

Counter-Islamophobia Kit

Workstream 1: Dominant Islamophobic Narratives -Greece

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Countering Islamophobia through the Development of Best Practice in the use of Counter-Narratives in EU Member States.

CIK Project (Counter Islamophobia Kit)

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Working Paper 4: Dominant Islamophobic Narratives - Greece

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About the CIK Project

The *Countering Islamophobia through the Development of Best Practice in the use of Counter-Narratives in EU Member States* (Counter Islamophobia Kit, CIK) project addresses the need for a deeper understanding and awareness of the range and operation of counter-narratives to anti-Muslim hatred across the EU, and the extent to which these counter-narratives impact and engage with those hostile narratives. It is led by Professor Ian Law and a research team based at the Centre for Ethnicity and Racism Studies, School of Sociology and Social Policy, University of Leeds, UK. This international project also includes research teams from the Islamic Human Rights Commission, based in London, and universities in Leeds, Athens, Liège, Budapest, Prague and Lisbon/Coimbra. This project runs from January 2017 - December 2018.

About the Paper

This paper is an output from the first workstream of the project which was concerned to describe and explain the discursive contents and forms that Muslim hatred takes in the eight states considered in the framework of this project: Belgium, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Portugal and United Kingdom. This output comprises eight papers on conditions in individual member states and a comparative overview paper containing Key Messages. In addition this phase also includes assessment of various legal and policy interventions through which the European human rights law apparatus has attempted to conceptually analyse and legally address the multi-faceted phenomenon of Islamophobia. The second workstream examines the operation of identified counter-narratives in a selected range of discursive environments and their impact and influence on public opinion and specific audiences including media and local decision-makers. The third workstream will be producing a transferable EU toolkit of best practice in the use of counter-narratives to anti-Muslim hatred. Finally, the key messages, findings and toolkits will be disseminated to policy makers, professionals and practitioners both across the EU and to member/regional audiences using a range of mediums and activities.

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1. Introduction

The aim of this study is to map and analyze the phenomenon of Islamophobia in contemporary Greece. We aim to reconstruct the most significant narratives regarding Muslims and Islam, categorizes them, indicates which narratives are most dominant in the Greek context, traces and explains similarities and differences between narratives of Islamophobia apropos the ideas, policies and attitudes towards Muslims they entail. The analysis is guided by the performative definition of Islamophobia proposed by Sayid (2014) and Domination Hate Model of Intercultural Relations (Islamic Human Rights Commission 2016), both putting anti-Muslim hatred in a wider context and providing tools for processing primary and discussing secondary sources to propose a categorical list of narratives of Islamophobia in Greece.

The second and third part of this report provide a brief overview of the existing literature and grey literature on Islamophobia in Greece as well as background material to the categorization of anti-Muslim narratives, that is, an account of the relevant historical and political context and key demographics.

The fourth part discusses how historical developments are associated with the contemporary rise of Islamophobia and provides insights into popular negative attitudes towards Muslims through the analysis of public surveys conducted between 2015 and 2017, such as the European Islamophobia Reports of 2015 and 2016, DiaNEOsis surveys documenting Greeks' beliefs on a variety of political and ideologically loaded topics, along with surveys and reports on incidents against religious sites, racist violence, and the implications of the refugee crisis. The report is, in that respect, the first essay comprising an extensive commentary on the findings of public opinion surveys on a variety of issues relevant to the phenomenon under study.

In the fifth part, we engage in the analysis of public discourse and the narratives emerging therefrom, highlighting the ideological background and cleavages that decisively inform an understanding of Islamophobia in Greece. The results of the three qualitative surveys mentioned *supra* validate the appropriateness of underlining the ideological premises in which narratives of Islamophobia originate and corroborate the categorization found under Concluding Remarks (part six). .

In selecting the corpus of texts to be analyzed – around 150 articles published in the Greek press, newspapers and websites, from 2013 to present and several books on Islam – we were particularly mindful of the major ideological cleavages that define islamophobic narratives. In line with this approach to our sources, we intentionally zoomed in on 'who speaks' or 'who narrates', to allow for the various ideological and political backgrounds of authors to surface in the portrayal of public discourse on Islamophobia, including political actions and discourse, as well as manifestations of Islamophobia in everyday life.

2. State of the art in research on Islamophobia in Greece

The international debate on Islamophobia was foregrounded started in 1997 when the Runnymede Trust introduced the term in its UK-related report 'Islamophobia – A Challenge for Us All' (Runnymede, 1997). The definition of Islamophobia in the Runnymede report involved eight distinctions between 'open' and 'closed' views of Islam and four manifestations of Islamophobia in British society corresponding to negative attitudes against and sentiments about Muslims – exclusion, violence, prejudice and discrimination – all of which remain at the core of any subsequent discussion on Islamophobia. An influx of publications and studies on Islamophobia in Europe and the United States followed the Runnymede Report, despite persistent objections regarding its suitability that are firmly entrenched in academic and public discourse. SETA's (Foundation for Political, Economic and Social Research) analysis of Islamophobia is grounded in the definition of the term and phenomenon as 'anti-muslim racism' emanating from *'a dominant group of people aiming at seizing, stabilising and widening their power by means of defining a scapegoat – real or invented – and excluding this scapegoat from the resources/rights/definition of a constructed "we"'* (Bayrakli, E., and Hafez, F., (Eds). 2016, 7). This definition alludes to key issues referred to in the 1997 Runnymede report and S. Sayyid's six clusters of Islamophobia (Sayyid, 2014), yet is distinct from those.

One of the aims of the country report on narratives of Islamophobia in Greece will be to draw on such approaches and build on Sayyid's clusters by proposing ideology as a lens through which to study Islamophobia, its multiple and varying sources and its non-artificial character¹. This approach permits the delineation of manifestations of Islamophobia in Greece apropos specific ideological families. The concept of threat, which differentiates narratives of Islamophobia from anti-Muslim racism, stereotypes and prejudices, informs our delineation of the term; in this light, Islamophobia can be defined as the fear that the presence of Muslim communities per se is posing an immediate threat to the society, defined either in national (nationalist Islamophobia) or 'European' terms (liberal Islamophobia)².

Despite the large wave of Muslim migrants entering Greece after 2000, there has been no systematic study of the term Islamophobia and the phenomenon it describes in Greece. In this light, the two reports issued by SETA in 2015 and 2016 discussing Islamophobia in Greece, among other European countries, constitute the most systematic, to date, attempts to fill this gap. Sakellariou³ highlighted the absence of a central counter-Islamophobia state policy and demonstrated the gradual rise of Islamophobia since 2015 in Greece (Bayrakli, E., and Hafez, F., (Eds). 2016, 237-54; Sakellariou 2016 and 2017). Valuable insights on the state of Islamophobia in Greece are also provided by three public opinion surveys (Pew 2016, Dianeosis 2015 and 2017).

¹ Implied in SETA's definition. The same approach is followed by other authors such as Allen (2010) and Schyor, in C. Ernst Islamophobia (2013)

² The concept of threat as a decisive factor in forming or increasing intergroup bias is elaborated by Riek et al. (2006).

³ Sakellariou has written a 2015 study on the anti-Islamic discourse of the Golden Dawn party and voices in the Greek Orthodox Church without applying the term Islamophobia in the analysis. See, *Anti-Islamic Public Discourse in Contemporary Greece: The Reproduction of Religious Panic The revival of Islam in Balkans*, 42-61

Last but not least, one should add the 2006 publication of EUMC (European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia, established by EU in 1997) regarding the discrimination against Muslims in Europe, including Greece (EUMC, 2006). The report was based on interviews of Muslim residents in each member state.

3. Background: Muslim population in Greece

The number of Muslims residing in Greece is not clear. According to the global survey of the Pew Research Center Muslims in Greece constitute 5.3% (610.000) of the population (Pew, 2010). The number, as well as the countries of origin of Muslim migrants arriving to Greece after 2000, cannot be accurately estimated; the official registration process does not provide reliable results and, despite extensive patrols, the number of migrants entering the country through the sea borders cannot be measured with precision. Be that as it may, it is quite clear from the available estimates that Pakistan, Bangladesh, Egypt and increasingly Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan constitute the main countries of origin (Triantafyllidou, 2016).⁴ Approximately 60.000 refugees are currently residing in Greece after the outbreak of the refugee crisis. In 2016, the country of origin was primarily Syria, while Afghanistan and Iraq followed. Moreover, 64% of the refugees are men, while minors represent a substantial percentage, namely the 24.5% of men and the 31.9% of women refugees (Special Commission of Immigration Policy, 2017).⁵

The Muslim population of the Thrace region in North-Eastern Greece, around 100.000 (Tsitselikis, 2011, 569) was accorded the status of a religious minority in 1923. The largest ethnic group represented in the Muslim minority is Turkish, followed by Pomacs and Roma. The Muslim minority was represented in the national elections of 1989 and 1990 by independent candidates and two of them were elected members of the Hellenic Parliament. In 1993, the 3% nation-wide limit set for election prevented independent Muslim candidates from being elected. Since then, the Muslim minority is represented in/within parties.

The Constitution of Greece includes reference to ‘the prevailing religion in Greece [...], the Eastern Orthodox Church of Christ’ under Section II, titled ‘Relations of Church and State’, and Art. 3 para. 1. In Art. 13, the inviolability of the freedom of religious conscience is guaranteed. In that article, it is stated that (para. 2) that “All known religions shall be free and their rites of worship shall be performed unhindered and under the protection of law [...] and that (para. 3) ‘The ministers of all known religions shall be subject to the same obligations towards it as those of the prevailing religion.’ Although Islam is recognized as a ‘known’ religion in Greece, the controversy over the absence of a

⁴ For an estimate of the number and ethnic composition of irregular immigrants in Greece, see Triantafyllidou and Mantanika, 2016.

⁵ Detailed data can be found in http://mindigital.gr/images/GENIKOI/FLORENTIS/factsheets/jan_2017/gr_fact_sheet_refugee_print_19_01_2017-2.pdf

mosque in Athens, the capital of Greece, has been a topic of hot public debate. To date, Muslims in Athens worship in prayer spaces, rather than mosques. It was only in 2016 when the Parliament, with an overwhelming majority of 206 v. 24 votes, the latter coming from the Golden Dawn and the ANEL parties (see *infra*, part 5), voted for the construction of a mosque in the city of Athens. Finally, the most important Muslim Association in Greece is MAG (Muslim Association of Greece), founded in 2003, focusing on the study of Islam and Islamic Law and taking a stance against racism on occasion of threats against Muslims, while other associations with Muslim membership are related to specific ethnic groups.

4. Background: the formation of anti-Muslim hatred

In Greece, the history of encounters with Islam is long and tumultuous, extending back to the early Byzantine period and the creation of the Caliphate. The demise of the Christian Byzantine Empire was succeeded by the long Ottoman occupation of contemporary Greece. Under Ottoman rule, Sultan's subjects were defined in religious terms and it is from this religious cleavage, that modern Greek nationalism emerged in the late 18th century. The 1821 War of Independence led to the formation of the Modern Greek state (1830), grounded in strong ethno-religious definitions of nationhood. Orthodoxy remains to present one of the pillars of national identity in the country (Pew, 2016, 21).

The creation of Modern Greece ushered in an era of irredentist aspirations of territorial expansion and wars against the Ottoman empire until 1922, when the Greek Army was defeated in Asia Minor⁶. The territorial settlement established by the 1923 Lausanne Treaty brought religious identity to the forefront. In the first exchange of populations in world history religion was the defining factor for national identification. The Christian minority in Constantinople and the Muslim minority in Thrace were exempt from the exchange. These minorities were strictly defined as religious in nature. There have been no instances of war between Greece and Turkey after 1922, though the two countries almost fought in 1974 for the contested territories on the island of Cyprus and their relations remain tense since.

Hostility against Turkey is a lingering feature of right-wing discourse that is smoothly intertwined with Islamophobic narratives. This appeal to history is not a distinctive feature of such narratives in the Greek case, as scholarship affirms that '*Islamophobia would appear to have the possibility of having a historical legacy from which it draws information, relevance, understanding and meaning*' (Allen, 2010, 134). Nevertheless, the relations between Turkey and Europe did not generate an a priori Islamophobic worldview as demonstrated by the absence of narratives of Islamophobia even after the second wave of Muslim migrants entered Greece in 2000⁷. Prejudice, orientalist stereotypes and

⁶ For a concise overview of the history of this formative period, see Clogg, 1992.

⁷ Migrants were facing racism but not, at least in public discourse, as Muslims. Moreover, no anti-immigrant party ever made substantial inroads in the Greek political scene until 2012, when the Golden Dawn party was first entered the Parliament.

anti-Turkish sentiments existed, but there is no evidence that the bundle of grounds for hostility ever transformed into a collection of comprehensive ideological outlooks. It was nationalists – conservatives and the extreme right – who, triggered by political developments, bridged traditional dichotomies and contemporary exigencies. In this respect, the argument that Islamophobia is *‘more directly related to the ambiguities of nationalism, a modern ideology that blends fellow feeling and cultural difference in complex [...] ways’* (Shryok, in C. Ernst, 2013), seems valid; *‘ambiguities’* and iron necessities, one could add, since Islamic threat is depicted in existential shades.

Opinion surveys designate 2015 as a crucial turning point, namely a temporal juncture that marked a quantitative as well as qualitative shift to patterns of Islamophobic discourse. It was the outbreak of the refugee crisis coupled with the threat of ISIS that generated narratives of Islamophobia. These twin factors are highlighted in this report as potent ideological accelerators that culminated in the formation of a rising, multi-faceted Islamophobic discourse. Nationalist ideas also played a role in that direction as their defenders activated and capitalized on old historical narratives and fears related to the permanent Turkish threat. Perceptions of Islam and Muslims in the public sphere after 2015 are documented in three important surveys (Pew 2016, Dianeosis 2015 and 2017) that aspired to construct a reliable ideological portrait of the Greek society.

Besides establishing that the majority of Greeks share negative feelings about Islam, the surveys’ findings corroborate that contemporary Islamophobia is intertwined with ideological orientation. Those identifying themselves with the Right in the three surveys considered shared a thoroughly negative view on Islam or Muslims, while those on the Left held much more positive views. What is crucial to be noted, though, is that, while negative sentiments towards Islam certainly constitute building blocks of Islamophobia, they should not loosely be equated with the phenomenon itself. For example, when asked about their feelings towards the concept of Islam Greeks gave 72.3% negative views. If one hurriedly interpreted this finding as proof of rampant, almost universal Islamophobia in the country, the fringe status of Islamophobic discourse, the majoritarian rejection of Islamophobic parties and the cordial treatment of refugees corroborated by the very same survey of 2017 would be left unexplained.

The answer seems to lie in the negative meaning some concepts have acquired by default.⁸ Indeed, when Greeks were asked in 2017 about Muslims instead of Islam the negative views collapsed from 72% to 46%, while positive ones rose from 15% to 36% (Dianeosis, 2017). Finding the correct names and terms is key to drawing valid conclusions. Positive views range from approximately 50% on the Left to 20% as we move towards the Right (Dianeosis, 2015, 40 and 2017, 47). The same holds true for negative views which, as expected, reach the highest point in the responses of Golden Dawn voters (Pew, 2016, 6).

⁸ Another striking example is the condemnation in the same survey of the concept of capitalism by Greeks while all other findings demonstrate their preference for economic liberalism and market economy.

Ideology informs responses to concrete and immediately relevant issues, such as the construction of a mosque in Athens, with respect to which the rate of negative responses gradually grows from 24% to 83% as we move from the Left to the Right (Dianeosis, 2017, 90-1). Similarly, in response to the question regarding how Muslims view terrorists, 23%, corresponding to the Extreme Right, responded that terrorists are popular among Muslims, while 63%, corresponding to the Left, believes that Muslims are condemn terrorists and terrorist acts (Dianeosis, 2017, 92-3). The same pattern is found in the attitude towards refugees (Dianeosis, 2017, 49). It should be noted that the majority of Greeks share sympathetic views on all those issues: the majority supports the construction of a mosque in Athens, dissociates Muslims from terrorists and reacts positively when asked about refugees⁹. Nevertheless, the view that Muslims share a partial identity and do not want to mix with the host society, a viewpoint central to Islamophobia, is firmly entrenched in Greek society, more than any other European country, a warning sign that should be addressed (Pew, 2016, 5)¹⁰.

Conclusively, the extensive data demonstrates the association of ideological affiliations with anti-Muslim narratives and hatred, as well as the existence of different shades of hatred in the relevant discourse. The categorization of dominant narratives of Muslim hatred in the subsequent analysis reflects the well-established nexus of ideology and Islamophobia, points to key elements and motifs in each category and highlights differences as well as points of potential convergence amongst them.

5. Categorical list of dominant narratives of Muslim hatred

The categorical list of dominant narratives of Muslim hatred in Greece is premised on thorough analysis of narratives traced in political and media discourse, with an emphasis on experiences of discrimination in everyday life. In identifying the narratives and demonstrating their association to three main ideological strands, Extreme Right, Conservative and Liberal, we are guided by Sayyid's clusters of Islamophobia and methodological approach (Sayyid, 2014). In the first part of this analysis the material resonates with the fifth cluster of Islamophobia in that *'there is a sustained and systematic elaboration of comments in the public domain that disparage Muslims and/or Islam'* (Sayyid, 2014, 16).

We shall first turn to the most virulent version of anti-Muslim hatred, namely the version of nationalism represented by the Extreme Right. We have already established that nationalism is the driving ideological force behind Conservative and Extreme Right discourses and hinted at how such narratives exploit the historical legacy to gain validity. Conservative and Liberal narratives of

⁹ Though they seem to have concerns and doubts about their economic integration and fear regarding competition with locals (Pew, 2016).

¹⁰ The finding that Muslims are perceived as a partial community should not be immediately equated with Islamophobia, despite being a foundation of anti-Muslim hatred. The perception of an imminent threat is necessary for the emergence of Islamophobic discourse, otherwise the study of Greek society turns into a paradox.

Islamophobia are discussed subsequently. The analysis concludes with references to experiences of discrimination against Muslims in everyday life.

Extreme Right Narratives

The ultra-right party, Golden Dawn, self-defined as a popular and nationalist movement, is represented in the Hellenic Parliament since 2012, when it was first elected as the third party. Since then it has occupied the third place in four successive elections. The neo-Nazi ideological origins of its founding members and the association of its rise, at least initially, with anti-immigrant sentiments in certain areas of Athens (Georgiadou, 2012, 185-219; Dinas et al., 2016) highlight the roots of Golden Dawn's nationalism and the reason why party members and supporters would perceive of Islam and Muslims as direct threats against the Greek nation even *ante* 2015, before the rise of ISIS and the refugee crisis (xryshaygh.com, 04. 02. 2013 and Linardis, 26. 11. 2014).

A narrative that distinctively originates in the Extreme Right, and is increasingly adopted also by Conservative voices, is connecting the refugee crisis with the policy of the historical foe, Turkey; this narrative is absent from Liberal discourses. The intertwining of Muslim presence in Greece with Turkish policy is grounded in the conviction that Turkey is perennially following an aggressive, expansionist policy against Greece, and is willingly using anyone and anything as a pawn in its undeclared war. In those narratives, Turkey is depicted as deliberately sending the refugees to Greece with the latter constituting '*a silent, unconventional army in the service of Turkey*' (Linardis, 28. 02. 2017) that will flood the islands, change the demographics and open the door to Turkish expansionism.

Interestingly, not only Turkey, but also the European Union is portrayed in certain texts as promoting the Islamization of Europe via the '*importation of Stone Age Muslims targeting, eventually, at the abolition of nation-states in the continent*' (Linardis, 07. 05 2016). Europe is depicted as a society in decline, without values and ideals, unable to fight against Islamic fanaticism. Sporadically 'Americans', referring to the United States, and Zionists are depicted as orchestrators of Europe's Islamization.

In Golden Dawn narratives, the refugee crisis is, as one would expect, also associated with the threat of terrorism. Having established as a theoretical premise that '*terrorism is found at the hard core of Islamic religion*' (Mihaloliakos, 2016, 4.12.2016), refugees are portrayed as potential terrorists¹¹. Golden Dawn is attributing violent predispositions even to child refugees in its effort to block their schooling in Greek public schools (Xrysavgh, 16. 12. 2016).

11 Although a vast majority of the party's voters agrees on the negative perception of Islam, their attitude towards the refugees is significantly more balanced; it seems that Golden Dawn has not succeeded in persuading even its own audience about the danger posed by the refugee crisis (Dianeosis, 2017).

In this light, Golden Dawn is adamantly opposed to the planned construction of a mosque in Athens grounding its line of argumentation in the anti-Turkey historical legacy [*'200 years later [than 1821, marking the first year of the War of Independence], the Green flag of Islam is flying over Athens again'* (xryshaygh.com, 12. 01. 2016)], and the threat of jihadist teaching in the mosques, *'where they will be taught since children, ways of slaughtering the infidels'* (Linardis, 08.01.2015). Both narratives are illustrative of the vague fear of Islamization of Athens and Greece.

Another pattern of Extreme Right narration is constructed as a reaction to Leftist narratives. In response to the Left's diachronic defence of multiculturalism, the anti-Leftist narrative of Golden Dawn accuses the Left for using immigrants as *'a siege ram in order to demolish established values and create a globalized identity'* (xryshaygh.com, 5.2.2014). In line with this view, the denunciation of Islamophobia by the Left is presented as essentially tantamount to 'Islamolagnia', 'Ethnophobia' and racism against the Greeks (Mastoras, 9.1.2017), while the extremist left is even depicted as cooperating with Muslim terrorists (Xrysavgh, 20. 12. 2016).

The solution recommended by Golden Dawn against the multi-faceted threat of Muslims, terrorism and multiculturalism is closing the borders and turning Greece into a fortress (Mihaloliakos, 5.3.2016), while irregular immigrants already residing in the country should be expelled.

Apart from Golden Dawn, Islamophobia is integral to the ideological outlook of two Extreme Right newspapers, Eleftheri Ora and Makeleio, both enjoying a fringe, yet stable, daily circulation of around 3.000-4.000 copies.

Eleftheri Ora is a nationalist, ultra-orthodox, messianic newspaper that regularly re-publishes age-old prophecies on the inevitable rise of Greece and the restoration of the Byzantine Empire, while at the same time issues fiery warnings about the impending collapse of the nation under a combination of threats. Primary among them is the 'invasion of Muslims', disguised as refugees, closely related to Turkey, perceived as the enemy (Andri, 23. 08. 2016). Another narrative surfacing in this nationalist newspaper, drawing on the Islamophobic sentiments triggered mainly by the refugee crisis, views ISIS attacks on Europe as a severe warning that Greece is 'at war', and there are no grounds for Greeks' complacency, nor should the urgency of the narrative's moral be ignored (Eleftheri Ora, 28. 11. 2016, 1).

Far more coherent than the idiosyncratic Eleftheri Ora is Makeleio, a far-right, anti-parliamentarian newspaper whose founder, the Greek journalist Stefanos Chios, is famous for the vitriolic attacks to politicians. Given that Golden Dawn adopts a moderate public profile and abstains from openly endorsing violence against Muslims, Makeleio is arguably the most radical Extreme Right voice having repeatedly called for violence against dissenters and Muslim refugees as well. This ultra-nationalist voice had long ago identified Muslims as a threat, but it was the rise of ISIS and the outbreak of the refugee crisis that further radicalized the newspaper's narratives, which revolve around the association of refugees with Turkey's expansionism against Greece and deem the violence of ISIS to be representative of Muslims anywhere.

Makeleio is vindicating the concept of modern moral panics, defined by their *‘increasing rapidity in ... succession; one barely finishes before another takes its place’* (Thompson, 2005, 1). Apart from far-right narratives portraying refugees as instruments of, interchangeably, the New World Order pursuing the loss of *‘Greek national, historical and religious self-awareness,’* and Turkey intending to *‘flood the Aegean islands with Syrians’* (Makeleio.gr, 31. 01. 2017), Makeleio is supposedly revealing and exposing the violent nature of refugees. Successive articles are reproducing a nightmarish chain of events to demonstrate the imminent threat refugees pose for Greece. In the newspaper’s website, it is stated that *‘they are not refugees but devils who will chop our heads off’* (Makeleio.gr, 2.3.2016:1) and that their hatred of Christianity is verified by attacks against churches. Refugees, sarcastically named *‘poor immigrants’*, are even viewed as potential cannibals (Makeleio.gr, 02. 03. 2017). The portrayal of refugees as embodying an imminent and physical, rather than long-term cultural and national, threat is a unique feature of such far-right narratives and a breeding ground par excellence of hate environment.

Makeleio radicalized this narrative even further. In April 2015, the newspaper hosted in its front page a photo of refugees in boats with the description *‘Throw them into the sea, for they will eat us alive’* (Makeleio.gr, 15.4.2015:1). This front page constitutes the only explicit call to violence against Muslims that we have encountered in the Greek public sphere¹².

Islamophobic narratives abound in websites as well. Apart from the minor Extreme Right websites such as ethnikismos.net, empros.net, patriamag.gr, the most aggressive and original in its content is Stoxos.gr, an explicitly pro-dictatorship, nationalist website.

Finally, in March 2016, members of Extreme Right organizations staged a demonstration against the Islamization of Greece in Thessaloniki, and in April 2016 Golden Dawn staged a demonstration in Piraeus.

Conservative Narratives

The conviction that the Muslims constitute an imminent threat against Greece and that this threat grows and originates in the very presence of Muslim communities can be found in certain fractions of Greek conservatism, united in the adoption of an anti-Islamic version of nationalism. The three key issues pertaining to Islam and Greece, namely the construction of a mosque in Athens, the refugee crisis, and the threat of terrorism are central to Conservative narratives.

A definitional issue that needs to be addressed at the outset of this analysis is what falls within the scope of Conservative voices. The institutions and political or media-related sources wherefrom Conservative narratives originate vary from the Greek Orthodox Church to political parties, individual members of the Parliament and of the Greek Orthodox Church, newspapers and websites; because of the variety of sources of conservative narratives, the ideological classification of *‘who speaks’* and

¹² A call resonating the first cluster of islamophobia suggested by Sayyid.

‘who narrates’ is a challenge and a potential area of scholarly debate as such. For instance, the coalition partner in government, ANEL (Anexartitoi Ellines [Independent Greeks]), is a conservative voice that, as some would claim, belongs to the Right as a populist Right or a mainstream Right party. For the purposes of this report, Conservative voices are defined broadly to encompass various entities and individual ‘narrators’.

Specifically the Church of Greece and the coalition partner in government ANEL have addressed only the question of the construction of a mosque in Athens¹³. The two other key issues, the refugee crisis and the threat of terrorism, are encountered in ‘Dimokratia’, a newspaper of average circulation, in opinions by the former Nea Dimokratia politician Failos Kranidiotis, now founder of a fringe Right-wing party, in the website Antinews, and certain voices in the Greek Orthodox Church.

This part examines the narratives formulated by Conservative voices as well as the points of convergence and divergence from narratives generated by different ideological backgrounds. A crucial difference is the democratic, parliamentary orientation of Conservative voices in contrast to the explicit or latent dictatorial aspirations of the Extreme Right. Instead of cries for the army to take action or for a popular nationalistic movement to combat terrorism and the refugee crisis, such voices remain in line with the Constitution and parliamentary procedures¹⁴. Another point of divergence is the strong emphasis on the religious character of the conflict with Islam, a trait echoing the ties of certain Conservative voices with the prevailing religion. Summarized by the proclamation that ‘*this is a war of religions*’ (Dimokratia, 28. 07. 2016), this perspective is absent from Liberal and far from central in Extreme Right discourses; the emphasis in the latter is put on nation and race, rather than religion.¹⁵ Conservatives’ anti-Left narratives, instead of putting forward dire accusations of complicity with terrorists and the like, accuse the Left for incredulously sticking to its ideas of multiculturalism and demonstrating hypocrisy towards the oppressive, anti-Christian and misogynist face of Islam (Kranidiotis, 23. 10 2016).

What is alarming, though, is the convergence of certain Conservative narratives with Extreme Right ones; such convergence designates popular Islamophobic narratives that escaped the fringe Extreme Right and established themselves in the mainstream of Right-wing political discourse. These include the association of refugee flows with the stealth arrival of ‘Islamic neocolonists’ (Charvalias, 29 11. 2016), who encourage, among others, refugees in acting violently against Christians, while Muslim migrants, supported by Turkey, will soon prove to be the Trojan Horse which will allow Turkey to dominate Hellenism (Dimokratia, 20. 11. 2016). In any case, the inability of Muslims to accept European values is a barrier to the integration of refugees, who are expected to isolate themselves and, through the sheer force of demographics, turn Greece into an Islamic republic.

Apart from risks to national sovereignty and the preservation of national identity, the case of terrorism shows, according to Conservative voices, that ‘*the creation of big Muslim communities in*

¹³ While the conservative MPs from the party of Nea Dimokratia, the liberal party, are aligned with the non-Islamophobic stance of the party’s liberal leadership.

¹⁴ Despite the continuing debate on the definition of Extreme Right, its association with anti-democratic ideas is established in scholarship. See Mudde, 1995: 206).

¹⁵ With the idiosyncratic exceptions of Eleftheri Ora and Stoxos.gr

European cities proves to be a deadly danger' (Kranidiotis, 17. 07. 2016). This claim is also propagated by certain influential voices in the Greek Orthodox Church. Islamophobic narratives regarding the burning issues of terrorism and refugees are nowhere to be traced within the Church of Greece. Contrary to the official stance of the Church, the Metropolitans of Thessaloniki, Kalavryta and Aigialeia, and Piraeus have expressed extremist views.

According to Amvrosios, Metropolitan of Kalavryta and Aigialeia, the '*hordes of Muslims*' entering Greece intend to compromise the religious morals of the people, commit crimes against Christians and – a striking parallel with Golden Dawn narratives – are depicted as pawns in Turkey's undeclared war (Amvrosios, 24.01 2017). In similar vein, Anthimos, Metropolitan of Thessaloniki, stated that Islam is Europe's biggest problem and drew parallels between the 1453 Ottoman conquest and the flow of Muslim migrants, while Seraphim, Metropolitan of Piraeus declared that Islam is violent at its core and thus incompatible with European values.

In Conservative narratives the construction of a mosque in Athens is perceived as a criminal act attributed to the political myopia of Greek politicians who are not aware of the '*merciless religious war [that] takes place across Europe between Islam and all the other religions*' (Dimokratia, 20. 11. 2016). Greek politicians are accused of, instead, '*inviting them [the Muslims] to Europe and erecting mosques, where some of them will be taught how to blow us in the air*', (Anastasiadis, 24.. 07. 2016). ANEL, the partner of SYRIZA in the government coalition, and the above mentioned Metropolitans adopt a similar stance against the construction of a mosque in Athens.

The convergence of Extreme Right and Conservative discourses in relation to the mosque in Athens is alarming in that it renders the potential of Islamophobia attracting supporters beyond the Far Right highly probable. The sentiment underlying the phenomenon of convergence is expressed vividly by F. Kranidiotis, Conservative politician, in his bold statement that he would '*rather be called a right-wing extremist with [his] family kept safe than...getting slaughtered by ... psychopaths*' (Kranidiotis, 17. 07. 2016). In the words of the Runnymede report, Islamophobia then becomes '*more explicit, more extreme and more dangerous*' (Runnymede, 1997, 1).

Liberal Narratives

The perception of Muslims as an imminent threat to society is systematically tied to the Extreme Right or Conservative worldview and this is, largely, an accurate description of the ideological landscape that serves as fertile ground for Islamophobic narratives in Greece.

For the most part, an indiscriminate depiction of Muslims as a collective danger due to their particular cultural and religious traits is absent in both Liberal and Left discourses regarding the major issues of terrorism, refugee crisis and the status and perspectives of the Muslim migrant community. In fact, Liberal and Left commentators routinely condemn both Islamic extremism and Islamophobia,

dissociating Muslims from radical interpretations of Islam or rejecting altogether links drawn between terrorism and religion.

Regarding the refugee crisis, both Liberals (centre-Right and Social-Democrats) and the Left address it as a humanitarian crisis that needs to be resolved in a comprehensive way. Objections expressed regarding the presence of refugees in the country are not related to the issue of religion or even to the prospect of integration, but rather with Greece's severe economic crisis that inhibits the state from taking care of the vast numbers of migrants, including refugees, crossing the Greek borders without assistance from abroad. Liberals and the Left, as becomes evident in the discourse of the respective political parties¹⁶, have adopted a progressive outlook on the construction of a mosque in Athens by adopting legislation in the course of the last decades to support the integration of the Muslim minority in Thrace and by voting, quite recently, for the construction of the mosque in Athens.

The Liberal version of narratives of Islamophobia is minoritarian yet coherently articulated. Liberal narratives did not succeed in gaining popularity among Liberals. The danger that lurks in the existence of coherent Liberal narratives is the potential spread of Islamophobia, given the broad appeal of Liberal ideas in Greece and elsewhere. Liberal interpretations of Islam are, generally, more nuanced in that they recognize the existence of various strands in Islamic thought and delineate ISIS extremism as a specific, radical, and minoritarian phenomenon. Liberal voices claim that Muslim communities will inevitably serve as fertile ground or provide safe space for radical Islamists and, thus, constitute an imminent threat to Western societies.

The Islamophobic character of Liberal narratives should not obscure their significant differences with Conservative and, even more, Extreme Right versions of Islamophobia. The most blatant of those is the dissociation of terrorist attacks from the refugee crisis and the persistent focus on the terrorist threat. In fact, it is the terrorist attacks on European soil that provoked the most vehement criticism of Muslim presence in Europe and not the outbreak of the refugee crisis.

Liberal narratives place strong emphasis on the European dimension of the perceived threat of Islam, a feature that comes into stark contrast with the nationalistic outlook of Extreme Rights and Conservative discourses. This is not to say that the European perspective is absent from right-wing discourses where terrorism and multiculturalism in Europe foreshadow the bleak future of Greece, depicted as the bastion of Christian Europe. What is different in the case of Liberal narratives is that Europe is under attack and Greece is considered an integral part of the European whole. Appeals to history and Europe's historical legacy is prevalent in the articulation of Liberal Islamophobia, but qualitatively different from those in right-wing discourses; Liberals defend European history and its hard-fought Enlightenment legacy instead of linking Islamic threat to the Turkey as Greece's historical foe¹⁷.

¹⁶ With the exception of isolated incidents on the islands of the Aegean Sea (Sakellariou, 2016).

¹⁷ This highlights that liberal narratives are more uniform across different countries, contrary to the highly particularistic nationalist narratives.

Christianity is not prevalent in Liberal narratives. Echoing a long tradition of Liberal thought, authors in this strand of Islamophobia do not adopt a Christianity-centered line of argumentation, yet perceive of contemporary Christianity as a more peaceful religion than Islam which is *'always aggressive and never far from its origins'* (Triantafyllou, 2015: 83, 143), while *'centuries of History'* separate us from Christian violence (Theodoropoulos, 27. 07. 2016). Naturally, and this is another important difference between Liberal and Conservative narratives, Europe is not defined as a Christian continent or as a family of nations but as a cultural entity originating in the legacy of the Enlightenment and human rights. Terrorism and Muslim intolerance are not threatening Christianity in Liberal narratives, but rather the European humanistic and liberal way of life. Thus, the Liberal proclamation is that *'the war against us is cultural'* (Theodoropoulos, 27. 07 2016) – and not a war of religions.

The character of the recommendations put forward in narratives of Liberal Islamophobia is non-coercive, and this is yet another distinct characteristic of this ideological space. Contrary to the aggressive, claustrophobic and even violent ideas propagated by the Extreme Right and, increasingly, Conservative voices, the Liberal remedy consists, mostly, in a defensive reassertion of Western values¹⁸, which should lead European societies away from promoting multiculturalism¹⁹. Europeans should regain their self-esteem and promote their own culture and values, distancing themselves from political correctness and cultural relativism. The argument is successfully summarized in the statement: *'we are obliged, yes, obliged (!) ... to host people with another cultural background. A part of them should be assimilated, in other words, educated'* (Theodoropoulos, 12. 02 2017). Soti. Triantafyllou, perhaps the most articulate Liberal opponent of Islam, warns that the West is committing suicide by not defending its core values (Triantafyllou, 2015)²⁰.

European values are routinely defined as tolerance, freedom of religion and expression, respect of human rights, rejection of fanaticism and, above all, the secular character of the state and social life. These values are endangered because the Muslim communities are unwilling to accept or apply them. Islam is understood as a nexus of political and religious ideas that rejects the secular state as well as respect for human rights and tolerance towards different worldviews. Seen in this light, Muslims live parallel to the Western society, are unwilling to respect its laws, thus *'threatening... social cohesion and democracy'* (Triantafyllou, 29. 11. 2015). Today, these narrators note, *'Islam is the only religion whose adherents go to extremes'* (Panoutsos, 12. 02 2015) to defend any insults to their faith. Even moderate Muslims experience a *'mental rift'* (Triantafyllou, 01. 10. 2014) regarding jihad. This is indicative of how the very existence of Muslim communities is destined to produce, apart from gated worlds and silos indirectly affecting social cohesion, extremists that actively seek to

18 With the exception of Th. Tzimeros, founder of a fringe neo-liberal party, who suggests that Islamic communities should be encouraged to condemn every extremist verse in Islamic holy script, but if they refuse to do so, they should be treated as terrorists (Tzimeros, 22. 12 2016).

19 A characteristic example is St. Lygeros, *'The invasion of civilians'* (2016), where the danger of hosting people coming 'from countries with autocratic tradition' is highlighted and improved tactics of integration and selection among the asylum-seekers are recommended, acknowledging the humanitarian nature of the crisis.

20 A. Andrianopoulos (2015) , a distinct neo-liberal politician and writer, maintained that the economic marginalization of Islamic communities will be integrated if the market mechanism is left to operate.

impose their bigot views on the Western enemy²¹. Central to the Liberal narrative is that the pursuit of multiculturalism paved the ground for the dangerous marginalization of Muslims within Western societies. This marginalization is seen as the failure of the West to educate Muslims into its tradition of tolerance. In Liberal narratives of Islamophobia Muslims are depicted as inherently or unavoidably hostile to the very concept of tolerating non-orthodox views or ways of life.

It is the idea of tolerance, one of the most dominant Liberal concepts in modern times, that is particularly omnipresent in these texts as the ideological backbone of Liberal Islamophobia.

Experiences of Islamophobia in everyday life

The government's decision in 2016 to finally vote for the construction of a mosque in Athens removed the most convincing argument for the existence of an institutional version of Islamophobia in Greece²². Moreover, the anti-racist law of 2014 (4285/2014) guarantees the existence of a legal framework against the spread of hate-speech in Greek public sphere. The government guaranteed the admission of refugee children in public schools, despite sporadic reactions from local communities, while in 2016 a presidential decree permitted the establishment of a Department of Muslim Studies in the Faculty of Theology in the Aristotelian University of Thessaloniki. Again, conservative Metropolitans openly opposed to this development.

The absence of a monitoring centre for Islamophobia makes the exhaustive collection of data impossible; however the Ministry of Education issued the first of its kind report in 2016 regarding attacks on religious sites in Greece during the previous year. 147 such incidents were documented; out of those, 137 were directed against Christian Orthodox Churches, only 1 against a Catholic Church, 4 incidents against Jewish religious sites and 5 against Muslim religious sites. Apart from the accidental fire in a Thracian mosque, the other 4 incidents were directed against Muslims in (a) an unofficial praying house in Athens, where two copies of the Quran were burnt by the perpetrator, (b) symbols were inscribed in a Komotini mosque, (c) anti-Turkish rants in the Muslim cemetery on the island of Kos and, the most serious incident, (d) involved the placement of an explosive device in an unofficial prayer house in Heraklion, Crete. No explosion ensued and no damage was afflicted (Ministry of Education, 2016). Such incidents are indicative of Islamophobic activities encompassed by the Sayyid's second cluster of Islamophobia, namely attacks on property considered to be linked to Muslims.

As for attacks against persons, the first cluster of activities described as Islamophobic by Sayyid (2014), the refugee crisis has fuelled violence, albeit to a limited extent. An arson attack against a military camp destined to host refugees in Giannitsa in February 2016 (Zervas, 2016), and an attack against refugees on the island of Chios in November 2016 that received indirectly the support of the leader

21 It is on this ground that some Liberal voices oppose the construction of a mosque perceiving it as a breeding ground of radicalism.

22 The law establishing a mosque was voted in 2006, but technical and administrative issues persisted until 2014.

of Golden Dawn, N. Michaloliakos (Newsit, 2016) are examples of the most serious such incidents. Other incidents of hostility, in February and March 2016, involved the throwing of pigheads in refugee camps. The presence of nationalists in demonstrations against the establishment of camps has also been reported (Newsbeast, 2016 and Demetis, 2016).

A more complete picture of racist violence in Greece is offered by the 2015 and 2016 reports of RVNR, an NGO documenting racist violence. The NGO reported 273 incidents in 2015, out of which 22 incidents were associated by the victims to their religion (RVNR, 2016, 11). The respective numbers for 2016 were 95 total incidents and the police identified the victim's religion as the motivation for violence in 24 incidents (RVNR, 2017, 20).

Members of the Golden Dawn were identified as perpetrators by the victims in several cases, demonstrating the relative discrepancy between the official outlook of the party and the practices of its members, although as it was mentioned above, the leadership of the party has indirectly backed violent assaults against groups targeted by the Golden Dawn.²³

In sum, the available data shows a sharp decline in racist attacks during the last year, despite the relative rise of Islamophobia in public discourse, while Islamophobic incidents constitute the minority of the reported cases. The findings are in line with the conclusion that Islamophobia in Greece is a real, albeit for the present, fringe phenomenon.

Resorting to narratives by Muslim migrants documented in the press and media allows drawing further associations between the clusters of Islamophobia (Sayyid, 2014) and the lived experience of anti-Muslim hatred in Greece. Testimonials of migrants hosted by the Doctors of the World in Athens and the Greek provinces underline the sharp contrast between the safety and decent conditions in the shelters, including accommodations such as provision of separate prayer room for Muslims, and the reality of violence associated with racism and fascism 'outside': being kicked out of an open, public soccer field by bullies in Lamia, being attacked physically in the center of Athens without provoking violence. Golden Dawn supporters and the police are accused of violent behavior and physical attacks in these testimonials (koutipandoras.gr, 19.1.2014). Regarding the third cluster of Islamophobia, namely acts of intimidation, it is hard to establish that persons acting in concert, for instance the marching of fascist group in areas populated by predominantly by migrants, are engaging in specifically Islamophobic activities. Islamophobia in institutional settings cannot be substantiated; be that as it may, the mere fact that the Christian Orthodox religion is spelled out in the Constitution as the dominant religion, and the resulting implications for the respective components of the curriculum in primary and secondary education, as well as the 3% nation-wide limit set for election, which de facto prevents independent Muslim candidates from being elected, could be relevant to the fourth cluster. In anti-Muslim narratives examined and illustrated above, we oftentimes encounter distorted views of what Islam stands for, particularly in those narratives approaching Islam apropos Christianity and interested in making value judgements on occasion of this juxtaposition.

²³ The links between Golden Dawn and racist violence are also corroborated in another extensive study on xenophobic incidents from 1996 to 2016 by Galariotis et al., 2016.

The observation that prevails is that violent behavior against Muslims in Athens and Greece more generally is grounded in xenophobia or the fear and hatred of the ‘otherness’ of migrants or foreign individuals and groups, rather than a perceived ‘otherness’ of Muslims (Kanonidou, Kyrezi, Sorotou, 2009).

Gender issues and Islamophobia in Greece are evident in the lived experience of Muslim women refugees as reflected in testimonials and relevant reportage and of LGBTQ+ Muslim refugees’ experiences as these appear in sources of counter-narratives. Such incidents stress the importance of approaching gender issues and Islamophobia as a highly intersectional matter. It also verifies the appropriateness of the Domination Hate Model of Intercultural Relations for understanding anti-Muslim narratives. Incidents of rape of vulnerable Muslim refugee women in official transit sites and unofficial refugee camps can be understood as the result of an environment of hatred caused by policy or, more accurately, lack of policy and adequate state control and supervision. In the testimonials of Muslim women, the perpetrators of sexual harassment and rape incidents are Muslim men of various nationalities, while assault by police officers has been reported to the press, yet not confirmed by Greek police authorities and not considered a common or usual practice (Kouroupaki, 2016). The lack of provision for ensuring, de facto and actually, the safety and wellbeing of women in refugee sites and raising, where necessary, the standard of security guaranteed to them in view of the diversity of nationalities, religions, family status and cultural backgrounds of refugees hosted in such sites, can be perceived as inaction in terms of policy-making and response to the crisis. This creates an environment that allows for anti-Muslim hatred. In the case of LGBTQ+ Muslim refugees, the presence of distinct initiatives, separate shelters and aid corresponding to unique needs of this population is indicative of their vulnerability. The lived experience of a person coming from countries and religions criminalizing homosexuality and being required to ‘come out’ repeatedly to officials lacking training and knowledge about their gender identity in order to substantiate asylum requests needs to be addressed in a discussion on Islamophobia. The violence to which LGBTQ+ Muslim refugees are/can be exposed in an environment of hate presents particularities that should not escape our attention (Safe Refugee, 2017).

Regarding the public sphere, no major narrative is revolving around the relationship between Islam and women, although sporadic comments exist. The commentators, mostly extreme Rightists or conservatives routinely depict the maltreatment of women in Muslim countries (Makeleio, 2017 [3]) or in Europe (Makeleio, 2017 [4]) with only the latter case pertaining to the perception of Islam as a threat that we designated as the defining characteristic of Islamophobia.

The practice of female circumcision (Kranidiotis, 2014), compulsory veiling and women’s rights in general are the dominant themes. In any case, the aforementioned comments are not dominant in the public discourse belonging, mainly to the narratives that warn of Islamization of Greece as well as the one that points to the disrespect of Human Rights and, more often than not, constituting a secondary argument against Muslim presence in Greece/Europe.

6. Conclusion

Our research on Greece's public sphere and the analysis of the ideological landscape corroborated the findings of quantitative surveys on Greek public opinion according to which opinions on Islam in Greece are shaped across 'sharp ideological divides' (Pew, 2016; Dianeosis, 2015 and 2017). Conclusively, the narratives that emerged are ultimately tied to their ideological milieu. The purpose of the report is to offer an empirically substantiated portrayal of Islamophobia in Greece.

Islamophobic narratives abound among the politicians and public commentators of the anti-democratic extreme Right and certain influential factions of the non-extremist ultra-Conservative Right with significant similarities as well as important differences in their perception of Islam and Muslims.

Moreover, a Liberal Islamophobic view has emerged in recent years which, although minoritarian in the context of Greek liberalism, is not negligible since it has formulated its own distinct narratives and interpretations of Islam.

Given that any dissection on Islamophobia in Greece should necessarily take into account the ideological nature and preconditions of its articulation, the major narratives that have emerged from our research are listed below and their ideological milieu is indicated parenthetically to demonstrate the partial overlapping among ideological families regarding certain narratives. This should not obscure the value of the ideological divide as the interpretative axis of the study.

Muslims constitute a threat because:

1. They will provide the manpower for, and organize terrorist attacks in Greece (Extreme Right, Conservative Right, Liberals)
2. They serve as the blind instruments of Turkish expansionist views on Greece by settling on the Aegean Islands (Extreme Right and Conservative Right)
3. They are used by EU bureaucrats and/or other 'globalists' to dismantle the European nation state (Extreme Right)
4. They will deliberately try to de-Christianize Greece and turn it into an Islamic country (mostly Conservative Right and, secondarily, Extreme Right)

5. Their presence will inevitably (and not as a part of a pre-constructed plan) lead to the loss or corruption of Greek national identity (Conservative Right)
6. They serve as the instruments of leftist attacks to Greek cultural and national foundations (Extreme Right and Conservative Right)
7. They will sever, as an unassimilable community, the social and cultural cohesion in Greece (Conservative Right and Liberals)
8. They will sever, as an unassimilable community, the social and cultural cohesion of Europe (mostly Liberals and, to a lesser extent, Conservatives)
9. They will help diffuse a culture of disrespect towards human rights (mostly Liberals and to a lesser extent, Conservatives)
10. Their incompatibility rests on the rejection of the secular state (Liberals)

Criteria of Ranking

The different intellectual premises of each narrative make their comparison in terms of popularity difficult since it is clear that they appeal to different audiences. Beyond doubt, the narrative that ties Muslim presence to terrorism is by far the most prevalent across ideological orientations. The very fact of its adoption by all ideological families is a safe criterion for the classification of terrorism as the most popular Islamophobic narrative

Both quantitative public opinion surveys and the discursive material discussed demonstrate Islamophobia's nationalist, right-wing foundations. This safely leads us to the conclusion that narratives stressing the national danger or danger to the Christian religion posed by the presence of Muslim immigrants or refugees in the country are the most popular after the dominant narrative of terrorist attacks. The Islamization and de-Christianization of Greece are points of convergence of Conservative and Extreme Right narratives; this needs to be taken into account. Conspiracy theories pertaining to globalization and narratives that aim at the Right's leftist rivals remain marginal in terms of the frequency of their appearance in the discourse, yet in qualitative terms, are clearly Islamophobic in nature.

Liberal narratives of Islamophobia remain, mostly, peripheral, in terms of the frequency of their appearance, not only as Liberal voices, but even more due to the emphasis placed on European identity, the secular state and its cultural legacy. With nationalism dominating narratives of

Islamophobia, the Liberal narratives are the least popular. The very existence, however, of coherent Liberal narratives in anti-Muslim discourse is an alarming development with the narrative associating violation of human rights with Islam being the most prominent.

The criterion of ranking is dual. On the one hand, we took into account each narrative's appeal across ideological families and, on the other, each ideological family's proclivity to Islamophobia. This is the reason why liberal narratives were not accorded dominant status since liberal Islamophobia is underdeveloped and denounced by the majority of liberals. What is more, Islamophobia, as expressed in those narratives, is not infused with hatred, which is why they are ranked lower than Extreme Right and Conservative narratives.

In the end, people make sense of their world through narratives. Countering them will be the subject of the next paper.

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