



## **The Impact of the Evolution of Nationalism on the Recent Rise of the Radical Right within the European Context: The Case of Golden Dawn**

*“Nationalism is like alcoholism, a short period of exaltation, followed by  
a long period of headaches.”<sup>1</sup>*

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### **Abstract**

This paper aims to analyse one of the recent debates on the rise of the radical right movements related to the Greek case, through the use of the theoretical approach. The debate the paper will deal with was escalated by the criminal accusations towards the Greek Neo Nazi party Golden Dawn. Being a highly sensitive issue among the public and politicians alike, nationalist movements have become a matter of lively debate in Europe in recent years, especially after the start of the refugee influx into Europe. In the Greek case, Golden Dawn's entry into the Greek parliament in 2012 came into prominence with the aftermath of the economic crisis. With the simultaneous influx of refugees, Greece has become the centre of extremists' activities towards those refugees. The global impact of nationalism on radical movements is a stubborn fact, since radical right movements have tended to have a contagious effect especially over the last two centuries. This paper aims to reveal that nationalism and the relevant radical right movements are renewable materials and they might emerge under the proper conditions.

*Keywords: Greece, Theories of Nationalism, Golden Dawn, Radical Right, Extremism, Globalization, European Integration*

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<sup>1</sup> Quote by Frans Timmermans.

## Introduction

The recent rise of the radical right in Europe is deeply rooted in Europe's historical evolution of nationalism, rather than linked to a single case such as economic recession or refugee influx. Revealing the correlation between the emergence of nationalism and the rise of the radical right will help us understand the Greek case in depth. Golden Dawn's sudden prominence should be examined by considering the historical background of nationalism in Europe and specifically in Greece. This study intends to cover the major arguments regarding the topic in its theoretical aspects and assemble different major perspectives including Anderson's imagined communities, Hobsbawm's invention of traditions, and Smith's Ethno-symbolism, while examining the particular Golden Dawn case rather than discussing primordial or perennial aspects. Once the theoretical framework is given, this paper will try to reach the answers to the following questions: how does the evolution of nationalist ideology influence the radical right movements and does Golden Dawn fit in this framework in practice or is Golden Dawn a unique case?

## The Evolution of Nationalism

One can see that there has been a simultaneous emergence of radical right movements all over Europe. This paper drives upon the causes of the radical right's appearance. It adopts the impact of globalization on nationalism as a framework and it analyzes the current situation primarily through Ernest Gellner's functionalist perspective. Ernest Gellner argues that nationalism invented nations (Gellner 1983). He suggests some tools for this invention such as print capitalism, the bureaucratic and centralizing state, capitalist exploitation, the culture of industrialization and mobilizing rhetoric of political *élites*. According to his argument, the central power is the most important ingredient in order to operate all of these tools. According to theories of nationalism, this central power is entitled the nation state. Hobsbawm regards the democratization process starting in the 19<sup>th</sup> century as responsible for the centralization of power. Therefore, the nation and nation state concepts started to engage with each other in this period. This process started irreversibly and proceeded to create many problems in the meantime. Hobsbawm expands his approach...

As we shall see, after 1870 democratization would make (this) problem of legitimacy and the mobilization of citizens both urgent and acute. For governments, the central item in the equation state = nation = people was plainly the state. (Hobsbawm 1992: 23)

The nation state building system embodied cleavages among societies and most of the European countries were exposed to nationalist tendencies in the last two centuries. Gellner emphasizes that nationalist sentiments go hand in hand with the development of industrialization. Industrial development led to the most extensive transformation in human history. It would not be wrong to mention that every single detail in people's daily lives started to change in leaps and bounds. No doubt these quick major changes touched people's lives in sociological, economic and political aspects.

Gellner approaches nationalism (Gellner 1983: 124) as a renewable material. What he means by renewable material is that nationalism can adapt to changing conditions in time. He suggests that nationalism can proceed under any conditions. Anderson approaches the theory of nationalism as an instrument of mobilizing society by the hand of authorities who are seeking to reach their goals. He highlights the printing press as a milestone in the process of mobilizing society, since it became the most efficient means of propaganda in its time. Nevertheless, he

claims that instruments may alternate in time, but the ones who hold power use these instruments according to their time. This argument confirms what Gellner refers to the renewability of nationalist ideology.

The acquisition of this knowledge revealed the fact of manipulation. It became easier to mobilize societies through the internet without a source or even any evidence. The distribution of knowledge varied over the course of time, but the manipulation of information never vanishes owing to the actions of *élites*. Hobsbawm highlights `divinity` as a tool to manipulate society. It seems possible to synthesize Hobsbawm's and Anderson's approaches. The invention of the press encouraged the enhancement of the educational system. This intensification initiated the decline in people's commitment to the divine. Therefore, divinity had lost its fascination for people, and its tendency to influence their rationality (Hobsbawm 1990: 22).

In the case this paper focuses on, contemporary Greek nationalist and radical right parties follow more or less the same path to convince people of their **holy struggle**. In fact, Golden Dawn highlights Greek Orthodoxy as the most important element of the Greek nation's essence. When arguing that nationalism is replacing religion, it does not mean that religion is completely out of the frame. The state religion has continued to play an active role in Greek daily life. Most of the time, Greek nationalists and the Church meet on common ground.

## **Greek Nationalism**

Regarding Golden Dawn's ultra nationalist tendencies, it would be more accurate to describe the algorithm of Greek nationalism. The Greek case is unique in contemporary European history, since Greece witnessed military dictatorships, two World Wars, *κατοχή*<sup>2</sup>, Civil War, *etc.* within the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Every single major occasion played a vital role in the transformation of the society. Greek society had to struggle with all of these troubles driving it to inevitable factionalism. After the Liberation War of the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the leading figures in Greece brought the form of the new Greek state up for discussion. The leadership of Greece was divided on many topics. There were two sides in this dispute, Modernists and Traditionalists (or Conservatives). Every faction tried to protect its sphere of influence and the discordance between the two camps played an indicative role in the cultural development of Greece. Since the Traditionalist bloc came out victorious in this conflict, they had a chance to delineate the **high culture** of Greece with a variety of tools such as central education, art, language, *etc.*

According to Gellner, divergencies emerged based on culture in the pre-industrial era. Culture has become a raw material for the nationalist movements. Nevertheless, it is difficult to argue that culture is homogeneous. Founders of Greek nationalism placed emphasis on their **high culture** and political consensus while establishing the state apparatus.

Religion was one of the few issues that the leaders agreed on (Koliopoulos and Veremis 2007: 246). In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Greek intellectuals and *élites* were torn between traditional Greek history, Ancient Greece in other words, and being a part of the European civilization. In periods of European uptrend, it was difficult for Greek intellectuals to be apart from European Romanticism.

The idea of de-industrialization provides insight into the Greek case. Contrary to Gellner's approach, Greece was induced into de-industrialization over the years for various reasons and this condition prepared the way for the vicious cycle of economic dire straits. To be exposed to

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<sup>2</sup> Axis occupation of Greece.

the backward economic programmes of international powers mobilized the nationalist sentiments among Greek society. Ernest Gellner overlooked the fact that industrial development could be the most important component in the rise of nationalism in many regions, but it was not the only factor. Industrialization has been one of the elements in the globalization process. This process has penetrated into societies with a variety of tools, but at different levels.

Globalization had a trigger effect on the dissemination of nationalist movements. Naturally, every movement was shaped by the country specific conditions such as traditions, conservatism, the level of literacy, *etc.* As a matter of fact, Gellner admits that industrialism became widespread in a warped way. In the simplest terms, uncontrolled urbanization had an impact on demographic structures, job opportunities, political organizations, *etc.*

Greece had to wait until the Population Exchange to become a homogenous state. Nonetheless, globalization has an impact on the homogeneity of countries, too. Thus, the end of the Cold War led thousands of Albanian refugees to defect to the Greek borders. Similarly, the Syrian War caused thousands of Syrian refugees to seek asylum in Greece. Thus, one can see that it is impractical for a country which is attached to the global system to overlook other problems in the world. Local problems had become global problems notably by the 20th century. Establishing the nation-state system did not help the founders to isolate their territory.

### **Impact of Globalization**

It is hard to argue that the New Radical Right is entirely authoritarian, since there are no major examples after 1945. It is not possible to test the authoritarianism of the New Radical Right, since there is no state which follows radical policies under a one-party radical right regime. Recently, there have been few authoritarian governments in Europe, such as Hungary, Belarus, *etc.* Although Hungary's Victor Orban had disputes with his Western allies during his years in office, he never broke off ties with the Western world. Even if Hungary counts as an example, it is still not a great influence.

While there is a concurrent rise in radical right tendencies in the Western World, it is worth observing the distinct dimensions of globalism in this trend. This process can be interpreted as a power struggle on influencing society. The methods of globalization have changed in the last century with the help of technology, but the core idea always remained in the same place. The rise of the radical right in Europe is not one of the methods or goals of the globalization process but is one of the outcomes of it. Nowadays there is a common tendency suggesting that the radical right has emerged with the help of the global economic crisis and refugee crisis.

Apart from economic, military and environmental globalism, social and cultural globalism (Nye 2002) involves movements of ideas, information, images and people. In these terms, the biological racism of the past has transformed into cultural racism, since the rise in the movement of people. At this point, collaboration on discourses is seen among the actors of the radical right parties in different countries.

### **The Rise of Golden Dawn**

Golden Dawn has recently become one of the most prominent actors in Greek politics, as the 3<sup>rd</sup> party in parliament. Even though Golden Dawn is an old actor in Greek politics, it abruptly became an effective game changer. Moreover, the actors might have changed over the years, but their ideology has deep roots. It is possible to go back to the Metaxas dictatorship. Protecting Greece from Communism was not his only mission. He had also determined to re-organize Greek

society and Greek culture. However, the significant progression of the radical right happened after the Greek military junta period between 1967 and 1974. The parties established after the junta had common points, such as being pro-Hellene and pro-Christian-Orthodox. They were conservatives in essence, and they were trying to protect their nationalist electorate.

Since Golden Dawn members and their former counterparts have had relations with extremists, it would not be true to categorize Golden Dawn as a radical right party in the same way as other European examples. Ellinas distinguishes Golden Dawn from mainstream radical right parties in Europe:

The racist ideology and violent image of GD also set it apart from radical right parties in Europe which share a nativist or nationalist worldview but do not necessarily embrace a biological understanding of national belonging or use violence as a means to achieve political ends. (Ellinas 2013: 550)

When Golden Dawn entered parliament, the fierce and violent attacks against refugees gained momentum. The election results indicate that this rise seemed unexpected, but the background of the case tells a different story. This party has not been established recently, and its political figures did not show up in the last few years. As nationalist literature shows, nationalism renews itself and has used more or less the same rhetoric in the last two centuries. In this respect, it is not wrong to mention that industrialization, print capitalism, *etc.* are linked to each other to trigger nationalist sentiments. The rise of the Greek radical right party, Golden Dawn is not a coincidence since its counterparts have also risen recently in Western Europe.

Golden Dawn has an extremist and violent character rather than the common concept of a new radical right party. Increasing complexity and uncertainty in politics swells the radical tendencies. Globalism does not lead to homogenization among societies. As evidence of this nonfulfillment, German Chancellor Angela Merkel stated<sup>3</sup> that the multiculturalism project has failed in the European integration process. The cruciality of this failure is revealed on many occasions such as the approval of Brexit, the Grexit talks, the unwillingness of countries to agree to economic aid packages for the ones who are in economic dire straits, and involuntariness in cooperation over incoming refugees.

## Conclusion

Every one of the components suggested by Hobsbawm, Gellner, Anderson, *etc.* had an impact on the shaping of nationalist thought. Apparently, changing sociological and economic conditions altered the progress of nationalist thought. The most prominent cleavages happened through the impact of those components directly on social and daily life.

The completion of Italy's and Germany's unifications widened the scale of turmoil in the European region. Italy and Germany instrumentalized national identities by using **high culture** among their societies in order to consolidate their national consciousness (Kızılyürek 2002: p. 182). As Paul Brass argues, the political situation is crucially important in the emergence of new ideologies. In the Italian and German examples, both states reached a consensus on high culture, but they had to wait for political consensus.

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<sup>3</sup> "Angela Merkel: German multiculturalism has "utterly failed", *The Guardian*, October 17, 2010, accessed May 12, 2017, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2010/oct/17/angela-merkel-german-multiculturalism-failed>.

Besides, each crisis has disclosed the corrosion of the European social fabric. Moreover, the corrosion of the social structure triggered nationalist sentiments. The trigger effect of nationalism proves that globalization plays an important role in the improvement of new ideologies. For example, the rise of nationalism among the ethnic groups of the Ottoman Empire precipitated feelings of hatred for the Greek society of the empire. The inevitable triggering affect led the Greek *élites* to rediscover their national past and build a consolidated Greek identity.

Although it has been discussed that nationalism has started to replace divinity in the last few centuries, Greek pioneers reached a consensus on the necessity of a religion for the consolidation of a national consciousness in the short term. The establishment of a Greek state Church and central education system could be the most important steps in creating a Greek identity, which is the core of nation state building. Therefore, the system could allow its community to imagine itself as a nation instrumentalizing symbols and traditions.

On the other hand, Ernest Gellner argues that the industrialization process goes hand in hand with nationalism. As has been seen, the Greek example does not entirely coincide with Gellner's argument. On the contrary, Greece was induced into deindustrialization within decades. Nevertheless, the national sentiments strengthened regardless of the deindustrialization process in Greece.

The emerging radical right movements in Greece in the 20<sup>th</sup> century did not hesitate to influence the founding fathers of Greek nationalism. There is always a continuum in ideological context among the radical right parties of Greece. At this juncture, Golden Dawn is a unique case since it differs from other radical right movements in Greece. Apart from rejecting elitism, Golden Dawn markets itself as the only protector of the nation which is struggling to restore the past glory of Greece (Vasilopoulou and Chalikiopoulou 2015: 6-10). In order to do that, Golden Dawn glorifies Greece's history, language and culture.

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# Interrupted Continuities: The Effect of Local Narratives on the Trajectory of Political Legacies

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## **Abstract**

A fast-growing literature on historical legacies exalts how persistently the past can map on present-day political attitudes and behaviour. A common assumption in this literature is that legacies follow a monotone pattern. Taking the radical right in Greece as my case study, I propose an alternative, non-linear trajectory, whereby exogenous shocks may re-activate the signalling capacity of the past. I use original data to reveal a strong correlation between civil war anti-communism and the post-crisis radical right vote (i.e. Golden Dawn). Apart from enhancing our understanding about the roots of radical right support, the findings qualify existing accounts of how the past feeds into people's political predispositions. They also constitute the starting point of my doctoral thesis query: how do legacies survive and what explains variation in the intensity of latent political identities?

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# 1 Introduction

‘History in this country has been written by the defeated... but for the first time in 64 years [since the end of the Greek civil war], Golden Dawn will be writing the true version. We are the children of the victors.’

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*D. Koukoutsis (2013),  
Golden Dawn MP*

Existing scholarship on historical legacies illustrates the enduring persistence of the past on the present (see Simpser, Slater, and Wittenberg 2018 and Wittenberg 2015 for comprehensive reviews). This is not only the case with institutions, typically trapped into path dependent processes (Rodrik, Subramanian and Trebbi 2004; Acemoglu and Robinson 2001), but also when the focus lies on individuals’ political values, beliefs and preferences (Voigtländer and Voth 2012; Wittenberg 2006). Evidence of ‘sticky’ predispositions is interpreted as proof of their continuous presence and relevance.

Despite the focus on such long-term continuities, however, less attention is given to questions about if and when such effects decay. The recent focus on tracing legacy effects has not been matched with a parallel effort to understand the underlying trajectory of such effects - i.e. the potential variation in their intensity between these stretches of time (Simpser et al., 2018). It seems that an implicit, yet untested, assumption in the literature is that historical legacies traverse a monotone function, gradually decaying over time (e.g. Fontana, Nannicini, and Tabellini 2017; Torcal and Mainwaring 2002; Kotzageorgiou-Zymari and Hadjianastasiou 2000). As a result of generational replacement, or simply ageing and period effects, their effect is expected to wax and wane over time.

I propose an alternative trajectory of ‘interrupted continuities’. I argue that history can also leave a non-monotone imprint on attitudes. Events take place, affect the attitudinal profile of those who experience them, gradually decrease in salience and eventually wear off. Yet, they may not disappear. They may remain dormant and be re-activated when opportunity structures permit so. To be more precise, historical legacies return when the political circumstances provide leverage for the past to offer useful political cues. My own work on the link between the radical right and the civil war in Greece reveals that historical anti-communism was not persistently salient, but rather rekindled by a novel crisis. Although this trajectory is far from rare, it has received only marginal attention in the existing literature, as most focus has been placed on the understanding of how effects persist over a long period of time.

The aim of this doctoral project is to expand the boundaries of legacy-minded research. Taking my Master's thesis findings as my starting point, I highlight the need for a more systematic examination of legacy trajectories. Evidence of long-term effects says little about variation in their intensity and direction between the time periods under examination. The research question I tackle is thus the following: what explains variation in the persistence/re-activation of latent political identities? In other words, how do political legacies survive? Is there a logic in the timing and possibility of their recurring relevance, or is it a matter of chance and political agency? For example, what urged the newly elected Golden Dawn MP to refer to the Greek civil war, sixty-four years after its termination? The recent rise of 'the politics of nostalgia', employed by populist and extremist parties alike, creates further scepticism over the purported path of political legacies. If there is a structure guiding their oscillating relevance, as I argue, then it must not be a linear one.

The rest of this paper is structured as follows. Section 2 outlines the motivation of this project, reviews previous research and presents my Master's findings. Section 3 introduces my preliminary theoretical considerations and hypotheses. Section 4 concludes.

## **2 Motivation and Current Research**

### *2.1 Motivation and Previous Research*

Before delving into the core of my doctoral research question, I will demonstrate what sparked my interest in legacy trajectories. I have two points of departure: a) the literature on political legacies and b) the literature on competing identities, which straddles various fields in political science, from political economy to conflict research.

The main lacuna in the *legacy/persistence* literature is that, in assuming a monotone trajectory, it fails to theorise its outcome variable. The re-emergence of particular legacies/latent identities in the political sphere constitutes a puzzle that the current literature is unable to explain. Moreover, there are inconsistent findings regarding the mechanism by which a legacy is transmitted across generations. Is it transmitted via the family (Lupu and Peisakhin 2017; Balcells 2011), via the local community (Tabellini et al. 2017; Costalli and Ruggeri 2015; Voigtländer and Voth 2012; Wittenberg 2006), or is transmission unrelated to the direct experience of trauma (trauma vs. politics of memory)?

In terms of *competing identities*, there is a recurring theme across literatures whereby no divisive identity is constantly salient. Accordingly, the salience of grievance-based identities is conditional on third factors (Brass 1998; 2003; Wilkinson 2004; Chandra 2004; Fearon and Laitin 2003), such as inequality (Huber 2017; Huber and Suryanarayan 2016; Bulutgil and Prasad 2018, working paper; Huber and Mayoral 2018; Esteban and Ray 2008) or critical junctures (e.g. economic or migration crises).

Combining the two points, there is an apparent puzzle: given the fluidity of (grievance) identities, the expected decay function embedded in legacy models is overly rigid. To my knowledge, the only paper that challenges this decay assumption is the one by Fouka and Voth (2013), showing how German car sales in Greece declined during the euro crisis, but mainly in areas affected by the Nazi occupation. In other words, a new critical juncture revived anti-German sentiments that had been long dormant. Similarly, in my Master's thesis I show how civil war anti-communism had faded in Greece, before it was re-activated by the crisis.

## *2.2 Own Research (Master's Thesis)*

My thesis tackles the puzzle of Golden Dawn's meteoric rise in 2012. Two explanations have been suggested. Ellinas (2013) attributes the GD success to deteriorating socio-economic conditions as a result of the prolonged and strict austerity plan, while Vasilopoulou and Halikiopoulou (2015) see the GD vote as evidence for the way in which the crisis boosted nationalism across the country. However, the portrayal of GD's upsurge as a mere 'vehicle for protest' phenomenon fails to account for three important facts. First, the party ended up performing well even in areas in which neither the debt nor the migration crisis was strongly felt. Second, the variation in GD vote shares between otherwise similar local communities in the periphery remains unexplained. Third, existing explanations struggle to account for the lack of similarly extremist reactions to austerity in countries such as Portugal, Spain or Ireland.

I argue that in order to explain this seeming paradox, we need to relax our continuity assumption. In a nutshell, I show that variation in the rural vote share of the GD is driven by the re-activation of civil war anti-communism. Failing to cope with the economic crisis, the party system collapsed, together with the key ideological divisions it was sustained upon. The resulting vacuum gave room to the re-politicization of local memory in areas with higher exposure to communist violence. The Birth, Death and Revival of the political legacy (i.e. historical anti-communism) are shown via the use of two anti-communism proxies (i.e. the royalist vote in 1974 and communist vote in 1940s elections), OLS regressions and instrumental variable estimation. As the purpose of this paper is to introduce my doctoral project, I shall briefly present my results without delving into the empirical strategy and analysis. Of course, I would be more than happy to do so on the day of the conference.

The three principal hypotheses that guided this study are the following:

*Hypothesis 1 (Revival - Deep History): Civil war anti-communism predicts support for the Golden Dawn in the 2012 elections.*

The second hypothesis examines the origins of the communist/anti-communist cleavage. For the theory to hold, voting for Golden Dawn must be the result of civil war anti-communism, rather than anti-communism pre-dating the civil war. While anti-communist tendencies already existed prior to 1943, it was during the war that they grew to form this long-lasting cleavage. Hence:

*Hypothesis 2 (Birth): Pre-war anti-communism is a poor predictor of the Golden Dawn vote in 2012.*

The third hypothesis aims to disentangle the ‘re-activation’ mechanism from the ‘endurance’ mechanism and vindicate the claim that the legacy of civil war anti-communism followed an interrupted, rather than a continuous path. To do so, I examine the association between war-rooted anti-communism and the pre-crisis radical right. To validate my mechanism, I examine the election closest to the one used in my main analysis, namely the 2009 election, the last one won by PASOK.

*Hypothesis 3 (Death): Civil war anti-communism displays a weaker association to the radical right in 2009 compared to 2012 (LAOS 2009 vs. GD2012, respectively)*

The main results are presented in Tables 1-2 (Birth and Death) and 3 (Death).

**Table 1: The Effect of the Pro-Monarchy vote in 1974 on the vote for the radical right in 2012 and 2009 ( $H_1$  &  $H_3$ )**

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>	
	GD 2012	LAOS 2009
	(1)	(2)
Royal 1974	0.038*** (0.012)	0.005 (0.006)
Region Fixed Effects	✓	✓
Observations	716	716
R <sup>2</sup>	0.377	0.263
Residual Std. Error	0.036	0.020

Entries are OLS coefficients, with robust standard errors, clustered at the region level, in parentheses. \*  $p < 0.1$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ .

Table 2: **IV Estimation: The Effect of the 1974 Royalist Vote (instrumented by Abstention 1946) on Golden Dawn 2012 Vote Share ( $H_1$  &  $H_3$ )**

	<i>First Stage</i>		<i>Second Stage</i>			
	<i>Dependent variable:</i>		<i>Dependent variable:</i>			
	Royal 1974		GD 2012			
	(Excl.)	(Incl.)	(Excl.)	(Incl.)	(Excl.)	(Incl.)
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
$Abstention_{1946}$	-0.277*** (0.088)	-0.243*** (0.086)				
$Royal_{1974}$			0.188* (0.096)	0.200* (0.121)	0.250** (0.110)	0.276** (0.141)
Region Fixed Effects	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
F Statistic	12.879***	7.73***				
Observations			92	92	92	92
R <sup>2</sup>			0.037	0.003	-0.093	-0.190
Residual			0.038	0.039	0.040	0.042
Std. Error			(df = 88)	(df = 87)	(df = 88)	(df = 87)

Entries are OLS coefficients, with heteroskedasticity-robust standard errors in parentheses. \*  $p < 0.1$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ .

Table 3: **Placebo Test: The Effect of Pre-Civil War Nationalist Vote (1936) on Golden Dawn 2012 Vote Share ( $H_2$ )**

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>					
	GD 2012		GD 2012		Royal 1974	
	Excl.	Incl.	Excl.	Incl.	Excl.	Incl.
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Nationalist 1936	0.035 (0.022)	0.030 (0.022)	0.015 (0.024)	0.006 (0.024)	0.091 (0.088)	0.074 (0.087)
Abstention 1946			-0.048*** (0.018)	-0.059*** (0.015)	-0.251*** (0.093)	-0.222** (0.091)
Region Fixed Effects	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Observations	93	93	93	93	92	92
R <sup>2</sup>	0.204	0.254	0.246	0.324	0.200	0.172
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	0.177	0.229	0.212	0.293	0.163	0.134
Residual Std. Error	0.035	0.033	0.034	0.031	0.117	0.113

Entries are OLS coefficients, with heteroskedasticity-robust standard errors in parentheses. \*  $p < 0.1$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ .

The main take-away, visually portrayed in Figure 1, is the re-activation of the civil war legacy in Greece.

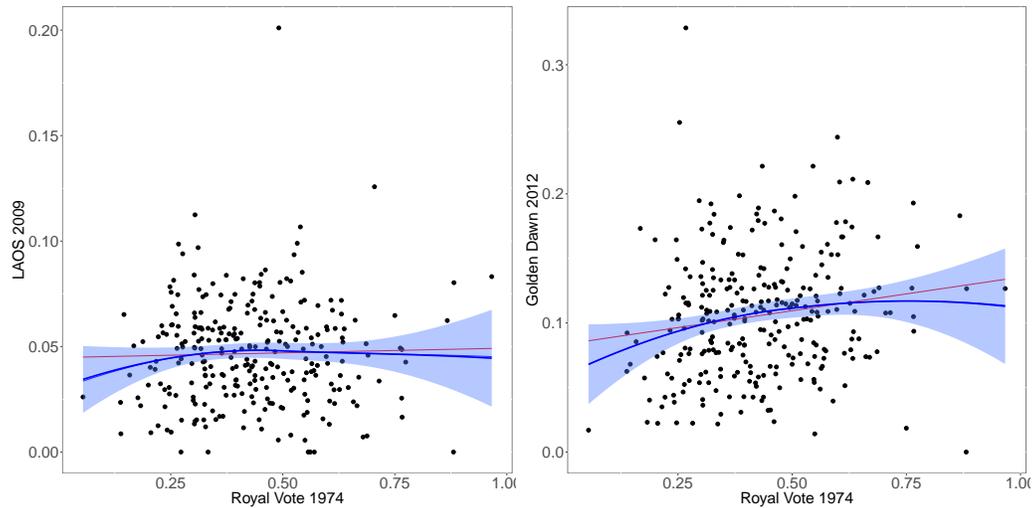


Figure 1: **The relationship between Royal vote in 1974 and support for the radical right before and after the crisis.**

The findings of this study therefore point, not only to an unheeded historical aspect of the radical right vote, but also illustrate the failure of the legacy literature to predict its outcome variable. In other words, they highlight how both the continuity assumption and decay expectation are flawed.

### 3 Theoretical Considerations / Hypotheses

Building on existing work and my own findings, I propose that we should re-think legacy trajectories in a non-linear manner. I coin the term ‘interrupted continuities’ and propose that *local memories/narratives* are key in order to understand variation in the salience of legacies and identities.

How do legacies survive? In tackling this question, a central distinction I wish to make is one between local narratives that remain politically influential and those that may have lost their political salience. For a trauma to travel across generations, its memory must be transferred either through its re-telling at the local level, or through the state narrative. A key insight from this analysis is that the local experience of trauma will live on even when it disappears from the political realm. While a legacy’s influence on voting behaviour eventually decays, traumatic memories continue to be transmitted across generations through local story telling (i.e. traditions, local celebrations, sayings, monuments etc.). This points to a disjunction between a trauma’s survival and its political manifestation. The latter is not a necessary condition for the former.

The more intense the local experience of trauma is, the higher is the likelihood that grievance-based local narratives will persist. Local memory may not directly inform the political identities of the coming generations. Yet, it can be politicised under conditions that increase the saliency of the trauma. The exact process can vary. There are at least three possible mechanisms at play. First, political elites can make this link between past and present explicit. Building on theories of persuasion and coarse inference, Mullainathan, Schwartzstein and Shleifer (2008) show how political messages can be framed in ways that facilitate associations between substantively irrelevant themes. Ochsner and Roesel (2017) also point to the role of the radical right in Austria in re-activating historical ethnic divisions. Second, current events can themselves be linked to past events or evoke them in memory. This is the case in the study by Fouka and Voth (2013), in which the anti-German sentiments engendered during the Greek crisis were intensified in areas with more vivid experience of Nazi violence during the WWII. Third, more parsimoniously, it might be that political change is so abrupt that the new political landscape does not yet offer clear signals that people can use to orientate themselves politically. Exogenous shocks (or critical junctures) can shatter existing loyalties and challenge established partisan cues and ideological shortcuts. In these circumstances, past cleavages can find the space to colour political predispositions. I argue that such revivals of latent identities indicate that they had never really disappeared. They had lost their political salience, yet survived via local narratives. Hence, my main theoretical proposition:

*Local experiences of trauma can return into political relevance whenever national conditions trigger them in memory.*

The two working hypotheses are the following:

*H<sub>1</sub> (memory): The intensity of 'local stories' explains variation in local memories (both within and across generations)*

*H<sub>2</sub> (behaviour): The intensity of 'local stories' explains variation in potential re-activation*

The first hypothesis seeks to confirm whether local relics of past traumas (i.e. monuments, celebrations, street names etc.) have a systematic effect on the extent to which people remember. The second hypothesis explores whether this effect extends to voting behaviour as well. Should a critical juncture occur, the possibility and variation of re-activation across local communities will depend on the intensity of such local relics.

The main dependent variable is the change in, or volatility of, voting behaviour following a shock. The main independent variable is latent identities. My preliminary research design is divided into three parts: a) a cross-national study to confirm the link between volatility and the salience of latent identities, b) two-micro studies (Greece and Spain, or Ireland, or Algeria) to show re-activation and how local memory explains its variation, and c) fieldwork in one of the case studies to refine the ‘local stories’ measurement and process-trace the mechanism.

## **4 Conclusion**

The findings of my Master’s thesis and notion of ‘interrupted continuities’ highlight the need for a more systematic examination of legacy trajectories. In striving to demonstrate continuities we need to be able to make sense of discontinuities too. We need to combine the implications of legacy and competing identities literatures and come up with a way to explain the transmission of attitudes and behaviours. The continuities demonstrated by previous work are too often reliant on the temporal focus the authors opt for. Hence, the study of discontinuities is not only useful to examine legacy trajectories, but also to better understand existing findings. The mechanism of legacy transmission is an important gap in the literature. My overall aim in this PhD project is to conceptualise this mechanism.

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# **Failures of health reforms in Greece: the role of political parties and interest groups**

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## **Abstract**

The study presents the results from a survey that was carried out using the method of personal telephone interviews to 1.000 citizens in October 2017 and repeated on a different sample of 1.000 citizens in October 2018. The study found that the majority of correspondents have negative attitude towards the health system due to its low performance. Although the vast majority considers that a structural reform of the current healthcare system is almost imperative, a very important percentage of citizens perceive the reform as something negative. Our research findings highlight the contradiction that characterizes the Greek society as regards the reforms of the healthcare system and also the need to take into consideration citizens' needs when planning healthcare policy.

## **Introduction**

Healthcare policy refers to those choices, plans and actions undertaken to achieve specific health goals within a society (WHO:2019). A basic precondition for identifying and meeting the needs of a society is the existence of a clearly defined and structured health policy. Mosialos distinguishes health policies in market-building policies, which mainly emphasize more liberalized policies, and in market correcting policies (Mosialos et al 2010:2). These policies are based on the redistribution and focus on the protection of citizens. Therefore, they require negotiations at international and intergovernmental level.

The implementation of a reform depends on the degree of acceptance it receives from society, which is determined mainly by the extent to which the citizen trusts the intention and the desired results and, on the other hand, whether it is accepted by specific interest groups. According to Walt *et al* (Walt et al 2008:308-309) when political analysis precedes or accompanies political choice, then the chances of being considered effective or successful are clearly greater. Namely, once the content of a policy has been decided, greater emphasis should be attributed on how it will take place and, above all, on the interactions it has with both society and the various interest groups.

Thirty years after the establishment of the national health system in 1983 many efforts to reform it have been undertaken, mainly focusing on improving management structures and facilitating patients' access. However, experience highlights that the creation of a strategic plan is not enough in order for the reform to be successful. A broader political consensus between all relevant stakeholders is required but also a political commitment as per the aim of the reform, the necessity, the advantages and of course the implementation.

In this paper we provide our empirical analysis as regards citizens attitude towards the healthcare reforms and a brief description of the three major reforms of the Greek national health system since its establishment.

## **The reform of the Greek healthcare sector**

The establishment of the Greek national health system (ESY) in 1983 consists the first major healthcare reform which took place in the context of the democratic consolidation and democratization of the Greek political system, responding to the great need to modernize the Society and the Economy. The reform represented the first attempt to universalise the healthcare system and fairly distribute health resources and it was partially implemented (Mosialos and Allin 2005: 420-444). The second major reform of the Greek healthcare system was attempted in 2000 with the aim to alter the institutional setting of the health system and reduce privileges of many interest groups. It didn't succeed as many interest groups perceived it as a way of losing their privileges and therefore opposed.

The third attempt of reform could be placed in 2009 until nowadays when Greece entered the financial assistance program. Greece's healthcare reform program over the last decade has been introduced in the framework of its commitments that had to be implemented under the Fiscal Adjustment Programs since 2009, as a prerequisite for the financial assistance to the country. Health reforms had the sole purpose of rationalizing public spending through the implementation of a series of structural measures. In fact, country's high public and private healthcare expenditure and the disproportion that has been characterizing until nowadays the distribution of healthcare provision, are considered an important factor of the Greek healthcare system structural problems well before the crisis (Groewnewegen and Jurgutis 2013:371-372, Kyriopoulos *et al.* 2000).

The speed and amplitude of the reforms implemented in the healthcare sector under the adjustment programs did not allow the system to meet the needs and priorities of its users, but instead they increased inequalities and created additional barriers to access (Zavras *et al.* 2016) The sharp increase in unemployment and the dramatic decline in family income further tested healthcare system's limits as they resulted to increased demand for public health services (Economou *et al.* 2014, Karanikolos *et al.* 2016). The policy changes that were introduced in the healthcare system had to result to an immediate fiscal impact (Souliotis *et al.* 2014, 2015, 2017). Therefore, priority was given to cost containment policies mainly through cuts in public funding. Public healthcare funding was already decreased because of the rising unemployment and the resulted reduction of employees' contributions (Giannitsis and Zografakis 2015:20). In addition, healthcare professional's income had drastically declined and a limitation clause on recruiting new healthcare personnel in the Greek NHS was introduced. According to Athens Medical Association data, during crisis more than 18.000 doctors left the country (Kathimerini: 2016).

The impact of austerity policies in Greece has highlighted the need to redefine the national health policy, putting at its centre the protection of patients (Kondilis *et al.* 2013, Souliotis *et al.* 2018) and also the configuration of a sustainable and effective national healthcare system, by restructuring the primary healthcare and social policy (Kanavos and Souliotis, 2017:359-401).

## **Defining reform**

The policy of policy change or of a reform plays an important role. When significant changes are involved policy affects the origin, the formulation and the implementation of the reform (Reich, 1995:57). As Reich notes, broader reforms are feasible when there is sufficient political will and when changes to an area are designed and implemented by competent. Therefore, reform refers to a political process as it represents some values and expresses a specific view of the society.

Reform programs are mostly driven by economic factors (Cassels 1995:332), rather than epidemiological, so we note that in most industrialized countries the most important motivation of implementing a reform program is linked to cost-containment policies (Frenck, 1994:21-22). For instance, many of the reforms implemented in Greece during

the Economic Adjustment Programs, may couldn't be introduced in the system within the time frame they did if they weren't part of a series of obligations imposed externally. Nevertheless, reform is by nature a political process is affected or defined by ideological factors. In general, the meaning of the healthcare reform involves a positive process since it consists a fundamental and at the same time incremental and peaceful change (Frenk and Gonzalez-Block 1992).

In order for a reform to be implemented, the political leadership needs effective methods to analyse the basic and minimum political preconditions as well as the main political factors for the benefit of the reform. However, a reform of an existing policy may potentially have negative consequences due to the long-standing problem of lack of alliances. The most powerful interest groups tend to affect more governments' decisions, compared to a less powerful group where the impact of a specific policy change will be much more pronounced (Contandriopoulos *et al.* 2018:1018-1019). These barriers can be overcome by creating political alliances and compensatory benefits. However, the agreements reached with external factors should be politically acceptable and sustainable on the domestic political stage.

A determinant parameter for the successful implementation or the failure of a health reform is the environment in which it is being developed and taken place. Healthcare policies are initially influenced by the pre-existing political commitments as well as the level of government power. The financial situation of the country at the moment that a specific reform is taking place constitutes a key factor whether the reform will be accepted or opposed. In a society like the Greek, where veto players play a crucial and determinant role in the decision-making process, low State efficiency worsens and becomes a break of any attempt to structural change. On the other hand, the level of participation and involvement of all stakeholders (interest groups, political parties, government members) constitutes a determinant key factor.

## **Data and Method**

The survey was carried out using the method of personal telephone interviews in the interviewed households and the use of a structured questionnaire, in a sample proportional and representative of the population of the country as regards the residential area. A telephone survey of 1.000 citizens was performed in October 2017 and repeated on a different sample of 1.000 citizens in October 2018. Both samples were defined via a multistage selection process using a quota for municipality of residence, sex and age. The maximum standard error for the measurement results is 3.1%. We interviewed citizens over 17 years old, with the majority between the ages of 25-54, having middle and higher education. The 13.7% of our sample are public servants, the 22.6% work in the private sector and the 23.2% are pensioners.

## **Results**

The study analyzes citizens opinion, choices and priorities towards the health system and its reform, as well as the degree of trust in the institutions. In the first part of our survey we examined citizens access to healthcare services and their preference on provider.

According to our finding, 66.3% of citizens needed to use a healthcare service over the last six months and 22.9% of those who needed a healthcare service have claimed unmet medical need to due to cost. From them 87% needed to visit a doctor and 78% needed laboratory tests. The majority of citizens that needed to visit a doctor (40.7%) preferred to visit a private doctor contracted to the Social Security Fund (EOPYY). In the case of hospitalization 82% preferred to use a public hospital rather that a private clinic (3.9%). The most important barriers to access a doctor was the long waiting list to get an appointment (55.9%), the inability to get appointment with a contracted private healthcare provider without paying out-of-pocket (31.5%) and the inability to pay the cost of a private doctor (25.2%). During the crisis, the majority of citizens (75.3%) have seen their financial situation and their financial burden for healthcare services (46.5%) worsened. According to our findings, citizens primarily seek to access a public healthcare service and due to long waiting times, they opt to a private contracted service, which usually is not available under insurance coverage. So, they are forced to opt to a private healthcare provider and pay the full cost, which most of the time is not affordable.

The vast majority (73.4%) have negative attitude towards the health system due to its low performance. For 81.3% a structural reform of the current health system is almost imperative, with the establishment of a family doctor and the necessity of new financing schemes and resources to be a priority (49% and 45% respectively). Nevertheless, 47.1% of citizens perceive the reform as something negative. The lack of political will and the risk of political cost (36.4%), as well as the reactions of interest groups (22.6%) are the key factors of the failure of healthcare reforms.

## **Discussion**

Politics influence the formulation and implementation of a public policy, especially when major changes are involved. Structural reforms are feasible when sufficient political will exists. Therefore, reform consists a political process as it represents social values and reflects a specific view of the society.

Prioritizing healthcare policy is becoming more and more complex since patients needs are continuously increasing and at the same time healthcare systems are under fiscal pressure. Our findings, as well as other research findings, demonstrate the growing unmet medical needs that characterize the Greek health care system and the barriers that should be taken into account when shaping healthcare policy. Our survey highlights the long-standing issue of primary healthcare. According to our findings citizens priority remains the access to public healthcare providers. That is the reason

why they highlight the establishment of a family doctor and the finding of new financing schemes to be the most important priority of policy change.

Our research findings also highlight the contradiction that characterizes the society as regards the reforms of the healthcare system, mainly driven by the low institutional trust and the low social capital in Greece. Even there is a growing demand for structural reforms in the current healthcare system, citizens have a very cautious approach to reforms. In addition, the highly clientelism that characterizes the Greek political environment, between the political party in power and the different interest groups, is an inhibiting factor which strengthens any reluctance to change (Souliotis K. 2014:23-41). In order to increase citizens trust towards major policy changes in the field of healthcare, reforms should reflect society's actual needs and preferences and thus a broader consensus and political commitment is needed.

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