The far right in Greece: a foretold story

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THE FAR RIGHT IN GREECE
A Foretold Story

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Introduction

With the end of World War II and the defeat of Nazism in the West, there is a joint effort to work towards consolidating democratic regimes in order to develop and establish more liberal, tolerant, and stable political systems (Akkerman et al., 2016; Mudde, 2017). However, ~~the~~ far-right ideology has been consistently present throughout the 20th century in various forms and attitudes, expressed among others through xenophobia, nationalism, welfare chauvinism, anti-establishment populism, racism, and authoritarianism, while in action in conditions of dictatorial regimes and democratic erosion (see Mudde, 2019).

Over the last few decades, parties of the far right have gained significant levels of support and success across European countries (Hainsworth, 2008), something that brought a crucial change in the political establishment of these countries (Betz, 1993). Even though in established consolidated democracies, the far right has occurred in different historical, so- cio-political, and economic contexts and circumstances, it has managed to gain legislative representation, shape policies and even enjoy government power (Norris, 2004). It has also managed to adapt through times of crisis and to still grow in popularity and numbers by offering to the part of the electorate that felt "invisible" answers to problems that the established political scene has neglected

This chapter deals with the issue of the Greek far right from 1974 onwards, which begins with the fall of the dictatorship and the political change-over, and the return to a democratic regime. It is a period of democracy, modernisation, and progress for the Western world. Greece is trying to integrate into the European Community in the context of globalisation and the model and standards of consolidating democracy of the West. More specifically, the expressions and positions of the Greek far right are presented in an attempt to compare the different forms and overriding issues occupying the national political scene in order to narrate its continuing story.

Methodologically, a genealogical approach to the Greek far right is applied. By building on existing Greece-focused work and official party material, the chapter provides a complete and erudite summary of what has been developed on the Greek far right scene to date. What makes Greece interesting~~,~~ as a case study~~,~~ is the chronic status of marginalisation of the far right but also the fact that there is some continuity from one "wave" to another~~,~~ in what can

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also be described as a "change of baton." Additionally, despite the noted similarities among the "waves" of far-right parties, the Greek far right has multiple distinguishing, differentiated, and identifying party characteristics (e.g., pro-monarchy, liberal, neo-Nazi, Christian Orthodox, and anti-democratic) that feed the whole debate on the diversity of the far-right family in the broader European geographical area. Notwithstanding, though, it also presents a country case that is quite different from other European countries, as Greece has managed to provide unswervingly a habitat for the far right to voice its polyphonous through the years narrative and experience success both on a national and local level.

The rise of the European far right

Various definitions have been given through the academic literature to understand what the far right is. Ignazi (1996, p. 4) talks based on spatial, ideological, and attitudinal criteria, where parties of the far right are categorised based on the presence or absence of a fascist heritage and the acceptance or refusal of the political system. Mudde (2007), on the other hand, distinguishes three main features that define the far right: nativism, authoritarianism, and populism, while Betz (1994) identifies three common ideological elements: (a) the rejection of the individual and social equality and the political means they use to achieve this position, (b) their opposition to the social integration of certain groups and their attraction to the phenomenon of xenophobia, and (c) the rejection of the established socio-political system, without openly undermining the democratic regime. For Anastasakis (2000), there are four dimensions related to the rise and the nature of the far right: (a) historical, connected with the fascist legacy of the inter-war period, (b) structural, seen more in a socio-economic context conducive to the phenomenon, (c) political, as the role of political actors, and (d) ideological-cultural, seen as a historical continuity and significance of radical ideas and focuses.

When it comes to emergence, many scholars have argued the post-war phenomenon of the far right appearing in so-called "waves" (Mudde, 2007, 2019; Von Beyme, 1988). This wave metaphor points to a compelling explanation of the far-right phenomenon based on the post–World War II chronology of far-right development to date. The first wave is perceived as "incarnations," or as Mudde (2016) puts it, a historical continuity of far-right movements pre-war and post-war period started just after the end of World War II in 1945. The second wave began roughly in the 1960s and provided a glance at the potential success of far-right parties in liberal democracies. Seen through the demand-side, far-right parties of this period focus on anti-tax, anti-big business, and anti-bureaucracy policies. They are supported by the so-called "losers" in post-war economic modernisation managed to have an impact on national politics. For Kitschelt (1995), this is a period of post-industrialism, and the far right is seen as an authoritarian reaction to the post-materiality of the libertarian left, while for the first time, issues of security, community, nation, and identity are introduced as part of the political debate (Ignazi, 1996). The third wave started in the 1980s and finds parties of the "new" far-right emerging in numerous Western European countries and from a more supply side scope (Rydgren, 2007), having a distinct influence on the political discourse of socio-cultural and socio-political issues (Betz, 1998) and focusing on matters of welfare chauvinism, radical anti-immigration policies, referendum policies, and national priority. The fourth wave starts at the beginning of the 21st century and finds far-right parties becoming mainstream and normalised political actors, institutionalised and integrated into the political arena (Mudde, 2019).

Apart from the demand/supply side of explanations, in the literature, the rise of the far right is also highly connected with the political crisis within consolidating democracies of the

West and the lack of trust in the established political parties providing new political opportunities (Norris, 2004). The crisis of representation manifested in a decline of voter turnout at elections, a high degree of dissatisfaction with politics and politicians, and a realignment of voting behaviour and voter volatility away from the mainstream, as alienation from political institutions has allowed new parties to emerge as agents of change and influence, with far-right filling the rising demand of this negative protest against the status quo. Additionally, the growth of multi-culturalism and more ethnically diverse societies assisted the rise of the far-right parties, bringing in the debate issues of cultural protectionism, ethnic diversity, and othering as part of their political argument (see Bekhuis et al., 2013; Lazaridis et al., 2016)

In sum, since the 1980s, far-right parties have managed to become a relevant factor in West European politics (within and outside the political system). At the same time, their compact structure provides the advantage of changing the political "overtone window" and responding quickly to the electorate's preference. Additionally, the charismatic leadership has made them the "most prominent representative of a new political entrepreneurialism" (Ignazi, 1997, p. 49) and still poses a significant challenge to the established structure and politics of West European democracy.

The Greek far right

Scooting from the past

At the climax of the Cold War, similar to the cases of Spain and Portugal, the dictatorship of 1967 in Greece came as a response to the fear of a potential communist overthrow and as a solution to the political instability that characterised the national scene since the end of the civil war in 1949. According to Couloumbis (1974), the political crisis of the 1960s that led to the coup d'état can be traced to the inadequate political institutions, the traditions of military interventions, the disagreement among insufficient political elites in dispense of democracy, and the structural effects of Greece alliance with the United States and NATO. The driven ideas of the colonels' Junta can be summarised as the revival of a nationalist mindset based on and preserving Christian values and the protection and survival of the nation from the danger of being overthrown by its various enemies (Clogg & Yannopoulos, 1972). During the seven years of the colonels' Junta, violent political repression was expressed in a system of exclusion and prohibitions imposed in the context of declaring the country under siege, through the imposition of martial law and the suspension of parliament, as well as a series of articles of the Constitution on fundamental rights (Nafpliotis, 2013). The fall of the regime came with the Turkish invasion of Cyprus, and in 1974 the transition to democracy started. As in other cases of the third wave of democratisation that occurred in the same period throughout the globe (Spain, Portugal, Brazil, Chile, etc.), Greece was faced with issues of transitional justice and political legitimacy. Under the leadership of C. Karamanlis, returning from exile, a newly formed government will work towards national unity by legalising the Communist Party of Greece (KKE), abolishing the monarchy with a referendum, establishing a new constitution the following year (1975), and a preoccupation with foreign policy issues (in order to restore the relationships after the years of country's isolation due to the junta regime) that contributed to the stability in the new democratic regime (Sotiropoulos, 2010).

Since the transformation of the Greek political system in 1974 and the establishment of the third democracy in the country, the far right didn't seem to claim in an organised way an autonomous presence in the national political scene (Georgiadou, 2008). One of the reasons that this might be the case is the fact that in the eyes of the electorate, the ideology and the

positions of initiatives of the far right were still highly connected with the dictatorship period. Despite this, though, by the late 1970s, new far-right parties made their appearance in a part of a society that was still attached to the old regime, was sceptical towards the democratic change and was still afraid of the communist threat. According to Voulgaris (2005), this is something that can be identified in the legitimisation of political ideologies that the newly formed government brought, moving from anti-communism to anti-fascism, something that isolated even further the remaining post-junta far right. The initiatives of this period are primarily led by politicians from the pre-1967 establishments, e.g., Spyros Theotokis, Petros Garoufalias, and Spyros Markezinis, among others and their narratives and arguments focus on the legitimisation of the Communist party, the stand towards the monarchy, and the treatment of ex-junta officials that remained in prison at the time while maintaining their strong nationalist positions (Ellinas, 2010).

The first far-right party after the change-over was the National Democratic Union (Εθνική Δημοκρατική Ένωση *or NDU*), formed in 1974. NDU can be characterised as an authoritarian, pro-dictatorship party despite Garoufalias, the leader of the party, insisting on the party's democratic credentials (Ellinas, 2010). In its political programme, NCU appeals to patriotism and ethnonationalism with racial references, supports law and order to save the nation from its enemies, and sees militarism as a means of preserving that order (NDU, 1974). In its short period that was active, it managed to gather the political forces of the remaining far-right supporters at the time, e.g., pro-monarchy and pro-junta, and participate only once in the national elections, those of 1974, gaining 1.1% of the popular vote, including in its ballot politicians that were actively connected with the junta regime.

The growing reactions and dissatisfaction towards the policies of Karamanlis' government following the elections of 1974, along with the outcome of the referendum against the monarchy, led to the emergence of National Camp (Εθνική Παράταξις *or NC*) in 1977. According to Clogg (1987), NC is a part of an ad hoc set of converging reactionaries promoting pro-junta and pro-monarchy, religious, and fascist narratives. In its manifesto, NC also makes racial references, for a society of equality, liberty, and justice, just for the Greeks, following the national ideals (NC, 1977). Maintaining an anti-communist and anti-systemic discourse, the party aimed to free the jailed junta leaders while promoting Greek membership into the European Community and in a more liberal scope pledging to free the economy from state interventionism (Ellinas, 2010, p. 131), and managed to get into the elections of 1977 a 6.8% of the vote and elected 5 MPs in the national parliament.

Despite the success of NC in 1977, the support of the far right four years later dropped to 1.7% at a national level for the Party of the Progressives (Κόμμα Προοδευτικών *or PP*), included mainly the remaining members of NC as the more significant majority was of the party has fled and been absorbed by the conservative party of New Democracy. In 1984, National Political Union (Εθνική Πολιτική Ένωση *or EPEN*) was formed, a party formally led by the former dictator George Papadopoulos. OPEN remained close to the ideas of the Junta in terms of law and order and militarism elements while addressing anti-establishment sentiments, supporting a traditional Christian morality, and arguing in favour of privatisation in economic terms (EPEN, 1989). Despite electing a representative in the European elections of 1984, after numerous electoral failures at a national level through the years, the party eventually disappeared from the political scene.

As Georgiadou points out, the vivid memory of the Junta, along with a non-contentious transition to democracy and rapid consolidation of bipartisanship, were circumstances that formed an electoral concentration around the two main political parties, the conservative New Democracy and the social democratic party of Panhellenic Socialist Movement (Georgiadou,

2019). Additionally, the lack of a straightforward political ideology, broader than its connections and references to the former military regime, the anti-communist elements, and the nostalgia of the monarchy, along with Taggart's (1995) argument that the change-over from the authoritarian regime of the Junta to democracy limited the opportunities and created difficulties in shaping and mobilising a viable alternative form of far right, can provide some clarity and explain the inefficiency of far-right parties of this period to achieve a more stable electoral base.

Crawling towards the European model of the "third wave" far right

Throughout the 1990s, the ~~far-right~~ remained on the sidelines, and its various formations taking place during this period had no significant impact on the political scene. However, for Ellinas (2010), this period highlights a shift in the far-right discourse, with a new emphasis on nationalism as a core ideology. This can be observed in the case of the National Party (Εθνικό Κομμα), founded by former EPEN members in 1989, but also in the later instances of the Hellenic Front (Ελληνικό Μέτωπο *or HF*) founded in 1994 by M. Voridis and Front Line (Πρώτη Γραμμή *or FL*). Constantinos Plevris founded FL, also the founder of the 1960s organisation of August the 4th (*4η* Αυγούστου), a member of which would be the later leader of Golden Dawn (Χρυσή Αυγή *or GD*) Nikos Michaloliakos (Lazaridis & Tsagkroni, 2016). Through these parties, for the first time, the issue of internal homogenisation appears, a term close to what Mudde (2007) defines as nativism, in line with anti-immigration and xenophobia, populism and anti-multiculturalism arguments, while continuing to emphasise Christian values, argue against the political establishment and the elites and the highlighting the necessity of strengthening law and order. In the case of NP and FL, anti-Semitism is also present, with Zionism to be blamed for corrupting the Helleno-Christian traditions (NP, 1990). HF and FL managed to have an extensive presence in the national media; however only managed to have minor electoral success and get no more than 0.6% and 0.18% in the national elections (Fragoudaki, 2013). Despite the limited electoral success, what becomes clear from the parties that emerged in the 90s is a form of renewal closer to the European far-right parties at the time, following the ideological themes of the "third wave."

In an effort to seek to adopt a more centre-right profile for the party of ND (Vernardakis, 2005), Kostas Karalamanlis in May 2000, leader of ND at the time, decided to expel three-time elected MP and George Karatzaferis from the party, creating a new opportunity for the far right to emerge from the sidelines. While since the foundation of the party of ND, several members of the far-right scene have found shelter within the party, the removal of Karatzaferis shaped a new dynamic, taking out far-right supporters from the margins and generating new avenues of influence in the political arena. That would come with the newly formed party of Popular Orthodox Rally, LA.O.S. (Λαϊκός Ορθόδοξος Συναγερμός) by Karatzaferis, a few months after his dismissal, on the 14th of September 2000, date of religious symbolism for Greek Orthodoxy (the Holy Cross Day). The electoral debut of LA.O.S. took place in the municipal elections of 2002, acquiring 13.6% of the vote. However, in the upcoming national election of 2004, the party failed to reach the margin of 3% (got only 2.2%), but in the European elections the same year managed to get 4.1% and elected Karatzaferis as an EMP. Since then, LA.O.S. succeeded in extending its mobilisation and, in the national elections of 2007, entered the Greek parliament for the first time by getting 3.8% of the popular vote. It's worth mentioning that by 2007, LA.O.S. had already absorbed members and supporters of HF and FL and their leaders, M. Voridis and K. Plevris, accordingly. 2009 elections would be the most successful in the party's history, gaining 7.14% in the European elections and 5.63% at

a national level. Still, in the ensuing years, the party would fall in numbers and fail to assure any more seats in the elections that followed.

LA.O.S. had a lot of similarities to the fellow European far-right parties, anti-establishment rhetoric, closed structure and strong leadership, populism, and anti-immigration narratives. Arguing against the "rotten" status quo that led to the "de-Hellenisation and enslavement of the nation" (LA.O.S., 2004), the party stood for the sovereignty of the people with reverence for the Greek nation, tradition, and identity. While supporting individual liberties, for LA.O.S., migration is at the centre of the party's narrative, opposing not only illegal immigration but also calling for a ban on non-EU migrants. Additionally, anti-communism, constitutional reform, liberalism in socio-economic issues, strengthening of national security, law and order, Christianity, anti-Semitism, suspicion towards Western powers, patriotism, and ethnic-nationalism are strongly present in the party's discourse.

In order to explain the rise and support of LA.O.S., one should look at the political developments taking place since the early 90s. The issue of the name of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) sparkled a rise in nationalist and xenophobic outbursts, with Greece being intransigent against the use of the word "Macedonia" by the new state, as it is an inseparable part of the Greek identity (Ellinas, 2010). The issue of "Macedonia" was mobilised by both main political parties, that of ND and PASOK through the years that followed, led to the creation of a splinter party from ND, that of Political Spring (Πολιτική Άνοιξη) (Georgiadou, 2008), continued to play a key role in negotiations in an international level, remained a top political concern and kept strong the nationalistic sentiment among the population. The "Macedonia" issue was constantly present throughout the years in the LA.O.S. narrative, and the party's firm positions on the matter granted extra visibility to the media every time new negotiations were taking place. Moreover, the political and economic scandal of Koskotas that led to the clash of the PASOK government in the late 80s to the early 90s (so-called "dirty '89") increased the discourse of corruption of the political elite (Ellinas, 2004). Despite the scandal, PASOK and ND continued to rule the political scene, giving the opportunity to LA.O.S. to strengthen the argument against the corrupted establishment, proposing itself as an alternative option. In the meantime, just in the early 2000s, another issue emerged over the religious affiliation on state identity cards (Lazaridis & Tsagkroni, 2016). The decision of the government of PASOK created a radicalisation of Greek politics, with many rallies taking place throughout the country, often organised by the church, and with the support of many conservative politicians, who questioned the indissoluble links between "Orthodoxy and the nation" (Prodromou, 2004, p. 70). In this environment, Karatzaferis found space to present himself as a "true defender" of Greek Orthodoxy (Ellinas, 2010, p. 156). They managed to distribute his reverberation of the issue by getting visibility through the mainstream media, something that was reflected in the first outburst of the electoral outcome of the municipal elections of 2002 (see above). LA.O.S. also benefited from the discussion around the Annan Plan, aiming to resolve the Cyprus dispute by proposing a reunification option, as while PASOK has clearly taken a stand in favour of the plan, at the time, the conservative party of ND avoided taking an official position on the issue, leaving space for LA.O.S. to represent the nationalist part as a defender of a "patriotic" no towards the UN proposal (Ellinas, 2010, pp. 159–160). Finally, as Georgiadou (2019) points out, this period is characterised by a margin of the two mainstream parties moving closer in the ideological scale to each other, something that created fertile ground for new political opportunities to emerge, as we see in the case of LA.O.S.

In the elections of 2012, LA.O.S. failed to reach the threshold, gaining only 1.6% of the vote, leaving the party with no seats in the Greek parliament. As Lazaridis and Tsagkroni

(2016) address, an explanation of the party's low support can be explained by the decision of LA.O.S. to participate in the coalition government of Loukas Papademos in 2011, which supported the EU-IMF bailout package for Greece, developing from the economic crisis of 2008, creating a classifying image of LA.O.S. as part of "the establishment." With the public opinion rising against the established parties, as to be blamed for the economic crisis the country was facing at the time (Ladi & Tsagkroni, 2019), and with the rising issue of migration, increasing support for Golden Dawn and the newly formed anti-establish party of Independent Greeks (Ανεξάρτητοι Έλληνες) resulted to the volatility of former supporter of LA.O.S. to these two parties.

Walking towards social nationalism

Even though GD was founded by Nikos Michaloliakos in 1983, the self-identified social nationalist party failed to attract any electoral support throughout the '90s and 00's, despite increasing its efforts by participating in various nationalist party coalitions with closely ideological affiliated organisations, such as Patriotic Alliance (Πατριωτική Συμμαχία) (Dinas et al., 2016). Patriotic Alliance expressed a form of ethnic nationalism ideologically, with a strong belief in the Greek nation as defined by race, blood, language, religion and culture (Patriotic Alliance, 2004). In its discourse, the party included xenophobic and welfare chauvinistic narratives, along with anti-establishment sentiments and support for traditional and religious values. With numerous unsuccessful political alliances and initiatives, GB remained on the margin of the political scene in Greece, all until the municipal elections of 2010. Despite GD being examined under the far-right umbrella, the party is a sort of exemption due to the combination of its ideological ideas and parliamentary speech it adopts and the violent street activist practices it engages in going hand-in-hand (Georgiadou, 2019). When it comes to ideology, neo-nazism, and neo-fascist ideas, along with racism, populism, nativism, anti-migration, and xenophobia, can be seen as the core characteristics of GD, lengthways with anti-establishment sentiments, with nationalism seen as the "absolute and genuine revolution" (GD, 2012), offering the idea of a "nationalist solution" that would bring bout "national rebirth" (Vasilopoulou & Halikiopoulou, 2015). For years since its appearance, the party boycotted elections, considering participating as a form of treason, claiming the corrupted political system, and undermining the role and effectiveness of parliamentary democracy. As an alternative, the party saw violent activism and street activities as means of a revolutionary overthrow. In the municipal elections of 2010, the party gained 5.3% in the municipality of Athens and elected Michaloliakos as a representative in the city council. Only two years afterwards, the party gained 6.9% of the popular vote at a national level and elected MPs in the Greek parliament.

What GD managed to do, is gather the dissatisfaction towards the incapability of the established parties to respond effectively to the ongoing economic crisis and, in addition to elements of far-right anti-migration discourse, turn the vote in its favour. More specifically, the party presented itself as a protector against the corrupted elite that enslaved the Greek nation under foreign interests. In a crisis-ridden state, since 2012, GD has tried to increase its network both in the field and online, making its presence strong to a broader audience through the form of "strongholds" throughout Greece by organising "philanthropic" initiatives in the form of welfare-focused community-based activities, e.g., food and blood donations (Verousi & Allen, 2021), especially in areas with strong presence of migrants the party organised for the Greek people, to prove their support and care unlike the rest of the political parties, that were also responsible for the uncontrolled migration all in line with the extreme anti-migration discourse of the party, which securitised migration as a threat to the Greek national and racial

identity. As Fragoudaki (2013) highlights, it is interesting that in contrast to the rest of the far-right parties in Europe but also in Greece, GD has no clear policy against migration but its only base is narratives on evident biological racism in the name of the race and the blood of "Greeks" that needs to be protected from the "subhuman" migrants.

The controversial decision of LA.O.S. to participate in the coalition government gave the opportunity to GD to coil the supporters of the far right. What LA.O.S. failed to do, GD managed to succeed: to not only appear as an alternative to the established elites and express a democratic parliamentary narrative but also to not disappoint its core supporters by softening its narrative and means of activism, remaining loyal to the party's original tactics since the 1980s, proving the electoral relevance that an anti-democratic party can obtain (Georgiadou, 2019). And while several members of the party have been involved in criminal acts, such as assaults, homicides, attacks on migrants, and arson, it was only in 2013, and the assassination of anti-fascist Pavlos Fyssas, that the Greek High Court of Annulment (Άρειος Πάγος) indicted the leader, deputies, and members of GD based on Art. 187 of the Greek Penal Code, which penalises the formation and participation in a "criminal organization." With the judicial investigation ongoing at the time, GD's support started to decrease. With several local branches closing down, the party still managed to get re-elected in the 2015 national elections, despite most of its leadership is in jail, and gained 6.3% of the vote share. In 2015, on the pick of the migration crisis, and despite its losses in the big centres of the mainland, the extremist anti-migration and anti-refugee rhetoric of GD assisted the party is holding its public support. However, the downfall of the party continued gradually through the years. In the 2019 elections, the party failed to make the threshold, with many of its members distancing themselves from it, and in 2020 the verdict of the trial's verdict resulted in its leadership's conviction.

To sum up, GD's success and popular appeal are part of Greece's historical continuum of far right. The party highlighted a risk to consolidating democracy in the country. This neo-Nazism threat nurtured violent tactics reflecting on the core socio-economic and political issues manifested at the time in the country. The devaluation of the political establishment (frustration against the rulers, disarray), the economic crisis (that led to unemployment, poverty, social inequalities, delinquencies, rage), the migration crisis (an increase of sentiments of racism, xenophobia, othering) in combination with intolerance and the culture of violence (something that is strong in the Greek society indiscriminately the political ideology) contributed to the rise for GD that managed to transform availability to opportunity.

Crawling back to rebuild and reform

With LA.O.S. and GD not present anymore in the political scene, new prospects for the far-right scene occurred. In 2019 a more moderate, fourth wave in Mudde's (2019) terminology, the far-right party, Greek Solution (Ελληνική Λύση *or GftF*), entered the parliament (3.7% of the vote), building its discourse on nativism, ethnic-nationalism and anti-migration like its predecessors. Founded in 2016 by Kyriakos Velopoulos, with a reputation for conspiracy theories and peddling "letters" allegedly written by Jesus (Verousi & Allen, 2021), GS presented itself as a "solution for Greece" while toning down the far-right rhetoric and condoning any sort of violence or grassroots activism. The party self-identify as nationalist, stood against the Prespes agreement concerning the name of North Macedonia, is in favour of a strong state in its xenophobic and racist discourse, stands against multi-culturalism with a strong Islamophobic narrative that poses a threat to the Christian values and the Greek nation, supports an alliance with Orthodox Russia, and speaks out against the political elites, and managed to address a binding and sturdy far-right audience in the society.

The transformation of the Greek far right in a post-GD era led to the formation of new groups beyond GS. One of them is Greeks for the Fatherland (Έλληνες για την Πατρίδα, *GftF*), formed in 2020 by Elias Kasidiaris, a former spokesperson and MP of GD and at the time defendant in the ongoing trial. Kasidiaris resigned from GD after his proposal for re-organisation of GD was rejected by the leadership of Michaloliakos and moved to the formation of GftF by promoting a more democratic image and legitimate image, denouncing any elements associated with neo-Nazism. With the slogan "Greece belongs to Greeks," GftF stood for "national preservation and the revival of Hellenism," and in its ideology, nativism, anti-migration, the anti-establishment and robust state can be traced. With Kasidiaris serving a 13-year prison sentence after the condemnation verdict of the GD trial, it seems unlikely that the party would participate in the forthcoming elections of 2023. Other formations, among others, include National Popular Consciousness (Εθνική Λαϊκή Συνείδηση) and Patriotic Radical Union (Πατριωτική Ριζοσπαστική Ένωση) both formed by former members of GD.

Conclusion

Just after the re-establishment of a democratic regime and in a period of consolidating effort, the far-right stayed in the margins of the mainstream and drew little attention for decades. However, with the memories of the junta dictatorship fading, the constant efforts of renewal, both ideological and structural, since the 90s following the model of fellow far-right parties in Europe, and the opportunities due to political, national, economic, and migrant crises, there was a new catalyst for demand for far-right parties to emerge. In the midst of the crises and with economic, societal, and political grievances thriving, the far right in Greece, despite its inner conflict and variations (structural, ideological, and expressiveness), managed to gain and maintain a strong representation that led many of its representatives to be elected in national and European level.

What one can observe in this genealogical approach to the Greek far right is the chronic status of marginalisation and incapability to renovate its political discourse. In this sense, the electoral successes of Greek far-right parties are determined not by the strategic improvement or the update of the supply side of the far right, but by the crisis of the mainstream political landscape, and mainly the conservative party (ND) or of the custom competitors in the far-right scene (e.g., LA.O.S.). In this sense, the far right seems to be unable to maintain an autonomously new electorate, but only to take advantage of the existing far-right parties' crisis and manage to attract periodically new attention. Having said that, the chronic sequential presence in the country, the characteristics of the far-right parties and their societal and political impact proves that its rise and presence are not merely episodic but more in line with other European countries.

Despite the pulverisation of the far right after the revelations in the GD trial, the mediocre success of GD, and even though part of the previous supporters of the far right moved back to the conservative party of ND, a gap remains open at the far right of the political spectrum, which does not rule out the emergence of other potential contenders. The continuous presence of the far right in the country's political scene indicates that its ideology and discourse are still appealing to a part of the electorate, which continuously offers them a space of prominence (Figure 10.1). As a metaphor, the continuous presence can be seen as a sequence connecting the ancestral parties and their descendants in this "change of baton" format. Each particular element from each formation is collected by the next one and then enriched with additional ones to strengthen their position on the political scene, continuing the country's far-right foretold story.

far-right or populist parties		
National Camp		LA.O.S., Greek Solution
National Political Union		Golden Dawn
Old parties	far-right extremist parties	New parties

Figure 10.1 Classification of Greek far-right parties.

Source: Adopted from Georgiadou (2013).

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