MYPLACE (Memory, Youth, Political Legacy And Civic Engagement)

Grant agreement no: FP7-266831

WP7: Interpreting Activism (Ethnographies)

Deliverable 7.1: Ethnographic Case Studies of Youth Activism

Golden Dawn and Greek Youth

Panteion University of Athens

Author(s) | Aristotelis Deliveris, Alexandra Koronaiou
Field researcher(s) | Aristotelis Deliveris, Alexandros Sakellariou, Evangelos Lagos, Stelios Kymionis, Irini Chiotaki-Poulou
Data analysts | Aristotelis Deliveris, Alexandros Sakellariou, Evangelos Lagos, Stelios Kymionis, Irini Chiotaki-Poulou
Date | 10 January 2014
Work Package | 7 Interpreting Activism (Ethnographies)
Deliverable | 7.1 Ethnographic Case Studies of Youth Activism
Dissemination level | PU [Public]
WP Leaders | Hilary Pilkington, Phil Mizen
Deliverable Date | 31 January 2014

Document history

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Version</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Comments</th>
<th>Created/Modified by</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>12.01.2014</td>
<td>First draft</td>
<td>Aristotelis Deliveris, Alexandra Koronaiou</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>17.01.2014</td>
<td>Comments to author</td>
<td>Hilary Pilkington</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>29.01.2014</td>
<td>Revised version</td>
<td>Aristotelis Deliveris, Alexandra Koronaiou</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>30.01.2014</td>
<td>Final version</td>
<td>Hilary Pilkington</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Contents

1. Introduction ........................................................................................................................................ 3
2. Methods ............................................................................................................................................. 6
3. Key findings ....................................................................................................................................... 10
   3.1 Nationalism .................................................................................................................................. 10
   3.2 Racism ......................................................................................................................................... 12
   3.3 Expansionism ............................................................................................................................... 15
   3.4 Militarism ..................................................................................................................................... 16
   3.5 Class collaboration ....................................................................................................................... 19
   3.6 Antileftism and antimunism .......................................................................................................... 19
   3.7 Anticapitalist Rhetoric ................................................................................................................ 21
   3.8 Political elitism ............................................................................................................................. 22
   3.9 Hostility towards all political parties and the political system .................................................... 24
   3.10 Activism ...................................................................................................................................... 25
   3.11 National revolution-palingenesys .............................................................................................. 33
   3.12 Youth ......................................................................................................................................... 34
   3.13 Slogans ....................................................................................................................................... 36
   3.14 Colours ....................................................................................................................................... 36
   3.15 Symbols ....................................................................................................................................... 37
4. Conclusions ......................................................................................................................................... 39
5. Future Analysis .................................................................................................................................. 41
6. References .......................................................................................................................................... 41
7. Appendix: Table 1. Socio-demographic profile of respondents ..................................................... 43
1. Introduction

Greek society has been suffering over the last three years from a strong multilateral crisis, which is not only economic, but also social and political. By May 2013 the unemployment rate had risen to 27.6 per cent and for young people (under the age of 25) reached 62.9 per cent. The Labour Institute of the General Confederation of Workers in Greece estimated in its annual review of 2013 that the loss of income for wage-earners amounted up to 50 per cent over a three year period, while their purchasing power had decreased by 37.2 per cent. Research conducted by the National Confederation of Greek Trade in May-June 2013 demonstrated that 42 per cent of firms were in danger of going out of business. In the years 2009-11 the number of suicides doubled and there are still no reliable data for the suicide rate between 2012-13 when the recession escalated.

This period of long socioeconomic crisis has been a period marked also by unprecedented political realignments, at least as far as the post-1974 period is concerned. Golden Dawn (GD), a political force that remained marginal until 2009 (receiving just 0.29 per cent of the vote in that year’s parliamentary elections), managed to have its leader elected as member of the Municipal Council of Athens in 2010 and achieved a significant electoral breakthrough in successive parliamentary elections of May 2012 and June 2012. In particular, in June 2012, GD obtained 6.9 per cent of the vote and won 18 seats in the Parliament. During the months following June 2012, GD strengthened its notable presence on the ‘streets’ propagated its ideas confidently to a wider audience whilst often drawing great public attention as a result of the controversial actions and statements of its MPs, members and supporters. All this led to further political gains for GD. The latest polls' findings indicate that the influence of the party among voters had arisen and stabilized at a level fluctuating slightly from 11-12 per cent, just before the ruthless killing of an antifascist musician (Pavlos Fyssas) by a GD supporter in 18 September 2013, who was arrested and confessed his crime.

Huge antifascist demonstrations took place in the area of the murder and in the centre of Athens on the days following the murder. Thereafter (and too late for some of its critics), the government compiled 32 criminal cases and sent them to the public prosecutor, so that the involvement of GD members and supporters and MPs in criminal activity could be examined. Based on this evidence, the investigation led to six GD MPs being arrested at the end of September, among them the General Secretary Nicos Michaloliakos, while other party members were also arrested. All of them were accused of being members of a criminal organisation, based on the Greek penal code. The investigation is currently ongoing and it is possible that, at its conclusion, the case will be committed to trial. Six GD MPs are currently imprisoned, among
them the General Secretary, while the other three were released on condition that they did not leave the country.

On the 1 November an armed attack took place outside the offices of GD in Neon Heraklion, Athens. Two people riding a motorcycle and wearing helmets stopped outside the offices of the party, walked towards the party members guarding the entrance to the offices and opened fire against them. Then they rode off on the motorcycle and disappeared among the streets of Athens. The result of the attack was that two members of the party aged 22, and 27 were shot dead. GD placed the blame for the murders on the government and the media, which ‘targeted a legitimate political party’. On the 16th November, the ‘Combatant Popular Revolutionary Forces’, an organisation that had never been active before, claimed responsibility for the attack and the murders, which were characterised as an ‘act of retaliation for the murder of Pavlos Fyssas’. The investigation has not yet been concluded and it is not easy to reach long term conclusions about the consequences of this chain of events. However, it is true that in the polls over this period, GD was always the third most popular political party in the country; the arrests therefore did not reduce the party’s power to the degree expected.

The endurance of the party is of great significance as well as its popularity among young people. Electoral support for GD in the last elections was higher among young people than among the population as a whole. The youth vote for GD ranged from 10 to 14 per cent (depending on the different May/June exit polls) for the 18-24 age group and from 13 to 16 per cent for the 25-34 age group. GD repeatedly emphasises the importance of such support and argues that the party is ‘the power to come’, the rising star of the political spectrum. According to GD’s official discourse, in future elections, an ‘intergenerational battle’ will take place with the majority of Greek youth taking the side of the party. Moreover, GD has already managed to form groups of supporters in secondary schools. These groups attack their political opponents, teachers and classmates of non-Greek origin, propagate the ideas of the party and recruit fellow students.

In a period marked by social suffering and political instability and uncertainty, the activist mentality that the party promotes and the breakthrough that it achieved influences young people very much. For that reason, it is important to analyse the values and ideology of the party, as well as the links it has to youth.

The remarkable presence of far right parties in Greece and in Europe is not an issue that has suddenly emerged in the last few years, nor is the dissemination of conservative values among Greek youth. As far as recent Greek political history is concerned, since 1974 there have been three major far right parties: ‘National Faction’, ‘National Political Union’ and ‘Popular Orthodox Rally’. ‘National Faction’ participated only in the parliamentary elections of 1977 and obtained
6.82 per cent of the voting. ‘National Political Union’ was formed in 1984. Its leader was the imprisoned dictator Georgios Papadopoulos. In the European Parliament elections of 1984 it received 2.3 per cent of the vote and gained one seat. Although it was marginalized, due to the successful pressure imposed by the dominant conservative party (New Democracy) it remained active until the parliamentary elections of 1996. ‘Popular Orthodox Rally’ was formed in 2000 and achieved electoral success in the parliamentary elections of 2007 (3.8 per cent) and 2009 (5.63 per cent) and elections of the European Parliament in 2004 (4.12 per cent) and 2009 (7.15 per cent).

The dissemination of conservative values among a sizeable part of Greek youth is a reality established before the socio-economic and political crisis. Youth research conducted during the last two decades offers valuable information and insights. Such research had repeatedly pointed to important ideological and political developments and trends among Greek youth, namely, the strengthening of nationalism, authoritarianism and xenophobia. In these studies, Greek youth appeared to rank the army and ‘love of homeland’ very high, while, at the same time, they distrusted public administration, the government, the unions, the political parties and the politicians, they did not rate social action as important and they were distanced from politics and political participation and action (GSY and VPRC 2000 and GSY 2005). Some surveys also located and described a sizeable part of youth as exhibiting intolerant and authoritarian attitudes toward immigrants, sexual preferences and delinquency. They demanded that education should teach submission to authority and unconditional obedience to laws, even in cases of wrong or unjust laws. The ‘authoritarians’ as they were labelled in the 1997 and 1999 General Secretariat for Youth surveys, accounted for almost a third of the sample and they shared with the majority of the sample a highly critical attitude towards Greek society as a whole, great dissatisfaction with the political system and the functioning of democracy, an acute alienation from politics, as well as the demand for deep, even revolutionary, changes in society and the political system (GSY and VPRC 2000).

The question that the research attempted to examine was that of the interconnection between GD and youth. GD’s views of the youth, as well as the young voters’ and supporters’ views of GD were examined in order to answer the question of whether there are direct links between GD’s ideology and its young supporters’ assumptions, or whether this support is an emotionally driven reaction in a crisis time. This aim meant that the first stage of research was to bring to light and categorise the core elements of GD’s ideology, as these are manifested on its official websites and, in the second stage, to attempt to discern and understand the ways in which youth is involved in GD’s activities.
2. Methods

As noted above, to study a group like GD is not an easy task, since it is not just a political party among many others, but an extreme group that uses violence as one of means to achieve its political ends. The most interesting way to study a group of this kind would be to employ the ethnographic method in its classical form, i.e. through participant observation of the group and its activities. In this case, however, the access to the group required to undertake participant observation was unattainable. A number of attempts were made to gain access by contacting party members through third person who knew such members personally; the most polite reply received was ‘stay away, we are not interested’. The persons who made these contacts on the researchers’ behalf interpreted these responses as at best registering the indifference of party members to participate in such a project, at worst a warning of the potential danger to the researchers of getting involved. The difficulty, if not danger, of access together with the limited time to slowly build relations that might lead to access led the researchers to adopt a different approach.

This alternative approach was inspired by a slogan GD used to have on its previous website; ‘turn off your TV, you can find us on the internet’. This led the researchers to apply what is termed internet ethnography or online, cyber, virtual ethnography. GD criticizes the mainstream media for excluding the party’s MPs and representatives from the media political arena and preventing their attempts to express their views and ideas. To a certain extent this is actually true. The majority of TV channels, radios and newspapers try not to give GD members the opportunity to present their ideology to the general public. Of course, there are many exceptions to this stance on the part of the media. Especially during the first months after the elections of 2012, the mainstream media gave a platform to many of the party’s MPs and spokesmen, creating a very mild and friendly profile of the party and transmitting it to the people. The internet, in contrast, is a very productive and friendly field for the reproduction of fascist, neo-Nazi and racist speech and the propagation of ideologies of the same kind. It is also a tool that is used by the vast majority of young people in their everyday lives and this was also clear in the interviews we conducted. GD is aware of that and this is the reason why the party focuses on the internet and the social media, targeting, mainly, the age group of 15 to 35 years old.

It is a truism to say that the internet is a basic tool of our everyday life. However, what has made the internet a very interesting subject for social scientists is its influence on people’s lives in many, sometimes harmful, ways. The internet nowadays, is not just a simple communication tool. The internet shapes people’s identities and constructs a virtual world which, sometimes, is
totally in contrast with the real one and creates a virtual reality which people take as real. Thus, although for some researchers, fieldwork is necessarily an embodied activity, since the researcher’s body and the bodies of the others are central to practical accomplishment of fieldwork (Coffey 1999: 59), the virtual body/self is taking an increasingly central place in social research including ethnography. Thus, while Coffey’s statement may have been true at the time of writing, as the internet has become a fundamental part of people’s existence, so researchers have had to widen their perception of the body to include its virtual form.

Thus this study starts from the premise that the internet, in its various forms, could and should, be considered a site of ethnographic research. However, the internet poses a number of challenges for ethnographic research, not least determining what constitutes ‘the field’ - or site of research Notwithstanding arguments that such research should start from a site offline rather than within its virtual spaces (Burrell 2009: 186), it is contended here that the other way around is possible as well. Internet researcher, it is suggested here, redefines the concept of ‘site’ and poses some crucial questions, e.g. what happens when ethnography no longer is grounded in real geography? Or what happens when a community may in fact exist in cyberspace and the site for a community’s interaction may be a website on the internet? (Le Compte 2002: 288). This is neither to underestimate the importance of classical ethnographic work nor to imply that Golden Dawn is merely an online community. On the contrary, GD is not only a virtual reality; it is a real and active neo-Nazi political formation that also has a very active online presence and communicates its political positions and ideology mostly via the internet. Thus, this study is premised simply on the contention that, especially when a particular field is difficult to access physically, then alternative modes of ethnographic research may be adopted.

This study thus started with the analysis of the official webpage of the youth division of GD and the official webpage of the party organisation. Of course, the GD Facebook or Twitter presence might have been studied also. However, there are myriad webpages, Facebook pages and Twitter accounts of nationalist and extremist content making the selection of a rational sample very difficult. Moreover, the precise connection of such pages and accounts with GD is often unclear. For these reasons, the study focused on the aforementioned official webpages rather than the whole field of websites and social media pages flourishing on the web.

The second methodological issue faced concerns the relations between the researcher and the observed. The method employed in previous similar studies (Brickman-Bhutta 2012), where researchers have revealed their identity and asked for interviews via Facebook, was not an option in this case since the object of study were two webpages. This raised the question of whether the study was in fact a piece of ethnographic social research or just internet lurking
(Beaulieu 2004: 146) in order to see what a fascist, neo-Nazi party uploads on the web? Is the study just gathering data or something more? As Wolcott (1995: 247) states, there needs to be a clear sense here of the difference between doing fieldwork and simply gathering data. If the object is to gather data and the data to be gathered are known, then once that is done, the work is finished or the study is extended. The purpose of this study, however, went beyond the collection of data; it aimed to analyse these data in order to understand and explain the rise of GD in Greek society through the study of the party’s ideology and activism.

Thus, accepting the methodological compromises noted above, the study reported on here set itself the aim of conducting internet ethnography on the official webpages of GD. In this sense, it aimed not to writing the ‘oral other’ but rather capturing and recording the ‘digital other’ (Beaulieu 2004: 158), in this case the digital fascist, neo-Nazi ‘other’.

In order to analyse the data collected from the webpages and the interviews Nvivo software was used as per the MYPLACE qualitative analysis strategy. The method of data analysis applied was the classic thematic analysis (Guest 2012; Jorgensen and Phillips 2002, Grawitz 2001; Maingueneau 1991). After an initial reading of the empirical material for overall familiarization, the material of the webpages as well as the interviews were studied in more detail by four coders in order to define the principal thematic categories, and subcategories, of the analysis. The categories created had to have value and meaning from an analytical point of view and be compatible with the theoretical reasoning of the research, so that they were consistent with the objectives of the analysis (Mason 2002; Gibbs 2007).

It should be emphasised, though, that the uploading activities of the party and the youth division themselves provided a means of studying their social activism and various activities, since the internet was and still is the main instrument for communicating their activism to a wider audience and propagating their views, ideas and opinions.

However, the process of the research itself brought researchers into contact with a number of young people who were sympathizers and/or voters for GD and, in some cases, considered themselves to be active supporters of the party. Since these individuals were not core or founding members of the party it was easier to build relations with them and ask them if they would be willing to participate in the research. As a result of these contacts, a total of ten semi-structured interviews were conducted. These interviews were very useful since they provided the opportunity to discuss GD - its activism, ideology and presence in Greek society - with young people who had voted for them in one or both of the elections of 2012 (May and June) and who continued to view this group in a very positive way. Thus the internet ethnography approach allowed the study of both the movement itself and its social representation.
The fieldwork lasted from August 2012 until June 2013. The two webpages studied were: the official party website, www.xagr.net; and the two webpages of the youth division. The first youth webpage was: http://resistance-hellas.blogspot.gr. It was functional until 6 February, 2012, when, for no apparent reason, news and activities stopped being uploaded to it. The main content of the website included: the periodical ‘Counter-Attack’; Ideology; Activities-demonstrations; Nationalist Music; Announcements; Activist Material (photos, leaflets, etc.); Youth Festival and Videos. Almost a year later, on 15 March, 2013, and after the party’s electoral success, the youth division’s webpage restarted under another form and name: www.antepithesi.gr. Some articles from the previous webpage were also uploaded to the new one, but news and texts are very actively uploaded on a daily basis to the new site. Some of the categories of articles uploaded are: Historical texts, Ideological texts, Commenting, Audio-visual, Activism, Demonstrations, Announcements, Lessons from History and Myth, Nationalism in Art, Nationalist discourse, Fire and axe, Change, The Fighter of the Dawn, The spirit of the immortals, Political soldier. The older website is now a closed space and anyone seeking to access the material is warned that ‘Access to this blog is allowed only to invited readers’. The material downloaded from the site before it was made inaccessible to the public was saved in a word document totalling 140 pages. Material from the new webpage runs to 351 pages; thus a total of around 500 pages of texts, including the images that accompany them were downloaded for analysis alongside 112 images, photos and leaflets (some of which have been made available in the MYPLACE visual data bank).

Semi-structured interviews were the second methodological tool used in this case-study. A total of ten semi-structured interviews were conducted with young Greeks who were self-defined as voters for GD, three of them adding that they were active supporters of the party, but not members. The interviews were conducted following the snowball method. Eight interviewees were male, two were female and they were aged between 21 and 28 years old. Seven of them were unemployed; this is a figure that reflects the existing rate of unemployment among young Greeks (more than 60 per cent) and suggests that youth unemployment, to some extent, leads to extreme political choices and affiliation. A full demographic profile of the respondents is provided in the Appendix (Table 1). However, conducting these interviews was not an easy task and in most of the cases the participants were hesitant and suspicious, due to the fierce controversy that had already emerged in the Greek society concerning the violent actions of GD. In four cases, the respondents did not agree to the interview being recorded and thus notes of responses were written manually. These interviews were, of course, conducted overtly and interviewees were informed of the nature and purpose of the research. Nonetheless, researchers had to be careful in conducting the
interviews and adopt a neutral stance in relation to their views and ideas. Despite the limitations of the interviews, they provide an important and illuminating addition to the study.

3. Key findings

The thematic analysis of the official webpage of GD's youth division and of the official webpage of the party, revealed crucial ideological features and values of the party, as well as particular techniques of communication used by it. The themes discussed below are the most recurrent themes emerging from the in depth studying of the material; they are the ones which are repeated most frequently and that shape the party’s ideology. Some themes also emerged from responses by interviewees who participated in the study.

3.1 Nationalism

GD states the ruling idea of the party to be that of the ‘Nation’. A link on the official party webpage entitled ‘Movement, ideology’, declares that:

The ruling idea for us is the idea of the Nation; the idea of the Race. Nation is a group of individuals who share common origin, language, ways of living, religion and civilization. The Nation is the conscious Race, the People’s Community. The Nation constitutes the ruling Idea and Faith of our Ideology.\(^1\)

According to the same GD text, the Nation is prior to the State:

The Idea of the State is a human creation and when it does not keep in step with the Natural Principle of the Nation-Race, it creates freakish societies... For us, the Idea of the State is deserving of respect only when this State is National in its essence and its content and it serves the People’s Community.\(^2\)

The priority given to the ideas of the Nation and the Race does not mean ‘merely’ a love of homeland among party supporters, but also bears with it an intense and belligerent understanding of national identity. This understanding involves the undervaluation of other nations and the fostering of hostility towards them. The nationalist hostility against other nations is manifest in declarations of intent to implement a policy of national cleansing, in the


\(^2\) Ibid.
form of the expulsion from the country of people of different origin, and in the stated goal of external expansion.

It is interesting to underline that almost all the respondents, when asked to comment GD’s ideology, they denied that GD is a fascist or pro-Nazi party. They claimed that they are ‘nationalists’ and they feel very proud of this. As one of them said, ‘[GD] is a nationalist, patriotic party; it is a movement. Composed of a bunch of nationalists, Greeks, patriots, who decided to make words action. That’s it’ (Marios). However, another one added that they are not exactly what they claim:

I don’t think I can give them a label, because we are not talking of something completely uniform. Some of them are neo-Nazis, a part of them are nationalists, others are nationalist socialists, while others are just supporters of the far right. I would say it is a nationalist party, even though I don’t think that this label is the best description. (Harilaos)

Plate 1: Members of GD saluting in the neo-Nazi way. To the far left is the General Secretary of the party, N.Michaloliakos.
This pride they express about their nationalist ideals is related with the belief on the superiority of the Greek nation. This meaning is correlated to the belief of the superiority of the Greek people. However, this is not a superiority based on biology, but a superiority based on history and culture. As Voula stated, ‘It is clear that we are superior to other peoples, we were civilized when the others were living in the trees’. And another respondent said, ‘We were superior, we were the first to make theories, we were the first in poetry, in science, in trade’ (Grigoris).

3.2 Racism

Racism can be defined as the view that political or social ideas and practices can be derived from the belief that human beings are divided into biologically different races. Racist theories are therefore based upon two hypotheses. The first is that there are fundamental, genetic differences between the peoples of the world. The second is that these genetic divisions are reflected in cultural, mental and/or moral differences, making them politically or socially essential. GD recognises racial inequality, stating on its official party webpage that: ‘[GD] does not ignore the law of diversity and differentiation in Nature’\(^3\), and declaring that it ‘respects the mental, national and racial inequality of human beings’\(^4\). The movement thus accepts the core principles of racism.

GD’s speech is also xenophobic, since it insists on the idea that immigrants living in Greece undermine national coherence, homogeneity and cultural identity. Thus, on the official party webpage, GD declares that:

> Illegal immigrants – invaders - constitute an undisciplined army, which undermines the social structure and dismantles our national identity. Therefore, illegal immigrants, who constitute a group, which is alien to the Greek society, must be immediately expelled.\(^5\)

Furthermore, in the youth division website, it is pointed out that: ‘the mixture of Races is unacceptable, since it almost always leads to abnormality, mental illness, because of the destructive combination of inherited mental gifts, resulting in the destruction of human nature’\(^6\). It is inevitable that xenophobic views lead to rejection of the mixed marriages. Mixed

---


\(^4\) Ibid.


marriages are considered to be the last step in the ‘racial destruction’ of Greeks and they are considered to result in the distinct loss of Greek identity.\textsuperscript{7}

GD also blames immigrants for the rise in violations of public order and for the rise in criminality. They are conceived of as a deadly threat to social peace and as a source of constant terror for the Greeks. A link on the youth division website, entitled ‘The problem of immigration in Greece’ portrays a vivid image of Greeks suffering from the immigrant’s criminal activities:

The orgy of criminality includes all forms of crime. Drug selling takes place in downtown Athens, dealers have no hesitation, prostitutes wander the streets without fear, family houses are broken into by thieves armed with guns, attacks and beatings of elderly persons. The orgy goes on; the Greeks are the victims and spectators, locked in their homes at nights, praying they won’t face a break-in.\textsuperscript{8}

The webpages of the party and the youth division very often refer to crimes committed by immigrants against the Greeks. GD stresses out that the political system is unable to protect the Greeks and stop or expel the immigrants.\textsuperscript{9} Moreover, GD propagates that immigrants pose a crucial economic threat, since they reduce the chances of employment for Greek citizens; drain the social security funds; and impoverish the country, being largely responsible for the economic recession. The following passage offers a brief synopsis of GD’s analysis of the economic threat posed by immigrants:

The results [of immigration] in the socio-economic sphere are even more profound and crucial. Unemployment has reached 33 per cent. Almost all of the menial jobs have been grabbed by illegal immigrants, the social security system is collapsing and everyone wonders why. Illegal employment has reached its limit. When all’s said and done, no businessman gives preference to Greek workers, and, in search of an easy solution, they end up with illegal immigrants, who have no access to the social security funds and they are satisfied with the coppers that they earn. Therefore, we end up with a destroyed social welfare state, with hordes of unemployed Greeks


\textsuperscript{8} Ibid.


MYPLACE: FP7-266831 www.fp7-myplace.eu
Deliverable D7.1: Ethnographic Case Studies of Youth Activism
Page 13 of 44
and exhausted social security funds, .... this domino effect can lead to only one result - to the destruction of the Greek state.\textsuperscript{10}

In addition to that, GD argues that the solution of the unemployment problem presupposes the expulsion of the illegal immigrants. They use the slogan ‘FOR EVERY FOREIGN WORKER THERE IS AN UNEMPLOYED GREEK’ and they explain that ‘expulsion of all the illegal immigrants would mean hundreds of thousands of new jobs for the Greeks’.\textsuperscript{11} In general, immigrants are given the role of the scapegoat and are held to a great extent responsible for the economic crisis.

As noted before, the respondents do not accept biological and racial superiority of Greeks. Nevertheless, all of them agree, to a greater or lesser extent, with the hostility of GD towards immigrants living in Greece. The main reason explaining this hostility is the view that the immigrants are responsible for the rise in criminality. One respondent (Voula) described herself as a racist: ‘I have been forced over the last years to become a racist. They have forced me to become a racist, because it can’t be real that I am afraid to move around in the country where I was born and in the neighbourhoods where I grew up’. Furthermore, she proposed that immigrants should be exterminated: ‘why don’t they put them on a boat and sink it somewhere in the Aegean Sea?’

However, there is no unanimous acceptance of the violent actions of GD against immigrants, but when respondents were asked about the violence perpetrated against them, they responded by referring to the criminality and violence perpetrated by immigrants against Greeks: ‘the attacks against immigrants are definitely fewer than the attacks of immigrants against Greeks’ (Nikitas). As another responded added, ‘we talk about immigrants who have no culture. Cameroon, Angola. Who are they? The best of them must have killed their mothers. You cannot have a conversation with them. You just cannot, because they will get a knife and will attack you. So, you get the knife first’ (Marios). Finally a third one said that:

If you shout at an immigrant, then you get arrested. If he were to rob you, and if you were to beat him up, then you would get arrested. If he rapes you, and if you touch him, you get arrested. It can’t be like that. So, I agree with the actions of GD. (Nikodimos)

3.3 Expansionism

Expansionism is the enforcement of offensive foreign policy, which makes claims on territories where there is an ethnologic basis for this and/or where the state has ‘legitimate’ financial and military interests. The territories of particular expansionist interest for GD are: Northern Epirus, today part of the Albanian state; and Cyprus, which is currently an independent state.

The ethnological argument is clearly made in the following excerpt from an interview with the party’s MP and leading figure, Christos Pappas, who is currently in prison awaiting trial. Pappas stated in this interview:

Northern Epirus remains characterised by a vibrant Greek presence, despite the false censuses of the Albanian state which depict it as decimated and depopulated. It is also the only territory with a sizeable and vibrant Greek presence that borders the rest of the Greek state to go unclaimed.....we will return many times to Northern Epirus, until the holy day comes when we will arrive at last as liberators....GD is supported by the awakened Greek people, one million or more according to the latest polls. With these Greeks we will take our homeland back. Greece should be Greek again; Northern Epirus also should be free and Greek’.

GD also proposes the de facto unification between Greece and Cyprus, which is considered to be the result of combined diplomatic and military measures: ‘the implementation of the doctrine of a Joint Defence Area between Greece and Cyprus, combined with the adjoining exclusive economic zones of the two states, will add up to the de facto unification of the island with Greece.’

The vision of expansionism is repeated in the following passage, which adopts a more poetic use of language:

[the New State] will protect the same-blooded people’s community; it will restore social harmony and decency and then turn its head, slowly but steadily, to the east. It will head north for power, south for liberation. It will embrace all our brothers, from Northern Epirus to Cyprus.

---

It is Northern Epirus and Cyprus again that are named as territories upon which the New State lays claims.

### 3.4 Militarism

Militarism is the overvaluation of the role of the armed forces. In the ideology of GD, the armed forces are the tool that protects the Nation (the Conscious Race) and the New State from its external enemies and simultaneously serve the New State’s expansionist goals. This overvaluation of the role of the armed forces is manifested in various ways. Firstly, GD is in favour of raising the status of officers of the armed forces. This upgrading of the prestige of officers is evident in the following declaration on the official party webpage of the proposed political role for the military: ‘the Minister and the Undersecretaries of National Defence should come compulsorily from the ranks of the Army’. Secondly, GD supports the upgrading of military service and of the knowledge and training provided during military service. This is expressed in the following statement on the youth division website:

> The state, as well as every individual citizen, must prepare themselves for the moment when they have to prove their military abilities and skills. The state must always increase its capacity for war, and every citizen must permanently train themselves ....they should regard dying for the Homeland as the greatest honour.

The official party website, meanwhile, called for ‘compulsory enlistment of a period of 14 months for men and women,’ which constitutes an increase in the duration of military service (currently 9 months) as well as its extension to women. Thirdly, the idolization of the manly body and of military values and virtues (discipline, courage, willingness for self-sacrifice) also constitute part of the overvaluation of the armed forces. A text entitled ‘National revolutionaries’, uploaded to the official party webpage, illustrates particularly well the importance of the body as a powerful weapon in war:

> Our model is the well-trained and disciplined soldier. Our dogma is the ancient Spartan notion that the best clothes are fit bodies. The vigorous manly body is the

---


exemplar of aesthetics and weapon of war. We will win based on fierce thinking and strong muscles. If we do not have both of them, we will not succeed in anything.¹⁸

A further indication of the emphasis placed by GD on the military ethos and values is evident in the response of the leader of GD, when asked about the five books that a young nationalist should read. In an interview uploaded to the official youth division webpage, he cites, in first place, ‘the Iliad, which is a hymn to the martial virtue of Greeks’.¹⁹ Finally, the military training that the party, and especially its youth division, provides for their members and supporters proves their willingness to guide a process of equipping people with military skills and inculcating military values. This is articulated in the report on the activities of a nationalist camp organised in the summer of 2011 carried on the official youth division webpage where the activities described bear a striking resemblance to those of military training: ‘the activities this year included many surprises such as shooting, mountain walking, martial arts, football and various training exercises that improved the already high level of physical strength of our members.’²⁰ This is illustrated also in a number of images from the Youth Division Nationalist camp uploaded to the website (see Plates 2-4).

Plate 2: Youth Division Nationalist camp 2011, boxing²¹

¹⁹ See: http://www.antepithesi.gr/index.php?option=com_k2&view=item&id=559:apokleistiki-synentefksi-n-g-mixaloliakou&Itemid=287 (title: ‘Exclusive interview n.g. michaloliakos’, accessed in 31-3-2013)
Plate 3: Youth Division Nationalist camp 2011, long distance running

Plate 4: Youth Division Nationalist camp 2011, mountain walking

3.5 Class collaboration

GD aims for the restoration of social peace and harmony. To this end the party supports the idea that social classes should not be in conflict, but they should collaborate harmoniously for the common good and the national interest. Employers and workers are considered to be organically connected in what is imagined as a single unified entity. The People’s Community is conceived as undivided: any conflicts are subjugated to a superior, collective goal, that is, the strengthening of the Nation. Social harmony is believed to be the spring of moral and economic renaissance. The goal of class collaboration, and the subsequent denial of the party to recognise itself as the political agent of one or more classes’ interests, is clearly set:

The struggle of the People’s Nationalist Movement is not the political manifestation of the desire of one or more social classes. The Nationalists, we place above everything else mutual communication and respect among the Greeks, workers and employers, in the interests of the Nation. 24

The idea of class collaboration, together with the rejection of divisive class struggle, are elaborated in a crucial, ad hoc article entitled ‘GD, class struggle and the nation’, uploaded to the official party webpage, where it is stressed out that:

People’s Nationalism, in its political implementation, denies outright and absolutely the dominance of one class over another, it does not seek ‘class struggle’, but the harmonious collaboration of the classes in the interests of the Nation and the People. In the meritocratic society of the People’s National State there is no, and there can be no, exploiting and exploited class, but all social groups are obliged to collaborate harmoniously in the interests of the whole of the People’s Community. 25

The guarantor of class collaboration is the New State, which has the role of intervening in the field of the economy, to settle tensions between the classes and ensure that the national interest takes precedence over partial interests.

3.6 Antileftism and anticommunism

Left-wing and communist ideologies are regarded as deadly enemies because they promote class struggle and internationalism. Class struggle and internationalism should be impugned,


MYPLACE: FP7-266831 www.fp7-myplace.eu
because they are considered to weaken the unity of the People’s Community, which should be undivided. Great attention is paid to the period of the Greek Civil War, which is regarded as the period when the criminal nature of communism was demonstrated. The divisive consequences of the Left’s policy are condemned in an article entitled ‘The beginning of the end of red terrorism’ uploaded to the official youth division webpage, where it is claimed:

Bolshevism, always working underground, in obscurity, thrives on lies and retains power through violence. Skilled in the art of pretence and especially talented in popularly deceptive propaganda, it has managed to create a false representation of its nature and the form of its policy. The Left they were always traitors to the nation, always dividing the nation. They are just political and social demagogues. 26

Furthermore, this article attacks the Left on its policy on the immigration issue because ‘they say nothing about the hordes of illegal immigrants, who have invaded our country and are mostly responsible for the rupture of social cohesion’. 27

Plate 5: The slogan on the right is characteristic: ‘The Left has no History, it has a Criminal Record’28

27 Ibid.
28 Ibid.

MYPLACE: FP7-266831 www.fp7-myplace.eu
Deliverable D7.1: Ethnographic Case Studies of Youth Activism
Page 20 of 44
3.7 Anticapitalist Rhetoric

The capitalists’ quest for large profits is also stigmatized as a threat to the unity of the People’s Community. This quest may lead to results that oppose the coherence of the People’s Community. For example, immigrants could be selected as workers instead of the indigenous people, since they are paid lower wages. This means that the power of capitalists should be controlled by the New People’s State. Great attention is also paid to the international banking system, which is stigmatized as ‘loan sharks’ and is accused of having destroyed Greek society, after having dominated the treacherous political system. Nevertheless, GD does not advocate the abolition of capitalism, as an economic system based on private ownership of means of production. GD accepts the private ownership of the means of production and, therefore, accepts capitalism.

Nonetheless, stinging attacks on capitalism can be found on the party’s websites:

This sick system is based on the exploitation of the majority by the minority and has become rooted in most nations, resembling a fatal drug [...] capitalism ‘offers’ economic wealth combined with irrational consumerism. Consumerism leads to the narcosis of nations, then to ideological decline, then to biological death. 29

GD presents itself as the only power resisting ‘the World System of Moneylenders’:

What shakes the World System of Moneylenders are the Nationalist Speech and the Struggle of GD for Greece to be Free, to obtain National Sovereignty and a proud People. We are the only power which resists their plans for Greece to be fully subjugated to their Funds-Vaults. 30

Nevertheless, as noted above, the ‘anticapitalist’ side of GD’s ideology does not extend to the abolition of capitalism: ‘we believe in ownership, we believe in private initiative, but we do not believe in immoral and immune speculation against the People’s Community, we do not believe in illegal hoarding., we are opposed to the immunity of liberalism’. 31

GD’s anticapitalist rhetoric rather envisages the construction of a powerful State to control the

possible harmful consequences to which the quest for big profits may lead. GD is opposed to excessive profits, not to profits. This position is detailed clearly in the document entitled ‘Movement’ uploaded to the official party webpage, where it is declared that: ‘the state must control private ownership, so that it won’t be a threat to the survival of the people or be able to manipulate the people’.32

3.8 Political elitism

GD is in favour of a system of government that it calls ‘Meritocracy’. ‘Meritocracy’ is explicitly contrasted to ‘Democracy’. ‘Meritocracy’ is the system of government where political power belongs to people of political virtue, whereas ‘Democracy’ is accused of being vulnerable to demagogues, corruption, anarchy and mob rule. This attack on democracy is spelled out explicitly in a document uploaded to the youth division webpage, where it is stated that ‘Democracy and anarchy have the same effects. They result in immunity and chaos. They strip every person of every moral value and ideal.’33 In place of democracy, a system of ‘meritocracy’ embodied in a strong leader is proposed:

The excellent Leader (according to the platonic ideals) who has dedicated all of his Life to National and Social battles and has been honoured by the people, is the one who will lead the Nation to success and will make the Homeland powerful. That is the system of government that we, the revolutionary supporters of GD, fight for: Meritocracy’.34

The undervaluation of democracy is again evident in the deliberate avoidance of a reference to democracy by the leader of GD cited in an interview with him uploaded to the Youth Division website. The leader of GD, when asked about his vision of Greece, he replies: ‘[we fight for] a new state, a national state, meritocratic and just’.35 Meritocracy is a key word, as far as the system of government that GD proposes, is concerned. In the core document outlining the movement’s ideology on the official party webpage, it is stated that:

34 Ibid.

MYPLACE: FP7-266831 www.fp7-myplace.eu
Deliverable D7.1: Ethnographic Case Studies of Youth Activism
Page 22 of 44
One of the most important features of the State is its system of government, namely the way its leadership is chosen, that is the specific procedure followed so that the persons who organise the actions of the State are defined. The way that the masters of the State are chosen must be meritocratic. It should not be possible that the state is governed by unworthy demagogues, flatterers of the most vulgar tendencies of a people. Over the State hierarchy must be the Worthy.\(^\text{36}\)

The ‘Worthy’ are people of distinguished merit, ethos and potential. The procedure that leads to their selection is not recounted in detail, but is clearly contrasted to the current procedure by which political leaders are selected. This current procedure is criticized, because it may result in governance of ‘unworthy demagogues, flatterers of the most vulgar tendencies of a people.’ It is notable that no legal framework for defining and therefore restricting the power of the Worthy is set out.

The undervaluation of democracy is simultaneously an undervaluation of the basic principle of democracy, that is, the basic constitutional principle that every person, who has reached the age of maturity, has political rights. GD’s statements openly challenge the idea that every individual is able to form opinion on political issues, that everyone should be recognised as holding political rights. This lack of belief in the role of the majority in politics is evident in GD’s vision of political change being led by an elite few: ‘minorities have always changed the tide of History and the masses have followed’.\(^\text{37}\) Nationalism is envisaged as an ‘unassailable weapon’ against ‘the sick worship of the so called ‘will of the majority of the people’, which degrades politics and policy to poll research’\(^\text{38}\) and against the ‘equality of all human beings, which is enforced only by laws’.\(^\text{39}\)

This political elitism extends to the idolization of GD’s leader. Thus while ‘the people’ are recognised as a political force, their political will is implemented only through their leader. Thus, in the People’s State of Nationalism it is envisaged that: ‘the People is the only reality and it does not need power but leadership. The People are the true master, but they govern themselves through their leader.’\(^\text{40}\) In fact, the dominant force is the leader. The leader appears

\(^{39}\) Ibid.
\(^{40}\) See: \url{http://www.xryshaygh.com/index.php/kinima} (title: ‘Movement’ assessed: 12-1-2013)
in GD texts as an almost mystical force as in the following imagining of the leader meeting the Holy Land of Greece:

The Leader talked to her. The seed was planted. The Greek psyche was fertilized. What we are now living through, is the birth pangs of mother Greece. Grief, imprisonment, psychological warfare, explosions in our offices, deadly attacks. Parasites are trying to cause complications in the birth of the New State. But they are too insignificant to defeat it, because the holy infant that is born, this Holy State, has a Great Man as a Father, Eternal Greece as a Mother and us, you, the people, as protectors’.  

At a more prosaic level, a young supporter of GD, writes, in an open letter, about his admiration for the leadership after attending the Youth Front’s Annual Festival: ‘What makes GD special is the fact that there is among its ranks absolute discipline and faith in its leadership’. Moreover, it is claimed that through this leadership the victory over more powerful forces can be achieved: ‘a small nation, if it is determined to fight for its freedom and under the right Leadership, can defeat even much more powerful opponents.’

3.9 Hostility towards all political parties and the political system

As noted above, GD envisages only two legitimate political forces to exist: the People and the Leader. This leaves no space for any other political forces, in particular for political parties. If the correlation between the People and the Leader must not be violated by any intervention, then political parties, as intermediate collective bodies lying between the People and the Leader, are sources of dangerous intervention. Moreover, political parties represent partial class interests and, by so doing, they undermine the unity of the people’s community and hinder class collaboration. This disruptive potential means they must be banned: ‘the only state which effectively executes its historic duty is the People’s state, where political power belongs to the People, without any partisan pimps.’ GD consistently attacks all political parties and the political system in an extremely aggressive manner. The parties of the Right and the Left are held responsible for the recession and described as totally corrupt and unreliable:


MYPLACE: FP7-266831  
www.fp7-myplace.eu  
Deliverable D7.1: Ethnographic Case Studies of Youth Activism  
Page 24 of 44
Neither the Homeland, nor our people have gone bankrupt. Those who have gone bankrupt once and for all are the regime restored after the collapse of the military dictatorship in 1974, the regime of capitalist oligarchy and Marxist practices, together with the parties of corruption and bribery.  

The pernicious influence of these forces, it is claimed moreover, had seeped into the education system and thus threatened the nation as such:

The plague, Liberal and Marxist, of the political changeover era, which flooded the state mechanisms and the institutions, couldn’t but influence public education…..the Marxist riff-raff first and then the liberal one, forced Greek schools to get rid of their Greek roots….schools operated as a factory that produced citizens of a corrupted and non-meritocratic society. The road to the deconstruction of the nation by the traitors of the Right and the Left, was open.

The rejection of the political system, the hostility against traditional parties is a common attitude of the respondents. All ten of them shared the view that the current political system should be rejected. As one of the respondents put it: ‘It couldn’t be more of a whorehouse than it is now’ (Stamatis). Another respondent replied that: ‘The political system is a stupid democracy. I don’t believe in democracy’ (Nikandros). Additionally, one respondent expressed his rejection of the political system saying: ‘There is no democracy. It is a junta’, while another one claimed that: ‘the political system has collapsed’ (Domna).

The political system is also responsible for the crisis. As one of the respondents put it,’ I am angry at the political system, at the politicians, they have made so many mistakes and they have not been punished at all, on the contrary, the people are punished every day because of their mistakes’(Harilaos).

3.10 Activism

The drive towards activist mobilization in pursuit of GD goals is self-evident. GD defines itself as a Popular and Nationalist movement, that has adopted the form of a party only because this is


a legal requirement. However, only three of our respondents replied that they had participated in the activities of GD, such as gatherings and rallies. The youth division website takes great pride in activism. In fact, activism is presented as a key marker of differences between GD and its political opponents. This is expressed clearly on the youth division website:

A basic feature of our worldview and an essential point of differentiation from the youth divisions of the liberal and Marxist parties is our political activism.\(^{47}\) In this same text there is an analysis of the form of political activism to which the Youth Front is assigned: ‘Propaganda requires a variety of means. However, the most important of them is activism. If it is up to our older co-fighters to ensure the prevalence of our ideology mentally, then the basic concern of the Youth Front is the battle on the streets, prevailing through strength.\(^{48}\)

The streets of Athens and other big cities are presented as a battlefield, where GD supporters fight their enemies in a struggle for dominance. This is demonstrated in a description of an open gathering of the party that leftists had threatened to block:

Despite the fact that they (the leftists) had the support of the cities' authorities, they chose to play their game. They argued that ‘the cops protected the fascists’ in order to hide their fear of conflict with GD and to avoid absolute defeat the ones who prevailed were the Greeks. The GD prevailed. They should get used to that because we are coming and there are thousands of us and we will liberate every square and every neighbourhood from their lawlessness and anarchy.\(^{49}\)

The concept of fight is repeated constantly and extended to relations with traitors, that is ex-supporters who had abandoned the ranks of the nationalist movement:

We need by our side young men and women who are ready to fight. We do not need the cowardly bourgeois who abandon all the things they believed in because of their selfishness and disgusting egoism. Those who are with us must fight! All the rest, go to Hell! Long live victory!\(^{50}\)


\(^{48}\) Ibid.


The leader of the party also emphasises the significance of activism. In the epilogue of his book ‘In defence of National Memory’, he declares: ‘we should keep the flame of history alight. Both in knowledge and in action....Because it is true that knowledge without action, thought without mobilization is sterile academicism and sick philosophical interest, and nothing else’. The same idea- that the knowledge and ideology of a person are realized only when a person actively defends them - is repeated on the party’s official webpage, where it is stated: ‘A person, who does not transform his faith into action, has no ideology. To have an ideology is to have faith; to have faith is to struggle’.

The study of website materials reveals the activism of GD and its Youth Front to take a number of forms.

**Youth Festival**

This is celebrated usually in autumn and culminates in concerts of white power music. GD is a

---


driving force that encourages and supports the growth of the white power music scene in Greece.

Plate 7: ‘Der Sturmer’, (black metal), and ‘Pogrom’, (nationalist punk rock), in a live gig in the 2011 Festival of Youth Front

Greek history lessons

These lessons are highly targeted toward children and young people. Emphasis is given on the ancient glory and the victories of ancient Greeks at wars. They prefer to refer to militaristic and oligarchic Ancient Sparta. As far as recent Greek history is concerned, of great importance is the emphasis on condemnation of ‘atrocities of the bolshevism’, as well as the attempt to give positive meaning to the periods of 1936-1941 dictatorship and 1967-1974 dictatorship.

Plate 8: 2011 Festival of Youth Front


55 Ibid.
Plate 9: Greek history lessons given in the party’s offices. This one is about the National Revolution of 1821, which resulted in the destruction of the Ottoman rule and the formation of an independent Greek State in 1830\textsuperscript{56}

Plate 10: Kids saluting the neo-Nazi way in the history lessons

Camping
Groups of GD supporters, especially young men, take part in camps. At these camps, they practice military training: shooting, gymnastics, long distance running, wrestling, boxing, basic self-defence and winter survival skills (Plate 11).

Plate 11: Training in the forests of Thessaloniki

Social work
Food donations, clothes donations and blood donations are the most promoted forms of social work and contribution by GD (Plate 12). Donations are organised only for the benefit of Greeks, however, as noted in the following web report on a recent food donation action: ‘GD and the Youth Front, acting within the framework of the Social Solidarity program of the Movement, distributed today tons of traditional food to Greek compatriots who need help.’

Food donations are by far the most appreciated and praised activity of GD by our respondents. Only one of the respondents (Minas) commented negatively on the fact that food is given only


to Greek citizens. The rest showed no dissatisfaction. As one of them said, ‘of course I would participate, not (only) in a GD activity, but, in an activity of a group of Greeks helping Greeks’ (Nikandros).

Open gatherings, speeches and rallies

These actions give the leadership of the party the opportunity to promote its agenda, to fanaticize its supporters and attract the attention of new audiences. These open gatherings and speeches often take the form of rituals, i.e. lighted torches in the night, singing of anthems at the end of the speech, the arrival of supporters in military style, uniformity in suits). The rally that the party honours most is that dedicated to the memory of the three officers of the Greek army who died on 31 January 1996, during the crisis of the Imia islets. Great significance is

\[59\] Ibid.
\[60\] Both Greece and Turkey lay claim to the islets. Military ships and marine units of both sides gathered in the area. Greek marines occupied the Great Imia islet, while Turkish marines occupied the Minor Imia islet. A helicopter of the Greek Navy that patrolled over Minor Imia islet crashed into the sea on the morning of 31 January and all three
also attributed to the party's dominant presence in the annual ceremonies that celebrate the defeat of communists in the Civil War (29 August 1949) and honour the memory of the victims of Meligalas battle.\textsuperscript{61} One article uploaded to the official youth division website, estimated participation in the rally for the Imia crisis at nearly 50,000 and condemned the refusal of the media to report on the rally.\textsuperscript{62}

![Plate 13: Imia 2013 rally in Athens\textsuperscript{63}](image)

**Local propaganda activities**

Groups of supporters sell the party newspaper, distribute leaflets, write slogans on the walls, talk with people and analyse the political theses of the party. One action commented on the youth division website was the ‘propaganda campaign’ in Kalamata, just after the ceremony of Meligalas (Plate 14). Here it was stated that ‘the response of the people of Kalamata towards us was more than positive, resulting in the distribution of thousands of leaflets and newspapers of our movement.’\textsuperscript{64}

\begin{itemize}
\item officers in the helicopter were killed. Officially, the crash was attributed to bad weather, but there was speculation that the Turkish side had shot it down. There was a serious possibility of armed conflict and even war between the two countries. Finally, both sides retreated and withdrew their forces.
\item Meligalas is a village in Southern Peloponnese where a battle took place on 13-15 September 1944 between the armed forces of the National Liberation Front and the Security Battalions (Greek military forces that collaborated with the authorities of Nazi Occupation). The Security Battalions were defeated.
\item Ibid.
\end{itemize}
3.11 National revolution-palingenesis

The official discourse of the party and its youth division makes clear that its members and supporters are ‘national revolutionaries’ and that the victory of the party consists in the destruction of the status quo and the formation of a ‘New State’ and a ‘New Man’. Great attention is paid to youth, which is regarded as the vanguard of the national revolution. The struggle for national revolution, for radical change, is, according to GD’s rhetoric, necessary because the homeland and the People are trapped in decline and social disease and degeneration. The success of the revolution thus constitutes a complete palingenesis of the nation. This duality of decline and national renewal is a crucial part of the party's propaganda. The leader of the party, when interviewed on the website of youth division made this connection between them: ‘All that which currently appears to constitute ‘culture’ is a shapeless mass of rubbish, which endangers the nation. We struggle for national rebirth, not only in economic figures, but mostly in Culture’.

---

65 Ibid.
The notion of the nation in decline is repeated. GD describes our era as: ‘the era of complete social, political, economic and mostly moral and cultural decline and fall of the modern world.’ The world is depicted in the darkest colours. It is a world of grief, pain and despair. It is ‘a world of ruins, where the ones responsible for our misfortune, the long standing enemies of Hellenism, achieved by executing a fully detailed plan to lead the world affairs to a real abyss.’

At this point, we should underline the fact that all the respondents agreed that the existing social condition is a condition of moral decline and political crisis, which ‘could lead in a few years to a civil war’ (Domna).

As a consequence, if the world has become ‘a world of ruins’, if the peoples of the world face a ‘real abyss’, then the need for revolution and for a completely new reality to be built, has become urgent. Indeed, GD propagates that its duty and mission is to completely tear down the existing state and construct a new and radically innovative reality based on the strong principles of Ethos and Social Justice, rejecting the idea that the existing state can be altered through compromises. The dominant idea is that moderate solutions are, in fact, no solutions, they have nothing to offer. As they put it: ‘We want the world and we want it now. We want it all and if this is not possible, then we want nothing.’

This conception of the national revolution aims at a complete change of morals and culture and at the formation of a ‘New Man’ and a ‘New State’. In a text of the youth division website, it is declared that: ‘The Political Struggle of the Greek Nationalists' Movement aims at the creation of a New People’.

### 3.12 Youth

As noted above, youth is regarded as the vanguard of the national revolution. Youth is given the status of the driving force of the party and of the national revolution process. The party and its youth division repeatedly argue that GD constitutes the hope for Greek youth, while the corrupted parties of the Left and Right are the parties of the older generations.

---


68 Ibid.


70 Ibid.

The leading role of youth is clearly recognised in a text of the youth division website, under the title ‘Political Soldier 8 - Victory is ours’. There, it is declared that: ‘The Greek Youth is the source of Power of the Popular Nationalist Movement and the Movement is the expression of the power of the Greek Youth’ as well as ‘the Nationalist Youth is the pioneer of the solidarity activities of our Movement’.  

![Plate 15: Members of GD, mainly young ones, during a gathering at the beach](image)

Of great importance are the arguments used by GD to explain why youth is the social group most likely to struggle for the national revolution. Firstly, young men and women are considered to have inexhaustible sources of energy, courage, fighting spirit, reaction and resistance. Moreover, they have nothing to lose, since ‘it is now that they build their future’. In addition, they constitute, together with the Workers, the part of the People which remained untainted by the poison of the post-1974 Regime, or, at least, it was minimally alienated. For all these reasons they are the vanguard of the national revolution process.

---


3.13 Slogans

From its inception, the party’s main slogan has been: ‘Blood, Honour, Golden Dawn’. It has been argued (Psarras 2012: 331) that this is a mere translation of the slogan ‘Blut und Ehre’, of the Hitler Youth (Hitlerjugend). This motto (Blut und Ehre) is banned in contemporary Germany. Following the events of recent months, the variant ‘Homeland, Honour, Golden Dawn’ has replaced the original version in the movement’s gatherings. Another slogan used is: ‘Scums, traitors, politicians’, which helped the organisation a lot during the crisis (Psarras 2012: 332). In the past, when GD has needed to remobilize its forces, for example, after elections, the slogan ‘We will return and then the earth will tremble’ was used, reportedly, a variant of the phrase: ‘When we leave, then the earth will tremble’, attributed to Joseph Goebbels, ten days before he committed suicide (Psarras 2012: 332). Another slogan of great importance and widely used in the period of crisis is: ‘Greece belongs to the Greeks’. This slogan dates back to the 1970s, when it was used by the party of PASOK (Panhellenic Socialist Movement). Then it had no racist connotation. It referred to the removal of the NATO military bases and the emancipation of the Greek political system (Psarras 2012: 334). The slogan ‘Against all’ is also used heavily in both leaflets and, in general, in the propaganda of GD in recent last years. It obviously emphasizes the hostility of GD towards the whole of the political system.

3.14 Colours

The colours of GD are: red, black and white. GD claims that these were the colours of the revolutionaries in 1821. It has been argued (Psarras 2012:315) that the combination of these three colours is the ‘trademark’ of Nationalist Socialist German Workers’ Party (in German NSDAP), the ‘trademark’ of Nazism.
3.15 Symbols

The official symbol of GD is a meander, as shown in the official flag above (Plate 16). GD claims that it is a symbol widely used in ancient Greece and that they chose it as the party’s official symbol in order to put the emphasis on the ‘continuity of Hellenism and the dynamic movement of the nation towards the future’. ⁷⁵

However, before GD finally chose the meander as its official symbol, in the 1980s, when it first appeared as an underground organisation publishing its magazine of the same name, it had used the symbol of the circular swastika and the wolf hook (Plate 18).

Plate 18: Front page of the first issue of the magazine ‘Golden Dawn’, published December 1980 ⁷⁶


In this photo the symbol in front of which Nikolaos Mihaloliakos spoke is the ‘Wolfsangel’, or ‘wolf-hook’ – a runic symbol and an alleged weapon for hunting wolves in the Middle Ages. At the time of Nazi Germany, it was the symbol of the paramilitary organisation ‘Werwolf’, which the leader of the SS forces Heinrich Himmler created in 1944.

Finally, the Celtic cross is also a symbol very frequently used by GD. The display of this symbol on the shields of GD’s fighters is perhaps the most impressive use of this symbol (Plate 20).
4. Conclusions

The thematic analysis of the official web presence of the party and its youth division indicates that GD is a fascist, neo-Nazi party, and not just a party of the far right. The most inclusive definition of fascism is that of R.O. Paxton, who describes it as:

...a form of political behavior marked by obsessive preoccupation with community decline, humiliation, or victimhood and by compensatory cultures of unity, energy and purity, in which a mass-based party of committed nationalist militants, working in uneasy but effective collaboration with traditional elites, abandons democratic liberties and pursues with redemptive violence and without ethical or legal restraints goals of internal cleansing and external expansion. (Paxton 2004: 218)

78 Image taken from: http://giatinkinonikiaristera.blogspot.gr/2013/11/blog-post.html

MYPLACE: FP7-266831
www.fp7-myplace.eu
Deliverable D7.1: Ethnographic Case Studies of Youth Activism
Page 39 of 44
Moreover, the well-known historian of ideas Roger Griffin (2012) argues that a ‘new consensus’ has been formed among specialists in fascist studies, which stresses the primacy of the regenerative myth in fascist ideology, the primacy of a revolutionary, palingenetic national rebirth which redeems the nation from decline.

Our research verified that GD’s speech contains these elements; the only missing element is collaboration with traditional elites. Social disease and community decline are the most common descriptions of the state of society, which makes national revolution necessary immediately. The culture of unity is ensured through the pursuit of class collaboration, the culture of energy in the longing for activism, the culture of purity in the ideal of a homogeneous nation and the expulsion of immigrants. The special, pioneer role of the party’s members, who are given the title of ‘political soldiers’, is also verified. As noted above, GD proposes a system of government in which there are only two legitimate political forces, the people and its leader. All the political parties are banned. The rejection of parties constitutes a refusal of the right of different groups of the people to be organised and to struggle for political power and the subsequent fulfilment of their special goals. It is thus a rejection of core political rights, which confirms also fascism’s abandonment of democratic liberties. Moreover, the goals of internal cleansing and external expansion, combined with the upgrade of the tool (the armed forces) which is necessary for the fulfilment of these goals are also set. Finally, Griffin’s emphasis on national revolution, on national palingenesis and rebirth, is also satisfied.

In contrast to GD, parties of the far right may have adopted anti-democratic rhetoric and be critical of liberal democracy, but they do not go so far as to propagate the abandonment of democratic liberties. This differentiation is of great importance, since the willingness of the far right to play according to the rules of the democratic game eliminates the role of political violence and its idealisation.

The findings of the interviews indicate that respondents have an affinity to the ideology and values of GD. Sympathy for the rejection of all other political parties and the political system, the hostility and scapegoating of immigrants, the acceptance of the superiority of Greeks, the ambiguous assessment of political violence, the attribution of positive meaning to the term ‘nationalism’, the acceptance of the view that our era is an era of decline and sorrow, may all be factors explaining why GD has remained the third most popular political party in the opinion polls and the second one among young people, despite being accused of being a criminal organisation. As a consequence, GD will continue playing an important role in social and political matters since its infiltration to young people promises a better political future compared to the other political parties especially PASOK and New Democracy.
5. Future Analysis

From the above analysis two main themes emerged that could be applied in a comparison within the extreme right cluster or even cross WP7 clusters. In addition, these themes could be compared among the Greek team’s other ethnographic case-studies. These two themes are social activism and the rejection of politics and politicians. For example, the volunteer activism of GD, especially its food donations, could be compared to the activism of the Evangelical Youth, having of course in mind that their starting points are completely different due to their different ideological backgrounds. While the Evangelicals help everyone in need, GD members help only the Greeks. Furthermore, a comparison between GD and the Indignant Movement could take place regarding their stance against politics and politicians which is totally negative. They both reject the political system in its current form, but they suggest different solutions for the future and for an alternative form of political organisation. In that way it would be possible to examine the similarities and differences among these different ethnographic cases and try to find the reasons behind them.

These themes could be also examined using data triangulation, i.e. using both quantitative and qualitative data from other WPs (4 & 5). Social activism and the stance against politics and politicians are two main themes that emerged from the analysis in most cases and WPs. As a consequence, comparisons and triangulation could be possible and illuminate further the understanding of young people’s activism and views.

6. References


### 7. Appendix: Table 1. Socio-demographic profile of respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pseudonym</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Educational Status</th>
<th>Employment Status</th>
<th>Family Status</th>
<th>Residential Status</th>
<th>Relationship to organization</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stamatis</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Greek</td>
<td>Completed private college</td>
<td>Businessman</td>
<td>single</td>
<td>Lives independently alone</td>
<td>Voter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marios</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Greek</td>
<td>Completed university</td>
<td>unemployed</td>
<td>single</td>
<td>Lives with parents</td>
<td>Voter-active supporter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nikandros</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>Greek</td>
<td>Completed private college</td>
<td>unemployed</td>
<td>single</td>
<td>Lives with parents</td>
<td>Voter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nikodimos</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>Greek</td>
<td>Completed private college</td>
<td>In full time employment</td>
<td>single</td>
<td>Lives with parents</td>
<td>Voter-active supporter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harilaos</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Greek</td>
<td>Completed university</td>
<td>unemployed</td>
<td>single</td>
<td>Lives with parents</td>
<td>Voter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nikitas</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>Greek</td>
<td>Completed university</td>
<td>unemployed</td>
<td>single</td>
<td>Lives with parents</td>
<td>Voter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voula</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Greek</td>
<td>Completed high school education</td>
<td>unemployed</td>
<td>Living with partner</td>
<td>Lives with partner</td>
<td>voter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Nationality</td>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Employment Status</td>
<td>Living Arrangement</td>
<td>Voter</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grigoris</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>Greek</td>
<td>Completed high school education</td>
<td>In full time employment</td>
<td>single</td>
<td>Lives independently alone</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domna</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Greek</td>
<td>Completed university</td>
<td>unemployed</td>
<td>Living with partner</td>
<td>Lives with partner</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minas</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>Greek</td>
<td>Currently at university</td>
<td>unemployed</td>
<td>single</td>
<td>Lives with parents</td>
<td>Voter-active supporter</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>