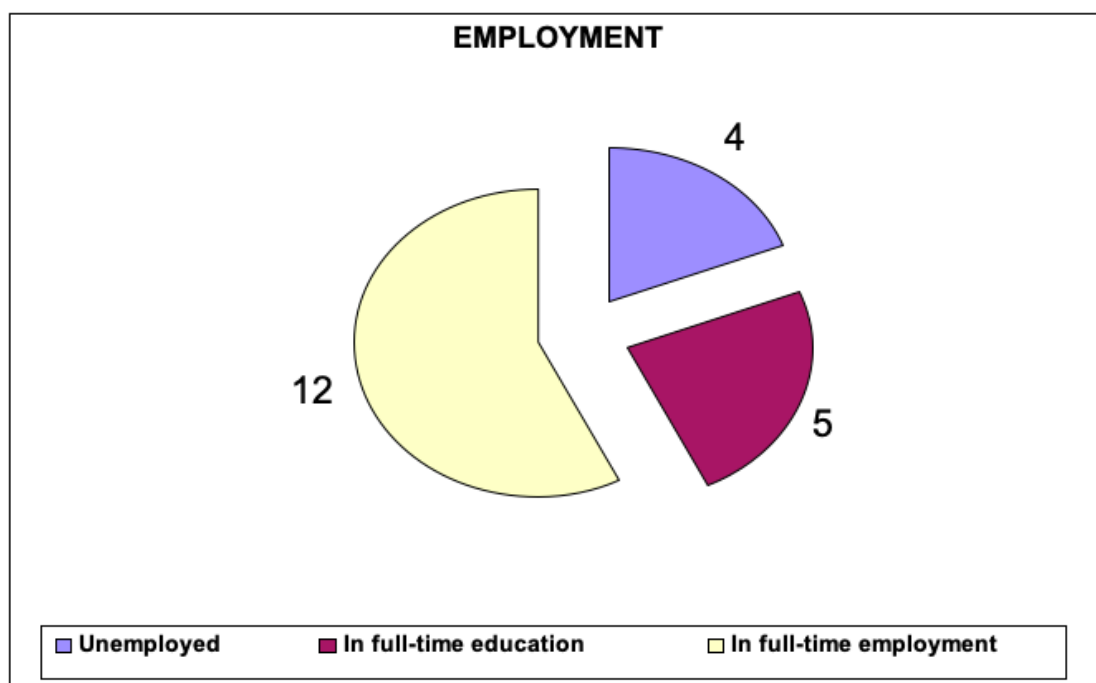
The vast majority (18) of the respondents were males while 3 were females. This reflects both the higher refusal rate among Greek-Orthodox females to be interviewed as well as the gender composition of the radicalised part of the milieu, as it was observed during fieldwork.

Figure 2: gender



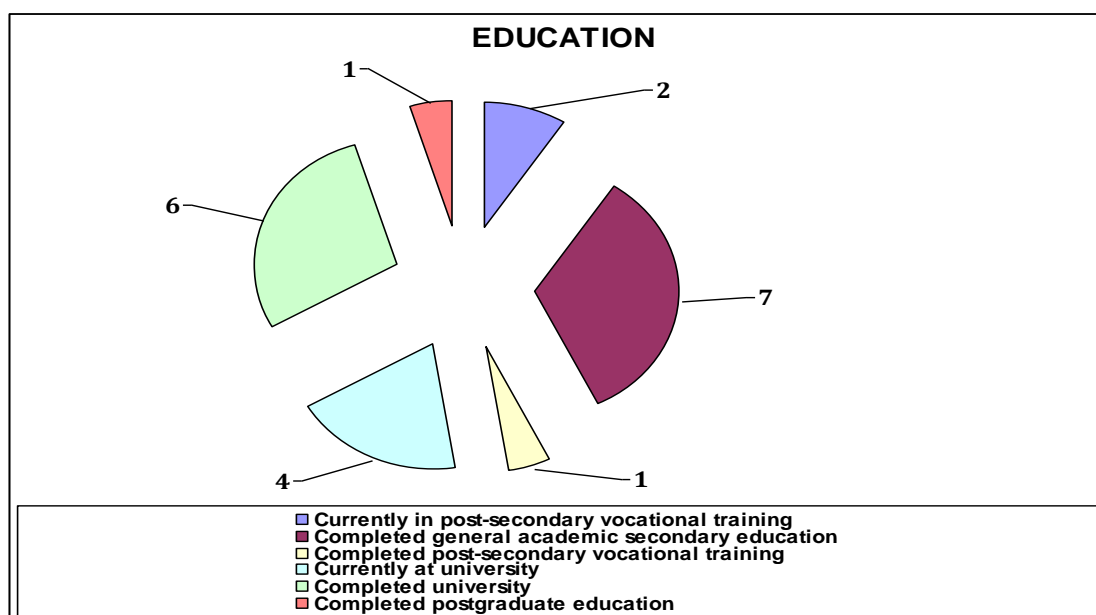
Regarding employment the majority (12) respondents were in full-time employment, 5 in full-time education and 4 were unemployed.

Figure 3: employment



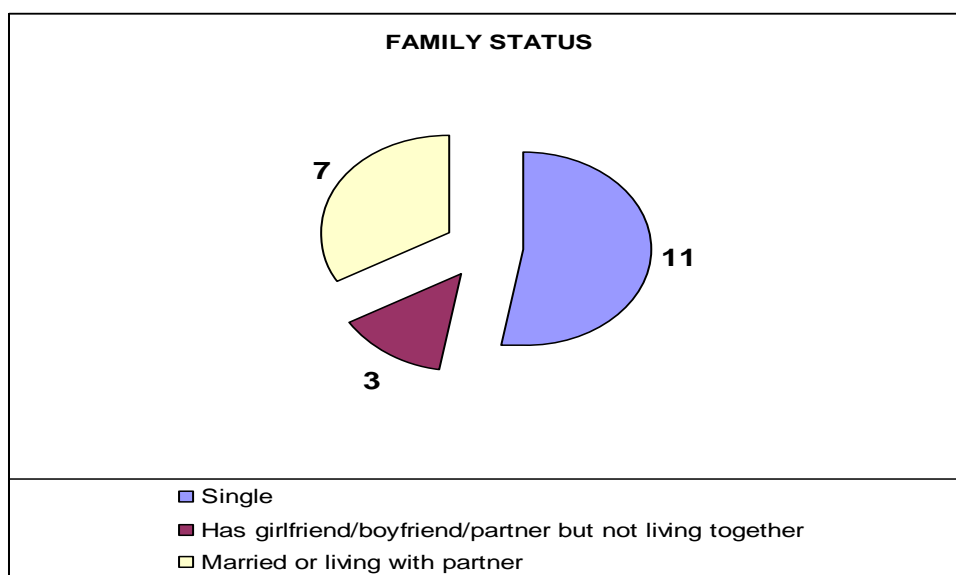
Regarding education, 7 had completed secondary education, 6 had completed university education, 4 were currently at university, 2 were in post-secondary vocational education, 1 had completed post-secondary vocational education and 1 had postgraduate education

Figure 4: education



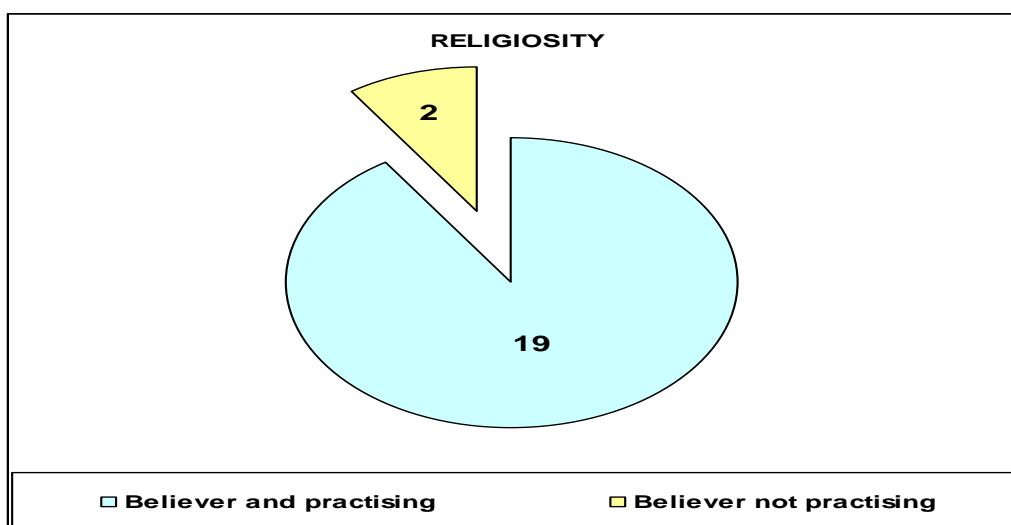
In respect to their residential status, 8 of the respondents lived at home with both parents and 1 lived at home with a single parent. Seven lived independently with their own partner/children, 2 lived independently alone and 3 lived in Orthodox university-student residential accommodation. Regarding their family status, the majority (11) were single while 7 were married or living with a partner, and 3 had girlfriend/boyfriend/partner but they were not living together.

Figure 5: family status



In terms of religion and religiosity, all of our informants were Orthodox Christians and the vast majority of them (19) said they were believers and practising their religious faith. Two informants said that they were believers but they were not practising their religious faith, meaning that they were not participating regularly in religious practices and events (confessing, receiving Holy Communion, visiting the local church for praying or catechism or attending holy mass regularly). However, they attended holy mass on certain important religious days or when they were invited to attend events such as marriages and funerals.

Figure 6: religiosity



4. Key Findings

This section of the report presents and discusses the key findings from the ethnographic study of anti-Islam/anti-Muslim radicalisation in the selected milieu of young Orthodox Greeks with Islamophobic/anti-Muslim views and attitudes. As it has already been mentioned in the introductory part of this report, the selected milieu is characterised by: i) the systematic presence of Islamophobic/anti-Muslim views and attitudes among Greek Orthodox Christians, ii) the historical connection between the Greek-Orthodox

national identity and nationalism with the right-wing and far-right ideology of Family-Religion-Family; and iii) the contemporary ties of the Islamophobic Greek Orthodoxy with anti-immigrant far/extreme right politics and activism. These characteristics designate the milieu as a potentially fertile socio-cultural and political environment for anti-Islam/anti-Muslim radicalisation.

The ethnographic fieldwork confirmed the systematic presence of Greek-Orthodox, right-wing, anti-Islam/anti-Muslim and anti-immigrant views and attitudes within the milieu and located a segment of it where these views and attitudes were combined with justifications of and preparations for the use of anti-Muslim and anti-immigrant (symbolic and physical) violence within a far/extreme right nationalist and authoritarian political agenda. The individuals and groups that comprised this segment of the milieu included Orthodox zealots, and far/extreme right Greek-Orthodox nationalists, strongly connected with the military, especially, but not exclusively, with the commando forces. These individuals and groups shared nationalist, Islamophobic/anti-Muslim and anti-immigrant views and attitudes with the overall milieu, but, additionally, they amalgamated them with open justification and endorsement of violence, militarism and political authoritarianism as political tools for promoting far/extreme right political agendas as a response to the threats that globalisation, multiculturalism and immigration were seen to represent for the 'faith and the nation'. In this respect, the individuals and groups of this part of the investigated milieu represent its radicalised section that, contrary to the non-radicalised, albeit still Islamophobic and anti-immigrant, part, justifies and endorses the use of anti-Muslim/anti-immigrant violence and propagates anti-democratic far/extreme right political solutions. The latter are inspired by the dictatorial regimes of 20th century Greek history and particularly by the 1967-1974 military dictatorship which is repeatedly celebrated in the discourses of the anti-Muslim/anti-immigrant Greek-Orthodox radicals.

The findings from the study of the selected milieu are presented and discussed focusing on the emerging differentiation, within the milieu, between its radicalised and non-radicalised segments. In this respect, both what is common and shared and what is special and differentiated is highlighted. The aim here is to stress both the common and the differentiating social, religious, cultural, ideological, emotional and political contents and characteristics of the milieu's two segments as well as to locate potential sources of the anti-Muslim/anti-immigrant radicalism. It should be remembered here, that due to the lack of personal and familial biographical information, the discussion of individual trajectories of radicalisation/non-radicalisation will be restricted to the examination of the differences between the two segments (the radicalised and the non-radicalised) of the milieu, as well as of the sources of radicalism within the milieu.

In this framework, the first Section (4.1) explores the radicalised and the non-radicalised respondents' understandings of radicalism and extremism, their causes and sources, as well as the respondents' evaluations of and attitudes toward them. The next Section (4.2) considers the theme of social relationships and the ways the radicalised and the non-radicalised informants respond to views and messages that they disagree with, while the gendered dimension of the milieu is discussed in Section 4.3. Section 4.4 discusses the religious, ideological, political and emotional ground which is shared by both the radicalised and the non-radicalised respondents while Section 4.5 highlights the special religious, ideological, political and emotional content of Islamophobic/anti-Muslim radicalism. The sixth section (4.6) discusses the importance of violence for anti-Muslim/anti-immigrant radicalism while the next one (4.7) explores the views and the understandings of both the radicalised and the non-radicalised respondents about economic inequality and perceived injustices highlighting the differential integration of the structural factors within radicalised and non-radicalised Islamophobic narratives. Finally, Section 4.8 highlights the special religious, ideological and political amalgam that defines Greek-Orthodox anti-Muslim/anti-immigrant radical identities and groupings within the milieu as well as the main sources of radicalism that these identities and groupings prescribe within the milieu.

4.1 Young people's own understandings of 'radicalisation'

DARE's open, critical and dialogic approach to radicalisation seeks to extend our knowledge about and understanding of the nature of radicalism and extremism through the interconnection of 'etic' and 'emic' perspectives enabling us to integrate the, usually institutional, external observer's perspective with perceptions, understandings, evaluations, attitudes and interpretations 'native' to radical milieus while taking into account the 'dissonance' between the 'institutional' and the 'native' (Kuhle and Lindekilde, 2010: 63) and thereby enriching and adjusting the official definitions and interpretations (ibid.: 67). This section of the report focuses on the investigation of young people's own understandings of the meaning of the project's core concepts (radicalism, extremism, terrorism), as well as of their content, namely, the conditions that foster radicalism and extremism and the situations that create them, examples of radicals and extremists, their common characteristics and differences, how and by whom they are labelled as such as well as the young peoples' attitudes, evaluations and interpretations about radicalism/radicals and extremism/extremists.

4.1.1 Conceptualisations

The common understanding of the concept of radicalism among our respondents departs from the etymological understanding of the Greek words '*rizospastismos*' (radicalism) and '*rizospastis*' (radical). As is also the case in the Latin etymology of the respective English terms, the 'root-breaking' core of the concept implies deep change, innovation and a fundamental break from the past, making a radical 'someone who seeks to forget the past and is trying to create something brand new.' (Thanasis)

For those of our respondents with a more political understanding of radicalism, this is undeniably intertwined with the pursuit of profound changes in an established order, that is, with change/subversion of the status quo, revolution and the struggle for gaining rights. For them, radicalism and radicals seek an immediate and total overthrow of the status quo and express an absolute contrast to the 'spirit of the times' seeking to establish a 'new order of things'. In this context, examples of radicals given by the respondents include ISIS, the Nazis, the Communists, Salvini, and the nineteenth century Greek revolutionaries against Ottoman rule.

In the case of extremism and extremists, our respondents departed from their understanding of radicalism as the pursuit of deep changes in an established order adding the elements of violence, fanaticism and terrorism. In this context, examples of extremists include ISIS, Al Qaida, anarchists, nationalists, the far-right, the neo-Nazi Golden Dawn, Nazis, Communists and the nineteenth century Greek revolutionaries against Ottoman rule. The element of violence is stressed and used to distinguish between the radical and the extremist.

The extremist is a kind of a radical person. They want to change the status quo in a violent way. The radical person wants to implement changes immediately. The extremist is willing to use violence in order to achieve this. It is a particular type of a radical person. That is the main difference. (Vaggelis)

The reference to violence as employed to achieve profound socio-political changes and overthrowing the established order recurs in our respondents' discourse suggesting, without explicitly stating, an implicit connection between radicalism and extremism. This theme is further complemented with the one of fanaticism. The latter is seen as the decisive factor that determines the use of violence and terrorism. Thus, Fotis a 34-year old Greek-Orthodox far-right activist connected Islamist terrorism with religious fanaticism through the belief which, according to him is central in Islam, that those who die fighting the infidels will be rewarded in afterlife. Moreover, Jacob, a middle-aged Christian-Orthodox theologian in secondary public education, defined fanaticism as 'zeal without awareness' and he connected it (along with other respondents) with extremist nationalism and the use of violence against immigrants in Greece as well as with Islamist extremism and terrorism.

I would describe an extremist as someone who does something that is not in line with public opinion, with human nature, for his religion or for his country. For example, to wear a suicide vest and to take so many lives simultaneously, that person I consider him to be an extremist. [...] Yes, violence in that style though. Let's say, since we are talking about them, if someday the Muslims get out in the streets and start stabbing people, I will consider them as extremists (Kimonas)

The combination of radicalism, violence and fanaticism constitutes the main perspective through which various extremisms (Islamic/Islamist, nationalist/Greek-Orthodox as well as left-wing) are perceived and understood by the majority of our respondents. In this respect, radicalism and extremism are perceived and understood by our respondents in terms of a continuum mediated by fanaticism and the willingness to use violence in order to achieve profound socio-political change.

4.1.2 Causes and sources of radicalism and extremism

Discussing their own understandings of radicalism and extremism, our informants mentioned what they saw to be their causes as contemporary phenomena and their sources in Greek society. As causes of radicalism and extremism they identified injustice, degraded social conditions, negative personal experiences, religious fanaticism, lack of education and of ethical principles as well as history, war and geopolitical conflicts. They referred to the Left and the Right as the main sources of radicalism and extremism in the Greek society insisting that Orthodoxy does not represent such a source.

4.1.2.1 *Injustice, degraded social conditions and negative personal experiences*

Injustice, poverty, oppression, discrimination, social exclusion and marginalisation were often highlighted as important causes and sources of grievances, divisions, resentment and hostility/hate that fuel radicalism and extremism especially in the context of confronting the status quo and fighting for rights and/or freedoms. In this vein of thought, the radicalised among our respondents (such as Thomas, the leader of a right-wing Greek-Orthodox paramilitary group) stressed the emotional impact of the consequences of the economic crisis that have significantly degraded the life prospects of young people. He attributed the 'toughness' and 'aggression' of the young members of his group (who 'are polishing their rifles' and 'they want to kill them all [immigrants and politicians]' to their rage and despair caused by poverty, unemployment and lack of life-prospects.

They are unemployed, and they are in trouble. I have my job and even if I don't earn enough, I still have my savings. And I'll get a pension. Theirs is a prospect of four decades of slavery. That's why they are yelling and they want to kill them all. (Thomas)

The justification of anti-Muslim/anti-immigrant hate based on grievances about poor conditions and prospects of life was recurrent among the individuals and groups of the radicalised segment of the milieu and it was echoed in the narrative of the perceived 'racism against the Greeks' that they saw as guiding the alleged favouring of immigrants by welfare services and policies (see 4.1.4.3 theme below in this Section). It was also echoed in the way the radicalised segment of the milieu integrated such grievances and the 'racism against the Greeks' narrative in the justification of anti-Muslim/anti-immigrant violence and in the far/extreme right authoritarian and anti-democratic political agendas that were found to be prominent among the anti-Muslim/anti-immigrant Greek-Orthodox radicals (see also Sections 4.6 and 4.7).

Finally, some of the respondents connected radicalism and extremism to negative personal experiences with others (mainly through crime or violence) which stimulate emotions such as resentment and hate. As Antonis put it, contemplating about the possible roots of anti-immigrant hate, 'a stimulus may be any kind of experience, that is, a foreigner beating you up for example. Then you start hating the immigrants.' (Antonis)

4.1.2.2 Fanaticism and lack of education, of values and of ethical principles

Our respondents often connected degraded social conditions, social exclusion and lack of prospects to fanaticism. The non-radicalised of the respondents stressed fanaticism as a result of lack of education as well as of moral values and of ethical principles seeing both Islamist and right-wing anti-Muslim and anti-immigrant extremism as emerging from the spread of fanaticism among uneducated and marginalised people who are exploited by organisations that propagate extremist interpretations of political and religious ideas and doctrines. In this context, Jihadist terrorism, both in Europe and the Middle East, is connected to marginalised and uneducated young people recruited by extremist organisations who offer them meaning and belonging through opposition to the materialist, hedonist and consumerist way of life of European countries which 'have cut ties with God and they cannot offer values to the youth' (Jacob). Similarly, their understanding of right-wing anti-Muslim extremism connected it with fanaticism through a conception of patriotism without Christian values and principles.

Nevertheless, the stronger the anti-Muslim/anti-immigrant sentiment among our respondents, the more they tended to stress fanaticism as a core characteristic of Islamic religiosity. For the radicalised respondents, Islamist extremism stems from the Qur'an itself and is endogenous to Islam, while Islamophobia and anti-Muslim attitudes and activism are seen as responses towards both the perceived threat of Islamisation of Greece and Europe and the failure of the mainstream political forces to address such threats. In this context, the perceived, endogenous to Islam, fanaticism is seen as fuelled and exploited by various 'enemies of Christianity' (Jews, Zionists, Freemasons, liberals, left-wingers and anarchists, Satanists, global elites and New World Order supporters) that conspire against Christian nations propagating and enforcing globalisation, multiculturalism, and the Islamisation of Europe and Greece.

4.1.2.3 History, war and geopolitical conflicts

Closely linked to socio-economic deprivation, exclusion and fanaticism, history and geopolitical antagonism and conflict were also seen as causes and sources of radicalism and extremism. The conception of a 'clash of civilisations' (Haynes, 2019), of a historical rivalry between Islam and Christianity/West, linking the distant past of the Crusades with contemporary geopolitical antagonisms over the control of energy resources mediated by economic hardship, inequality, exclusion and fanaticism was frequent in our respondents' discourse about Islamist radicalism and extremism.

In this context, while the non-radicalised respondents pointed out the Islam-Christianity/West 'historical rivalry' producing a generalised image of Muslims as 'not forgetting the Crusades', they also highlighted what they termed 'the West's responsibility' for Islamist extremism, referring to the geopolitical intervention of Western powers in the Middle East and other Muslim regions.

They are rival religions. They have fought each other. They represent different civilisations and peoples. Historically, the West is Islam's enemy [...] Bombings, poverty, dismantling of Syrian and Iraqi society create rivalry and hostility towards the West. This is part of the wider problem with Islam. In other words, I think that the real problem is the war in these countries. It must stop. (Vaggelis)

On the other hand, those with stronger anti-Muslim attitudes, though most of them supported the idea of 'West's responsibility' for contemporary Islamist extremism, they tended to emphasise their view of Islam as a religion in which fanaticism is endogenous, that is, included in and propagated by its core teachings while it is historically (since the Crusades) hostile to Christianity and the West.

They don't forget the Crusades. All these kids who are taught the 'Sharia' by the Imam in the Mosque, they are also taught that the 'Crusader' is their enemy. Who were the crusaders? They were English, French and Italians and they invaded our land through Greece. That's what we do to them now, we invade and occupy Europe. (Thomas, Field Diary)

Their discourse paints an image of Islam and Muslims as the eternal enemies of Christianity who are attacking Christian nations through migration and terrorism in order to Islamise them. In their understanding, the Christian nations are at war with Islam and have to defend themselves from its expansion in order to thwart the plans of the ‘enemies of Christianity’ who fuel and exploit Islamist fanaticism and extremism as a weapon against ‘Christian nations and peoples’. The idea that various ‘enemies of Christianity’ are masterminding Muslim immigration and Islamist extremism is common among those respondents most hostile to Muslims. Their discourse incorporates conspiracy thinking about global plans for the Islamisation of Christian nations through the use of migration and Islamic religious fundamentalism and extremism and justifies Islamophobic attitudes and anti-Muslim radicalism and extremism as unavoidable, even necessary, elements in this war about the identity of Europe, Greece and the West.

4.1.3 Sources of radicalism and extremism in Greece

The majority of our respondents viewed the Left and the Right as the main sites of radicalism and extremism in Greece. Nevertheless, despite their recognition of radicalism and extremism on the Right, mainly in the form of Golden Dawn’s neo-Nazi ultra-nationalism, they tended to underestimate it. Instead, they insisted that institutional tolerance towards left-wing violence legitimised the use of violence by parts of the Right, invoking, thus, an element of cumulative extremism (Busher and Macklin, 2015) in their understanding of right-wing political violence. Moreover, according to respondents, it is this violent left-wing political culture, transmitted to immigrants through the NGOs, that results in the violent resurgences in refugee camps and not the conditions present in these structures.

Finally, it should be noted that the great majority of our respondents rejected the idea that radicalism and extremism can be found within Orthodoxy. They underplayed the importance and influence of the prominent prelates and the Greek-Orthodox zealots who support anti-immigrant, anti-Muslim, far-right and neo-Nazi ideas and political forces, and suggested that they did not represent the official Church of Greece positions and that they were unimportant and isolated voices within Orthodoxy that, sometimes, reacted excessively in front of, otherwise, real dangers and problems.

4.1.4 Attitudes and Evaluations

Finally, our respondents talked about their own responses to radical/extremist messages and behaviours as well as how they evaluated them in terms of their social repercussions and political effectiveness. In this respect, a significant number of respondents, both radicalised and non-radicalised, expressed positive attitudes and evaluations regarding radicalism and extremism.

4.1.4.1 *Distancing oneself from, and confronting, extreme views and behaviours*

Many respondents expressed disapproval towards extremist messages and views. The strong correlation between extremism and violence described above and the perception of extremists as uneducated, marginalised and fanatics generates aversion and rejection of extremist calls to the non-radicalised part of the milieu. Extremist attitudes and behaviours are perceived as ‘zeal without awareness’ and ‘mob force’ without real effectiveness, even in the case of causes that are recognised as just and legitimate. Moderation as well as Christian and humanitarian values are advised and mobilised by these respondents. For them, the Orthodox ideals contribute to the control of passions and instincts and are essential both for individual and social betterment.

Nevertheless, the radicalised respondents stressed the need to tackle extremism by confronting the extremists, even by violent means. In this context, incidents of violent confrontation with agents of extremist ideologies, mainly Islamists or anarchists, are mentioned by those respondents and accusations of ‘cowardice’ and ‘passivity’ are expressed toward moderate responses to extremism. Thus, Thomas (the leader of the Greek-Orthodox paramilitary group ‘Military Union’) described the operation of his group

to bring down an ISIS flag that had reportedly been raised in an immigrant/refugee camp. In so doing he repeatedly referred to the threat that Muslim extremists (who are supposedly entering the country in disguise as immigrants/refugees) are seen to represent. Along with other Greek-Orthodox anti-Muslim radicals among the respondents, he stressed the need to prepare and organise in order to confront them, when they decide to revolt and attack the locals. His 'Military Union', comprised of former commando soldiers with far-right ties, trains and prepares for the armed suppression of such alleged revolt. They also collaborate with other Greek-Orthodox far-right groups in Athens (such as Father Daniel's group of Golden Dawn activists, with whom they had organised and implemented the four-month protest occupation of the Athens Mosque construction site) and other cities in order to confront 'Muslim extremists' whenever they attempt to make their presence visible and/or threatening.

4.1.4.2 Radicalism and extremism: conditions of approval

A significant number of our respondents expressed conditional approval for radicalism and even extremism and political violence. Aspects of radical and/or extremist discourses are perceived to be justifiable and a positive contribution to the public debate of major topics, such as immigration. The rise of extremist organisations is seen as able to pressurise mainstream parties and governments to align with 'people's will'. In the understanding of some of our non-radicalised respondents, the ideological basis of organisations such as GD is correct and defensible, but the means by which it is expressed and implemented are wrong.

Many of our respondents see radicalism and extremism positively in cases where people fight for freedom and rights such as defence against attacking enemies or national-liberation movements. Historical examples are employed in order to underline that, often, significant and just changes cannot avoid the use of violence. For the radicalised among our respondents the situation of the country requires drastic and 'tough' (Thomas) measures to be taken. The threat posed to the Greek nation by foreign and domestic enemies is likely to be addressed only through force and violent means. In their perspective, what is in fact 'extreme' is not the appraisal of and preparation for the use of violence against Muslim immigrants and those who support them but the policies that liberal and left-wing politicians and the EU are forcing Greece to implement regarding immigration and the economy.

4.1.4.3 'They will call us extremists'

Commonly used concepts in public debates such as 'extremism' and 'racism' are treated with caution and suspicion by the majority of our respondents. Those with most intense far-right and anti-Muslim/anti-immigrant attitudes stressed the existence of a deliberate plot to promote the extinction of the Greek nation and Orthodoxy through globalisation, multiculturalism and immigration. According to them, the 'establishment' (meaning the EU and global elites, the government and the political system and academia) along with the 'enemies of Christian nations' (Jews and Zionists, the Masonry, atheists, Satanists the Left and the New World Order) are working against Christian Europe and Greece using jihadist terrorism to establish and disseminate the identification of any type of religiosity with fanaticism and extremism. In their view, those who are aware of this conspiracy and comprehend that the only viable reaction against this plot is the fortification of 'faith and country' are stigmatised and labelled as 'fundamentalists', 'extremists' and 'paranoid'. Such views kept surfacing among the radicalised part of the milieu that condemned the 'hypocrisy' they saw in the 'establishment's' support for immigration and its professed concern about 'the danger of Islamist extremism' (Father Tryfonas).

Nevertheless, not all the respondents subscribed to such conspiratorial views. The non-radicalised respondents kept distance from such interpretations of immigration, globalisation and multiculturalism. While accepting the Islam-Christianity historical rivalry, they dismissed the views that attributed such phenomena and processes to plots masterminded by the 'enemies of Christian nations'. Instead they stressed economic policies, social conditions and geo-political antagonisms as their sources. In this

context, it is worth noting that a Huntingtonian understanding of contemporary Islamist extremism as an aspect of a ‘civilisational clash’ between Islam and Christianity is widespread among the majority of our respondents, even among the non-radicalised who do not advocate the use of violence against Muslim immigrants and refugees. In their discourse, Islam is by nature expansive and violent, inherently incompatible with Western culture and Christianity. In this sense strict restrictions on immigration are seen as absolutely necessary for the sake of the future of Christian European civilisation while accusations of racism are dismissed outright.

Finally, and adding to the Islamophobic and anti-immigrant discourse shared by the majority of our respondents, the view of the allegedly (Muslim) immigrants/refugees’ advantageous institutional treatment to the detriment of natives is widespread. According to almost all of our respondents, migrants are favoured in many aspects of everyday life (health services, benefits and allowances, taxation, housing) while many Greeks face socio-economic deprivation and exclusion. For our respondents, this constitutes a widespread atmosphere of racism against the locals, ‘racism against the Greeks’ as they put it, echoing the notorious GD slogan ‘the only existing racism is the one against the Greeks’. Some of the non-radicalised respondents used the same expression to refer to the perceived discriminatory attitude of the pro-globalisation/multiculturalism ‘establishment’ toward patriots and the nationally-minded who find themselves accused of nationalism, xenophobia and racism when expressing their beliefs. In their discourse, the contemporary liberal, left-wing and pro-globalisation zeitgeist is seen as determining what can legitimately be said and what cannot while those with different points of view are stigmatised and dismissed as ‘extremists’ and ‘fascists’ although what they demand is ‘justice for the natives’. In this respect, many of the non-radicalised part of the milieu complained about what they saw as the liberal and left-wing ‘ideological hegemony’ that silences the conservative, right-wing, objections to globalisation, multiculturalism and immigration and stigmatises the ‘nationally minded’ who voice them, through inconsistent and unfair accusations of racism and fascism.

4.2 Social Relationships

The analysis of our ethnographic material indicates that the social relationships of our informants, whether in-person or virtual, do not have a significant impact on radicalisation processes. We found no evidence of a ‘conversion process’ among our informants. Their accounts of their own responses to contested ideological views or to radical/extremist messages, together with the degree of familial and peer consensus on views, ideas and attitudes, suggest, rather, that both the radicalised and the non-radicalised informants tend (to varying degrees) to employ two main strategies in order to manage their social relationships in respect to radical/ extremist messages. The first strategy consists in avoiding those who they disagree with and in limiting social relationships to like-minded persons. The second involves the negotiation of the views, ideas, beliefs and attitudes that underlie the disagreement.

In this framework, the non-radicalised of our informants adopted these two strategies regarding the management of social relationships with respect to radicalism. Some chose to avoid any relationship with the agents of radical and/or extremist views, ideas and attitudes while others, chose to respond with moderation and Christian values. Thus, those most intensely opposed to far-right anti-Muslim/anti-immigrant radicalism, such as Melpo and Zinovia, distance themselves from persons with extremist views limiting social relationships with them:

It has happened in the past, when I started visiting a family who had hired me for private courses for their child. Something was not right in the way the Father was talking to me in our first meeting, but I could not decide what was wrong. As I was leaving the house, I saw a huge Golden Dawn poster hung behind the door. So, I left and I stopped going for the private class, because I realised that it was not a coincidence that the Father was talking to me like that. [...] I feel sad when I see religious people voting for the Golden

Dawn. [...] I feel frustrated when I hear those clichés regarding immigrants. [...] I will say this quietly.[lowers her voice] My neighbour from the downstairs apartment, I know her for a year now, she came to my house, a 21-year-old girl and she told me about her problematic relationship with a troubled man and I said, 'Well, where did you meet a person like this?' And she answered me 'I'll tell you. I hope you won't be scared. I was a member of Golden Dawn's youth branch, I met him there'. I was shocked! I wanted to grab her by the hair and throw her out of my house. I really wanted to. But then she told me 'Don't worry, I was young and foolish, I've nothing to do with that thing anymore, I've realised how wrong my decision was', so I've kind of kept it going with her. I do not think much of her, because it is not that she voted for them, anyone could vote for them, that's okay; it is that she was actively involved with them. She told me extreme things. And I came to the conclusion that this guy was problematic because he was militant in that party. (Melpo)

In other cases, the non-radicalised respondents chose to respond to extremist views expressed by others with moderation and invoking Christian values. Thus, Jacob, a Greek-Orthodox theologian teacher of Orthodox catechism in public secondary education, responded to a friend's racist behaviour toward immigrants waiting at a bus-stop. He criticised this behaviour as non-Christian, since it lacked the main Christian value, namely love. Kimonas and Giorgos adopted similar attitudes toward extremist online or offline messages or prompts for violent behaviour:

Yes, I have come across a guy who said that if a Muslim raped someone he knew, he would stab him. Not kill him. Stab him, in order to leave him a permanent wound as a reminder of what he did. I've encountered such a case, yes of course. Or another example is the homosexuals; there is a problem with this category of people as well. Some think that these people should be totally denigrated and alienated. They should be beaten, punched and kicked in the streets. [...] I let the other express his opinion first, then, I expressed my own in a straightforward manner: 'You know what? First of all, he is a human being. Calm down and look at his motives'. For me rape is unjustifiable. If I wasn't Christian- Orthodox, if I had not embraced Jesus in my heart, I would definitely kill the rapist. If I let my instincts loose, I wouldn't hesitate. I would act as an animal. But I told him to think calmly and examine each case separately and try to think of the reasons behind an incident. Or regarding homosexuals. Of course, I don't justify homosexuality, but in any case, they are human beings as well. Homosexuals cannot be perceived as inferior creatures because they are confused, they make wrong choices or whatever. (Kimonas)

Similarly, the radicalised respondents, like Fotis, an anti-Muslim/anti-immigrant far-right activist and member of Thomas' Greek-Orthodox paramilitary group ('Military Union'), avoid people 'who are in favour of immigrants' (Fotis) arguing that all his friends share his views and ideas, because they have the same problems as he has. In the same spirit, Father Gabriel, an Orthodox zealot clergyman and former member of the Monastic Republic of Mount Athos who leads a radical anti-Muslim/anti-immigrant group of Orthodox zealots, far-right supporters and former military officers and soldiers ('Greek-Orthodox Group'), had urged a like-minded audience²⁵ to abandon the clergy and to avoid praying with laics who accepted Ecumenism and turn for Christian spiritual guidance exclusively to those who reject the Ecumenist heresy because:

The Ecumenist heresy, which, in essence, means the secularisation of the Church, has influenced both the clergy and the laics and has turned us all into worldly and not

²⁵ This call came during his keynote speech at an event against globalisation, Ecumenism and the New World Order that his group and other Greek-Orthodox associations, like the 'Military Union', had co-organised.

spiritual beings. [...] Against heresies, misbelief and the betrayal of faith we must wake up and understand that we are responsible for the evil that is happening. And of course, if there was this reaction from the Christians, there would be no reflux from the Church hierarchy. (Father Gabriel, Greek-Orthodox Associations Event Field Diary)

Gerassimos, on the other hand, an Islamophobic and anti-immigrant GOC zealot, who thinks that the ‘immigrant problem’ can be solved ‘only by a dictatorship’, maintains more diverse social relationships including in his peer-and-friends environment persons that have different and even contrasting to his own views. In such cases, he tends to bring up and discuss the differences and the disagreements instead of avoiding them or insulating himself against them: ‘most of my friends say they don’t care about nations and borders; they call themselves cosmopolitans; and I ask them, “you were born Greek, you are Christian-Orthodox and you ended up cosmopolitan?”’ (Gerassimos). Nevertheless, although he does not exclude from his social relationships persons with different and contrasting to his own views, he prefers to sustain close social relationships with like-minded individuals within the informal group of Father Tryfonas’ GOC followers, where he has a distinguished status being one of Father Tryfonas’ ‘spiritual children’²⁶ (Discussion with GOCs Field Diary).

Whether they avoid those whom they disagree with or choose to negotiate views, ideas and attitudes that underlie the disagreement, our informants (radicalised or not) tend to use common strategies for the management of their social relationships in regard to radical/extremist messages and behaviours. These strategies, do not entail any kind of personal transformation; rather, they tend to forge their social relationships such that they sit comfortably with their existing predispositions and reproduce them.

4.3 Gender

Islamophobic Greek Orthodoxy conforms to the androcentric pattern observed in the case of far-right Islamophobic/anti-Muslim organisations and parties in Greece (Georgiadou 2013; Paraskeva-Veloudogianni 2015; Vasilopoulou and Haliki-opoulou 2015; Sakellariou 2015; Ellinas and Lamprianou 2016). Consequently, not only the presence of women was very low within the groupings and collectivities that we encountered during the fieldwork but also the few (three) women that agreed to be interviewed tended to share the views, beliefs and attitudes of the male majority of the milieu regarding a wide range of themes and issues such as gender, sexuality, national and religious identity, ideology and political preferences as well as Islam and Muslims. The cultural framework within which such themes and issues were understood and discussed by all informants was defined by the prevailing sense of a deep spiritual and moral crisis that determines contemporary culture in Greece and in Europe. In this respect, globalisation, multiculturalism, secularising trends and pressures as well as materialism, hedonism, egoistic individualism and distancing from religion were highlighted as the main sources of the contemporary spiritual and moral crisis that threatens both the Greek-Orthodox identity and the ‘Fatherland-Religion-Family’ ideology.

4.3.1 Gender, sexuality and the contemporary spiritual and moral crisis

All respondents connected gender and sexuality to the Christian-Orthodox values and morality as these are interpreted and incorporated within the ‘Fatherland-Religion-Family’ ideology. In this context, their understanding of gender identities, roles and relationships is composed of traditionalist patriarchal representations of masculinity and femininity that prioritise the reproductive function of the heterosexual nuclear family and the moralising influence of religion as prerequisites for the reproduction of the nation and of the national identity. Consequently, everything that is seen as incompatible with the ‘Fatherland-

²⁶ Gerassimos was one of Father Tryfonas’ ‘spiritual children’ that the GOC priest allowed them to discuss with the researchers.

Religion-Family’ ideological triptych - female sexual self-determination, non-heterosexual gender identities and LGBTQ+ visibility and rights, sexual education in schools and abortion - is interpreted as a symptom of the contemporary spiritual and moral crisis caused by the materialistic, hedonistic, individualistic and ungodly culture that globalisation, multiculturalism and the secularising pressures have spread and imposed within Christian European societies and Orthodox Greece. As a result, the latter have proven to be unable to offer meaning and purpose to young people, thus paving the way to immorality, social pathologies, mental illnesses and extremism.

According to our respondents, it is this same crisis that erodes the ‘Fatherland-Religion-Family’ triptych and undermines the Greek-Orthodox national identity threatening the nation’s very existence.

I think that the basic values that used to exist in the past do not exist anymore. Fatherland-Religion-Family, we have destroyed them all now. I see this that we are not like we used to be. And I think that's what they want to do with all this. Even with the financial crisis they created. I always believed that, as Greeks, we were always identified with these three elements. We were stable, we had values. Now I see that gradually we start to abandon these values. (Zinovia)

Their discourse regrets the spread of ‘anti-religious’, ‘ungodly’, ‘ethno-nihilist’, ‘immoral’ and ‘abnormal’ attitudes and behaviours by contemporary mainstream materialistic, hedonistic, individualistic and secular culture propagated by globalisation and the religion-neutral state. It also regrets the weakening of nation-states and of national cultures, the eclipse of patriotic feelings and the contamination of national identities with cultural elements foreign to them that lead them to disintegration.

In this context, homosexuality, feminism, gender identity diversification and LGBTQ+ rights as well as abortion are interpreted as threats to morality, society and the nation as they devalue traditional family and ‘corrupt youth’s morals legalising prostitution and abnormality’ (Orthodox Youth Group, Field Diary). Instead, the revitalisation of the traditional ‘Fatherland-Religion-Family’ triptych is recognised as the moralising and unifying culture that can save the nation from disintegration.

INTERVIEWER: So nation and religious faith are closely tied.

PANTELIS: And family.

INTERVIEWER: And family.

PANTELIS: Of course. These are the main ingredients that can keep us going; otherwise, we are finished. (Pantelis)

Within this ideological framework, contemporary women were criticised for embracing sexual liberty and immorality.

THEODOROS: There are many problems in Greek society. The most important is the moral one. I mean the selling off of the flesh, to put it politely.

INTERVIEWER: Can you give an example?

THEODOROS: In the university, I can’t look at a girl because she is dressed very lightly. They wear a lot less than they ought to.

INTERVIEWER: Do you feel repelled?

THEODOROS: It disgusts me. It’s not right to be in a university like that. The university is not your house. This is indecency. I can’t do the same myself.

INTERVIEWER: You mean that you would like to do something like that and you are not allowed to?

THEODOROS: No. I mean that since the female body is widely considered to be beautiful, they exploit it.

INTERVIEWER: Can you give an example?

THEODOROS: In a night-club, you will see young girls showing parts of their body so as guys buy them drinks. When you show flesh, this is selling off of your body. Young girls should not accept this. They should be annoyed. (Theodoros)

Abortion and fear of demographic decline were recurrent topics in the discourse of many respondents in which the reproductive rights of women were often questioned as part of a generalised concern about the erosion of moral values and the decay of stable identities. Additionally, immigration was often connected to high abortion rates in order to highlight the danger of population replacement and to criticise female reproductive rights on the grounds that they indicated indifference towards the nation and sinful behaviour.

The young woman who arrived with Father Gabriel expressed a strong hostility towards abortion. She argued that abortion is cruel murder that has become a plague for our country. She supported Father Gabriel's view that contemporary Greeks are misled and have fallen into heresies, which means that they are not real Orthodox. The outbreak of sin is the ultimate proof of this. 'We have drowned in abortions; sin has reached a pinnacle'. Father Gabriel added: 'There are 500,000 abortions each year. We are murdering our children. That's why we will be hit by the wrath of God. Because we have distanced ourselves from God. Prostitution and adultery have spread unprecedentedly.. (Discussion with Greek-Orthodox Group, Field Diary)

4.3.2 The misogynist Muslim and the dangerous immigrant

The views about and attitudes toward Islam and Muslims are not differentiated by gender. Suspicion, fear, hostility and the stereotypes of Muslims as fanatical, violent and abusive to women are widespread among the respondents and recur in their discourse, irrespective of their gender. In this context, Vaggelis contends that Islam and Muslims are 'incompatible with European culture' because 'Islam is a religion that teaches about disciplining women through beating' while women are treated as inferior to men and have no rights. Melpo also, despite her moderate attitude towards Islam and Muslims and her disdain for the Islamophobic and neo-Nazi Golden Dawn, is sceptical and cautious regarding personal relationships with Muslim immigrants in Greece:

INTERVIEWER: So, do you think that you could, perhaps, marry someone with a different religion? Let's say, a Muslim?

MELPO: Hahaha. Well, there is a Muslim that I like very much in the dance school and I have thought that I like him very much and perhaps I could have a relationship with him, a loose one maybe. But I thought, I could definitely not go out with him or get married to such a man. I mention this because he is the only one and the first one with whom I have a closer contact and it has crossed my mind as an idea. I have not had the chance to have a close relationship with a Turk, or a Syrian and so on.

INTERVIEWER: Why couldn't you marry him?

MELPO: I don't want to risk it in case he has, how to say, sexist phallocratic behaviour. Let's not risk it. And I don't know for how long he has lived here. He is a teacher in the dance school, and he doesn't seem to be like that, but on the other hand, these elements are in their culture. (Melpo)

Moreover, the stereotypical perception of Islam as a backward religion and culture that degrades and abuses women and accepts sexual relations (such as incest and paedophilia) unacceptable to the Christian European culture is interwoven with anti-immigrant stereotypes that stigmatise immigrants as potential rapists. The combination of Islamophobic prejudice that views Islam as ‘a religion of hate’ whose followers ‘accept incestuous relationships, rape and paedophilia’ and ‘they beat their women’ (Thomas) with fears of immigrant criminality such as the generalisation that ‘in every robbery, in every crime, in every rape, a foreigner is involved’ (Kosmas) defines the cultural framework within which Muslim immigrants are perceived as both dangerous and incompatible with Christian European and Orthodox Greek culture. It is this radical incompatibility and dangerousness that emerges from the discourse of even the most moderate of the respondents when they reject multiculturalism and consider the integration of Muslims in Christian societies as impossible.

The stereotypical representation of Islam as a religion and culture that degrades women and of Muslims as misogynist male chauvinists who harass and abuse them demarcates a cultural distance and incompatibility that strengthens suspicion and fear of immigration. In this respect, immigration of Muslims is systematically connected to the threats of contamination, alteration and ultimate decline of both the Greek-Orthodox identity and Greece’s ethnic and national homogeneity through mixed marriages and personal relationships. The fear of Greece’s Islamification, through the mixing of incompatible peoples and cultures, indicates the operation of a racialising mechanism in the production of Muslim ‘otherness’ revealing Islamophobia as a contemporary form of racism (Hafez, 2014; Ayhan and Tecmen, 2019; Kirtsoglou and Tsimouris, 2018).

4.4 The shared religious, ideological, political and emotional content of the Islamophobic Greek-Orthodox milieu

Greek Orthodoxy harbours extensive and intense Islamophobic/anti-Muslim ideas, views and attitudes which are founded on the widespread anti-Muslim/anti-Turkish Greek nationalism of the mainstream Greek-Orthodox national identity as this is crystallised in the right-wing ideology of ‘Fatherland-Religion-Family’. In this respect, Greek-Orthodox nationalism, intertwined with the opposition to globalisation, multiculturalism and immigration, as well as with grievances toward the political system and the mainstream policies regarding economy, migration, national sovereignty issues and challenges and secularisation trends and pressures, emerged as the ideological and political framework within which Islam and Muslims are perceived as threatening to Christianity, Europe and Greece and are viewed with suspicion, fear and hostility.

4.4.1 Religion and nation

The importance of the Orthodox faith for individual and social life was emphasised by all respondents, who saw religious faith as providing direction, meaning and moral assistance and guidance to individuals and unity to society. In this respect, our informants stressed that Orthodoxy provides holistic responses to universal transcendental and ethical/moral questions related to death, the purpose of life and the proper way of living with others. In this sense, it puts high ideals into practice and offers assistance in life’s difficulties and dangers. Moreover, all respondents saw a profound connection between Orthodoxy and the Greek nation and the Modern Greek national identity. In their discourse, nation and religion were inextricably interrelated and Orthodoxy constituted a vital and stable pillar of Greekness. For them, Greek antiquity and Orthodox Christianity were combined in a unique culture combining the true Christian faith and the greatest cultural and civilisational achievements enduring over the course of three millennia. They expressed awe, honour and pride at being the heirs of such a glorious and historical nation.

Look. We, the Greeks, started in antiquity with the Twelve Gods. Along the way, we evolved with the Romans, we endorsed Christianity and reached the Byzantine era. Byzantium is not

cut off from Ancient Greece. It is a continuation of our history, even though they weren't called Greeks at first. They were called Romans, but they were Greeks. That is why in the late Byzantine period they had been self-characterised as Greeks. They wrote Greek, they spoke the Greek language. This is why I say that modern Greeks are the direct descendants of Byzantine Eastern Roman culture. [...] Today, therefore, we share as cultural patterns both the ancient Greek one and Byzantine Christianity; their combination generates the modern Greek culture. (Vaggelis)

For all of the respondents, the sense of Greekness is inseparable from the Orthodox faith. Together, they are embodied in the traditional right-wing '*Fatherland-Religion-Family*' ideology, which is seen as a crucial prerequisite for social stability and national unity. This is especially true in times of spiritual and moral crisis, as the present is viewed by our respondents. They stress that contemporary moral decadence, the distancing from traditional Christian-Orthodox faith, the attempts to further separate the mainstream CoG from state institutions as well as sexual liberty, the decline of patriotic feelings and the crisis of the traditional heterosexual nuclear family are all symptoms of today's materialistic, hedonistic, individualistic and ungodly culture propagated by the supporters of globalisation, multiculturalism and the religion-neutral state.

What annoys me in Greece is the fact that there is a guided, and I do not know what its source is, deterioration of the country's national values and traditions. I mean, the concept of the Fatherland, the nation-state, are being downgraded. Religion, the traditional faith that we inherited from our ancestors and we must pass to our descendants, is being degraded. And, of course, the institution of the family which is being degraded through new, additional, artificial rights such as gay couples' marriages, or child adoption by gay couples, things that will lead to freak families and people with psychological problems.' (Vaggelis)

In this respect, they are strongly opposed to legislative initiatives for a religion-neutral state, sexual education, recognition and implementation of alternative gender identities and of LGBT rights as well as to immigration and multiculturalism. The majority agrees with Jacob who thinks that 'there is a wider plan to undermine the Greek-Orthodox identity of Greek people. As part of this plan, politicians are attempting to separate the Church from state institutions and support the relentless immigration of peoples of different religious faiths' (Field Diary, Jacob) and call for a return to the values of the '*Fatherland-religion-Family*' triptych.

The Greek-Orthodox identity and culture is crucial for the self-understanding of all the respondents and determines their perception and understanding of Islam and Muslims as the eternal rivals and enemies of Christian-Orthodox Greece. The traditional anti-Muslim/anti-Turkish Greek-Orthodox nationalism keeps surfacing in the discourse of the respondents as they discuss the national importance of Orthodoxy from the medieval Byzantine glory through the Ottoman 'dark age' to the national palingenesis of the nineteenth century Greek revolution against the Ottoman rule and the contemporary troubled relations between Greece and Turkey. In their Greek-Orthodox nationalism, Muslims and Islam are identified with Turks and Turkey, thus, comprising the national/religious 'other' of Greek-Orthodox national identity and culture.

INTERVIEWER: Let's talk about Islam. Do you have any knowledge about it?

PANTELIS: I just have some general information about it.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think Greeks are informed about Islam?

PANTELIS: No I don't think they know a lot about the religion called Islam. They know that we were opponents and under the Ottoman rule for 400 years.

INTERVIEWER: You mean all they know comes from the experience with the Ottoman empire

and with Turkey nowadays?

PANTELIS: Exactly, Turkey, Ottoman empire and 400 years of slavery.

INTERVIEWER: So, do you think that all these have an impact on how we see Islam?

PANTELIS: Of course. We are prejudiced. That's for sure.

INTERVIEWER: Prejudiced about what?

PANTELIS: We are concerned that we might go through the same old story...

INTERVIEWER: You mean the Ottoman rule?

PANTELIS: Of course. Four hundred years are not unimportant. Our hearts and our consciousness are deeply influenced by history. (Pantelis)

In this context, mediated by the historical and long-lasting rivalry and enmity between Greece and Turkey, the perception and interpretation of Islam and Muslims reproduces nationalist generalisations and stereotypes that generate prejudice, fear and hostility toward them. In this respect, the Greek-Orthodox anti-Muslim/anti-Islam discourse of the respondents highlights fanaticism, violence and expansionism that are seen as Islam's endogenous characteristics, already present in and propagated by the Qur'an itself. According to them, Islam is alien to Christian-European and Greek-Orthodox culture, values and way of life, while Muslims are seen as hostile to Christianity, Europe, Greece and Orthodoxy and as unable to be integrated in Christian European societies. Such cultural incompatibility is further strengthened when contemporary Islamist extremism and terrorism are considered, confirming, in their turn, the initial prejudice and heightening the widespread worry about, and fear of, Islam and Muslims that the majority of the respondents repeatedly expressed.

4.4.2 Globalisation, multiculturalism, immigration and secularising pressures

The Greek-Orthodox identity and culture, crystallised in the 'Fatherland-Religion-Family' triptych, are understood and experienced by our respondents as a precious and rigid inheritance that must be preserved unaltered and uncontaminated by contemporary developments, processes and pressures. For almost all of the respondents, globalisation and multiculturalism present a serious risk of losing national and religious values, traditions, morals and cultural characteristics and turning people into, what Pantelis called, an '*achtarmas*' ('muddle') without differentiating characteristics. In this respect, these processes represent a grave risk for the Greek-Orthodox national tradition as they threaten to taint or eradicate its unique characteristics through the mixing of alien national cultures and religions, producing an undifferentiated mass without qualities and character. At the same time, globalisation and multiculturalism are seen as heightening inequalities and creating antagonisms that lead to conflicts. Immigration, particularly of Muslims, is the most widespread example given by our respondents who repeatedly expressed grievances about the perceived favouring of (Muslim) immigrants by social policies as well as fears that the 'Fatherland-Religion-Family' triptych is threatened through mixing with immigrants' cultures.

I think that the excessive influx of peoples of different cultures will eventually cause problems. For me, a fundamental criterion in order to distinguish with whom we are going to co-exist is to have common characteristics, such as religion or culture. [...] I mean, due to this country's religion, only Christians should be accepted as immigrants. Because with the rest, it's not easy to co-exist. They have different beliefs, different characteristics, different outlooks on life and see human beings differently. [...] We should be rational regarding multiculturalism and there should be some common characteristics among the different peoples and cultures living in one place (Kosmas)

The fear of national/religious identity loss due to cultural contamination and alteration is shared by the great majority of the respondents and is embedded in the fear about the Islamification of Christian nations. For them, this is a real risk which underlies the common and recurring concern in their discourse that ‘we will be replaced by foreign immigrants’. This is exemplified by Maria’s worry that ‘they will keep coming and coming and coming and we will leave [the country] and they will stay here’.

In this context, immigration (especially of Muslims) is seen as involving and posing serious national, social and cultural risks. These cover a wide range of dangers and threats spanning from criminality, terrorism and degradation and decline of neighbourhoods to fears of contamination and alteration of the Greek-Orthodox national, religious and cultural character of Greece and its foreseen Islamification or even to worries about the exploitation of Muslim immigrants/refugees in Greece by Turkey in order to challenge Greek national sovereignty. It is not surprising, then, that the great majority of our respondents favour strict limitations to immigration as well as the deportation of large numbers of immigrants, particularly of Muslims, while they are suspicious, reluctant or even totally negative towards the construction and operation of the Athens Mosque. The mosque, for them, is alien to, and unsuited for, a Christian-European culture and is reminiscent of the country’s Ottoman past or even a dangerous step toward the Islamification of Greece. Even those, who, in the context of respect for religious freedom, recognise the right of Muslims in Athens to freely practise their religion, disagree with the financing of the Athens Mosque from the Greek state budget, interpreting it as injustice done to Orthodoxy, for the temples and churches of which the Greek state does not provide any funding. Additionally, they often express discontent and frustration that a mosque in Athens would evoke the Ottoman past of the country, blurring and eroding the image of a homogeneous Christian-Orthodox Greece, while increasing the risks of Islamic extremism in Greece and in Europe.

Additionally, almost all the respondents connected globalisation and multiculturalism to contemporary secularising trends and legislation. They interpreted contemporary attempts by the Greek state to regulate, beyond the boundaries of the CoG’s institutional approval, issues such as the state-Church relationship, religious and sexual education in the secondary educational system, the legal treatment of alternative gender identities and the recognition and protection of the human rights of minorities and of immigrants and refugees as attacks against the traditional Greek-Orthodox identity and culture and the ‘Fatherland-Religion-Family’ ideology. In this respect, the great majority of the respondents favoured a traditionalist approach that connected the state’s legislation and institutional action with the reproduction of the ‘Fatherland-Religion-Family’ ideology as the main response to the moral, value and spiritual crisis that globalisation, multiculturalism and materialism have caused. For them, this crisis was visible in the contemporary prevalence of materialism, egotistic individualism, consumerism and hedonism, which spread anti-religious and ‘ungodly’, ‘ethno-nihilist’ and ‘abnormal’ attitudes and behaviours that threaten Greek and European Christian societies. Our respondents regretted what they saw as the contemporary distancing from, indifference toward and rejection of traditional Christian-Orthodox faith, morals and values and their substitution for the religion-neutral state and institutions that, according to them, spread anti-social, anti-national and sinful behaviours such as sexual liberty, homosexuality and abortion that weaken nation-states and national cultures as well as traditional family values. Connecting strongly globalising, immigration and secularising trends and pressures with threats to national identity and sovereignty and the Islamification of Europe and Greece, the majority of the respondents stressed the need for the Church of Greece (CoG) to have a voice in politics and not to be separated from state institutions. They saw the CoG as a pillar of the nation and of the ‘Fatherland-Religion-Family’ ideology and they interpreted the secularising demands as attacks on the Greek-Orthodox identity of Greece. For them, the religion-neutral state (‘oudeterothrisko kratos’), as Jacob and others called it, was a weapon used against Greek-Orthodox national identity and culture in the context of the globalising and multicultural pressures that opened the door to Greece’s Islamification. Even those respondents, who, in principle, thought that religion should be kept separate from politics, strongly

supported the close connection of the Church with the state as defence against the threats to Greek-Orthodox identity and the 'Fatherland-Religion-Family' ideology. Within this framework of resisting secularisation and the religion-neutral state, many of them protested against LGBT rights and even justified the violent protests by GOCs and other Orthodox zealots, supported by Golden Dawn, against theatrical performances that were seen as blasphemous to Christianity²⁷, declaring that blasphemy against any religion should not be tolerated neither by the people nor by the state authorities.

4.4.3 Politics, political system and functioning of democracy

The great majority of the respondents were disillusioned with, and frustrated by, the way politicians and the political system responded to and addressed a wide range of issues, processes and phenomena ranging from globalisation, multiculturalism, immigration, state-Church relationships and national sovereignty issues to economic hardship, unemployment, poverty, crime and minority rights. Discontent for the functioning of democracy and disappointment, frustration, anger, distrust, contempt, and even outward rejection towards politicians and the political system were widespread among our respondents. In their discourse, politicians and the entire political system, along with globalisation agents such as the EU, were accountable and criticised for a wide range of social problems and risks, as well as for the weakening and corruption of democratic processes and institutions. The main grievances against the political system include a variety of issues such as the long-lasting consequences of the economic crisis, the secularising legislation that undermines Greek-Orthodox identity and the 'Fatherland-Religion-Family' ideology, the acceptance of the influx of large numbers of Muslim immigrants/refugees that are seen as unable to be integrated/assimilated, greatly worsening the already adverse social and economic conditions in the country as well as their, allegedly, preferential treatment by social policies and services over the natives.

In respondents' discourse, politics was often associated with feelings of powerlessness, futility and alienation resulting in political cynicism:

I mean, I'm a nobody for the powerful; if we talk politics, then I'm a nobody. I can't do anything either with my vote or in any other way. I mean, even if I don't vote, they don't give a damn [...] I have voted for everyone in the past, even for Golden Dawn, and I have understood that all of them, what they really wanted was to have power, to be in office. Whatever their beliefs are, they forget them when they are in office [...] and I think that what will happen to our country in the next 25 years is already decided, everything is planned. [...] It's all about money, there is nothing else. (Maria)

The widespread frustration with politicians, politics and the functioning of democracy was manifest in the respondents' grievances that political parties are only tools for 'grabbing and stealing whatever you can and giving offices to some of your people' (Kostas) at the expense of the society and the nation while politicians make decisions 'without ever asking the people' (Kyriakos) to whom they should be accountable. Instead, politicians are seen as being committed and accountable to other powers, such as the media and the EU, making decisions which determine people's lives, outside any democratic context and process. In this respect politicians and the political system are seen as not representing and defending the people's and the nation's interests and causes when they implement EU policies regarding the economic crisis, immigration and the troubled relations with Turkey. Thus, Kostas blamed politicians for accepting the 'German logic of the EU that leads not only our country but other countries too to

²⁷ See for example, 'Protest by Golden Dawn, religious groups cancels theatre premiere', 12/10/2012, ekathimerini.com, <http://www.ekathimerini.com/145367/article/ekathimerini/news/protest-by-golden-dawn-religious-groups-cancels-theater-premiere>, and Spyros Kouvoussis, 'Corpus Christi Cancelled After Blasphemy Protests', 1/11/2012, greekreporter.com, <https://greece.greekreporter.com/2012/11/01/corpus-christi-cancelled-after-blasphemy-protests/>

impoverishment' and Vaggelis complained about the EU policies on immigration which allow 'those who hold power in Europe' to 'take advantage of us' and turn Greece into 'a sealed depository of immigrants.'

In the same spirit Theodoros complained:

How on earth, is it possible when we close our borders to be called a backward or racist country and when Germany or other countries do the same to be justified because 'they secured their borders.' How is that I live in a country member of the EU and I haven't seen not even one EU air force fighter to support the Greek air force against the Turkish aircrafts which constantly violate Greek FIR? There is a problem of trust and what is this alliance at the end of the day? (Theodoros)

The prevailing sense that politicians, political parties and the entire political system were unable and/or unwilling to address the contemporary economic, national and social problems, challenges and threats that the people, the nation and Orthodoxy face underlie both the widespread view that a deep change in the way the 'system' is organised and functions is absolutely necessary and the, often, supportive attitude toward far-right leaders and parties. The latter's influence is interpreted as symptom of the 'system's' inability and/or unwillingness to adequately respond to contemporary challenges and the nation's or the people's needs and demands. Their ideology and political programme are, often, received with sympathy even though their political action and methods generate doubt, reservation, or even aversion among many of the respondents.

4.5 The ideological, political and emotional content of the radicalised segment of the milieu

Islamophobic views, emotions and attitudes are widespread among young Orthodox Greeks. In this way anti-Muslim views combine with Greek Orthodoxy to constitute the shared religious, ideological and emotional content of the milieu. However, analysis of the research material also revealed important differentiations among the respondents. These concern aspects of both Greek-Orthodox identity and the interpretation of the challenges, threats and risks that it faces as well as of the proper response to them.

The radical segment of the milieu emerges from within the Islamophobic Greek-Orthodox milieu representing its most militant/agonistic part. It comprises individuals and collectivities that adopt a religiously zealous and exclusionary, interpretation of Orthodoxy that, contrary to the mainstream Church of Greece's dogma, rejects the Ecumenical agenda of establishing dialogue and communication among the different Christian dogmas and condemns such attempts as heretical. Such a zealous and exclusionary interpretation of Orthodoxy is interwoven with strong nationalist views and attitudes that identify Greekness with Orthodox faith within the framework of the 'Fatherland-Religion-Family' ideology and opposes them to Islam and Muslims through anti-Turkism. This amalgam of zealous Orthodoxy with Greek nationalism understands globalisation, multiculturalism, immigration and secularism as threats, orchestrated by the enemies of Christianity, Orthodoxy and Greece, against the Greek national sovereignty and the Greek-Orthodox identity. In response to such perceived threats, the radicalised part of the milieu activates far-right political authoritarianism and militarism within a belligerent vision of a war waged against internal and external enemies for the salvation of the 'faith and the nation'. In this respect, they oppose the mainstream political forces and programmes and offer their support to far-right, authoritarian and violent solutions and courses of action. Their criticisms and accusations of the mainstream Church of Greece as unable to fulfil its national and spiritual role and as having succumbed to the 'Ecumenical heresy' meet and intertwine with the anti-partisan and authoritarian politics of far-right nationalism, producing an ideological and political mixture of nationalism, authoritarianism and religious zeal that celebrates the historical authoritarian regimes of twentieth century Greece and views continuing their legacy as the only patriotic course of action in the face of perceived contemporary national dangers. In their discourse, the use of violence against the 'enemies of the fatherland and of the

faith' is justified and anticipated and it includes pogroms against immigrants and even civil war and the extermination of both political opponents and of those who defend immigrants and refugees.

The radical Greek-Orthodox identity, which emerges from within the studied milieu and constitutes an important part of it, combines a double confrontation and struggle. On the one hand, it confronts an internal enemy represented by the leadership and the policies of the mainstream religious and political institutions, as well as by the Left and all those who defend and support immigrants and refugees. These are seen as betraying not only the true Greek-Orthodox identity but also Greek national interests and sovereignty. On the other hand, it confronts a multiplicity of external enemies (Jews, Masons, Muslims, atheists, powerful international elites, the New World Order supporters as well as neighbouring countries such as Turkey, Albania and North Macedonia) who are viewed as undermining and attacking, overtly or in disguise, both Orthodoxy and Greek national sovereignty.

Father Daniel condemned the leftists who govern and the politicians as a whole for betraying fatherland and religion. 'They gave up Macedonia to foreigners; they ignore the Greek minority in Northern Epirus [*he refers here to South Albania using the geographical name that Greek nationalism uses for the area*]; they packed Greece with illegal immigrants and keep destroying the institution of the family'. Greek Orthodox Christians, he said, must revolt and persecute anti-Greek communists who betray 'fatherland-religion-family'. All Greek patriots must take to the streets to protect the fatherland and Orthodoxy, which are now in danger from the New World Order. 'We have a war', he said, 'a war declared by the anti-Greeks and the Jews who seek to annihilate Greece and Orthodoxy. But the people, the clergy and the army will resist the destruction of Greece (Father Daniel, Nationalist Event Field Diary).

The discourse of radical anti-Muslim Greek-Orthodox part of the milieu inextricably interweaves these two confrontations and struggles through the metaphor of war. In their discourse, Orthodoxy and Greece (but also Christianity and Europe) face a war waged against them by their belligerent enemies who exploit Muslim fanaticism and hatred of Christianity and Orthodoxy and use Islamist extremism and terrorism as well as immigration (particularly of Muslims) as their weapon, aiming at the religious, cultural and national alteration of Europe and Greece. Conspiracy theories and anti-Muslim hate speech are combined within a vision of a Huntingtonian 'clash of civilisations' (Haynes, 2019) which is seen as provoked and exploited by the enemies of Christianity and Orthodoxy. Islamist terrorism and Muslim immigration represent the weapon with which this war is fought and the tool through which multiculturalism and the secular, 'religion-neutral', state are eroding Christian nations and cultures. Immigration has a special function in this war as it allows for the 'enemy' to invade the Christian European nations in disguise and, thus, alter the ethnic composition of the people and taint the national culture. In this respect, Muslim immigrants/refugees in Europe and Greece are stigmatised as an 'invading army' and 'illegal colonisers' who settle in 'our' country and not only alter its religious, cultural, national and ethnic composition but also prepare to revolt against and violently attack the natives. The threat of Greece's and Europe's Islamification recurs in the radical Greek-Orthodox discourse and stigmatises Muslim immigrants and refugees as the 'enemy within' that threatens the nation and the faith and which the Greek-Orthodox 'patriots' will have to confront using violent means.

According to Thomas, the negative scenario is the foreseeable uprising of refugees-migrants and their attack on Greek people. He underlines the high level of danger in Greece and in the West in general, saying that the Muslims 'do not forget the crusades and now are coming to take revenge.' [...] The high probability of a Muslim uprising is proven by the protests of 'illegal immigrants' because of the cut of the 400 euro allowance. 'What has been lying dormant over past years is now starting to wake. That's why I say that we will see uprisings in Greece. [...] Can you imagine the scenario of a Muslim uprising here in Athens? The first incident took place three months ago when they took over a highway near the Malakassa

hot spot. The second hotspot is in Skaramagkas (close to Athens), so we can't even seek refuge to the Peloponnese. The other three little hot spots are in Marathonas. I am not saying that every single immigrant in these hotspots will rise up and take the streets, but out of the three thousand who are in the Skaramagkas, one thousand will take to the streets'. [...] He also believes that Muslims in Greece are well-armed and many of them trained by extremist organisations, but according to him 'as long as there are Greek commandos in Greece, they will not be able to defeat us'. He agrees with those who claim that there are armed and trained Muslims in Greece ready to revolt and he estimates their number to be around 200,000 to 300,000. He believes that the uprising will happen sooner or later and hopes that his group ['the Military Union'] will be able to put it out immediately before other enemies of Greece (Albania, Turkey) take advantage of the situation. (Thomas, Field Diary)

It is precisely this generalised sense of threat (exaggerated through the metaphor of war) against the main constituents of their agonistic, militant and nationalist Greek-Orthodox identity that underlies the formulation of the continuously repeated grievances about being persecuted as Orthodox Christians ('we are under persecution' - Father Tryfonas) and stigmatised as fanatics, fundamentalists, extremists, nationalists and fascists. Thus, Father Daniel (a young GOC priest leading a group of Golden Dawn activists) kept repeating that he preferred being called a fascist than failing to do his duty to the nation, since such a failure would betray both his nationalist ideology and special forces/commando military background obliging him to commit suicide ('I should put a bullet in my head' - Father Daniel) in shame. Similarly, Fotis (a Greek-Orthodox far-right activist who always dressed in military outfit) was willing to accept the stigma of being regarded as fascist and racist because of his love for 'our nation and our religion':

FOTIS: I feel love for our nation, for Greece, for our religion and for the heroes who have fought in the past for our freedom and for our 'right' to play games on our cell phones...

INTERVIEWER: Yes.

FOTIS: And let them call me a fascist and a racist. I don't give a damn.

INTERVIEWER: Have they called you a fascist and a racist?

FOTIS: The prime-minister himself did so. Yes, he really did. He is a humanoid...

[...]

FOTIS: When the prime minister himself calls you a racist, that you're a racist and a fascist for raising the Greek flag, what else can one say? That thing gets me mad. Especially when I've seen the Greek Parliament, which is a sacred place, the Monument to the Unknown Soldier is located there, coloured in the 'gay pride' flag colours. As a Greek man I felt outraged. (Fotis)

In the same spirit of feeling persecuted and willing to accept stigmatisation and even suffering and self-sacrifice for the defence of 'fatherland and faith', Father Gabriel urged his audience to adopt the 'spirit of the martyr' and resist and fight against globalisation, Ecumenism and the New World Order, regardless of the consequences.

The faithful have to follow the Holy Fathers and accept the 'spirit of the martyr'. We have to bear our cross and make a public declaration. A declaration is not painless. They are going to call us names; they'll say we are fundamentalists, fanatics, crazy men who do not know what they're talking about. They will accuse us of being extremists and of initiating dangerous debates which mislead and bring fear to people. But we are accountable to God for the situation and we have to awaken ourselves and raise awareness for the rest of the Christians.

(Father Gabriel speaking at the Greek-Orthodox Associations' event against globalisation, New World Order and Ecumenism, Greek-Orthodox Associations' Event, Field Diary)

It is this feeling of being at war with a 'satanic religion' (Father Gabriel) and an 'absolute evil' (Thomas) - as Islam is routinely viewed by the radicalised segment of the milieu - that underpins the connection between Orthodox zeal (expressed in the slogan 'Orthodoxy or Death' [Discussion with Greek-Orthodox Group, Field Diary]) and anti-immigrant far-right nationalism and authoritarianism (represented by the far-right sympathisers, anti-immigrant Greek-Orthodox paramilitaries and neo-Nazi Golden Dawners active in the milieu. It is this same feeling of being at war with the 'enemies of the faith and of the nation' that equally underlies the radical revision of the 'Love one Another'²⁸ Gospel Commandment that we encountered among the Islamophobic/anti-Muslim Greek-Orthodox radicals in the milieu. According to such militant Orthodox revisionist discourse, the Greek-Orthodox cannot adopt and implement this Commandment in relation to the enemies of Greece and Orthodoxy, as in war 'you have to fight, consequently, you have to kill your fellow human' (Pantelis), because 'you cannot succeed just with the cross in your hands' (Thomas). Father Tryfonas (a radicalised GOC priest who advocated people's armed revolution against politicians, political parties and all enemies of Greece and Orthodoxy) emphasised the rejection of the specific New Testament Commandment. He argued that the Church of Greece's (CoG) emphasis on the 'Love One Another' Commandment is a symptom of either naivety or of the prevalence of heretical views within the CoG which spread illusions among the faithful in order to lead them to adopt Ecumenism. Such, according to him, heretical views, he believes, are already widespread within the CoG's hierarchy and leadership and have dominated its official dogma. He, ironically and scornfully, called those abiding by and spreading the 'Love One Another' Commandment as 'agapologoi' ('love-talkers' - those who always talk about love) and he highlighted what he called 'diakrissi' (discrimination) meaning that Orthodox Christians should always discriminate between those who love God and the enemies of Christianity. In defence of his theological interpretation of the 'Love one another' Commandment, he offered the example of the 'Jews' (calling them 'Christ's crucifiers') and argued that Christ may have forgiven them but, as consequence of what they did, they lost their homeland for 2,000 years. He also insisted that the 'Love One Another' Commandment is spread by the Masons, who are enemies of Christianity aiming to destroy it. According to Father Tryfonas' theological interpretation of the 'Love One Another' Commandment, the Orthodox people need to discriminate between those who 'love God' (the 'sheep' in father Tryfonas' jargon) and for this reason are worthy to be treated according to the New Testament Commandment and the enemies of Christianity (who are labelled the 'wolf') and should be excluded from the application of the 'Love One Another' Commandment. For Father Tryfonas the faithful Orthodox Greek patriots cannot love the enemies of Orthodoxy and Greece.

For Father Tryfonas the Church of Greece is risking the partition of the country and Muslims will serve as the instrument which will accomplish this partition. 'They [the clergy of the Church of Greece] love the Muslims, they are "love-talkers" ('agapologoi'); they love everyone. Christ also used to love everyone and he forgave His crucifiers, but they ended up losing their country for 2.000 years. Didn't God love the Jews? Didn't he forgive them? Didn't he say, *forgive them for they don't know what they are doing*? They lost their country for 2.000 years. Are we capable of making this distinction? Love needs distinction and I cannot bring a wolf and a sheep in the same room and make them eat around the same table. That's what they did to us nowadays. For, some people refuse to make the distinction. Some people - who "love" the way the Masons want them to love - place the wolf and the ship together.'

[...]

When we asked him, what is the source of this contemporary, as he called it 'brain washing', he answered: 'The Church itself with the 'Love one another' Commandment'. He argues that

²⁸ John 13:34, Holy Bible, New International Version®, NIV® Copyright ©1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.

the ‘Love one another’ Commandment is wrong because it is naive and overlooks the plurality of the enemies of Orthodoxy and Greece. These enemies ‘cannot be loved by the Orthodox people.’ (Father Tryfonas, Field diary)

The radical anti-Muslim Greek Orthodoxy is closely connected to the far-right political programme and anti-party attitudes. Hostility toward politicians (especially of liberal or left-wing affiliation), support for leading far-right figures, organisations and parties and admiration of, and often identification with, the historical authoritarian regimes of twentieth century Greece are widespread and recurring. Respondents long for ‘a national government’ (Fotis) that will prioritise the Greek-Orthodox people over minorities and immigrants and will revitalise the ‘Fatherland-Religion-Family’ culture through a ‘national economy’ (Thomas) and a ‘national education’ (Fotis). For this purpose, they search for a radical political or religious leader who would be able to ‘carry Greeks on his shoulders and lift them’ (Pantelis) leading the Greek people out of today’s dangers and difficult circumstances, perhaps also leading a Greek-Orthodox revolution. The urgency of the need for a national government and leader that will bring about a deep, radical, change in Greece’s politics and culture surfaces repeatedly within the radical Greek-Orthodox discourse that hopes for Greece’s protection from secularism, globalisation and multiculturalism, the guarding of the country’s borders from immigrant/refugee influxes with the use of military violence, the deportation of immigrants/refugees from the country, the limiting of minority rights and the punishment of the politicians responsible for today’s plight and decadence.

In this context, political authoritarianism and the use of violence (physical and symbolic) are accepted as legitimate means for the pursuit of political goals. In this spirit, Father Daniel, Fotis and Thomas hope for a military coup against Parliament and for the extermination of their political opponents and Father Tryfonas calls for an armed people’s revolution against the treacherous political system that betrays the country and the faith. The same authoritarianism and wholehearted endorsement of violence as political means underlies Thomas’ and his paramilitary group’s preparations and training for the armed suppression of an alleged Muslim immigrant uprising, as well as their hopes that the provocation of an armed pogrom against immigrants in Athens could strengthen the political influence of far-right parties. This same political stance drove Thomas’s paramilitaries and Father Daniel’s Golden Dawn activists to organise the 2016 four-month protest-occupation of the Athens Mosque construction site in order for its building to be cancelled.

It is precisely such longing for a violent and authoritarian solution to Greece’s woes that underlies the strong militarism that permeates the radicalised part of the milieu. The importance of the armed forces for this part of the milieu is particularly evident in the strong presence of militaristic identities (very often with a special forces/commando background) within radical Greek-Orthodox groupings and collectivities, as well as through the continuous invocation of military action in response to all sorts of perceived threats and grievances.

4.6 Justifying, anticipating and preparing for violence against Muslim immigrants

In the radical discourse of our informants, violence (both physical and symbolic) is omnipresent, celebrated, planned, desired and, at the same time, necessitated by the dire ‘situation of the country’ that requires us ‘to be tough’ (Thomas).

For the Greek-Orthodox radicals, violence always starts from the ‘other’, the enemy that, openly or in disguise, attacks, forcing ‘us’ to enter a war that ‘we’ neither started nor desired. ‘We are at war. Do you understand that?’ Theodor, a retired high ranking officer of the Greek military forces, member of Father Gabriel’s Greek-Orthodox Group, asked, echoing the uniform perception and understanding of mass (Muslim) immigration influxes as ‘war’ and ‘invasion’ among Greek-Orthodox anti-Muslim radicals. According to them, war and invasion are disguised as immigration, orchestrated against Christian Europe

and Orthodox Greece by their enemies (Jews, Zionists, Masons, atheists, Satanists, liberals, leftists, pro-immigration politicians, powerful international elites, the EU and Turkey) as part of a plot to destroy them. In their view, Islamist extremism and terrorism are the visible part of this otherwise disguised war, in which immigrants and refugees are used as both a cover for Islamist terrorism's efforts to penetrate European borders, bringing the war against Christianity to inside Europe itself and a disguised army of Muslim colonisers, aiming to alter Europe's religious, ethnic and cultural character in order to Islamise it. In this respect, both the omnipresent perceived danger of Europe's and Greece's Islamisation through mass Muslim immigration and Islamist terrorism and the fear that Muslim immigrants/refugees could be exploited by Turkey in order to challenge Greek national sovereignty (particularly in the Aegean Sea Greek islands where large numbers of Muslim immigrants/refugees have been concentrated and confined) are continuously surfacing in Greek-Orthodox anti-Muslim radical discourse.

It is precisely the constant invocation of this invisible war over Europe's and Greece's religious/cultural character that justifies both hate speech - formulated through the labelling of Muslim immigrants/refugees as '*lathrometanastes eisvoleis kai epoikous*' ('illegal immigrants invaders and colonisers') (Father Tryfonas) - and the use of violence against them as defensive violence for the protection of 'faith and fatherland' (Father Gabriel). It is also this same war and the conviction that Muslim immigrants/refugees 'have come here to slaughter us, we have to react while there is still time' (Thaddaeus, member of Father Gabriel's Greek-Orthodox Group) that justifies ex-soldiers, such as the members of Thomas' Greek-Orthodox paramilitary group (the 'Military Union') to informally continue their military training in anticipation of the need to violently suppress a foreseen (allegedly orchestrated by Turkey) armed uprising by Muslim immigrants in Greece. This pushed Thomas' 'Military Union', Father Daniels' Golden Dawn activists and other Greek-Orthodox zealots (mainly GOCs and anti-Ecumenist critics of the CoG) to occupy the Athens Mosque construction site for four months in order to prevent its construction.

Finally, it is this invisible and omnipresent war that allows the Greek-Orthodox zealots and radicals to anticipate and plan for a civil-war, an armed clash between the Greek-Orthodox patriotic forces and the treacherous pro-globalisation and pro-immigration political system and its supporters, aiming to restore the primacy of the Greek-Orthodox national identity and the values of 'Fatherland-Religion-Family'. As Thomas put it: 'The country is on the brink of a new civil-war but now the dividing line is between those who defend the nation and its values and those who identify as internationalists and defend the infidels' (Thomas). Indeed, the anti-Muslim/anti-immigrant Greek-Orthodox radicals among our informants openly identified with the two emblematic historical authoritarian regimes of twentieth century Greece and maintained strong personal and group ties with anti-Muslim/anti-immigrant contemporary far-right individuals, groups and parties. They systematically connected their struggle against the 'Muslim invaders' with nationalist and authoritarian far-right politics. Sometimes, they even described the provocation of anti-Muslim/anti-immigrant pogroms as the condition that would enable their war against the 'Muslim invaders' to 'put things on the right track' (Thomas) advancing far-right political agendas and parties.

Thomas thinks that Vellopoulos [leader of the far-right party GREEK SOLUTION] and Fragos Fragoulis [retired General of the Greek Army known for his far-right and nationalist ideas and action] could be more radical and uncontrolled. He believes that, if we are to overcome the crisis and the degrading of values 'we have to clear the landscape within the Parliament'. New parties and new minds need to enter the Parliament. 'This is why the bloodbath is approaching. In order to put things on the right track. Perhaps, what we expect that the immigrants will do [he means to revolt and violently attack the locals] might be done by the Greeks to the immigrants, so as to put things on the right course. Right now, new forces are emerging'. (Thomas, Field Diary)

Thomas' hope for 'clearing the landscape within the Parliament' and advancing far-right authoritarian political agendas and parties was widespread within the radicalised segment of the milieu. Thus, in the

same spirit, Fotis wanted the army to ‘step in’ and form a ‘national government’, Father Daniel imagined putting politicians on a boat and sinking it in the Aegean Sea or imprisoning them on a deserted Greek island, Father Tryfonas called for an armed people’s revolution against the ‘treacherous politicians’ and the members of Father Gabriel’s ‘Greek-Orthodox Group’ were supportive of far-right leaders and parties including Golden Dawn.

4.7 Inequality and perceived injustices

Economy and politics were repeatedly highlighted by all of our respondents when discussing the main sources of inequalities and injustices that influenced their everyday lives as well as their future opportunities, aspirations, hopes and life-plans. The pressures for structural change that globalisation, multiculturalism and secularising trends and processes have, during the previous three decades, exerted upon the Greek society, culture, economy and political system systematically emerged from the respondents’ discourse, as the main framework encapsulating the grievances, the oppositions and the demands that they articulated. In this respect, it is precisely these pressures for structural transformation of Greek society, culture, economy and politics that underlie and account for a wide range of grievances: spanning from the consequences and effects that a decade of economic crisis and implementation of harsh austerity policies had on Greek economy, employment and income of large sections of the society, to the widespread opposition to immigration influxes and multiculturalist policies; or from the disillusionment with and questioning of the entire political system including the functioning of democratic institutions and processes and the implementation and management of the structural pressures on the Greek economy, society and national sovereignty as a result of the country’s integration to globalisation through the EU; or from the opposition to secularising trends regarding Greek culture and the state-Orthodox Church relationship to the calls for the revival and embracing of the traditional right-wing ideology of ‘Fatherland-Religion-Family’ and its nationalist and patriarchal values and sexist morals.

Within this framework, objective economic inequality, interpreted as unequal distribution of income and/or wealth, tends to be taken for granted or even be endorsed and defended by the respondents.

The poor and the rich can live and work together, because both poverty and wealth come from God. ‘God trains people to live in His kingdom. If God wants me to be trained in poverty (and I tell you, I’m poor) who am I to go against God? I’m not against Him, so I’m not against my poverty. (Gerassimos)

Others defended the existence of economic inequality on grounds of freedom suggesting, though, that it should not be left to grow excessively.

Inequality is a natural consequence of the organised society. There is no organised society without inequalities. The issue is the size of the inequalities, the quality of them, the ability to reduce or increase them and the type of each inequality. And it is healthy that there is inequality as such. The problem is the type of inequality or its tendency to increase sometimes. That is to say, a society can’t have the same income for everyone. That would be totalitarianism. Because it would mean that there was no freedom, if everyone had the same income [...] As far as the issue of inequality in Greece is concerned, there are clearly rich and poor and there will always be rich and poor. In all healthy societies, there will be people with different incomes. The issue here is their starting point; the problem is the gap between them. That is, if the rich just make twice as much as the poor, then the gap is small. But if they make 500 times the income of the poor, then the gap is large. This is the real inequality and not the fact that there are poor and rich. (Vaggelis)

Nevertheless, two of the radicalised anti-Muslim respondents expressed mild grievances about the inequality between the poor and the rich. Thus, the very existence of poor and rich was evaluated as ‘a

bit unfair' because 'a guy works 15 hours and gets 300 euros while someone else works 2 hours and makes millions' (Fotis) while Pantelis protested the injustice he saw in that 'the few rich get richer but society is impoverished' arguing that eliminating inequality 'would make the world a better place', despite his conviction that this 'will always be desirable but not feasible' (Pantelis).

Within the context of the general agreement on the impossibility of eliminating economic inequality, all respondents expressed strong grievances regarding the country's and their own economic difficulties. Stressing the dire consequences of the economic crisis and of the implemented austerity policies, they frequently reported economic hardship as the source of concern and worry about the future. Pessimism regarding employment, income and life prospects were repeatedly expressed, particularly by younger respondents, who insisted that the country was in a state of decline in which opportunities were scarce, while even making a living and having a family appear as a tough struggle with an uncertain outcome. In this respect, our respondents reported widespread feelings of hopelessness among young people who feel that 'there is no hope or vision and those of us who still have some hope, the others see us as somehow crazies and, to tell you the truth, they are not wrong; there is no prospect, we feel it and we know it.' (Melpo)

Pessimism about opportunities and future life prospects was frequent in their discourse and underlie thoughts about migrating abroad.

I think that there are no opportunities now, as there used to be in the past. Now opportunities are very limited. That's why young people migrate. I don't mean it's easier abroad, but those who have a degree, they think they will find something. Now, for those without a degree, things are hard. There are not enough opportunities now and whatever you want to do, you have to struggle very, very hard. (Zinovia)

Regarding emigration due to economic hardship, some completely ruled out the possibility of migrating abroad and declared their determination to stay in Greece despite all the difficulties and problems.

FOTIS: We can't even have children. We will end up being a nation of elderly people. Plus, young people leave Greece to work and live abroad. I, too, was invited to go to the USA, but I refused.

INTERVIEWER: Oh, you refused

FOTIS: Of course.

INTERVIEWER: Why did you reject the invitation?

FOTIS: Because I want to keep on trying here. My home, my friends are here. I don't want to go to some country I don't know. As a Greek, I don't want to leave.

INTERVIEWER: You want to try and fight here?

FOTIS: I'm not a quitter. (Fotis)

Others, though, had lost hope about the possibility of Greece's economic recovery and considered emigration as a way out from the downward spiral of the economy.

We are falling and falling and falling. So, no, I don't feel safe at all in my country regarding the economy. A couple of years ago when my friends, 18-19 years old at that time, were discussing leaving the country, I was telling them to stay and fight here, because we love our country and we should support it. We shouldn't abandon it like a sinking boat. [...] But now, we are in a situation that I can't say the same thing. On the contrary, I may even urge them to migrate. Some time ago I was determined and tried to convince them to stay. Now I don't, because I can't see the end of it. (Antonis)

The general feeling among respondents was that they were struggling hard in a climate of uncertainty, insecurity and facing excessive difficulties and obstacles in order to achieve just the basic things, such as 'to sustain a household, to have a family, to be financially independent' (Kostas), which for the previous generation had been relatively easy tasks in an expected and anticipated life-plan.

Look, I feel that Greek society does not offer a feeling of security. On the contrary, it gives you insecurity, a feeling like 'what am I going to do in this jungle?', a feeling of uncertainty. There is nothing stable, nothing certain. So, clearly, Greek society offers nothing but frustration to young people. (Kimonas)

Economic hardship, unemployment, poverty, insecurity, pessimism and frustration compose the shared framework, within which our respondents highlighted a number of injustices which they saw as significantly worsening the conditions of their everyday life as well as their future opportunities and prospects. The perceived injustices mentioned by the respondents originate from the wider structural changes that Greek society, culture, economy and politics have undergone as a result of the pressures exerted by globalisation, immigration, multiculturalism and secularising processes and trends. They include grievances such as the prevalence of nepotism, favouritism, corruption and political clientelism as a means for securing a job and income in an economy severely traumatised by the consequences of the crisis and austerity. They also point to the political system's refusal to act in order to stop, or at least significantly limit, the entry and stay of immigrants/refugees (particularly of Muslims) while ignoring the negative after effects, the risks and the threats which they are seen to cause for society and the nation. They also include the perceived indifference of politicians toward the plight of the people while they focus on accumulating power and money through corruption. Additionally, they resent the perceived favouring of immigrants over the native Greeks in social policies, state institutions and international organisations as well as the excessive economic burden that immigrants are seen to represent for the already weak and insufficient taxpayer-funded social services. Minorities are also perceived to be favoured by the political system contrary to the views and wishes of the Greek-Orthodox majority. Finally, they include what is seen as the political system's identification with and subservience to the EU policies toward Greece regarding the economic crisis and immigration as well as the EU's indifference toward Turkey's aggressive challenging of Greek national sovereignty.

4.7.1. The religious and political integration of grievances about perceived injustices among Greek-Orthodox anti-Muslim radicals

Such perceived injustices are shared by all the respondents in the milieu to varying degrees. Nevertheless, it is the radicalised section of the milieu that integrates them within a religious and political framework constituting of militant Orthodoxy, nationalism, far-right political authoritarianism and militarism. It is within such a framework that a generalised belligerent, fanatical and bloodthirsty version of Islam and of Muslim immigrants/refugees can be painted; one that would justify the use of violence against them and against those who assist them, envisaging a civil war between the 'forces of the nation' and the 'internationalists', while, at the same time, promoting far-right nationalist and authoritarian political forces and programmes. In this sense, it is not surprising that it is the radicalised part of the milieu that systematically connected economic hardship with immigrants/refugees and the need for violent reaction against them. It is the radical informants who, systematically turned against immigrants, blaming them for their low income (because 'if all these foreigners weren't coming here to work for three euros, we would get ten euros' - Maria) or for their own unemployment, like Fotis who was looking for a job as a plumber but he was told 'I don't need you, I have Mohammed' (Fotis). Moreover, it is the radicalised informants who used such grievances in order to justify their acceptance of the use of violence against (Muslim) immigrants/refugees as in the case of the 'Military Union's' younger members; their preparedness and willingness 'to kill them all' (referring both to immigrants and politicians) was justified

by their leader, Thomas, as the result of the emotional impact on them of their poverty, unemployment and lack of life-prospects caused by the economic crisis.

It is also the radicalised segment of the milieu that integrates the traditional Greek-Orthodox anti-Muslim nationalism with conspiracy interpretations of globalisation, multiculturalism and immigration as the war that the ‘enemies of Christian nations’ (Jews, Zionists, Muslims, Masons, liberals and left-wingers, atheists, Satanists, powerful global elites) wage against Christianity and nation-states using immigrants (particularly Muslims) as an invading army in disguise that will, eventually, taint and alter the ethnic, religious and cultural composition of Christian European societies to achieve their Islamisation. Within such particularly prejudiced and hostile interpretations of wider phenomena, processes and developments, the mainstream imagery of Islamist extremism’s horrifying violence, sharpens suspicion, fear and hostility, producing a particularly grim and threatening version of the radical ‘otherness’ and ‘foreignness’ that Kirtsoglou and Tsimouris (2016:3 and 2018:2)²⁹ have termed as ‘radical alterity’. It is precisely such grim and threatening versions of Islam’s and Muslims’ ‘radical alterity’ that allow Greek-Orthodox zealots, far-right activists and paramilitary groups (such as Thomas and his ‘Military Union’, Fotis, Father Daniel and his Golden Dawn activists, Father Gabriel and his Greek-Orthodox Group as well as Father Tryfonas and Pantelis) to justify the use of violence against the ‘enemies of Christianity’ which they believe (Muslim) immigrants/refugees to be. Thus, from Fotis’ advice that ‘the army should be called’ in order for a ‘national government’ to be formed as the proper political response to contemporary transformations and risks, to Father Daniel’s vision of exterminating the politicians that betray the nation or to Thomas’ hopes that a pogrom against immigrants would ‘put things on the right course’ for strengthening far-right forces and political agendas within Greek society, there are discernible religious, cultural, ideological and political threads which pass through and connect the zealot Greek-Orthodox identities to militarism and far-right authoritarianism. In doing so, they shape the religious, ideological and political framework in which concerns, worries and fears about contemporary changes and grievances about social conditions, political choices and perceived injustices are incorporated, structuring and guiding social action towards specific ideological and political outcomes.

It is within such a religious, ideological and political framework that the prejudiced views of Islam and Muslims that are widespread among the respondents, as well as the discontents about immigration influxes and the fears of Islamist terrorism, are mixed with conspiracy interpretations of the Huntingtonian idea of a ‘clash of civilisations’. Such theories feed and propagate the assertions of Father Tryfona’s, Thomas and Father Gabriel’s (and their followers) that there are currently in Athens, and in other areas, hundreds of thousands of armed and trained Muslim extremists and terrorists waiting for the opportunity to revolt and ‘slaughter us’. It is also within this same religious, ideological and political framework that Thomas’s paramilitaries in the ‘Military Union’ train and prepare to suppress such an alleged revolt or organise operations in order to bring down ISIS flags and symbols that were allegedly raised in a refugee camp. At the same time, they promote, through their connections with the institutional leadership of the Greek Army, their plans to be officially recognised as National Guard. Similarly, it is precisely within this religious, ideological and political framework that prejudiced views and grievances about Muslim immigrants/refugees are integrated with the far-right ideological theme of ‘racism against the Greeks’. It is within such a framework that Muslim immigrants/refugees are viewed as unable to be integrated/assimilated within Christian European societies and as causing crime and unemployment to rise while simultaneously ruining the areas in which they live and exhausting the inadequate resources for social policies and services at the expense of the natives who are left to suffer economic hardship, poverty and unemployment. Here, a rhetoric proclaiming this constitutes ‘racism against the Greeks’ is employed to reframe the consensus within the milieu in favour of the implementation of closed borders

and deportation policies in line with the calls of more radical calls for the use of fences, minefields and the army against immigrants/refugees attempting to enter Greek territory.

Moreover, it is within such a religious, ideological and political framework that the fears and grievances about Muslim immigrants/refugees - supposedly threatening the Greek-Orthodox national identity and national sovereignty by contaminating and altering the mythologised Greek ethnic, religious and cultural homogeneity - are mixed with the milieu's radicals conspiracy interpretations of globalisation, multiculturalism and immigration as plots for the Islamisation of Christian nations. It is also within this framework that a particular nationally intimidating picture of Muslim immigrants/refugees is painted through their instrumental association with the challenges of Greek national sovereignty by Turkey, in order for anti-Muslim/anti-immigrant violence to be justified and endorsed by the Greek-Orthodox paramilitaries and activists.

Finally, it is again this religious, ideological and political framework that mixes respondents' grievances about the failure of the Greek political system and of EU institutions and policies to tackle the problems and the difficulties associated with the economic crisis and with a high immigration, with far-right calls for authoritarian solutions. This helps shape widespread political cynicism regarding Greek politics and the functioning of democracy, as well as respondents' disillusionment with the EU economic and migration policies, into far-right hopes that a 'national government' (Fotis) led by the Greek army could put an end to Greece's exposure to globalisation, multiculturalism and immigration flows and their threats. In their wake, there would be a restoration of the country's Greek-Orthodox homogeneity by expelling foreigners and revitalising the 'Fatherland-Religion-Family' ideology through a 'national education' (Fotis) and a 'national economy' (Thomas) that would benefit the Greek people through protectionist economic policies and the limiting of minorities' rights.

4.8 Identities, groupings and sources of radicalism

While anti-Muslim/anti-Islam views and attitudes are widespread and strict migration policies, including mass deportations of immigrants/refugees (particularly of Muslims), are almost unanimously supported among our Greek-Orthodox informants, the majority of them do not support or justify the use of violence against immigrants/refugees mentioning humanistic and Christian values of tolerance and respect for human life. Nevertheless, our ethnographic research has located, among our informants, a subset of religious, political and institutional identities, connected to civil society associations and organisations, political parties and state institutions, such as the Greek military, that incorporate radical, agonistic/activist, attitudes and behaviours toward Muslim immigrants/refugees.

These attitudes and behaviours reveal the discursive core of Greek-Orthodox anti-Muslim radicalism and they differentiate the radicalised from the non-radicalised, albeit still Islamophobic, segments of the milieu. The views, attitudes and behaviours of the radicalised part of the milieu are structured around militant Orthodoxy, Greek nationalism, political authoritarianism and the justification, anticipation and preparation for the use of violence against internal and external 'enemies of Christianity, Orthodoxy and the nation', who are seen as waging a war against 'those who defend the nation and its values'. Along this line of thought, that embraces anti-Muslim/anti-immigrant violence, conspiratorial thinking about contemporary socio-political processes and phenomena (such as globalisation, multiculturalism, secularising trends, immigration and Islamist extremism) is prominent and interprets them as aspects of such a war. Conspiracy thinking is instrumental in producing the necessary ideologised enemies of the faith and of the nation and in generating the deliberation to take part in that war in order to defend 'the faith and the fatherland'. Finally, the metaphor of war and the ideologisation of Muslims and immigrants as 'enemies of the faith and of the nation' through conspiracy thought integrate Greek-Orthodox anti-Muslim/anti-immigrant radicalism with far-right political forces and agendas within a nationalist palingenetic programme. The latter requires and endorses political authoritarianism and violence as

necessary means for defeating the faith's and nation's internal and external enemies, thus, salvaging the nation's ethnic, religious and cultural homogeneity through the restoration of the primacy of Greek-Orthodox identity and of the Fatherland-Religion-Family ideology.

Such justifications of anti-Muslim violence and the related religious and ideological views and political agendas were particularly evident among those identifying with militant Orthodoxy, far-right ideology and politics and with the Greek military. These religious, political and militaristic identities constitute the core of the radicalised part of the milieu and are embedded in a constellation of groups, associations and parties which foster, organise and propagate radical anti-Muslim/anti-immigrant attitudes and behaviours. Thus, the Genuine Orthodox Christians (GOCs), the anti-Ecumenist critics of the mainstream Church of Greece (CoG), the Orthodox zealots of the Monastic Republic of Mount Athos, along with Greek-Orthodox far-right militants and activists as well as former soldiers of the Greek army (especially, but not exclusively, from the commando forces) and their respective organisations and groupings represent the main agents of the Greek-Orthodox anti-Islam/anti-Muslim radicalism.

Within their diverse groupings (informal groups, formal civil society associations and political parties) Orthodox zeal, far-right nationalism and political authoritarianism as well as militarism are interconnected and interwoven even at the individual level. In this respect, Thomas, an anti-Ecumenist former commando soldier and admirer of the 1967-1974 military dictatorship who leads a Greek-Orthodox paramilitary association ('Military Union'), the members of which bear similar to his own ideological, political and religious attributes, exemplifies the typical, for the radicalised segment of the milieu, identity structure. Such characteristics are prominent within the entire radicalised part of the milieu, as is indicated by the identity structure of the individuals and groups that comprise this segment of the milieu. Thus, for example, Fotis, who strongly identifies with the army, is a Greek-Orthodox far-right nationalist and admirer of the 1967-1974 dictatorship; Father Daniel is a militant Genuine Orthodox Christian priest, former commando soldier and active Golden Dawn member activist and candidate in local government elections who leads a group of zealot Orthodox Golden Dawn activists, some of which also have a commando background; Father Gabriel is a zealot Orthodox clergyman from the Monastic Republic of Mount Athos who has also served the commando forces in the past and leads a zealot Orthodox group (the 'Greek-Orthodox Group') consisting of GOCs, anti-Ecumenists, far-right sympathisers and former military officers and soldiers.

Sharing a common identity and common enemies, the groupings of the anti-Muslim/anti-immigrant Greek Orthodoxy are themselves interconnected and cooperating with one another. Thus, for example, Thomas' 'Military Union' and Father Gabriel's 'Greek-Orthodox Group' share common members and, along with other Greek-Orthodox associations, had co-organised a public event against globalisation, Ecumenism and the New World Order which was also attended by representatives of far-right organisations and parties. Apart from being personal friends with Thomas, Father Daniel and his Golden Dawn activist group had joined forces with Thomas' 'Military Union' in the 2016 four-month protest occupation of the Athens Mosque construction site and had also participated in the 2018 Golden Dawn's 'No Mosque' protest against its opening and operation. Similarly, Fotis, a Greek-Orthodox far-right activist and member of the 'Military Union', totally identified with the military, exemplifies the strong ties among the radical Greek-Orthodox individuals and groups, since he had not only supported the 2016 protest occupation of the Athens Mosque construction site but he also participated (dressed in military outfit and acting as informal security guard) in all protests and events organised by all radical Greek-Orthodox and far-right groups that we encountered during the fieldwork, including Father Daniel's nationalist event at the centre of Athens and Golden Dawn's 2018 'No Mosque' protest. It is worth adding here, that Father Tryfonas's group of GOCs that had offered their support to the protest occupation of the Athens Mosque construction site, withdrew when the main forces within the occupation (the 'Military Union' and Father Daniel's Golden Dawn activists) refused to sign his anti-party manifesto in which he called on the Greek people to undertake an armed revolt against all politicians and political parties.

The radical anti-Muslim/anti-immigrant Greek-Orthodox individuals and groups that we encountered within the milieu during fieldwork form a network that maintains close relationships with the military forces as well as with far-right organisations and parties. In this respect, former officers and soldiers of the Greek Army (with a high proportion of them originating from the special/commando forces) are particularly visible and active within radical Greek-Orthodoxy, shaping the individual and collective self-understanding within the milieu as 'Orthodox martyrs and fighters' (Father Tryfonas and Thomas) and 'soldiers of Christ' (Father Gabriel) while identifying with the most militant version of Greek Orthodoxy through the adoption of the Esfigmenou monastery (in the Monastic Republic of Mount Athos) war slogan 'Orthodoxy or Death' (Discussion with Greek-Orthodox Group, Field Diary). Moreover, they maintain close connections with the leadership of the military institution from which they have received awards for their activities and upon which they put pressure to officially recognise their militaristic groupings as National Guard.

Such militaristic identities also appear to be important in connecting the radicalised part of the milieu with far-right politics and parties. Here, Thomas's, Father Daniel's and Father Gabriel's groups exemplify the strong relationships that radical Greek Orthodoxy maintains with Golden Dawn and other far-right organisations and parties. Such relationships extend beyond the shared identification with the historical dictatorial regimes of Greece and their nationalist, authoritarian and anti-left identities to include systematic collaboration and participation in activism. In this respect, beyond the widespread, within the radicalised segment of the milieu, support for various far-right organisations and parties, Father Daniel's group and Fotis, from the 'Military Union', stand out for their identification with Golden Dawn activism, exemplifying the alliance between Golden Dawn and parts of zealous Orthodoxy that we mentioned in the Historical Context section of the report.

Finally, the anti-Muslim/anti-immigrant radicalised part of the milieu is also related to mainstream right-wing parties such as New Democracy. Thus, during the second conversation with Thomas, he disclosed that he was member of New Democracy and he believed that the party's candidates for the Municipality of Athens and for the Region of Attica would be able to 'set the streets in order' and discipline the '*lathrometanastes*' ('illegal immigrants') putting them 'where they belong' (Thomas). Moreover, Giorgos, a non-radicalised Greek-Orthodox informant revealed that he was member of New Democracy party youth and discussed the issue of the party's relationships with the 'Christian-Talibans', as he labelled the radical Greek-Orthodox that constitute a part of New Democracy's members and voters.

GIORGOS: Yes, those who very easily declare 'I am New Democracy, I am a Christian-Taliban'.

INTERVIEWER: They mean that New Democracy is the party for Christian-Talibans?

GIORGOS: Some believe so.

INTERVIEWER: Who are these people?

GIORGOS: They are members and wannabe party officials.

[...]

GIORGOS: Some of them identify New Democracy with Orthodoxy or with Fatherland-Religion-Family and they declare 'I am New Democracy, I am Christian-Taliban', they are self-identifying with this thing.

INTERVIEWER: As if it was a positive term, you mean.

GIORGOS: Yes, a positive term. I was often surprised to hear this kind of things.

INTERVIEWER: So, you have heard this said by party members.

GIORGOS: Both members and some party officials aiming at climbing the party ranks

[...].

GIORGOS: Look, if you mean that there are people with extremist Orthodox views within the mainstream parties, you are right. There are. (Giorgos)

Another informant, who disclosed that he was a New Democracy supporter and voter, connected the party's voters with far-right radicalism and particularly with the Golden Dawn.

VAGGELIS: As long as Golden Dawn exists as a legal party, SYRIZA benefits. Because Golden Dawn draws its votes from the same base as New Democracy. So New Democracy loses votes to Golden Dawn. It is the electoral base of New Democracy that votes for Golden Dawn. So New Democracy has fallen to 30% from 37%. So, SYRIZA is benefiting.

INTERVIEWER: So, you think that if Golden Dawn....

VAGGELIS: If they are convicted, the party will be declared illegal and it will vanish

[...]

INTERVIEWER: So, you think, many Golden Dawn voters will go back to voting for New Democracy?

VAGGELIS: Absolutely. A lot of them.

INTERVIEWER: OK

VAGGELIS: A lot of them. At least a 4% [he means at the national level] will go back to voting for New Democracy. (Vaggelis)

Anti-Muslim/anti-immigrant Greek-Orthodox radicalism is an amalgam composed of Orthodox zeal, militarism, far-right nationalism and authoritarianism and emerges from within mainstream Greek-Orthodox right-wing anti-Muslim/Islamophobic nationalism. The special combination of ideological characteristics and religious, political and militaristic identities that defines Greek-Orthodox anti-Muslim radicalism is embedded and nourished within groups, collectivities, civil society associations, political parties (both far-right and mainstream right-wing parties, such as New Democracy) and institutional niches which include parts of the organised Orthodoxy (affiliated either to GOC or to CoG or related to the Monastic Republic of Mount Athos), as well as sections of the military institution. It is within such groups, collectivities, civil society associations, political parties and institutional niches that the special ideological characteristics and identities of the anti-Muslim/Islamophobic Greek Orthodoxy become articulated and interwoven with grievances, conspiratorial interpretations of wider phenomena and processes and with justifications of anti-Muslim/anti-immigrant violence as defensive violence against Greece's and Orthodoxy's enemies. It is this complex mix of ideology, socio-political grievances and conspiracy thinking that defines the radicalised anti-Muslim part of the milieu and structures radical social action within it. In this sense, it is this interplay of Orthodox zeal, far-right and militaristic identity characteristics with membership and participation in groups, collectivities and organisations which ideologise, anticipate and prepare for anti-Muslim/anti-immigrant violence within a conspiratorial and belligerent vision of a defensive war for 'faith and nation' that differentiates the radicalised and the non-radicalised segments of the milieu, despite their other shared characteristics.

Thus, what characterises the non-radicalised part of the milieu is the absence of this combination of militant Orthodox, far-right and militaristic identity characteristics with membership and participation in groups, collectivities and organisations that ideologise, anticipate and prepare for anti-Muslim/anti-immigrant violence. The non-radicalised part of the milieu does not participate in radical groups, collectivities and organisations and neither endorses nor ideologises anti-Muslim/anti-immigrant violence. Calls to violence are replaced by the endorsement of Christian and humanitarian values, the 'Love one another' Commandment is not challenged and moderation is chosen and advised as a response

to extremist views and attitudes. Thus, while Islamophobic Greek-Orthodox nationalism is always discernible among the non-radicalised respondents, who express concern and worry about large immigration influxes and ask for their strict limitation, this does not lead them to endorse the use of violence (whether institutional or not) against Muslims and immigrants. This attitude is also related to the absence of conspiracy interpretations of globalisation, multiculturalism, immigration and secularising trends as 'war waged against fatherland and faith by the enemies of Greece and Orthodoxy'. Their concerns about such wider phenomena and processes, which they too see as representing risks and threats regarding Greece and the Greek-Orthodox national identity, are not embedded in ideas about a planned attack against the nation while immigration influxes, especially of those of Muslim faith, are not understood as invasion and colonisation. Further, despite their understanding of Islam as endogenously breeding fanaticism, they tend to discriminate between radical/extremist and moderate interpretations of its teachings and dogmas, attributing the former to forces and organisations that promote ideological and political agendas among the Muslims. Moreover, while they express grievances about an alleged favouring of immigrants over the natives by international organisations and state institutions, social policies and services, they tend to recognise that the assistance offered to them is due to the dire conditions they face. Finally, while they endorse nationalist views and attitudes and the 'Fatherland-Religion-Family' ideology, they reject both the violent means through which they are pursued and the authoritarian political solutions advocated by far-right organisations and political parties. In this respect, neither the use of violence against immigrants and political opponents is accepted nor dictatorial visions of Greece's political life are supported among them.

The particular amalgam of anti-Ecumenist militant Orthodoxy, far-right nationalism and authoritarianism and militarism forms the cultural/political content of anti-Muslim/anti-immigrant radicalism within the milieu. It is embedded in and propagated by groups, civil-society associations, institutional niches and political parties that constitute nodes in a cultural/political/institutional network of shared ideas and attitudes and communicating and collaborating individuals and groupings. In this sense, this network represents the source of anti-Muslim/anti-immigrant radicalism in the studied milieu connecting anti-Muslim/anti-immigrant radicalism to mainstream political parties and institutions. Therefore this cultural/political/institutional network constitutes the social environment within which the radicalisation process takes place and individual radicalisation trajectories are shaped through participation and action in groups, civil society associations, political parties and institutions. Nevertheless, given the lack of biographical and familial information for the individuals who are active in this network, it has not been possible to explore the specificity of such trajectories or the biographical dimension of the radicalisation process studied.

5. Conclusions

Our research documented the existence of widespread Islamophobic/anti-Muslim ideas, views and attitudes among young Orthodox Greeks. These ideas, views and attitudes originate from mainstream Greek-Orthodox national ideology and identity and its crystallisation in the right-wing 'Fatherland-Religion-Family' ideology in which traditional anti-Turkish/anti-Muslim nationalism is synthesised with contemporary grievances about perceived threats and injustices regarding economic hardship, globalisation, multiculturalist policies, immigration and secularising pressures. Islamophobic ideas, views and attitudes are widespread within the entire milieu and compose a particularly negative and hostile representation of Islam which is typical of the ideology of anti-Muslim movements that focus on religious and cultural Identitarian struggles against Islam and the perceived threat of the 'Islamification of Christian nations'.

in this respect, Islam is represented as a backward, aggressive, expansionist and violent religion which is endogenously characterised by fanaticism, intolerance and even hatred toward non-Muslims and

particularly toward Christians. Adding to such hostile perception and understanding of Islam is the, widespread within the milieu, view that Islam tolerates and/or endorses the abuse and degrading of women and children while permitting sexual practices unacceptable to the West, such as incest, polygamy and paedophilia. Such prejudiced and hostile representations of Islam emphasise what is seen as the latter's 'radical foreignness' and incompatibility with European and Western civilisation and culture and are permeated by a vision of a clash of civilisations between the Christian nations and the Islamic world. This is a clash of civilisations that dates back to the Crusades and today threatens Europe and Greece with Islamification through immigration and the feared mixing of peoples and cultures. The contemporary media imagery of Islamist extremist violence has a corroborative effect on this representation (Busher, 2013; Pilkington, 2016; Kallis, 2018; Kallis, 2019, Kaya and Tecmen, 2019; Blumi, 2015; Hüseyinoğlu, 2015; Kirtsoglou and Tsimouris 2016).

This representation of Islam, typical of the Islamophobic ideology and culture of the various 'Defence Leagues' (Pilkington, 2016; Lee, 2015; Allchorn, 2019; Busher, 2015), constitutes the core of the Islamophobic/anti-Muslim ideology and culture that characterises and permeates the entire studied milieu. In this sense, it constitutes the shared ideological/cultural background of both the radicalised and the non-radicalised segments of the milieu. Such ideological/cultural common ground, shared by both segments of the milieu, underpins the racialising dynamic of Islam's 'radical alterity' which amalgamates all Muslims into one group and treats them according to supposed innate characteristics that derive from such representations of Islam (Garner and Selod, 2015; Blumi, 2015; Hüseyinoğlu, 2015; Kirtsoglou and Tsimouris 2016). It also underpins the grievances about the alleged favouring of Muslims and of immigrants/refugees by social policies and services to the detriment of the locals, or about the supposed propensity of Muslims and immigrants/refugees to crime and violence as well as the conviction that Muslim immigrants/refugees cannot be integrated to European societies and are incompatible with European and Greek-Orthodox values and way of life, which are shared by both segments of the milieu. Greek-Orthodox values and way of life are seen as being in danger of being altered and contaminated by the 'radical foreignness' of Islamic culture. Nevertheless, even though the non-radicalised majority of our informants share both the Greek-Orthodox national ideology and identity as well as the basic Islamophobic/anti-Muslim representation of Islam and Muslims with the radicalised segment of the milieu, they do not share the particular synthesis of ideological, political and identity characteristics that were found to be prominent within the radicalised segment and do not endorse conflictual dispositions and preoccupation with violence nor its far-right political plans and goals.

In this sense, the radicalised Islamophobic/anti-Muslim segment of the milieu emerges as a synthesis of ideological and identity characteristics that constitute radicalised versions of the Islamophobic/anti-Muslim Greek-Orthodox national identity and ideology embedded in far-right nationalist and authoritarian political programmes that justify and endorse the use of violence against Muslims, immigrants/refugees and political opponents.

Thus, what especially characterises the radicalised section of the anti-Muslim Greek-Orthodox milieu is the synthesis of Orthodox zeal with far-right nationalism, authoritarianism and militarism that embeds contemporary grievances about immigration, globalisation, multiculturalism and secularism within the conspiracist vision of a war waged against 'the faith and the nation' by a multitude of 'enemies of Christianity, Europe, Orthodoxy and Greece'. The 'enemies of Christian nations' (Jews, Zionists, Masons, liberals, left-wingers and anarchists, Satanists, global elites and New World Order supporters) are viewed as using the 'absolute evil' of Islamic 'satanic religion', as well as Muslim immigrants and Islamist extremism and terrorism as tools and weapons for the Islamification of Europe and Greece through the alteration and destruction of their religious, ethnic, national and cultural character. On their part, the 'faithful' and the 'nationally-minded' ('ethnikofrones') are viewed as not only justified, but also required, as Greek-Orthodox patriots, to react through any means, including armed violence, in order to protect

Greece's national identity and sovereignty and to restore the primacy of the 'Fatherland-Religion-Family' ideology.

For the Greek-Orthodox Islamophobic/anti-Muslim radicals such a 'patriotic duty' can only be served by a 'national government' (backed or led by the military forces) that will enforce economic protectionism, nationalist education and authoritarian and violent policies against political opponents and immigrants/refugees, this in the framework of a political agenda that is already propagated and championed by the contemporary far-right organisations and parties to which the radicalised Greek-Orthodox part of the milieu is connected to and even identified with. Such policies are viewed by the Greek-Orthodox anti-Muslim/anti-immigrant radicals as the revitalisation and continuation of the 'national policies' enforced by the admired and endorsed historical authoritarian-dictatorial military regimes of twentieth century Greece; unsurprisingly, their enforcement necessitates and justifies the extensive use of political violence, ranging from anti-Muslim/anti-immigrant pogroms to civil war among the 'nationally minded' and the 'internationalists' and to the extermination of political opponents and politicians who betray 'the faith and the nation'.

By contrast, the non-radicalised majority of the milieu rejects both the conspiracist and belligerent interpretations of globalisation, multiculturalism, immigration and secularising trends and the hateful; and aggressive attitude toward Muslims and immigrants that characterise the radical anti-Muslim part of the milieu. In their discourse, Islamophobic views and attitudes result neither in hateful representations of Islamic religion and of Muslims, nor in conflictual and belligerent attitudes and behaviours that perceive Islam, Muslims and immigrants as attacking Christian European nations' or 'Orthodoxy and Greece'. Despite the frequent surfacing of fears about the possibility that Turkey would exploit Muslim immigrant/refugee to challenge Greek national sovereignty, as well as about the danger of Europe's and Greece's Islamification through the contamination, alteration and decline of Greek-Orthodox national identity and culture and of the 'Fatherland-Religion-Family' ideology due to the mixing with foreign peoples and cultures, the non-radicalised segment of the milieu dismisses the far-right authoritarian and belligerent agendas and violent politics against Muslims, immigrants/refugees and political opponents that characterise their radicalised counterparts. Additionally, despite the (shared with their radicalised counterparts) unanimous support for strict anti-immigration and closed-border policies and their grievances about the perceived favouring of immigrants/refugees by social policies and services and state institutions (which underlie their demands for mass deportations of immigrants/refugees and for welfare chauvinist/exclusionary policies toward them), they reject the use of violence (military or civic) against them. Instead, they tend to invoke and call upon Christian and humanistic values of toleration, moderation and empathy with the suffering fellow human. Finally, despite their sympathetic attitude toward nationalist, xenophobic and exclusionary policies, their grievances about the mainstream political system and the functioning of democracy in Greece do not lead them to endorse anti-democratic political authoritarianism, nor to subscribe to the violent suppression or extermination of rival political persuasions.

Thus, what differentiates the radicalised from the non-radicalised Islamophobic/anti-Muslim Greek-Orthodox segments of the milieu is the special synthesis (present in the former and absent in the latter) of the ideological and identity characteristics that brings together Orthodox zealots who view themselves as 'soldiers of Christ', Greek-Orthodox far-right activists, militarists and neo-Nazi Golden Dawners in a common struggle for the protection of 'faith and fatherland' from the threat of Islamification and for the propagation of nationalist and authoritarian far-right political programmes that are seen as the proper response to the perceived threats and injustices that globalisation, multiculturalism, immigration and secularism generate against the Greek-Orthodox majority.

Moreover, this specific synthesis of religious, political and militaristic identities is the source of the Greek-Orthodox radicals' inclination for physical and symbolic violence and for political authoritarianism. The ideological scheme of a war waged by internal and external enemies of 'Christian nations' against the

‘faith and the fatherland’ and the urgent need to respond using ‘tough but necessary’ (Thomas) means such as violence and political authoritarianism constitutes the main ideological scheme that justifies the use and the preparation of violence and supports the propagation of anti-democratic authoritarian and exclusionary politics. The justificatory basis for the preparation and anticipation of violence and authoritarianism in the context of a just and defensive war against the enemies of Orthodoxy and Greece includes a number of theological and nationalist themes such as: the questioning of the ‘Love one another’ New Testament Commandment by the Orthodox zealots, the relentless repetition of the threat of a violent revolt of numerous, allegedly armed, Muslim extremists that have, supposedly, entered Greece among immigrants/refugees, the threat of the presumptive use of Muslim immigrants/refugees by Turkey in order to challenge Greek national sovereignty, as well as the widespread feelings of victimhood condensed in the ‘racism against the Greeks’ rhetoric. In order to be able to wage such a war against the internal and external ‘enemies of the faith and of the nation’, the anti-Muslim Greek-Orthodox radicals envisage the possibility of ‘deleting everything and starting from scratch’ (Thomas) in a nationalist-authoritarian palingenetic vision which anticipates a civil war, relentlessly referred to as the nineteenth century national revolution against the Ottoman and Muslim enemy looking, also, for a radical religious or political leader that could ‘carry Greeks on his shoulders and lift them’ (Pantelis). Such ideological schemes establish violence and authoritarianism as political means and run parallel to historical fascism’s ultranationalist, violent and authoritarian palingenetic vision theorised by R. Griffin (1991, 2003). They also account for the possibility and for the actual content of the alliance among Orthodox zealots, far-right nationalists and militarists and neo-Nazi Golden Dawn activists that we encountered and documented within the milieu.

In this respect, the radicalised Islamophobic/anti-Muslim and anti-immigrant part of the Greek-Orthodox milieu maintains a strong ideological and political relationship with right-wing extremism’, the right-wing ideology that, according to Elisabeth Carter’s (2018: 157-182), ‘minimal’ definition, encompasses authoritarianism, anti-democracy and exclusionary and/or holistic nationalism. Additionally, it seems that it is this element of ‘right-wing extremism’, within Greek-Orthodox anti-Muslim radicalism, that is responsible for the differential gender distribution and the female underrepresentation within the Greek-Orthodox Islamophobic/anti-Muslim milieu. In this respect the milieu appears to conform to the general trend regarding gender distribution among far-right and extreme-right activists where women are generally underrepresented and less visible (Ezekiel, 2002; Kitschelt, 2007; Mudde, 2014; Georgiadou 2013; Paraskeva-Veloudogianni 2015; Vasilopoulou and Halikiopoulou 2015; Sakellariou 2015; Ellinas and Lamprianou 2016).

The radical Greek-Orthodox anti-Muslim ideology, identity and culture is embedded within groups and collectivities that structure social action within the milieu. These range from informal activist groups related to far-right political parties, formal civil-society associations and far-right organisations to political parties. Among such groups and collectivities personal relationships of their members are maintained while participation in them is not exclusive and leaders and members may participate in more than one of them simultaneously. They, thus, form a network of communication and action which is additionally connected and related to institutions such as the Greek military forces, as well as to mainstream political parties. It is a network in which ideology, identity and social action are shared and structured indicating the existence of a triple pathway to Greek-Orthodox anti-Muslim radicalisation; one that intertwines Orthodox zeal, far-right and mainstream right-wing politics and institutional militarism. The limited data about personal and/or familial backgrounds (since respondents avoided or explicitly refused to provide detailed personal/familial information) makes it impossible to confirm (or not) the far-right socialisation through familial tradition and culture hypothesis (Nayak, 1999; Simi and Futrell, 2010). Nevertheless, a number of factors suggest that the prevalent route to radicalisation in the milieu conforms to the ‘continuity’ type and is motivated by a combination of the ‘ideology’ and ‘identity’ ideal types of motivation toward radicalism (Linden and Klandermans, 2007). These factors include: the existence of an

ideological and identity network that interconnects radical ideological contents and identities, civil-society associations, political parties and state institutions; the absence of any indication of a 'conversion process'; the tendency of both the radicalised and the non-radicalised respondents to use the same strategies for the management of their social relationships in regard to contested ideological views and radical/extremist messages; and the reported neutrality of such strategies in relation to personal radicalisation/de-radicalisation processes.

Finally, grievances about sustained inequalities and perceived injustices do not appear to have a significant impact on whether respondents in the milieu radicalise; both their understanding and the attitudes toward them are shared by the radicalised and the non-radicalised segments of the milieu. Nevertheless, it is the radicalised part of the milieu that integrates them within its special synthesis of religious, ideological and political views and attitudes in order to substantiate its main ideological schemes of the war waged against the 'faith and the nation' and the 'racism against the Greeks' rhetoric which justify the role that violence and authoritarianism play in Greek-Orthodox anti-Muslim radicalism. In this respect, it seems that grievances about perceived injustices have a justificatory function for violence and authoritarianism that adds an element of 'cumulative radicalisation/extremism' (Bartlett and Birdwell, 2013; Busher and Macklin, 2015; Eatwell, 2006) or of 'reactive co-radicalisation' (Pratt, 2015) in the profile of Greek-Orthodox anti-Muslim radicalism. This element is both ideological and behavioural. It includes ideological justifications of violence and authoritarianism, viewed as defensive reactions to the hostile and threatening others' aggression, as in the case of the paramilitarists' preparations and military training to violently suppress an alleged Muslim immigrant violent revolt; it also includes active confrontation in the face of either threatening actions, as is the case of Thomas' paramilitaries' operation to bring down an ISIS flag that had reportedly been raised in an immigrant/refugee camp or alleged plans and goals, as is the case of the protest-occupation of the Athens Mosque construction site on fears that it could develop into a recruitment centre for Islamist extremism.

Anti-Muslim/anti-immigrant radicalism in the studied milieu is the combined product of Orthodox zeal, Greek-Orthodox anti-Turkish nationalism, far-right authoritarian political agendas and militarism. It emerges from within a network of individuals, formal and informal civil society associations, political parties and institutional niches, such as the commando forces of the Greek military. Although the process of radicalisation could not be studied at the biographical level of individual radicalisation trajectories, this network defines the cultural/political/institutional space where Greek-Orthodox Islamophobic/anti-Muslim radicalisation takes place. It is within this network that nationalist, conspiratorial, prejudiced and hostile representations of Islam and Muslims that form a racialising view of all Muslims (particularly so of Muslim immigrants/refugees) as radically foreign to and incompatible with Christian European societies are synthesised with far-right politics and right-wing extremism. The latter play an important role in this network as they radicalise the traditional Greek-Orthodox Islamophobic/anti-Muslim nationalism by connecting it to authoritarian/anti-democratic and violent political programmes and forces. It is within this network that Greek-Orthodox Islamophobia is integrated into a vision of a just, defensive war against a multitude of 'enemies of the faith and of the nation' which include liberals, Jews, Zionists, left-wingers, global elites and those who benefit from and support globalisation, multiculturalism, immigration and secularism. By stigmatising Muslims (especially immigrants/refugees) as enemies who threaten the Greek-Orthodox national identity and ideology and the Greek national sovereignty, this network justifies, prepares and anticipates anti-Muslim/anti-immigrant violence as a necessary aspect of the wider war in defence of 'faith and nation'. It, thus, radicalises the racialising dynamic of Greek-Orthodox Islamophobic nationalism by envisioning and preparing anti-Muslim pogroms as part of wider plans for the advancement of far-right authoritarian political programs and goals. By amalgamating religious, political and institutional identities and recasting them into radical authoritarian/anti-democratic political programmes, this network emerges as the source of Greek-Orthodox Islamophobic/anti-Muslim

radicalism as well as the native socio-political environment of the process of radicalisation within the studied milieu.

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7. Appendices

Appendix 7.1: Socio-demographic data of respondents

Name (pseudonym)	Age	Country of birth	Education	Employment	Ethnicity	Family status	Gender	Religion	Religiosity	Residential status	Number of people living in household
FOTIS	35	GREECE	Currently in PSVE ³⁰	Unemployed	GREEK	Single	Male	Christian - orthodox	Believer and practising	LSP ³¹	4
GIORGOS	28	GREECE	Completed GASE ³²	Unemployed	GREEK	Single	Male	Christian - orthodox	Believer and practising	LWP ³³	3
KIMONAS	22	GREECE	Currently in HE ³⁴	In full-time education	GREEK	NLT ³⁵	Male	Christian - orthodox	Believer and practising	n/a ³⁶	n/a ³⁷
KYRIAKOS	20	GREECE	Currently in HE	In full-time education	GREEK	Single	Male	Christian - orthodox	Believer and practising	n/a ³⁸	n/a ³⁹
MARIA	35	GREECE	Currently in PSVT	Unemployed	GREEK	M/LWP ⁴⁰	Female	Christian - orthodox	Believer and practising	LP/C ⁴¹	5

³⁰ PSVT – post secondary vocational training

³¹ LSP – lives at home with single parent

³² GASE – general academic secondary education

³³ LWP - lives at home with parents/step parents

³⁴ HE – higher education (university)

³⁵ NLT - has girlfriend or boyfriend but not living together

³⁶ At the time of fieldwork, he was living in an ecclesiastical boarding house for university students

³⁷ At the time of fieldwork, he was living in an ecclesiastical boarding house for university students

³⁸ At the time of fieldwork, he was living in an ecclesiastical boarding house for university students

³⁹ At the time of fieldwork, he was living in an ecclesiastical boarding house for university students

⁴⁰ M/LWP - married or living with partner

⁴¹ LP/C – lives independently with own partner/children

PANTELIS	34	GREECE	Completed GASE	In FTE ⁴²	GREEK	M/LWP	Male	Christian - orthodox	Believer and practising	LP/C	3
FATHER DANIEL ⁴³	30	GREECE	Completed GASE	In FTE	GREEK	M/LWP	Male	Christian - orthodox	Believer and practising	LP/C	2
ZINOVIA	33	GREECE	Completed GASE	In FTE	GREEK	Single	Female	Christian - orthodox	Believer not practising	LWP	4
JACOB ⁴⁴	54	GREECE	Completed PGE ⁴⁵	In FTE	GREEK	M/LWP	Male	Christian - orthodox	Believer and practising	LP/C	7
FATHER GABRIEL ⁴⁶	43	GREECE	Completed GASE	In FTE	GREEK	M/LWP	Male	Christian – orthodox	Believer and practising	LP/C	2
THOMAS ⁴⁷	52	GREECE	Completed PSVT	In FTE	GREEK	M/LWP	Male	Christian - orthodox	Believer and practising	LP/C	5
FATHER TRYFONAS ⁴⁸	60	GREECE	Completed GASE	In FTE	GREEK	M/LWP	Male	Christian - orthodox	Believer and practising	LP/C	5

⁴² FTE – full-time employment

⁴³ True Orthodox Christian priest (field diary)

⁴⁴ Orthodox Theologian (field diary)

⁴⁵ PGE – post graduate education

⁴⁶ Orthodox clergyman from the Monastic republic of Mount Athos – leader of ‘Greek-Orthodox Group’ (field diary)

⁴⁷ Leader of ‘Military Union’ (field diary)

⁴⁸ True Orthodox Christian priest (field diary)

ANARGYROS	29	GREECE	Completed HE	In FTE	GREEK	NLT	Male	Christian - orthodox	Believer and practising	LWP	4
ANTONIS	33	GREECE	Completed HE	In full-time education	GREEK	NLT	Male	Christian - orthodox	Believer and practising	LA ⁴⁹	1
KOSMAS	24	GREECE	Completed GASE	In FTE	GREEK	Single	Male	Christian - orthodox	Believer and practising	LWP	3
KOSTAS	31	GREECE	Completed HE	In FTE	GREEK	Single	Male	Christian - orthodox	Believer and practising	LWP	4
MELPO	31	GREECE	Completed HE	In FTE	GREEK	Single	Female	Christian - orthodox	Believer and practising	LA	3
TAKIS	27	GREECE	Completed HE	In FTE	GREEK	Single	Male	Christian - orthodox	Believer not practising	LWP	4
THANASSIS	20	GREECE	Currently in HE	In full-time education	GREEK	Single	Male	Christian - orthodox	Believer and practising	LWP	4
THEODOROS	19	GREECE	Currently in HE	In full-time education	GREEK	Single	Male	Christian - orthodox	Believer and practising	n/a ⁵⁰	n/a ⁵¹
VAGGELIS	26	GREECE	Completed HE	Unemployed	GREEK	Single	Male	Christian - orthodox	Believer and practising	LWP	4

⁴⁹ LA - lives independently alone

⁵⁰ At the time of fieldwork, he was living in an ecclesiastical boarding house for university students

⁵¹ At the time of fieldwork, he was living in an ecclesiastical boarding house for university students