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Crisis and Extremism: Can a Powerful Extreme Right Emerge in a Modern Democracy? Evidence from Greece's Golden Dawn

Costas Roumanias, Spyros Skouras, Nicos Christodoulakis

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Costas Roumanias*, Spyros Skouras[¤], Nicos Christodoulakis®

ABSTRACT

By local and international standards, Golden Dawn (GD) is at the far end of Extreme Right, yet it has emerged as Greece's third largest party, gaining most of its electoral support within months, in early 2012. Its electoral rise has been attributed to the severe economic crisis the country had previously and since experienced. We investigate this remarkable case study econometrically, using both panel vote-share, and individual vote-intent regressions. Dramatic changes in parameters provide congruent evidence that GD's success was due to a change in voter behaviour, rather than changes in individual characteristics or contextual conditions. Around one third of this change was due to GD's success in taking ownership of the previously ownerless niche issues of immigration and law-and-order; the remaining change is attributed to its success in attracting financially distressed voters and voters fitting a typical Extreme Right demographic. Auxiliary evidence suggests this change was driven by a massive realignment of voters fleeing mainstream parties, after a coalition government imposed harsh austerity measures.

Keywords:
Crisis, extreme right, issue ownership, structural change, immigration.

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1. Introduction

Greece's Golden Dawn (GD) party is one of the few cases on record of an extreme right (ER) political formation achieving consistent and ongoing electoral success, and an especially striking case because it sits at the extreme end of the ER. Investigating how an ER party with negligible popularity for over twenty years became the third largest political party should be of relevance beyond the specifics of GD and a useful case-study to understand ER voter inclinations. In other countries political parties of comparable ideological extremity might exist but these have been so far operating in the fringe, as for example the British BNP or the German NPD; (party acronyms are detailed in Appendix A). Examining the critical factors that led a party of such extremity from the political margin to consolidating a position as a national player, is instructive and can help identify in time potential causes of political extremism. In addition, the sudden increase in GD's popularity is interesting because, as we shall see, it demonstrates the impact good positioning in issue space can have on electoral performance.

Our comprehensive contextual and individual-level survey data allow us to empirically analyse the determinants of GD's electoral success in a regression context. Using this data, we develop a detailed econometric analysis that tracks GD's rise from an ER fringe party similar to those of several other European countries, to the third position in the national political scene. This is remarkable, especially since Greece no longer has a bipartisan political system, so smaller parties carry significant influence. Our analysis contributes to the existing literature in three distinct ways. It reveals that the meteoric rise in GD's vote shares were caused by a structural break in voter behavior. Furthermore, this structural change was abrupt, took effect within a few months and can be placed according to our data between December 2011 and May 2012. We link the rise in the support for GD to parts of the constituency that attribute high importance to issues of immigration and law-and-order. GD gained among these groups far more than other right-wing parties, indicating that it managed to be more efficient in gaining ownership of those issues[2].

Finally, we are able to access quantitatively the validity of existing popular wisdom and theoretical scholar analysis that the rise of GD can be mechanically and exclusively attributed to the evolution of the economic crisis in Greece. Our data shows that this holds only partially. Socioeconomic indicators alone fail to fully explain this rise as effectively as the change in voting behavior that is more generically associated with the prevailing political climate. The change was abrupt and cannot be accounted for by a number of specific socioeconomic conditions (and in these we have included cumulative effects on conventional indices of socioeconomic deterioration). It rather seems that the sudden change coincided with the signing of the second bailout agreement between Greece and its official creditors, consisted of the European Union, the European central Bank and the International Monetary Fund. The fiscal consolidation measures of the second program coincided with the enforced partial default

[2]Although anti-immigrant talk was present in the rhetoric of other right-wing parties such as populist radical right LAOS (Ellinas 2013), the extremity of GD's position and physical violence towards immigrants was unmatched. Our analysis of individual vote-intention data shows a high concentration of voters concerned about these issues among the GD supporters, compared to any other party.

on domestic holders[3] of Government bond, fuelling the sentiment that harsh austerity was to continue for a period much longer and to an extent much deeper than initially envisaged. This might have been a shock strong enough to bring about changes in political behaviour.

We should clarify from the outset that we use the term ER throughout this paper in the sense proposed by Mudde (2007) to refer to the extreme end (including for example Hungary's Jobbik, Germany's NPD or the U.K.'s BNP) of a broader Far Right[4] (e.g. France's Front Nationale, Austria's FPÖ or Switzerland's Swiss People's Party inter alia)[5]. Most empirical research on the ER vote is based on cross-country European survey data (e.g. Arzheimer 2009, Lubbers et al., 2002), contextual regional vote-share data within a country (e.g. Stockemer, 2016) or country-level data (e.g. Golder, 2003). In analysing GD, we have the benefit of a much larger voter base than is usually the case with ER studies, alleviating some of the econometric issues surrounding modeling vote regressions with low or zero vote counts. By collecting a wide range of contextual and survey data, we are able to report both contextual and individual regressions, combining evidence to present a congruent and robust view of factors influencing the GD vote and side-stepping controversial issues about which approach is preferable (Arzheimer 2012). Specifically, we use (i) a panel spanning election outcomes across 56 regions and seven national and European elections that includes a battery of contextual explanatory variables; and (ii) 10,000 individual responses in five waves of detailed surveys conducted by a leading polling firm in Greece.

Some observers believe that GD's success is a unique phenomenon, potentially of limited relevance outside Greece, as they tend to attribute it mainly to the local financial crisis. Indeed, GD's jump in popularity was observed in the national elections of May 2012, the first after Greece's crisis was felt (technically, a recession began in late 2008, before the European and National elections in June and October 2009, however the severity of the crisis was not widely appreciated until after those elections[6]). This observation has been widely interpreted as suggesting that individuals hit hardest by the crisis turned to GD to protest against mainstream parties. However, this is not borne out in our econometric analysis on GD voting, where only a limited impact is identified through purely pocket-book effects, including unemployment, GDP

[3]The Private Sector Involvement scheme (PSI) was exercised in 2012. A partial default of up to 75% of nominal value applied to retail holders, social security funds and other institutions.

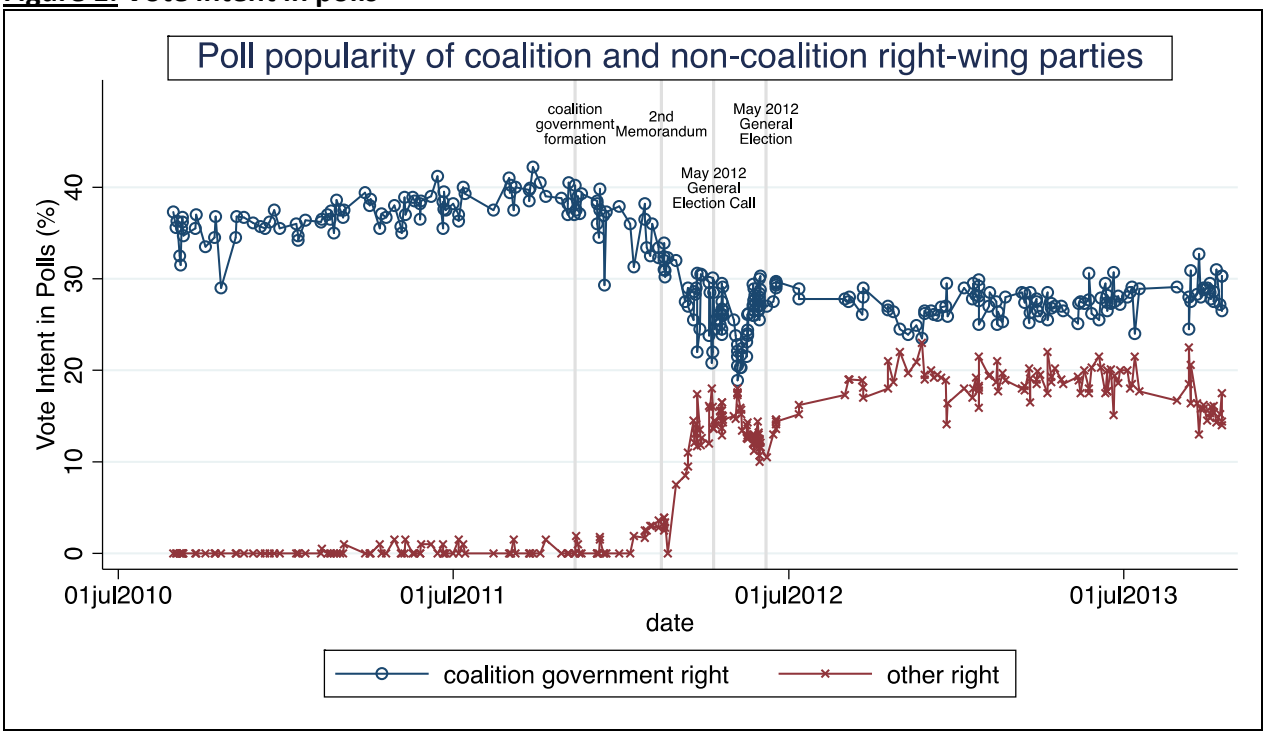
[4]There is a wide variation on the terminology used to refer to the Far Right. Some authors use the term «Extreme Right» more generically to refer to both radical right and to extremist, anti-democratic right. For a detailed exposition of the terminology used see Mudde (2007). We follow Mudde (2007) and reserve the term Extreme Right for the most extreme, antidemocratic, end of the Far Right and use «Far Right» as encompassing term including both the less extreme Radical Right and the ER (neo-fascist/neo-Nazi) parties.

[5]Despite lack of unanimity in classification criteria, most analysts agree that ER is determined from parties' affinities to historical fascism (Ignazi 1992, 2002, Golder 2003, Mudde 2007, Minkenberg 2013). ER parties are characterised by anti-democratic ideologies and attitudes (Mudde 2007). It should be noted that irrespective of method of classification, GD falls easily within the most extreme category (ER, neo-fascist).

[6]For example, unemployment remained under 10% till 2010 but eventually reached almost 30% in 2013; for a description of the situation in Greece see OECD (2016); on the origins of the crisis and a critical assessment of policy responses, see Christodoulakis (2015). Note also, that GD obtained 5.3% of the votes in the municipality of Athens in the 2010 municipal elections, but negligible support in other municipalities or nationally. The first time it registered substantial support was in the national elections in 2012.

or personal and business bankruptcies at the contextual level, or extremely negative views of economic conditions in surveys. We find that such effects account for about one third of GD's increase in vote-intent regressions, and less so in contextual regressions.

Figure 1: Vote intent in polls



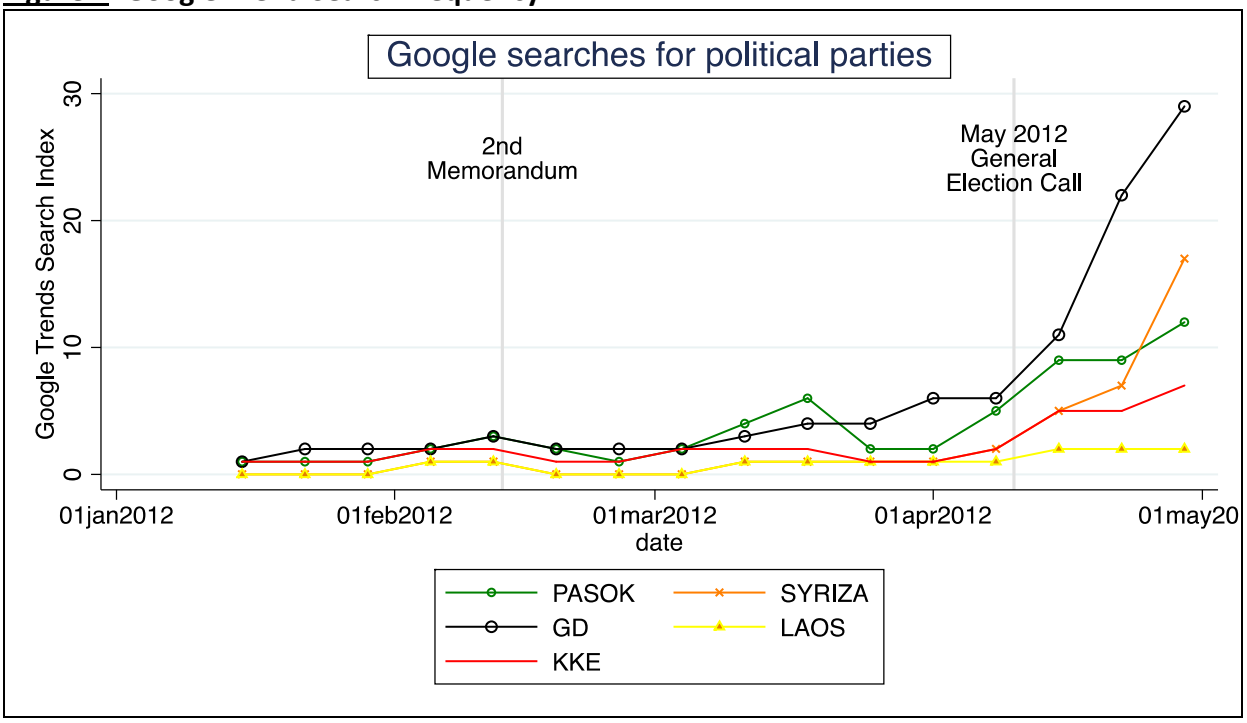
Note: We depict the vote intent in polls across all major polling firms for right-wing coalition government members of New Democracy and LAOS versus non-coalition government members of GD and Independent Greeks (ANEL). The coalition government was formed in November 2011, including New Democracy, the socialist party PASOK and the right-wing party of LAOS. Austerity measures were voted in February 2012 amid an unprecedented break-out of violent protests in Athens and other cities. The Government finally resigned in April 2012, opening the way for the elections in May 2012.
Data source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Opinion_polling_for_the_Greek_legislative_elections,_2012

On the other hand, we find that a third of GD's vote increase was driven by voters who were concerned with immigration and law-and-order (issues that did not become more severe around the time of GD's popularity surge) and the size of this effect is robust across both vote-intent and contextual regressions. The remaining increase in GD voting, was driven by GD's appeal to voters in ER-friendly demographic groups (young, male, unmarried, with moderate education level) and voters who were exposed to a right-wing tradition (based on contextual proxies for such tradition).

Perhaps even more strikingly, the break-up of voters' ties with mainstream parties and their transition to GD did not follow a smooth (even if steep) path alongside the deterioration of the country's economic conditions. Instead it was abrupt and took place within the first months of 2012, pointing towards specific socio-political triggers. What caused these voters to turn to GD in early 2012? To understand this, we need to appreciate the broader political scene at the time, especially an agreement between a coalition government and international partners in

February 2012 to implement harsh austerity. This caused unprecedented riots and an exodus of voters from mainstream parties participating in this coalition, which was widely blamed for the country's condition (Figure 1 illustrates this exodus in early 2012). In this context, it is sensible that voters in natural ER demographics, voters with anti-immigration sentiment or those looking for a powerful protest vote, would be attracted to GD. This transition was likely facilitated by increased media attention GD was receiving, especially in the Internet (see Figure 2), which likely became self-reinforcing once its popularity started trending and voters began exploring its platform[7]. Empirically, the country's political upheaval and ongoing shift away from mainstream coalition-government parties is evident in the form of robust evidence of parameter variation between 2009 and 2012 in our contextual vote-share regressions and between 2011 and 2012 in survey data vote-intent regressions[8].

Figure 2: **Google Trend Search frequency.**



Note: Google Trend Search Indexes represent the relative search frequency of the names of the five largest parties with names that do not have plausible variants that might be used in any search (we exclude New Democracy which may be searched with many variants).

We believe our findings have broader implications, beyond Greece: In conditions creating voter mobility, extreme fringe parties can strategically position themselves to take selective ownership of key issues and thereby capture a significant portion of the electorate. Mainstream

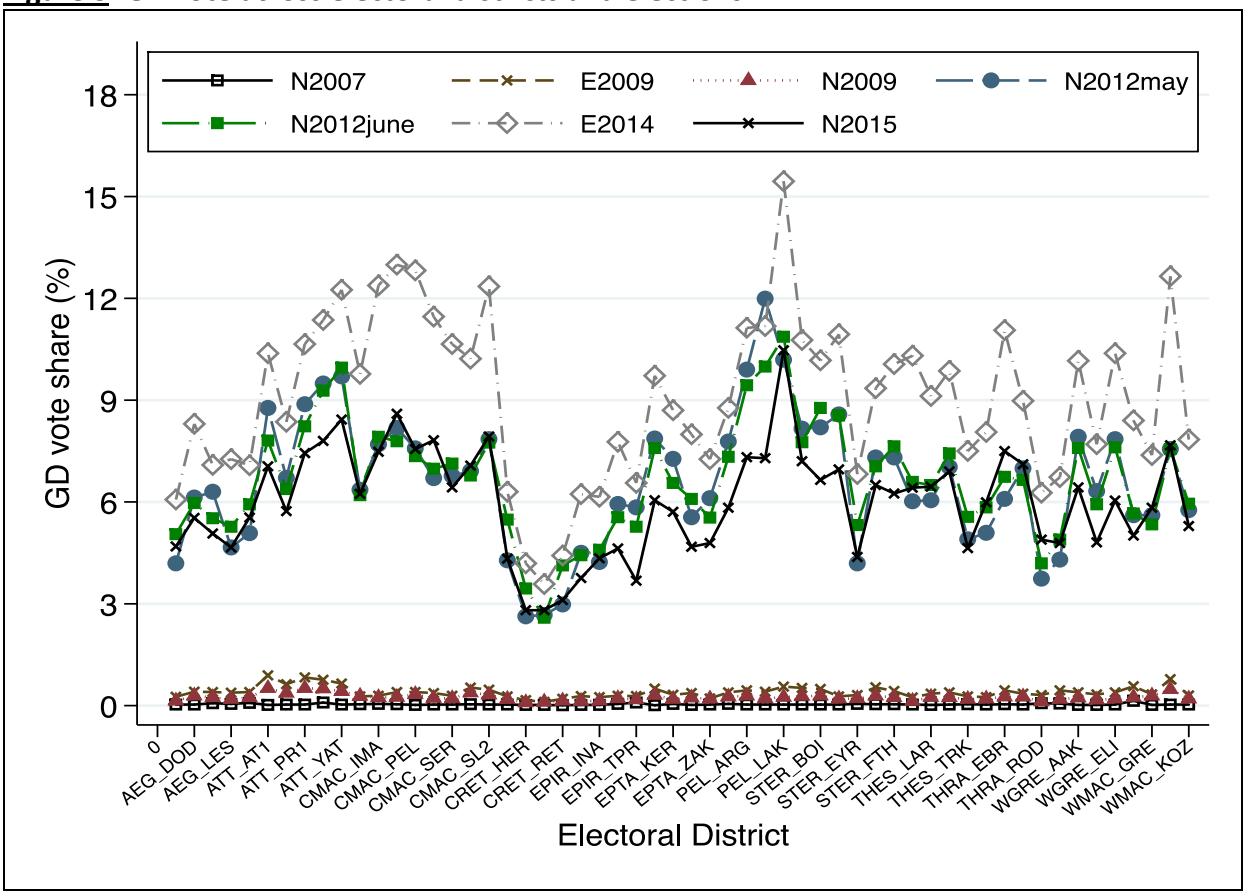
[7]The rise in public interest towards GD might not have itself directly triggered a rise in its support, which might have been triggered primarily through its grassroots activity, it is indicative of the attention that GD was receiving at the time and is probably associated to the general interest around the party that was increasing its electoral share.

[8]While parameter variation is sometimes attributed to an omitted variable problem (Lewis-Beck and Paldam, 2000), in our analysis it is very plausible that this break reflects a shift away from mainstream parties.

parties might find it difficult to take a clear stand on thorny or controversial issues such as immigration, creating a void that extreme parties can exploit to capitalise on concerns of voters, particularly those in ER-friendly demographics. Our evidence suggests that given ripe conditions, this ER demographic may very quickly organise itself around an appropriate leader.

The rest of this paper is structured as follows. In the next section, we provide some background on GD's ideology and issue focus. We then briefly review literature attempting to explain the vote of ER parties broadly and GD's success more specifically. Section 3 describes our individual level and contextual data, introduces our econometric models and reports our empirical results. Section 4 summarises our conclusions. An Appendix describes data and related details.

Figure 3: GD vote across electoral districts and elections



Note: Expressed as percentage of local valid vote count, for each of 56 electoral districts across seven elections studied in this paper. Electoral districts are labeled with the acronym of each district, preceded by the acronyms of the region they belong to (see Appendix A3.3). Graphs denote National (N) or European (E) elections and the relative year. In 2012, there were two elections in May and June respectively.

2. GD and related Extreme Right research

2.1 Background on GD

For a long time after it registered as a political party in 1990, GD received negligible electoral support. Figure 3 displays the GD vote in all national and European elections since 2007. The first noteworthy characteristic is that it never received more than 0.5% of the vote before 2010. That year, it made a noticeable appearance in the municipal elections of Athens, scoring 5.3% of the local vote and electing its leader to the local council. In the national elections of May 2012, GD rocketed to 6.97% of the vote, winning 21 of 300 seats in the Parliament. Since then, in three national and one European Parliament elections, it has received between 6% and 10%, and remained the third most popular party in Greece all recent elections. Regarding the vote distribution across constituencies, Figure 3 reveals a strong regional dispersion, suggesting that local variations in socioeconomic conditions or political traditions may play an important role in shaping voting choices. However, the closeness of the graphs corresponding to the three national elections of May 2012, June 2012 and January 2015 points to a very solid pattern in each region, thus implying that GD voting is mostly affected by more resilient factors rather than by circumstantial developments. Both of these findings highlight the need for a systematic contextual analysis of the GD vote.

2.1.1 Ideological Identity

GD was formed in the early 1980s but registered as a political party in 1990. Most observers agree that it has a National Socialist/neo-fascist ideology9, anti-systemic, anti-democratic, anti-immigrant outlook, and open endorsement of violent crimes against immigrants and their supporters (Ellinas 2013, Geogriadou 2013). In September 2013, GD's leadership was arrested, facing trial for criminal actions including complicity to murder. Many observers (e.g. Dinas *et al*, 2013) see GD as surpassing most ER parties in both radicalism and extremity of actions.

Although other radical right parties in Greece have taken explicit stands towards limiting immigration, no other party has been as indiscriminately anti-immigrant or has based its openly racist agenda on biological and ethnic purity arguments. Furthermore, GD differs from the other existing radical right-wing parties (LAOS and ANEL) in its explicit anti-parliamentarian and anti-democratic narrative and in its open and applied endorsement of extreme physical violence towards immigrants. The extremity of GD's stands and actions have probably contributed significantly towards convincing its electorate that it means business, particularly in critical issues such as immigration and law and order. The popularity of this type of ER is particularly paradoxical in Greece, which in the last century experienced disastrous military dictatorships, an extremely brutal Nazi occupation and substantial emigration of Greeks who formed sizable and successful immigrant communities in other countries.

2.1.2. GD's issue positioning

As is the case with many European ER parties, GD's trademark has been an anti-immigration rhetoric emphasising 'cultural contamination' and the loss of Greeks' jobs to lower-paid foreign

[9] See for example Georgiadou (2013).

workers. As unemployment rose during the crisis years, this message gained appeal, paralleling the experience of several countries.10 Wike et al. (2016) report that 72% of Greek respondents considered refugees a burden. This was exacerbated by associations of immigration with crime11 that allowed GD to conflate anti-immigration with a law-and-order rhetoric and blame the 'contamination of Greece's ethnic purity'.

In terms of style, GD has developed a military aesthetic that appeals to young, single, moderately educated males –a typical demographic characteristics of ER voters (Arzheimer 2012)— and has cultivated a grass-root support base, often organised into violent groups12. This reflects its view that non-democratic means for pursuing its political objectives are legitimate.

2.2 Existing explanations for the success of GD

2.2.1 Research specific to GD

Existing literature on GD has focused primarily on supply side factors that enabled the party to seize hold of a sizeable electoral share. Dinas *et al.* (2013) study the effect of grassroot mobilisation of party members on the electoral success in the municipal elections of 2010 in Athens. They show that the party faired considerably better in areas where it enjoyed visibility, compared to similar areas where it mobilised less. Despite GD's local success in 2010, its national appeal was still negligible until 2012, as is evident from intent-to-vote surveys. Ellinas and Lamprianou (2016) place GD's main organizational and activity expansion to a national level towards the end of 2012, after its national electoral breakthrough.

Research on the demand side has offered some informal evidence of the factors that might have affected the GD vote. For example, Ellinas (2013) and Georgiadou (2013) use exit poll data from the national elections in May 2012 to attribute the party's electoral success to 'a massive realignment of the electorate away from mainstream parties' due to the crisis-related deterioration in economic conditions. The demand side explanations offer useful working theories on the reasons driving GD's sudden rise and call for empirical verification. Our data allows us to quantify the extent to which variation in individual and regional economic conditions can explain variation in GD support and compare the validity of this explanation to others. Our findings are consistent with the view that the Greek far right experienced a massive re-alignment and furthermore, we can trace the causes for this to sudden changes in voter behaviour in the first months of 2012 rather than to more gradual socioeconomic triggers.

Turning to the role of immigration, Dinas *et al.* (2016) exploit a quasi-natural experiment related to the differential inflows of immigrants on various Greek islands sharing similar characteristics, to estimate the causal effects of immigration on GD support. They find that exposure to drastic increases in refugee arrivals contributed to a 2% rise in GD's electoral rates.

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[10] Turner and Cross (2015).

[11] Tsiganou *et al* (2010: 78) report that foreigners were responsible for 20% of total criminal activity (with the limitations that come with measures based on arrests) in 2007, up from 3% in 1995

[12] Sakellariou (2015) argues this has helped recruiting young supporters.

However, we cannot infer the importance of immigration for GD's national vote from this estimate. In our regional analysis, we measure this directly and find that GD gained approximately 2% of the electorate due to concern with immigration, a finding broadly consistent with Dinas *et al* (2016) results. We also highlight the role of media coverage in making GD more visible. More broadly, we show that the party's rapid ascent cannot be attributed to sudden changes in socioeconomic factors, but rather to structural changes in voting behaviour, the roots of which should likely be traced to shifts of voters away from mainstream parties as well as GD's increased visibility and media coverage. On the limited effects of economic conditions on political extremism, Lamprianou and Ellinas (2016) use survey data to show that radical political action is only marginally connected to relative economic deprivation but strongly associated with ideology, organisation membership and personal characteristics.

2.2.2 Broader research explaining the ER vote in an international context

Individual-level studies of the ER vote focus on the effect of demographics, individual attitudes and contextual variables. Several studies confirm ER's appeal to younger ages, male voters, low or middle education levels and blue-collar workers (Arzheimer and Carter 2006, Arzheimer 2009, Lubbers *et al.* 2002). The ER vote is also related to anti-immigration attitudes, political dissatisfaction, national pride and to attributing high importance to law-and-order (Lubbers and Scheepers 2000, Lubbers et al. 2002). In contextual analyses, the impact of immigration on the ER vote is usually positive (Arzheimer, 2009, Coffé et al. 2007, Swank and Betz 2003, Dinas & van Spanje 2011) with few exceptions (Arzheimer & Carter 2006). Unemployment has also been analysed extensively, but with mixed conclusions as to the direction or existence of an effect (Inglehart and Norris 2016, Golder 2003, Arzheimer and Carter 2006, Coffé et al. 2007, Jesuit et al. 2009, Lubbers et al. 2002, Knigge 1998).

The literature has occasionally considered the effect of other socioeconomic factors on the ER vote. Funke et al. (2016) find evidence that financial crises lead to increases in extreme voting; Swank & Betz (2003) link the far-right vote with higher tax rates and lower levels of social protection. Coffé et al. (2007) find a negative effect of income inequality. We explored a range of variables listed in the Appendix to explain the GD vote, but in our analysis report only regressions with statistically significant variables.

3. Empirical Results

3.1. Data

Our individual-level data is from the TASEIS polls, conducted biannually by MRB Hellas, www.mrb.gr, a leading Greek polling company, containing detailed personal information, quantitative assessments of Greece's current and future economic conditions, choices among options for the most pressing issues in Greece, and interviewees' last vote and vote intent in a hypothetical election to be held within a week from the interview date. Our sample spans five

interview dates on December 2011, December 2012, June 2013, December 2013 and June 2014 and contains 9,621 usable observations roughly equally distributed across dates13.

Our contextual data was gathered for Greece's 56 electoral districts, each electing a fixed number of MP's based on a reinforced proportional representation system which did not change throughout our sample14. This data includes unemployment rates; immigration density (ratio of residents of foreign origin to natives); regional crime rates; bounced checks and mortgages in arrears by electoral district; bank deposits; tourist visitors; and GDP per capita in purchasing power standards. Detailed definitions and sources of data is provided in Appendix A. Summary statistics for all variables appearing in our reported results are provided in Table 1:

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics

This table reports descriptive statistics for dependent variables and regressors appearing in our individual GD vote-intent and contextual GD vote-share regressions.

		Variable	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Individual data	Dependent	GD vote intention	9,621	0.093	0.290	0	1
	Demographics	Male	9,621	0.494	0.500	0	1
		Age/100	9,621	0.467	0.179	0.21	0.75
		Temporarily Unemployed	9,621	0.062	0.242	0	1
		Married	9,621	0.615	0.487	0	1
		Secondary education	9,621	0.590	0.492	0	1
		Urban	9,621	0.215	0.411	0	1
	Attitudes	Gloom	9,621	0.347	0.485	0	1
	Issues	immigration	9,621	0.066	0.249	0	1
		crime	9,621	0.008	0.027	0	0.1
		transparency	9,621	0.075	0.264	0	1
Contextual data	Dependent	GD vote actual	392	4.137	3.791	0.007	15.451
	Social	immigration	448	0.833	0.403	0.137	1.999
		crime	448	3.190	2.767	0.190	11.172
	Economic	tourism	448	0.093	0.152	0.001	0.812
		unemployment	448	1.601	0.819	0.048	3.880
		economic output	448	1.616	0.449	0.940	2.940
		bounced cheques	448	0.250	0.227	0.006	1.818
		non-performing mortgages	448	2.434	2.643	0.039	15.757
		Right Wing tradition	448	0.336	0.103	0.059	0.595

[13]The polls use face-to-face interviews and secret ballots. Each sample of 2000 individuals is designed to be representative with respect to demographics. From a total of 10,000 individuals we excluded 379 observations for individuals who did not provide responses to some of the variables used in our analysis. A poll scheduled for June 2012 did not take place because two elections (May and June 2012) took place around its scheduled date. A detailed description of all our variables is provided in Appendix A1.

[14]The representation system remained intact from 2007 to the present with minor seat reallocations among constituencies after the 2011 Census.

3.2 The GD Vote

GD's national elections vote-share rocketed from 0.29% in October 2009 to 6.97% in May 2012. Before turning to a detailed discussion of what caused the dramatic increase in GD voting, it is instructive to begin with an examination of the characteristics of individuals expressing intent-to-vote for GD in surveys. In Table 2, we report LPM and Probit regressions with a range of regressors describing individuals (selected as the most economically and statistically salient effects from a broader set listed in Internet Appendix A1; here and below we also considered regressions merging contextual with survey data as well as various types of nonlinearities, without gaining any additional insights). Overall our results are reasonably robust across these two models.

We find a very high coefficient on a gender dummy, meaning that the GD vote is larger by 8-10% (depending on whether we use Probit marginal effects or LPM coefficients) for unmarried males compared to married or unmarried females. This effect is reduced by half in married men. Note that we control for age, which reduces the propensity to vote for GD by 0.1% per year, so the importance of marriage for males does not reflect the fact that married men are on average older than unmarried men. The propensity to vote for GD increases for temporarily unemployed workers, individuals with secondary (but not tertiary) education and individuals living in rural areas.

Turning attention to individuals' attitudes, we find that the Gloom attitude (a dummy indicating the most negative answer in all five attitude questions, described in more detail in Appendix A1) leads to support for GD, as does identifying immigration, crime or lack of transparency as one of the country's three top problems (other available options are listed in Appendix A1). We can get a sense for the overall influence of attitudes and issue concerns on the GD vote, by multiplying coefficients with the mean of each variable. Based on LPM estimates, each of the above effects contributes 1.7%, 2.0%, 0.3% and 0.3% respectively towards the propensity to vote for GD. Most of these influences are largely in line with characteristics of ER voters internationally. However, our focus is on explaining the jump in GD support, whereas in most other ER analyses, changes in behavior over time have not been addressed.

Table 2: Individual-level Analysis of GD Voting

This table reports the results of individual-level regressions with intention to vote for GD as dependent variable. The data comes from five polls conducted between December 2011 and June 2014. The first column reports OLS estimates of a linear probability model. The second column reports probit coefficient estimates for the same model. The third column reports marginal effects for Probit, evaluated at the mean of all variables. Standard errors are reported below all estimates. Regressor definitions and data sources are listed in Appendix A1. Statistical significance at the 10% level is indicated in bold. Number of observations: 7,713.

	LPM	Probit Coefficients	Probit Marginal Effects
Constant	**0.07**	**-1.50**	
	0.02	0.11	
Male	**0.09**	**0.48**	**0.08**
	0.01	0.06	0.01
Married	0.01	0.04	0.01
	0.01	0.06	0.01
Married x Male	**-0.05**	**-0.21**	**-0.04**
	0.01	0.06	0.01
Age (/100)	**-0.11**	**-0.67**	**-0.12**
	0.02	0.15	0.03
Temporarily Unemployed	**0.03**	**0.15**	**0.03**
	0.01	0.06	0.01
Secondary education	**0.03**	**0.18**	**0.03**
	0.01	0.06	0.01
Gloom	**0.05**	**0.27**	**0.05**
	0.01	0.04	0.01
Problems: immigration	**0.29**	**1.05**	**0.18**
	0.03	0.08	0.02
Problems: crime	**0.04**	**0.20**	**0.04**
	0.01	0.07	0.01
Problems: transparency	**0.04**	**0.20**	**0.03**
	0.02	0.08	0.02
Adjusted R-squared	0.09	0.1	

3.3. The increase in support for GD is due to a change in voting behavior

We now turn to understanding the dramatic increase in support for GD between the consecutive national elections of October 2009 and May 2012. One celebrated explanation is that the election of May 2012 was the first after Greece's financial crisis had begun being felt, and the economic hardship the crisis inflicted, turned voters towards GD. We argue that there are two problems with this explanation. First, while this is not widely appreciated, GD's popularity was growing very slowly until early 2012 and increased extremely rapidly in a very narrow time window in early 2012 (it first appeared in a national poll in February 2011 at 0.5% and trended upwards slowly to around 1.5% till the end of that year, then it rocketed to almost 7% by early May 2012)15. On the same issue, our survey data indicates that in December 2011, the intent to vote for GD was only 1.3%, in agreement with other polls (as in Figure 3).

Contrary to popular narratives, this suggests that the rapid rise in GD's support was due to abrupt changes in *voting behavior* rather than abrupt changes in daily economic conditions, and moreover that the voting behavior changed in the space of a few months. A key political development around this time was the signing of the second bail-out agreement ("Memorandum" in common parlance), implementing deep fiscal cuts, in February 2012. At the same time, a default on Government bonds affected Social Security funds as well as many private individuals, contrary to promises for an immunising debt-restructuring scheme. During deliberations in Parliament, riots and clashes with the police took place in Athens and other major cities, inaugurating a new period of violent reaction against austerity policies. The mainstream conservative New Democracy and right-wing LAOS parties that previously thrived on anti-austerity rhetoric had by then become partners in a broad coalition Government. By voting for the austerity measures, they triggered massive outflows of sympathisers and rank-and-file party members to other emerging players, such as the radical-left SYRIZA, the right-wing Independent Greeks and GD, all of which enjoyed a clear rise which continued to trend until the elections.

Second, as we shall see in our panel data, variables that proxy for the severity of the crisis at a local level (unemployment, GDP and bankruptcies) do not explain the cross-sectional distribution of GD voting even after controlling for other factors. In other words, there is little evidence that GD voting was more intense in areas where the crisis was more severe. Other factors of nation-wide significance played a crucial role. We next quantify the importance of changes in behavior vs. changes in conditions using both individual-level and contextual regressions.

3.3.1. Individual-level analysis

To understand changes in voting behavior after controlling for the effect of changes in economic conditions, Table 3 presents regression analyses using dummy variables to measure

[15]GD's significant support in a few municipalities in the 2010 municipal elections, was localised and can account for a small fraction of the national legislative electorate. Combined with negligible support in polls for legislative elections, this suggests that the increase in GD's vote 2012 was separate to the local increase in support it received in certain municipalities in the municipal elections.

how the impact of various regressors changed between surveys in December 2011 and December 2012. Evidently, the change is dramatic, with meaningful and statistically significant changes in most coefficients.

In the LPM models used, the propensity to vote for GD in 2009 is:

$$GD = \beta_0 + \beta_1 x_1 + \cdots + \beta_k x_k + e \qquad (1)$$

In 2012, the propensity to vote for GD is:

$$GD = \beta_0 + \beta'_0 + (\beta_1 + \beta'_1)x'_1 + \cdots + (\beta_k + \beta'_k)x'_k + e \qquad (2)$$

where terms like β'_i appear as coefficients of interaction terms with a dummy for 2012. The coefficients $\{\beta_i\}$ appear in the first column and $\{\beta'_i\}$ appear in the second column of the table.

Subtracting the first equation from the second, the change in the GD vote is:

$$\Delta GD = \beta'_0 + \left(\beta'_1 x'_1 + \beta_1 \Delta x_1\right) + \cdots + \left(\beta'_k x'_k + \beta_k \Delta x_k\right) \qquad (3)$$

The first term in each parenthesis in (3) measures the impact of changes in voting behavior, while the second term measures the impact of changes in conditions/attitudes on the GD vote. The last two columns of Table 3, decompose the change in GD's vote and show that it is almost entirely due to changes in behavior. Most importantly, of GD's vote increase by 6.68% between 2009 and 2012, 4.12% was obtained by convincing voters with (mostly pre-existing) gloomy, anti-immigration and anti-crime attitudes to vote for it, with the remaining increase coming almost entirely from more GD voting among males. We believe this last effect is best interpreted as an outsized increase in GD's appeal to a male demographic that is traditionally more akin towards the ER. This likely represents a fraction of the individuals fleeing mainstream coalition government parties.

3.3.2. Contextual analysis

Our finding that GD's support was driven by changes in behavior is confirmed and reinforced in detailed contextual regression analysis presented in Tables 4 and 5, which approach the same issue with a broad range of additional controls.

In Table 4, we report a regression of the GD vote across 56 electoral districts on key regressors, for each of the seven elections in our sample, starting before GD became prominent. Evidently, from 2012 onwards, the sign and magnitude of the coefficients on several regressors change drastically. There is strong evidence that from 2012 onwards, GD was able to tap into voting pools in areas with large concentrations of immigrants, high crime-rates, long-standing right-wing tradition, and low tourism. Changes in coefficients associated with economic conditions do not display any clear statistically significant pattern. The first thing to note is that changes took effect between the 2009 and the 2012 National elections, in agreement with our individual-level data that place the change more precisely between December 2011 and May 2012. Furthermore, following the May 2012 election, the coefficients exhibit a more stable behavior, even after GD's leadership was arrested and charged for participation in a criminal organisation and complicity to murder.

Table 3: Individual-level analysis of the rapid rise of GD

This table reports the results of individual-level regressions with intent to vote for GD as the dependent variable, restricting attention to the surveys of December 2011 and December 2012 when the surge in GD popularity occurred. Interaction dummies for 2012 capture changes in coefficients between these dates. We include regressors the coefficients of which are statistically significant either with or without an interaction, but do not keep insignificant interaction terms (based on the LPM). Observations: 3,850 (1,932 for December 2011 and 1,918 for December 2012). The two rightmost columns report the change in GD vote intent due to: 1. changes in coefficients and 2. changes in regressors using the method discussed in section 4.3.1.

	LPM		Probit Coefficients		Probit Marginal Effects		impact of coefficient change	impact of regressor change
		2012 dummy		2012 dummy		2012 dummy		
Constant	0.01		**-2.00**		-			
	0.02		0.17					
Male Dummy	**0.04**	**0.05**	**0.35**	**0.27**	**0.04**	**0.03**	2.47%	-0.01%
	0.01	0.02	0.10	0.16	0.01	0.02		
Married	**0.03**	**-0.02**	0.15	0.16	0.01	**0.02**	-1.24%	0.05%
	0.00	0.02	0.09	0.10	0.01	0.01		
Married x Male	**-0.05**	**0.01**	**-0.44**	**0.10**	**-0.04**	0.01	0.31%	-0.09%
	0.01	0.01	0.07	0.63	0.01	0.00		
Age (/100)	**-0.09**		**-1.06**		**-0.11**		0.00%	-0.01%
	0.02		0.19		0.02			
Secondary	-0.00	0.04	-0.13	**0.38**	-0.01	**0.04**	2.43%	0.00%
education	0.00	0.01	0.06	0.08	0.01	0.01		
Gloom	0.01	**0.06**	0.06	**0.32**	0.01	**0.03**	2.17%	-0.01%
	0.01	0.02	0.15	0.17	0.02	0.02		
Immigration	**0.04**	**0.22**	**0.51**	**0.54**	**0.05**	**0.06**	1.87%	0.11%
	0.02	0.04	0.17	0.18	0.02	0.02		
Crime	**-0.01**	**0.05**	**-0.47**	**0.77**	**-0.05**	**0.08**	0.44%	0.02%
	0.00	0.03	0.10	0.10	0.01	0.01		
Transparency	**0.03**		**0.24**		**0.02**		0.00%	-0.04%
	0.02		0.13		0.01			
R2 adjusted	0.12		-		-			

Table 4: Contextual Effects on GD Voting by Election

This table reports the results of regressions with GD vote (%) across Greece's 56 prefectures as the dependent variable. We report separate OLS regressions for each election. Regressor definitions and data sources are listed in Appendix A1. Statistical significance at the 10% level is indicated in bold. "n.a." appears on dates when a regressor is not available.

Election / Model	2007-9	Euro 2009-5	2009-10	2012-5	2012-6	Euro 2014-5	2015-1
constant	0.00	-0.19	-0.08	0.07	0.93	**4.03**	1.90
	0.02	0.12	0.07	1.38	1.28	2.31	1.63
Immigration	**-0.02**	0.05	0.02	**2.32**	**1.72**	1.08	0.41
(Foreigners /10)/Greeks	0.01	0.07	0.04	0.73	0.59	1.00	0.61
Crime (1000 * Property	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	**0.31**	**0.23**	**0.50**	**0.33**
crimes per capita)				0.08	0.08	0.15	0.13
Tourism (Tourists x nights per	0.01	**-0.45**	**-0.19**	**-4.07**	**-5.78**	**-4.31**	**-2.84**
capita/100)	0.02	0.14	0.10	1.52	1.63	2.31	1.47
Unemployment /10 (%)	0.01	**0.10**	0.05	**0.90**	0.24	0.49	0.31
	0.01	0.06	0.03	0.47	0.31	0.51	0.35
Economic Output (Prefecture	**0.02**	**0.22**	**0.14**	-0.68	0.06	-1.31	-0.01
GDP per capita/100)	0.01	0.05	0.03	0.69	0.61	1.02	0.64
Bounced cheques	-0.02	-0.07	0.04	0.40	**1.84**	-0.43	-0.15
(as % of local bank deposits)	0.03	0.21	0.05	1.26	1.04	0.86	0.90
Non-performing mortgages	n.a.	-0.05	-0.04	0.10	0.09	0.08	0.07
(as % of local bank deposits)		0.06	0.03	0.18	0.10	0.13	0.07
Right Wing Tradition (Vote share	0.04	**0.40**	0.16	**9.07**	**7.27**	**9.96**	**6.12**
for restoration of King 1974)	0.03	0.16	0.10	1.80	1.66	2.73	1.84
GD vote total (%)	0.03	0.46	0.29	6.97	6.92	9.40	6.28
GD vote avg across prefecture (%)	0.04	0.40	0.25	6.58	6.63	9.06	6.01
Adjusted R2	0.09	0.48	0.42	0.57	0.53	0.39	0.36

One shortcoming of the regression estimates reported in Table 4 is that they may be subject to omitted variable bias associated with effects operating on the GD vote at the electoral district level. Table 5 deals with this using fixed and random effects estimation, treating the data across elections and prefectures as a panel. Estimates are broadly in line with our previous analysis: immigration and crime have an economically and statistically large positive impact on the GD vote after 2012, but an insignificant (immigration) and weaker (crime) impact before 2012. Financial distress associated with bounced checks seems to lead to an increase in the GD vote after 2012 relative to the earlier period, as suggested by the interaction effect with the crisis dummy.

One important insight that this contextual analysis adds relative to the individual-level analysis is that, after 2012, GD was able to capture significant support in areas with a right-wing tradition. Another interesting observation is that in Euro elections, the GD vote is significantly larger, reflecting a general pattern in second-order elections, according to which voters are more willing to support smaller parties than in national elections16.

Table 5 also presents a decomposition of the change in the actual GD vote between 2009 and 2012 into a component associated with change in conditions and a component associated with changes in behavior, analogous to that presented for the individual-data analysis of Table 3. As was the case in the individual-level analysis, changes in behavior is dramatically more important than changes in conditions. Almost half the increase is in areas with higher immigration and crime, but the overwhelming effect is the increase in GD voting in areas with a long-standing right-wing tradition for reasons beyond what we could control for with our data17. The contextual analysis leads to weaker estimates (compared to the individual-level analysis) for the importance of financial distress as proxied for by bounced checks (0.31%), perhaps because this is a poor proxy or because contextually financial distress is less important than it is individually.

[16]Our key conclusions are robust to various transformations of the regressors, including quadratic terms, first differences etc. We also attempted to include several other regressors listed in the Appendix but they were not significant.

[17]The propagation over time of local political traditions has been observed in a number of studies. For example, Voigtlander and Voth (2012) show that anti-Semitism in interwar Germany is spatially correlated with similar attitudes five centuries earlier and that these correlations are stronger in areas of low population mobility or limited interchange with other cultures.

Table 5: Contextual Effects on GD Voting
Controlling for Fixed and Random Regional Effects

The first two columns report panel regressions with fixed and random effects using the same data as in Table 4. The missing observations from Table 4 were imputed using the earliest observation available, after noticing that there is little variation over time within prefectures in these regressors. We include regressors from Table 4 that were statistically significant either with or without an interaction term. The third column reports the preferred random effects specification applied to the two consecutive elections 2009 and 2012 when GD popularity surged. Regressor definitions and data sources are listed in Appendix A1. Robust standard errors are reported below all estimates (White 1980, 1982). Statistical significance at the 10% level is indicated in bold. The two rightmost columns report the change in GD vote due to changes in coefficients and the change due to changes in regressors using the method discussed in section 4.3.1 applied to the Random Effects model in column 3.

	FE	RE	RE 09-12	impact of coefficient change	impact of regressor change
constant	1.74	-0.10	**0.14**		
	1.73	0.09	0.04		
Immigration	-2.10	-0.20	0.01		
(Foreigners/Greeks)	2.63	0.25	0.04		
Crime	**0.26**	0.05	**0.02**		
*(1000 * Property crimes per capita)*	0.12	0.03	0.00		
Tourism	**-11.14**	0.60	-0.02		
(Accommodations per capita/10)	6.05	0.46	0.11		
Bounced cheques	**-0.96**	**-0.77**	-0.04		
(as % of local bank deposits)	0.51	0.37	0.04		
Right Wing Tradition (Vote for	-	**0.45**	0.16		
restoration of King 1974)		0.19	0.12		
Crisis Dummy	**5.08**	**2.37**	**1.15**		
(1 starting 2012-5)	0.43	0.70	0.66		
Immigration x Crisis Dummy	1.51	**1.07**	**1.63**	**1.40%**	0.01%
	0.92	0.56	0.63		
Crime x Crisis Dummy	**0.23**	**0.28**	**0.26**	**0.91%**	0.07%
	0.06	0.06	0.05		
Tourism x Crisis Dummy	**-3.94**	**-4.18**	**-3.74**	**-0.36%**	0.00%
	1.79	1.33	1.49		
Bounced cheques x Crisis	1.06	**1.08**	0.92	**0.31%**	-0.01%

Dummy					
	0.63	0.51	1.08		
RW Tradition x Crisis Dummy		**7.43**	**8.63**	**2.90%**	0.05%
		1.75	1.75		
Dummy 2009-5 Euro	**0.49**	**0.38**			
	0.13	0.03			
Dummy 2009-10	**0.69**	**0.43**			
	0.21	0.09			
Dummy 2012-6	0.03	0.07			
	0.12	0.08			
Dummy 2014-5 Euro	**2.87**	**2.69**			
	0.24	0.18			
Dummy 2015-1	0.09	-0.23			
	0.27	0.17			
Adjusted R2	0.95				
Observations	392	392	112		
Number of clusters	56	56	56		
Fixed Effects test	0.00		-		
Hausman test	0.01		0.66		

3.4. Explaining the change in voting behaviour

Informed observers of Greek politics have attributed the jump in support for GD to voter-migration from LAOS, a less extreme right-wing party. At first sight, this seems plausible, considering LAOS' representation in parliament collapsed from five seats to zero between the elections in which GD's vote jumped. Furthermore, the reason for this collapse is widely believed to be its participation in the coalition government, from November 2011 to May 2012 (coinciding with the narrow time frame during which GD's support in fact increased) that undermined its otherwise non-mainstream profile.

Such an explanation could in principle be consistent with the effects we report in the previous subsection, since the change in coefficients in regressions after 2012 could reflect a reduction in competition in Greece's ER when LAOS shifted to more moderate positioning. However, our analysis below suggests this is at best only a partial explanation of what happened. Instead, a more important reason for the change in behaviour was that GD was able to take issue ownership of widespread concern with immigration and crime, 'ownerless' issues which no other party, including LAOS, had previously been able to capture.

3.4.1. Voter migration from LAOS to GD is limited

GD's vote increased from 0.29% to 6.97% between the consecutive elections in 2009 and May 2012, while LAOS' dropped from 5.63% to 2.89%18. This simple observation reveals that it is unlikely that an overwhelming portion of GD's vote came from voters who previously supported LAOS. This insight is reinforced in Table 6 where we estimate the party of origin of GD voters in the election of May 2012 when GD's electoral support jumped. According to the official exit poll after the 2012 elections, only 18.5% of GD's voters migrated from LAOS.

We also use Rosen et al.'s (2001) ecological inference for RxC tables, to calculate the political origins of the GD vote in May 2012. The results are almost identical to the exit poll transition rates for the cases of ND, PASOK and GD and close for the SYRIZA and OTHER parties. Ecological inference suggests the probability that a GD voter migrated from LAOS was 9.3%, even lower than that obtained in exit polls.

Finally, and this should be interpreted with caution, we report the fraction of individuals who intended to vote for GD across all surveys by recall of party voted in the previous election. LAOS is a rather small source of voters but LAOS varies significantly in size over our sample. In sum, while there was unquestionably a migration of voters from LAOS to GD and perhaps this can explain a large portion of LAOS' collapse, it can only explain a limited fraction of GD's support.

[18] This measure underestimates somewhat the collapse in LAOS' votes because the 2012 vote share corresponds to a much lower turnout than in 2009. In fact, LAOS lost 203,280 votes, part of which migrated to GD and contributed to its gains of 421,361 votes,

Table 6: Analysis of voter transition towards GD			
We tabulate estimates of the previous vote for GD supporters around the time of the rapid rise in GD support (early 2012). The first estimate gives the results from the official exit poll after the May 2012 elections, (Georgiadou 2013). The second column uses Rosen et al.'s (2001) ecological inference. The third column estimates the previous affiliation of individuals declaring intent to vote for GD in our individual-level data (10,000 observations) between Dec 2011 and June 2014.			
Party of Origin	May 2012 election exit poll (%)	Ecological Inference Rosen et al. (2001) (%)	MRB surveys (%)
ND	28.5	29.2	17.6
PASOK	36.1	35.2	2.7
KKE	1.7	6.3	0.3
SYRIZA	5.0	8.4	4.3
LAOS	18.5	9.3	1.8
GD	-	0.7	58.5
OTHER	6.7	10.9	15.0

3.4.2. GD law-and-order and anti-immigration political positioning

Our regression analyses trace a large portion of the increase in GD support back to the change in behavior of voters who identify immigration or crime as issues of outstanding importance for Greece. Indeed, this is reinforced in Table 7 which shows in a clear and simple manner that GD became the only party whose supporters had a disproportionate interest in one of the two issues (35% in December 2012 up from 23% in December 2011. The interest across all individuals was stable at 16%). Furthermore, this disproportionate interest developed during 2012 even as the popularity of GD grew very significantly which is important because as a party's popularity increases, the distribution of its supporters' characteristics will eventually converge to the distribution of characteristics across all individuals (16% in this case). The interest of supporters of other parties in these issues went down in almost all cases, which is strongly suggestive that GD was able to attract individuals with a pre-existing interest in these matters from other parties. By contrast, in unreported analysis we found that GD's ownership of the Gloom attitude which we used in Table 3 to explain the GD vote, did not increase significantly.

Table 7: Political Issue Ownership of Immigration and Crime during GD's rise

This table reports the number and fraction of individuals who identified immigration or crime as "one of the three most pressing problems facing the country today" in two surveys from our individual-level data, conducted in December 2011 and December 2012 and sampled 2,000 each. We only kept individuals who responded to all questions. The last row reports the total number of individuals on each date and the fraction of interest for the entire sample.

	% identifying immigration or crime among the country's three top problems			
	2011-12		2012-12	
Vote Intent	#	%	#	%
GD	26	23%	220	35%
LAOS	104	20%	6	17%
ND	383	15%	366	12%
PASOK	228	13%	136	18%
SYRIZA	162	17%	403	14%
KKE	218	13%	120	9%
OTHER	811	18%	667	15%
TOTAL	1,932	16%	1,918	16%

How did GD manage to position itself as the party of choice for voters concerned with these issues within the space of a few months? Revisiting the events of early 2012 with the benefit of the empirical results we have observed, it seems likely that the intensely anti-immigrant and racist speeches of high-ranking party representatives and the violence and aggression of mid-ranking representatives were appealing to a significant body of the electorate. While media was highly critical of GD during this period, this critical attention was –contrary to intent— perceived positively by a sizable segment of the electorate. A Google Trends comparison of searches (in Greek) for the term Golden Dawn ("Χρυσή Αυγή") versus the names of the other political parties leading to the election in 2012, revealed that GD consistently attracted the highest search interest, and that this was increasing steadily over time after the elections (as shown in Figure 2). This supports our view that the pre-election period, offered GD an excellent opportunity to convey its political message to all those willing to listen.

The timing and speed of GD's electoral ascent highlight the role of mainstream political parties' actions and omissions in this process. Meguid (2005) stresses the impact of mainstream parties' issue positioning on fringe parties' electoral fortunes. At the time of GD's electoral breakthrough, Greece's mainstream parties were tied in a political coalition that imposed severe measures and focused almost exclusively on economic issues. This possibly acted in two ways; it alienated voters from mainstream politics, leading them to seek outlets to channel their protest, and it turned mainstream parties' focus towards economics, making them neglect issues that were central to parts of the electorate and were addressed effectively by GD.

In sum, GD was likely successful because it took an extreme position against immigrants and convinced voters it was serious about its positions through violence and aggressive propaganda. Furthermore, it was abated by media which while criticising GD, were in fact disseminating its message, helping it reach a segment of the electorate concerned with issues insufficiently emphasised by other parties, including competing right wing-parties like LAOS.

4. Conclusion

Our econometric analysis of GD voting suggests that GD's electoral success reflects the permanent impact of its successful election campaign in early 2012. In just a few months, GD was able to redefine itself as the clear owner of the related issues of immigration and law-and-order. In both individual-level and contextual GD voting regressions, the GD vote was unresponsive to individual characteristics and contextual variables, until the importance of certain factors for GD voting changed dramatically, suggesting a marked shift in voting behaviour. This effect does not appear to be due as much to GD capturing the vote of other right wing parties like LAOS, as it seems to reflect a broad change in behaviour across the electorate.

Most importantly, GD was able to capture significantly greater support from individuals with pre-existing concerns about immigration and law-and-order and with Greece's economic conditions, particularly young, unmarried males. From a contextual perspective, electoral districts with higher immigration, crime and especially right-wing tradition, provided stronger support for GD after 2012 than can be explained by changes in the conditions of these regions (additional secondary effects were associated with personal bankruptcy rates and tourism). This is consistent with our thesis that GD reshaped voter behaviour in early 2012, possibly facilitated by media coverage which, while intended as critical, served to deliver GD's message to a niche section of the electorate that was receptive to it.

Interpreting these findings more broadly, ER parties may achieve a significant jump in popularity by targeting ownerless issues of concern to segments of the electorate and by adopting unorthodox, even criminal methods, which nevertheless appeal to certain voters. This strategy is likely to be most successful during political upheavals, when voters abandon their party affiliations and re-assess their priorities. On a more optimistic note, while ER voting is intensified by factors such as immigration, crisis severity etc., our quantitative analysis suggests that the coefficients of such factors seem to be contained, so our evidence suggests a bound on the electoral appeal of ER parties, at least unless the political upheaval is far deeper than the one observed in Greece.

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Appendix

A1. Detailed description of our individual-level dataset.

A1.1 Definitions of Data used in the empirical section

Gloom: A dummy indicating that an individual responded to five separate questions on the current and future personal and country conditions with the most negative – e.g. "very bad" - of five options available in the poll (see description of poll in section A1.1.2)

GD vote intention
Male
Age (divided by 100)
Temporarily Unemployed
Married
Secondary education
Urban
Gloom
immigration
crime
transparency

A1.2 Raw Data

We analyse data from 5 polls conducted at the following dates:

1. 1-8 December 2011
2. 27 November - 6 December 2012
3. 13-21 June 2013
4. 2-11 December 2013
5. 25 June – 4 July 2014

The polls were conducted with Greek national adults that had voting rights. The geographical coverage included the whole of the country (Athens, Thessaloniki, Urban, semi-urban and rural areas). The data collection method included a face to face interview with a use of a questionnaire and a ballot for secret vote casting. All samples consisted of 2000 individuals each.

The questionnaire included the following variables:

1. Gender (Male-female)
2. Age (in brackets of 19-24, 25-34, 35-44… 55-64, 65+)
3. Profession (self-employed, employed in the private sector, in the public sector, pensioner, temporarily not working, unemployed searching for a job, student, home employed, rentier, not working.
4. Marital status (not married, married, divorced).

5. Education (none/elementary, high school, undergraduate student (University/polytechnic), graduate (University/polytechnic), post graduate student (University/polytechnic).
6. Area of residency.
7. Monthly income of the interviewee in Euros (0-450, 450-600, 600-750… 2850-3000, 3000+)
8. Household monthly income (as above).
9. Attitudes questions:

   a. "How are things in the country?" (1=very well, 2=relatively well, 3=neither well nor bad, 4=relatively bad 5=very bad, 6=I don't know, 7=I do not wish to answer).

   b. "How do you judge the economic conditions in the country today?" (1=very well, 2=relatively well, 3=neither well nor bad, 4=relatively bad 5=very bad, 6=I don't know, 7=I do not wish to answer).

   c. "What is your current personal financial situation?" (1=very well, 2=relatively well, 3=neither well nor bad, 4=relatively bad 5=very bad, 6=I don't know, 7=I do not wish to answer).

   d. "The economic conditions in the country in the next year will:" (1=improve considerably, 2=improve slightly, 3=remain the same, 4=deteriorate slightly, 5=deteriorate considerably, 6=I don't know, 7=I do not wish to answer).

   e. "Your personal financial conditions in the next year will:" (1=improve considerably, 2=improve slightly, 3=remain the same, 4=deteriorate slightly, 5=deteriorate considerably, 6=I don't know, 7=I do not wish to answer).
10. ISSUES: "Identify the three (3) most important problems facing the country today:" (Interviewees were asked to choose from a list containing the following): (education, local-government efficiency, health, transportation/congestion, unemployment, inflation, foreign affairs, pollution, (economic) immigration, drugs, terrorism, tax system, economic development, crime, social security, regional development , government/church relations, transparency, economic convergence, social convergence, fiscal policy).
11. "Which party did you vote for in the last elections?" Answers differed depending on date according to the following table:

Party/Poll	2011-12 (DEC)	2012-06 (JUNE)	2012-12 (DEC)	2013-12 (DEC)	20146 (JUNE)
NEW	2	1	1	1	1
SYRIZA	5	2	2	2	2
PASOK	1	3	3	3	3
ANEL		4	4	4	4
GOLDEN		5	5	5	5
DIMAR		6	6	6	6
KKE	3	7	7	7	7
DRASI/CREA		8	8	8	8

LAOS	4	9	9	9	9
GREENS/ECO	6	10	10	10	10
OTHER	7	11	11	11	11
I WAS NOT	8	12	12	12	12
I DID NOT	9	13	13	13	13
BLANK	10	14	14	14	14
INVALID	11	15	15	15	15
I DON'T	12	16	16	16	16
I DON'T	13	17	17	17	17

12. "If national (parliamentary) elections were held next week, which party would you most likely vote for?".

Party/Poll	2010-12 (DEC)	2011-06 (JUNE)	2011-12 (DEC)	2012-06 (JUNE)	2012-12 (DEC)	2013-12 (DEC)
NEW DEMOCRACY	2	2	2	1	1	1
SYRIZA	5	5	5	2	2	2
PASOK	1	1	1	3	3	3
ANEL (INDEPENDENT				4	4	4
GOLDEN DAWN			10	5	5	5
DIMAR (DEMOCRATIC	7	7	7	6	6	6
KKE (COMMUNIST	3	3	3	7	7	7
LAOS	4	4	4	8	9	8
GREENS/ECOLOGISTS	6	6	6	9	10	9
CONSENSUS FOR NEW				10		10
PLAN B				11		11
NEW DAY				12		12
ANTARSYA				13		13
CHRISTIAN				14		14
DRASI/CREATION					8	
CREATION AGAIN				15		15
DEMOCRATIC	8	8	8			
PAN-HELLENIC		9	9			
OTHER	9	10	11	16	11	16
UNDECIDED	10	11	12	17	12	17
BLANK	11	12	13	18	13	18
INVALID	12	13	14	19	14	19
I DON'T KNOW	13	14	15	20	15	20
I DON'T WISH TO	14	15	16	21	16	21
ABSTAIN	15	16	17	22	17	22

A2. Detailed description of our contextual data

A2.1 Definitions of Contextual data as listed in Table 1

GD vote actual: % of valid ballots cast for GD across 56 electoral districts in seven elections.

Immigration: Percent of inhabitants of foreign origin to indigenous population. Data from the Census of 2001 and 2011, imputed for other dates using the method described in Appendix A2.2.2

Crime: Property crime rate measured as the number of incidents per 1,000 inhabitants. Data of regional aggregation from ELAS (Greek Police), Crime Table. Each prefecture is assumed to face the same crime rate as the region it belongs to.
http://www.astynomia.gr/index.php?option=ozo_content&lang=%27..%27&perform=view&id=43803&Itemid=1149&lang=
Tourism: tourist visit-days per head of local population recorded in the 201 Census. Data from ELSTAT (Greece's Bureau of Statistics);
Unemployment: see imputation scheme in section 2.2.1
Economic Output: *GDP* per capita in purchasing power standards, from Eurostat
Bounced checques: the value of bounced checks and mortgages in arrears by electoral district, provided by two of Greece's largest banks. Scaled by district's bank-deposits; bank deposits from the Bank of Greece, Bulletin of Conjectural Indicators;
Non-performing mortgages: the value of non-serviced mortgages in arrears by electoral district, provided by two of Greece's largest banks. Scaled by district's bank-deposits; bank deposits from the Bank of Greece, Bulletin of Conjectural Indicators;
Right Wing tradition: *Vote share for restoration of King 1974.*

A2.2 Construction of our imputed contextual data

A2.2.1. Unemployment

Suppose that in a region with *(n)* prefectures, unemployment rate is available at a regional level as well as for *(n-1)* prefecture, but is missing for prefecture *(k)*. An approximation can be constructed along the following lines:
With (U_i) denoting the number of unemployed persons in prefecture *(i, i=1…n*), total unemployment in the region is given by

$$U = U_k + \sum_{j=1, j\neq k}^{n} U_j \tag{A8}$$

Dividing by populations, the above identity gives:

$$\frac{U}{N_k} = \frac{U_k}{N_k} + \frac{1}{N_k}\sum_{j\neq k}^{n} U_j \tag{A9}$$

With (ϑ_i) denoting the proportion of active to total population (N_i) in prefecture (*i, i=1…n)*, unemployment rate is defined as

$$u_i = \frac{U_i}{\theta_i \cdot N_i} \tag{A10}$$

Population weights are defined as ($w_i = N_i / N$, *i=1…n*). Assuming that (ϑ_i) is constant across the various prefectures in the same region, the unemployment rate in the missing prefecture *(k)* is approximately given by:

$$u_k = \frac{u}{w_k} - \sum_{j=1, j\neq k}^{n} \left[\frac{w_j}{w_k} \cdot u_j\right] \tag{A11}$$

Following this rule, the unemployment rate was recovered for the prefecture of Grevena in the region of Western Macedonia, Eyritania in Sterea, Thesprotia in Epirus, Samos in the region of Northern Aegean, and Lasithi in Crete. In the region of Ionia, unemployment rate was missing for both Cefalonia and Lefkas, thus a common rate was constructed by treating the two as one

prefecture. Populations are obtained from the 2011 Census, and weights are assumed to remain constant throughout the period 2007-2013.

A2.2.2 Immigration

Immigration density *(f)* is defined as the ratio of residents of foreign origin *(F)* to the native population *(N)* in each area, *i.e. f=F/N.* The ratio can be computed for the Census years 2001 and 2011 using the corresponding Census data. Fig. 10 shows that there is a very strong and nearly uniform correlation between the densities in the two Census years. The fact that the pattern of increasing immigration density is nearly uniform across prefectures, suggests that a common logistic curve can be estimated to provide an interpolation for the periods 2002-2010 as well as extrapolation for 2012-2014. The following Lotka equation is assumed to describe the pattern of foreign population changes:

$$\dot{F} = \rho F \cdot (1 - \frac{F}{A}) \tag{A1}$$

where *(ρ)* is the unhindered growth rate of foreign population and *(A)* denotes the carrying capacity of the area. Capacity is assumed to be proportional to the native population, i.e. *A=αN,* as infrastructure, social networks and job opportunities are all increasing in population levels.
Setting

$$\frac{\dot{f}}{f} = \frac{\dot{F}}{F} - \frac{\dot{N}}{N} \tag{A2}$$

Denoting the native population growth rate by $n = \dot{N}/N$, and combining (A1) and (A2) the following dynamic equation is obtained for immigration density

$$\frac{\dot{f}}{f} = \lambda \cdot (1 - \frac{f}{\phi}) \tag{A3}$$

where *λ=(ρ-n)* denotes the unhindered growth rate of immigration density and *φ=α(1-n/ρ)* is the equilibrium value. The former is assumed to remain the same across prefectures, while the latter varies and is denoted by (φ_k) to reflect the particular carrying capacity in each prefecture *(k, k=1…51).*
The general solution of the above differential equation is given by the expression:

$$f_k(t) = \frac{\phi_k}{1+\beta_k \cdot e^{-\lambda t}} \tag{A4}$$

where β_k is a constant of integration specified for each prefecture *(k, k=1…51).*

Terminal conditions $f_k(0)$ and $f_k(T)$ for *T=10* can be calculated by using data from the Census of 2001 and 2011 respectively. Then the prefecture-specific constants (β_k , φ_k , *k=1…51*) are easily obtained as:

$$\beta_k = \frac{f_k(\mathrm{T}) - f_k(0)}{f_k(0) - e^{-\lambda T} f_k(\mathrm{T})} \tag{A5a}$$

$$\phi_k = (1 + \beta_k) \cdot f_k(0) \tag{A5b}$$

The common rate (*λ)* is obtained from (A3) by pool-estimating the equation

$$\frac{1}{T}\left[\frac{f_k(T)}{f_k(0)}-1\right]=\lambda-\left(\frac{\lambda}{\varphi}\right).f_k(0) \qquad \text{(A6)}$$

Estimation gives:

$$\frac{1}{10}\left[\frac{f_k(2011)}{f_k(2001)}-1\right]=0.243935-0.020996\cdot f_k(2001) \qquad \text{(A7)}$$

(0.0192) (0.0051)

Nobs=51, Adj R2=0.241, DW=1.871. SE in brackets.

This implies an equilibrium immigration value of *φ=11.618%.* Equation (A4) is then used to obtain estimates of immigration densities over the periods 2002-2010 and 2012-2013.

A3. Nomenclature of political parties

A3.1. Political parties in Greece

ND: New Democracy (centre-right)
PASOK: Pan-Hellenic Socialist Part (centre-left)
KKE: Communist Party of Greece
LAOS: Popular Orthodox Alert
ANEL: Independent Greeks (rightwing)
GD: Golden Dawn
Syriza: Coalition of Radical Left

A.3.2. Political parties in other European countries

ER: Extreme Right
BNP: British National Party
NPD: National Democratic ***Party*** of Germany
FPÖ: The Freedom Party of Austria
FN: Front National of France

A.3.2. Electoral districts of Greece

	DISTRICT NAME	Abbreviation
1	Α΄ ΑΘΗΝΩΝ	ATT_AT1
2	Β΄ ΑΘΗΝΩΝ	ATT_AT2
3	Α΄ ΠΕΙΡΑΙΩΣ	ATT_PR1
4	Β΄ ΠΕΙΡΑΙΩΣ	ATT_PR2
5	ΑΤΤΙΚΗΣ	ATT_YAT
6	Α’ ΘΕΣ/ΝΙΚΗΣ	CMAC_SL1
7	Β’ ΘΕΣ/ΝΙΚΗΣ	CMAC_SL2
8	ΗΜΑΘΙΑΣ	CMAC_IMA
9	ΚΙΛΚΙΣ	CMAC_KLK
10	ΠΕΛΛΑΣ	CMAC_PEL
11	ΠΙΕΡΙΑΣ	CMAC_PIE
12	ΣΕΡΡΩΝ	CMAC_SER
13	ΧΑΛΚΙΔΙΚΗΣ	CMAC_HAL

14	ΕΒΡΟΥ	THRA_EBR
15	ΞΑΝΘΗΣ	THRA_XNT
16	ΡΟΔΟΠΗΣ	THRA_ROD
17	ΔΡΑΜΑΣ	THRA_DRA
18	ΚΑΒΑΛΑΣ	THRA_KAV
19	ΓΡΕΒΕΝΩΝ	WMAC_GRE
20	ΚΑΣΤΟΡΙΑΣ	WMAC_KAS
21	ΚΟΖΑΝΗΣ	WMAC_KOZ
22	ΦΛΩΡΙΝΗΣ	WMAC_FLO
23	ΑΡΤΑΣ	EPIR_ART
24	ΘΕΣΠΡΩΤΙΑΣ	EPIR_TPR
25	ΙΩΑΝΝΙΝΩΝ	EPIR_INA
26	ΠΡΕΒΕΖΑΣ	EPIR_PRE
27	ΚΑΡΔΙΤΣΗΣ	THES_KAR
28	ΛΑΡΙΣΗΣ	THES_LAR
29	ΜΑΓΝΗΣΙΑΣ	THES_MAG
30	ΤΡΙΚΑΛΩΝ	THES_TRK
31	ΖΑΚΥΝΘΟΥ	EPTA_ZAK
32	ΚΕΡΚΥΡΑΣ	EPTA_KER
33	ΚΕΦΑΛΗΝΙΑΣ	EPTA_KEF
34	ΛΕΥΚΑΔΑΣ	EPTA_LEF
35	ΑΙΤΩΛ/ΝΙΑΣ	WGRE_AAK
36	ΑΧΑΪΑΣ	WGRE_AHA
37	ΗΛΕΙΑΣ	WGRE_ELI
38	ΒΟΙΩΤΙΑΣ	STER_BOI
39	ΕΥΒΟΙΑΣ	STER_EYB
40	ΕΥΡΥΤΑΝΙΑΣ	STER_EYR
41	ΦΘΙΩΤΙΔΟΣ	STER_FTH
42	ΦΩΚΙΔΑΣ	STER_FOK
43	ΑΡΓΟΛΙΔΑΣ	PEL_ARG
44	ΑΡΚΑΔΙΑΣ	PEL_AKD
45	ΚΟΡΙΝΘΙΑΣ	PEL_KOR
46	ΛΑΚΩΝΙΑΣ	PEL_LAK
47	ΜΕΣΣΗΝΙΑΣ	PEL_MES
48	ΛΕΣΒΟΥ	AEG_LES
49	ΣΑΜΟΥ	AEG_SAM
50	ΧΙΟΥ	AEG_CHI
51	ΔΩΔ/ΝΗΣΟΥ	AEG_DOD
52	ΚΥΚΛΑΔΩΝ	AEG_KYK
53	ΗΡΑΚΛΕΙΟΥ	CRET_HER
54	ΛΑΣΙΘΙΟΥ	CRET_LAS
55	ΡΕΘΥΜΝΗΣ	CRET_RET
56	ΧΑΝΙΩΝ	CRET_CHA

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