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Movement adaptability in dissimilar settings: the far right in Greece and Russia

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ABSTRACT

This article discusses how two similar far right movements in different political systems – Golden Dawn (GD) in democratic Greece and the Movement Against Illegal Immigration (DPNI) in authoritarian Russia – adapted their strategies and claims to better fit existing political contexts and how this affected the institutionalization of these movements. GD, a neo-Nazi movement formed in the 1980s, entered mainstream politics during the deep financial crisis of 2010, and since 2012 has consolidated its position as the third major opposition party. DPNI was founded in 2002; it had close connections with governing politicians and mobilized large xenophobic protests until it was banned in 2011. It then entered into a coalition with other far right groups under the banner of *Russkie*, cooperated with the liberals in the massive anti-fraud protests during 2011–2013, and tried to register as the Party of Nationalists, but failed and has now disbanded. While GD de-radicalized its anti-immigration claims to fit with the dominant discourse and exploited the financial crisis for its grass-root mobilization, DPNI changed its strategies and collaborated with its ideological opponents only after it had become very popular and faced with severe state repression. Our comparative analysis shows that far right movements adapt to their diverse environments in a manner similar to that of other anti-establishment movements regardless of context – whether within a democratic or non-democratic regime.

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KEYWORDS Far right movements; institutionalization; Greece; Russia; Golden Dawn; movement against illegal immigration

Introduction

The electoral success of populist far right[1] parties in the European Union and the transformation of the Tea Party movement into a party in the U.S.

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[1]We use the term 'far right' as a more generic term to describe political groups (parties, movements, or milieus) that belong both to the generic terms 'extreme right' and 'radical right' and are

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have shifted the focus of scholarly interest in the role of the far right in politics (Almeida and van Dyke 2016; Mudde 2014). This comes as no surprise, as immigration and ethnic relations – the issues of major interest to far right parties of both populist and non-populist types – have also constituted the most prominent and controversial fields of political contention in Western European politics since the 1980s (Koopmans *et al.* 2005: 3). Numerous studies explain the increasing public support for (populist) far right parties (e.g. Steenvoorden and Harteveld 2018; Kriesi 2014) and describe the mobilization of far right movements in Europe (Peterson 2016; Rydgren 2005; Karpantschof and Mikkelsen 2017) and the U.S. (van Dyke and Meyer 2016, Muis and Immerzeel 2017). The majority of this research focuses on single case studies or compare far right movements in similar contexts, e.g. in Western Europe (Betz 1994; Kitschelt and McGann 1997; Ignazi 2003; Carter 2013) or Central and Eastern Europe (Pytlas 2016; Pirro 2015; Bustikova 2017; Minkenberg 2017). Therefore, we know little about the role different political contexts play for the sustained mobilization of such movements.

The sustainability of social movements and political parties is related to their ability to change their arguments and strategies so that these fit into the existing political context (Minkoff 1999). Such an adaption process is often related to social movement institutionalization, which is usually studied in the context of left-wing, environmental, women's, and civil rights movements (Banaszak 2010; Bosi 2016; Giugni and Passy 1998; Heaney and Rojas 2007; Maquire 1995; Meyer 1993; Piccio 2016; Rootes 1999; Suh 2011; van der Heijden 1997). Social movements' ability to adapt in authoritarian regimes such as Russia is still an under-researched topic (Liikanen 2008; Greene 2014). Moreover, our knowledge of the adaptability of far right movements remains limited (but see Peterson 2016).

In this article, we contribute to existing research and ask how far right movements adapt their strategies and claims in different political environments? We answer this question by comparing two similar far right groups in different political regimes – Golden Dawn (GD) in a democracy (Greece) and the Movement Against Illegal Immigration (DPNI) in an authoritarian regime (Russia). Both Greece and Russia underwent transitions from authoritarianism to liberal democracy in

distinguished – according to German practice – by the fact that 'radical' right does not reject liberal democracy, although it may support plebiscitary legitimation or strong presidentialism. Nationalism stands in the core of these groups' ideology and they can also bear anti-immigration, authoritarian, and anti-establishment populist features (Vasilopoulou and Halikiopoulou 2015; Mudde 2010).

the 1970s and 1990s respectively, however, Russia has never become a consolidated democracy but rather fell back into authoritarian rule. Still, both countries have seen the rise of a large number of far right organizations since their transition periods (see Ios 2002; Verkhovsky *et al.* 1999).

Greece, however, is the first Western European country to have seen a far right movement with neo-Nazi characteristics becoming one of the major opposition parties in its parliament. GD is a social movement party and its leadership favours authoritarian rule, something that brings it into direct conflict with the principles of liberal democracy. Russia is an authoritarian regime that allows controlled open competition. Under its hybrid system of societal control, grassroots movements compete with state-supported groups 'on a highly unequal basis' (Robertson 2009: 531–532). DPNI became the most significant far right movement in the 2000s; since 2005 it has organized the biggest annual protest event of Russian nationalists, the Russian March, and it has succeeded in mobilizing local ethnic conflicts at large scale xenophobic events (i.e. the Kondopoga pogrom, the Manezhnaya Square riots) (Tipaldou & Uba 2014).

DPNI had a similar agenda and organizational structure to that of GD and tried to become an institutionalized movement, but was banned in 2011. It re-emerged as part of a coalition movement under the banner of *Russkie* and formed a coalition with pro-democracy activists during the anti-fraud protests of 2011–2012, but it eventually failed to transform itself into a political party. While the different agendas of these movements could be related to structural (regime) differences, we argue that regardless of the regime, far right movements can advance their agendas through adapting their discourse, modes of coalition-building and mobilization strategies to their environment.

We provide evidence for our argument via a detailed description of the development of two movements, focusing on the interplay between structure and agency. Our analysis covers the period from the formation of the movements (in the 1980s in Greece and in the 2000s in Russia) to their institutionalization (in 2012 in Greece) or failure (in 2015 in Russia). The description is based on documents published on the websites of GD and DPNI[2] and the published interviews and texts of their leaders (for GD in Psarras 2012 and Nikolakopoulos 2012 and for DPNI in

[2]GD's website can be accessed at: http://www.xryshaygh.com/?COLLCC=118773551&COLLCC=112787071& and DPNI's at: http://dpni.org/ (last accessed 12 May 2018).

Tipaldou 2015c; Vinogradov 2008; Shibanova 2006; Stringer 2005 and Basmanov 2013). For the framing and mobilization strategies of both movements and their connections with political elites we rely on Greek and Russian newspapers (*Eleftherotypia, Ta Nea, To Vima, Novyi Region, Russkii reporter*), watchdogs of the far right (*Ios* from the newspaper Eleftherotypia in Greece, and the SOVA Centre, Panorama and Anticompromat in Russia), the report on Greece by the European Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe (Muižnieks 2013), the Greek police archives,[3] and DPNI's protest events from the database we constructed for our previous article (XXXX 20XX). We finally used the Greek Ministry of Internal Affairs database for data on GD's performance in local, national, and European Parliament (EP) elections.

Far right movements and the role of adaptability

Gaining regular access to policy-makers' and advancing movements' goals is often related to the institutionalization of social movements (Rootes 1999; Suh 2011). This long-term multi-dimensional process (Bosi 2016) may involve the professionalization and formalization of the movement, as well as the formation of a political party and participation in elections (Maquire 1995; Heaney and Rojas 2007; Piccio 2016). Movement institutionalization takes place when movement activists decide to aim for it and when political elites accept and incorporate the movement as a political actor (Giugni and Passy 1998; Suh 2011). Adapting to a changed situation – often characterized as political or discursive opportunities (van der Heijden 1997; Koopmans and Statham 1999) – is thereby a necessary (but not sufficient) part of the institutionalization process. Movements interact with the elites either by ignoring the pressures of the changed internal and external environment or by adapting to the situation relatively fast (cf. Minkoff 1999). We have to note here that when we refer to a social movement, we mainly refer to its leadership, because social movements are rarely homogenous.

A movement's decision or choice to adapt to the political environment is not self-evident, because it can involve both advantages (e.g. institutionalization increases access to legislative bodies) (Banaszak 2010) and disadvantages (e.g. there is a threat of co-optation, demobilization and fragmentation) (Coy and Hedeen 2005). Radical movements might be

[3]The authors obtained the database of the Greek police of the number of participants in the GD organized lmia through electronic communication on 18 November 2017.

particularly resistant to increased contact with the state due to a perceived pressure for de-radicalization. De-radicalization implies the loss of some activists and can cause internal disagreements (Tarrow 2011). The decision to adapt their repertoire or agenda to an existing (democratic) political environment may be particularly demanding for far right movements, even though their non-democratic agendas and mobilization strategies sometimes risk prosecution (Caiani and Della Porta 2011). If far right parties decide to operate within the frame of liberal democracy, they have to moderate and this will cost them the support of their most radical elements (Mudde 2007: 288). This suggests that far right movements might not be too willing to adapt to a democratic political environment.

However, prior research on populist far right movements in Western Europe shows how these movements have managed to enter parliaments after choosing an electoral path over one of mobilization, using nationalist-defence frames to mobilize globalization losers (Hutter and Kriesi 2013). Peterson (2016: 319) analysed the successful institutionalization of the Swedish far right party, the Sweden Democrats, initially a Nazi movement, as a result of its adaption. This movement in democratic Sweden was ready to 'alter [its] structures, tactics, goals, ideology, or relations with others'.

In terms of tactics, it has been shown that populist far right parties do better in elections when they abstain from their regular social movement strategy – the protest (Hutter 2014). However, electoral participation does not necessarily lead to a decrease in the violent activism of all far right groups (Jäckle and König 2017). In non-democracies, adaption to electoral processes might not be needed, but it is to be anticipated that mobilization which challenges the regime will not be tolerated and the movement might need to adapt accordingly.

Additionally, movements can also adapt their agendas to better fit the dominant discourse. For example, Rydgren (2004: 475) notes that the rise of far right parties in Western democracies is related to a cross-national spread of new master frames, which combine ethno-nationalist xenophobia and anti-political establishment populism (cf. Caiani and della Porta 2011). We can expect that far right movements will act similarly to right-wing populist parties, which seek legitimation through new frames that distance them from fascism and present them as democracy's defenders (Halikiopoulou 2018).

Finally, although the decision to adapt to the environment is taken by the movement, other actors in the field – ruling elites and possible allies, play a significant role in the results of this process. For example, in the case

of far right movements, established political parties may opt to institutionally exclude the movement because they perceive it as a threat (Peterson 2016: 328). On the other hand, targeted elite or potential allies may try to absorb successful agendas introduced by far right movements and implement them with moderation in their policies, as has happened in Eastern Europe (Mudde 2007).

In sum, we argue that far right parties are likely to adapt to their environment regardless of the prevailing regime and the process is characterized by a dynamic interaction between the movement and a political environment that is ever in flux. In the following presentation of the experiences of Greek Golden Dawn and Russian DPNI, we focus mainly on adaptation via changed mobilization strategies, agenda setting, and the formation of strategic coalitions.

The character and development of Golden Dawn and DPNI

Golden Dawn (*Chrysi Avgi, GD*),[4] was formed in the 1980s by a group of young radicals (Nikolaos Michaloliakos, Christos Pappas), who started to publish a national-socialist magazine of the same name and supported the re-establishment of an authoritarian regime similar to that of Nazi Germany (Psarras 2012: 35). GD became publicly visible in the early 1990s, when its opposition to the naming of a young, former-Yugoslav republic 'Macedonia' gained the support of many young people (Nikolakopoulos 2012). Its landmark public action was the Imia March, named after a dispute over the uninhabited Aegean island of Imia that almost started a war with Turkey and led to the death of a Greek officer in 1996 (Papadatos 2014; 65–67). Since then, GD has organized an annual rally for Imia that, according to the Greek police, managed to mobilize up to 2000 supporters in 2011 and 2017. The GD agenda is based on opposition to democracy, as well as communism and liberalism. The movement supports Nazi ideas and is defined by 'violence, discipline and ultimate respect for the leader to the extent that party members are required to stand and salute upon the leader's arrival' (Vasilopoulou and Halikiopoulou 2015: 3–4; Ellinas 2013: 550). GD follows a rigorous ethical code, a strict hierarchy and by 2013 had built up a paramilitary arm reportedly numbering 3,000 persons (Nikolakopoulos 2012).

[4]Transliteration, except of names and surnames that were kept as already published, is based on the Standard system for Greek and the BGN/PCGN for Russian.

In its early stages, GD functioned as a clandestine club with no political ambition. Its magazine even stated: 'politics is a very dirty business and we are too pure for entering it' (Psarras 2012: 41). This changed in the 1990s, when in 1996 GD ran for the Greek general election, although received only a marginal 0.07% of votes.[5] In the following EP elections (1999), GD formed a coalition party 'First Line', by joining the party of Greece's major theorist of neo-fascism, Konstantinos Plevris. The coalition won only 0.75% of the vote. GD moved on to form a new coalition in 2002 with populist far right party Popular Orthodox Rally (*Laikos Orthodoxos Synagermos*, LAOS) that allowed four GD members to sign up on its list for local elections. For the 2004 EP elections GD formed a coalition with former members of party LAOS under the name 'Patriotic Alliance', but they received a marginal 0.17%. There did not seem to be much support for far right ideas at the time.

The external environment of GD changed with the financial crisis of 2007, when LAOS received 5.63% of the vote in the 2009 general election and entered the coalition government of Lukas Papademos (November 2011–October 2012), together with the centre-right party New Democracy (ND) and the centre-left party PASOK. Since then a far right party was part of establishment. The fact that LAOS, as a part of the government, signed the unpopular austerity measures thereby losing much of its popularity (Vasilopoulou and Halikiopoulou 2015; Ellinas 2013), opened up new opportunities for GD. With one less competitor, GD won 21 seats in May and 18 seats in the June 2012 national elections (6.9% of the vote in both elections).

This rising party faced a small set-back in 2013, when the GD leaders and high-ranking members were arrested after the assassination of anti-fascist musician Pavlos Fyssas, an event that brought the party's paramilitary activity to light (Vasilopoulou and Halikiopoulou 2015: 62). Despite the arrests, GD won three seats in the EP elections in 2014 and significantly increased its presence across the country in the 2014 local elections (e.g. GD won 11.13% of the vote in the country's biggest municipality of Attica). Electoral success continued with the double general elections of January and September 2015, when GD won 17 seats (6.28%) and 18 seats (6.99%) respectively. The social movement had become an established far right party.

The Movement Against Illegal Immigration (*Dvizhenie Protiv Nelegal'noi Immigratsii,* DPNI) was formed in the early 2000s by the brothers

[5]Electoral results for all European, general and national elections in Greece retrieved from the Ministry of Internal Affairs, http://www.ypes.gr/el/ (last accessed 12 May 2018).

Aleksandr Belov and Vladimir Basmanov. It is the first movement to have imported Western European-style anti-immigration frames in Russia. The websites of both movements reveal that GD and DPNI use similar frames: GD targets illegal non-white immigrants and its main tag-line is 'Greece for Greeks', whereas DPNI targets non-Slavic illegal immigrants with the central slogan of 'Russia for Russians'. While some scholars note that DPNI has always stressed its commitment to democratic principles – which makes it an anti-establishment movement in non-democratic Russia (Pribylovskii ca.2013; Tipaldou 2015c: 112), its leaders claim it to be 'a national liberation movement' (Basmanov 2013) and have expressed their ideological affinity to Hitler's methods for seizing power (Vinogradov 2008). Similar to GD, DPNI did not try to become a political party. According to Belov, the movement preferred was not ready and it was more convenient to influence politics indirectly through established political organizations (Stringer 2005). In 2008, Basmanov, initiated organizational reforms that sought to make DPNI somewhat more like a political party, but this divided the movement and led to his resignation.

DPNI gained public attention through the Kondopoga pogrom of 2006 and by organizing several Russian marches (Tipaldou and Uba 2014). The first of these was related to a lethal fracas between ethnic Russians and Chechens and Azerbaijanis in a Chechen-owned restaurant in Kondopoga. The fracas was regarded by residents as an interethnic conflict and DPNI reacted fast by mobilizing a People's Assembly of about 2,000 participants. It demanded the deportation of foreigners from the city, which escalated into pogroms against Caucasian property (Kozhevnikova 2007; Tipaldou 2015c). In 2005, DPNI mobilized together with Aleksander Dugin's Eurasian Youth Union to launch the first nationalist demonstration in Russia, the Radical Right March. The following year, 2006, the event was renamed the Russian March, and in its heyday (2009–2011) it mobilized from 3,000 to 6,000 people in Moscow (Tipaldou and Uba 2014: 1086). Street mobilization was combined with active internet mobilization and the movement grew in popularity (Tipaldou and Uba 2014: 1086).

The situation changed in 2010, when the killing of a Russian Spartak fan in a street fight with North Caucasian youngsters led to a 'spontaneous reaction' of soccer fans, which took the form of a memorial rally (Tipaldou 2015c). DPNI leader Belov addressed the crowd and called for violence against the Caucasian 'animals'. The event culminated with a riot in which about 3,000 people chanted anti-immigrant slogans in Manezhnaya Square; attacks against non-Russians were reported in Moscow as well as

in other cities. While the Russian authorities had not previously hindered DPNI mobilization, the riots in 2010 also revealed its opposition to the Kremlin and DPNI was soon banned (Tipaldou 2015c).

Repression did not stop the movement, rather, the majority of DPNI leaders reacted fast, directly initiating cooperation with two other prominent far right leaders – Dmitrii Dyomushkin and Dmitrii Bobrov. Together they formed a new movement, *Russkie*, that was very similar to DPNI in its ideology and organizational structure. In 2012, *Russkie* announced the formation of the Party of Nationalists (*Partiia Natsionalistov*), which sought to represent the extreme right of the nationalist spectrum in Russia (Tipaldou 2015c: 112). The party was not allowed to register and it fragmented. In 2015 the authorities, who were already annoyed with DPNI's mobilization, and had stepped up pressure against nationalists since the 2014 conflict in Ukraine, banned *Russkie* in 2015 (Yudina and Alperovich 2013; Tipaldou 2018). When in 2016 Dyomushkin announced that he wanted to register the Party of Nationalists, the former DPNI leader, Basmanov, withdrew his support (Yudina and Alperovich 2017).

The instances of adaption: structural conditions and strategies of action

While GD had every opportunity to participate in local and national elections once it had registered as a political party, during the 1990s and the early 2000s it continued to use radical mobilization strategies and to organize violent protests and attacks against foreigners and anti-fascists (Vasilopoulou and Halikiopoulou 2015; Georgiadou 2013; Ellinas 2013; Tipaldou 2015a: 198). It also had no need to change, as until 2012 that the anti-racism Law 928/1979 was replaced by more effective and modernized legislation,[6] Greek law failed to criminalize individual acts of racist violence and the police (despite being empowered to effectively sanction perpetrators), prosecutors and the courts hardly ever applied it (Psarras 2012: 180–191). So, perpetrators enjoyed effective impunity and GD's violent mobilization did not face any sanction from the Greek authorities (Muižnieks 2013: 14; 20). Even after the arrests which followed the assassination of Pavlos Fyssas in 2013, GD launched a successful electoral campaign and managed to come third in the 2014 EP elections and third in the double general elections of 2015.

[6]Newspaper of the Greek Democracy's Government (2014) 'Legislation number 4285', Number 191, *10 September*, issue 1.

Thus, the movement did not need to abandon its violent strategies for electoral success, but it did opt for some 'tactical innovations' (McAdam 1983). First, it copied strategies effectively employed by other social movements and opted for mobilization through sport and music events. It set up a football hooligan team, the Azure Army (*Galazia Stratia*) and a youth branch, Counterattack (*Antepithesi*). This way, GD simultaneously managed to keep its most radical followers, attract new members from among radical youth groups, and avoid the image of a 'radical xenophobic' group which was not acceptable to the general public. The Azure Army incited the first pogrom against foreigners in modern Greek history in various cities, after Greece won the UEFA Euro 2004, while through Counterattack, GD promoted the first Europe-wide 'Hatewave Festival', which it attempted, but failed, to organize in 2005 (Psarras 2012: 146; 160).

Second, GD opted for grass-root mobilization by engaging with local residents in the Agios Panteleimonas neighbourhood, one of the areas of Athens with the highest non-Greek population. It combined its violent strategies with strategies typical of political parties: door-to-door canvassing and use of the media. For example, GD members continued to use physical violence against foreigners, but they also launched 'People's Committees' which complained about immigrant criminality in the media (Psarras 2012: 369–384). They even started to distribute the journal 'The Voice of the Residents of Agios Panteleimonas' and set up their own web TV-channel.[7] These actions were combined with 'social policies' such as food distribution, blood donation 'only for Greeks' (Ellinas and Lamprianou 2017: 5); later action encompassed other charity sectors, such as orphanages.[8] This adaption arguably paid off in 2010, when GD managed to receive an unprecedented 5.3% of the vote in the municipal elections and to elect its leader to Athens's municipal council (Dinas *et al.* 2016).

As with GD, DPNI did not face any hindrance during its early mobilization. Varga (2008: 572-573) has described how the Russian authorities failed to enforce the 2002 Federal Law on Countering Extremist Activity with regard to far right violence and to punish the perpetrators. However, since the Kondopoga pogrom in 2006, the authorities have become more interested in sentencing activists for spreading far right propaganda (Kozhevnikova 2007) and in 2016 the Duma passed a law that further strengthened sanctions related to extremism (Roudik 2016). Our

[7]Available at http://elldiktyo.blogspot.co.uk/p/blog-page_6.html [21 February 2018].
[8]See also GD's website for information about its periodical charity events such as the distribution of clothes, food and toys in orphanages, http://www.xryshaygh.com/enimerosi/view/t.o.-athhnwn-dianomh-imatismou-trofimwn-kai-paichnidiwn-fwtoreportaz [21 August 2017].

presentation of DPNI above indicates that the movement did not adapt to the situation and continued with radical strategies, which culminated in the protests at Manezhnaya Square and banning of the movement in 2011.

On the other hand, Russia's non-democratic system did not provide DPNI with the same electoral opportunities as GD had. Party registration rules in the early 2000s made electoral involvement for minor parties impossible. Legislation required at least 50,000 members in 45 regional sections for participation in elections to be allowed, and leaders of minor parties were selectively coerced and intimidated (Laruelle 2009: 20). In 2012, when the government simplified the rules for party registration (Turchenko 2017), DPNI's new coalition movement, *Russkie*, tried to register as a party, but authorities did not allow it to.

However, DPNI adapted its mobilization strategies on two occasions. First, as with other social movements in the digital age, DPNI looked for a location which opened up more opportunities than offered by the electoral arena and organized a wide network of supporters through the internet. It presented itself as a source of alternative news and its internet channel constantly (over)projected the number of crimes committed by non-Russians. Secondly, during the emerging anti-fraud campaign of the liberal opposition movement in 2011, former DPNI activists took part in peaceful pro-democracy street demonstrations together with the liberal opposition (Popescu 2012). This did not entail a change in the movement's agenda but it does show that DPNI eventually had to adapt to the non-democratic environment in which it found itself.

Adapting claims to dominant discourse

It is likely that GD's electoral success was not only related to its changed mobilization strategies after the financial crisis; its amended agenda was also a response to this situation. During the early years of mobilization, the 1990s, GD had managed to harness grievances that emerged around the Macedonian issue in Greece and decided to run for public office in 1993. In order to run for elections, the GD leadership opted for a de-radicalized discourse and started promoting Alain de Benoist's 'ethnopluralist' theory – turning to a discourse against illegal immigrants and criminality, from one of ethnic racism and national-socialism (Psarras 2012: 69). Still, this 'adaptation' to a more democratic discourse was only partial, and the GD magazine kept dedicating covers to Adolf Hitler and Rudolf Hess up until the late 2000s (Tipaldou 2015a: 195).

The entrance of the populist right-wing LAOS in the government coalition in 2009 opened up discursive opportunities, to which GD adapted, like right-wing movements elsewhere (Koopmans and Olzak 2004). The presence of LAOS lead to an anti-immigration agenda appearing at the government level and it justified GD's xenophobic discourse, increasing its legitimacy and almost making the movement mainstream. Moreover, during the 2012 pre-electoral campaign, immigration was the main topic of the established parties (Psarras 2012), and the ND leader, Antonis Samaras, even made public xenophobic declarations such as 'illegal migrants, who have now become the society's tyrants, should be deported' (Tipaldou 2015b). In 2013, the tripartite government also launched operation 'Hospitable Zeus', that resulted in the detention of 77,526 people and the arrest of 4,435 in detention centres based on racial profiling by the police (Vasilopoulou and Halikiopoulou 2015: 85–86). By doing this, the government not only incorporated GD's rhetoric into its own policy, but it also legitimized violence against migrants and refugees.

DPNI did not need to change the way it framed its agenda at the early stages of its mobilization, because in the 2000s the Russian government was systematically promoting patriotism and xenophobia ((Tipaldou 2015c: 186–188). The authorities promoted the creation of the ultranationalist party *Rodina* led by Dmitrii Rogozin and the setting up of patriotic youth organizations, such as *Nashi*. *Rodina* played a significant role in introducing xenophobic vocabulary into Russia's public discourse during the first half of the 2000s (Kingsbury 2017). Rogozin was considered by grassroots Russian nationalist movements as 'the greatest nationalist in the *Duma*' (Tipaldou 2015c: 212). Since 2011, Rogozin became deputy prime minister. DPNI's rhetoric was further legitimized after the Kondopoga riots, when Russia's president, Putin, introduced stricter legislation concerning the presence of foreigners in retail markets (Tipaldou and Uba 2014: 1093).

Adaption by forming coalitions

While forming coalitions and having institutional allies might endanger the autonomy of social movements, especially those which claim to have an anti-establishment character, political alliances can also benefit a movement (Tarrow 2011). In addition to adapted agendas and strategies of mobilization, GD used the fragmentation of the Greek political system and also formed some strategic coalitions. We have already noted its alliance with the fridge movement of Konstantinos Plevris in 1999 that resulted in a marginal number of votes. Its coalition with LAOS in 2002, however, was more

significant, because GD members signed up to LAOS' list for local elections. Thereby LAOS became the first Greek party to field openly racist and anti-Semite candidates (Ellinas 2013; Mudde 2007) and above all it gave GD an experience of institutionalized politics.

For DPNI, there was little need for any change at the start, as its early mobilization was characterized by close collaboration with state institutions. DPNI collaborated with the police through identifying places of residence and work of illegal immigrants (DPNI 2007). Belov has stated that he had contacts among senior counterintelligence officers and was photographed at a Kremlin banquet honouring 'Police Day' in 2006 (Rothrock 2012). The Kremlin also allowed for the DPNI to organize the Russian March and even contracted it to show its militia knowhow to *Nashi* (Tipaldou 2015c: 219). However, according to Belov, the authorities tried to crush the nationalist movement once they noticed that the nationalists were able to mobilize many young people (Vinogradov 2008). DPNI did not form any electoral coalitions as did DG; but Belov declared that his organization would support some candidates from the ultranationalist *Rodina* party in the Moscow city elections in 2005 (Pribylovskii ca.2013). In 2006, MPs Andrei Savel'ev of *Rodina* and Nikolai Kur'yanovich of the Liberal Democratic Party of Russia (LDPR) publicly joined DPNI, but Kur'yanovich had to resign after that (Pribylovskii ca.2013). Also, the former leader of *Rodina*, Rogozin, joined the 2006 Russian March. DPNI, in exchange, became one of the coalition partners for Rogozin's subsequent parties after *Rodina*, *Kongress Russkikh Obshchin* (Congress of Russian Communities) and *Velikaya Rossiya* (Great Russia) (Tipaldou 2015c: 117). These coalitions did not, however, help DPNI have similar success to GD.

Concluding discussion

This article argues that far right movements can advance their position through adapting to their environment by changing their mobilization strategies, agendas, and by coalition building, regardless of the political regime. Although a few prior studies (e.g. Blee and Creasap 2010), have suggested that far right movements are similar to other radical movements, the literature on institutionalization and adaptability of social movements tends to neglect far right movements. Furthermore, such analysis is seldom done in different political contexts. We have demonstrated that when far right movements adapt their claims and/or their strategies, this is similar to what has been described in prior studies about left-wing movements.

The process is as complex and dynamic, and it might benefit, but does not guarantee, the institutionalization of a social movement.

GD in Greece and DPNI in Russia experienced different openings for their respective discursive and political opportunity structures, and they often reacted to these by changing their strategies of mobilization, coalition building and/or re-framing of their main agendas. In democratic Greece, there was little space for radical nationalist agendas until the early 1990s when the dispute over the name of Macedonia gave GD its first opportunity to gain popular appeal. When it decided to run for election, it adapted to the situation and introduced a less radical agenda, opted for organizational changes which allowed it to publicly distance itself from anti-immigrant violence, and formed coalition with a populist far right party, LAOS. After further openings of opportunity due to the re-alignment of the political space and LAOS' entrance in the 2011 coalition government, radical mobilization strategies were combined with innovation in local mobilization, all of which lead to success in the local, national and European elections.

Authoritarian Russia provided DPNI with several discursive opportunities, because of the government's xenophobic discourse in the early 2000s, but closed political opportunities for electoral participation. DPNI did not challenge the system which hindered the registration of small parties, but rather adapted by cooperating with some members of the administration – especially with Rogozin – and focused on internet and street-level mobilization. When the situation changed and DPNI was banned due to its popularity and emerging anti-establishment demands in 2011, the movement's leadership adapted to the situation by forming a new movement, *Russkie*, in coalition with other far right fridge movements. Strategic cooperation with authorities, which had characterized it initially, and coalition building with established far right parties were followed by DPNI/*Russkie*'s participation in the 2011–2012 anti-fraud protests side-to-side with the liberal opposition. Even though the Russian administration introduced a bill that simplified party registration in 2011, *Russkie* never managed to register as a party and today the movement no longer exists.

Thus, the agendas of the two similar anti-immigrant movements, which also shared some mobilization strategies in the form of pogroms, People's Committees and the establishment of alternative media, is very different. Both movements adapted to new situations and respectively changed their strategies and agendas, but the disbandment of DPNI can be seen as just another way of adapting to the repressive regime of non-democratic Russia. Democratic Greece provided Golden Dawn with an opportunity

and its example shows that democratic regimes eventually facilitate the institutionalization of far right movements.

As the described adaption process of far right movements in Greece and Russia was rather similar to the one in Sweden (Peterson 2016), this should encourage further comparative research of social movements' institutionalization. Learning more about the complex interplay between structure and agency of radical movements in comparative setting, will allow us to better understand the varying success of such movements in Europe and beyond.

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